

CROWTHORNE TENNIS CLUB

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Crowthorne Tennis Club held on Zoom on Monday 15th March 2021 at 8pm.

Present: (17) Caroline Atkinson, Mike Smith, Karen Smith, Richard McCully, Andy Stone, Sarah Mayhew, Jenny Sheppard, Mark Callaghan, Mike Goddard, Derek Harman, Alison Nicholson, Wendy Miles, John Phillips, Maggie Ingham, Rob Hughes, Russell Finch

Apologies: Sue Hester, Gill Smith, Ravinder Norman, Dom Evan-Hart, James Brennan

INTRODUCTION (Caroline Atkinson / John Phillips)

Caroline started the meeting, which, due to Covid-19 restrictions, was held on the Zoom Video Conferencing System, by explaining how the meeting would be run and presenting a couple of slides to show how to use the controls. As usual the meeting was supported by a PowerPoint presentation which all attendees were able to see via the Zoom screen sharing feature. She said she would be controlling things behind the scenes and handed over to John who was chairing the meeting.

John opened with some witty comments, much enjoyed by those present, and proceeded to run quickly through the agenda. He then asked for the 2020 AGM minutes, which had previously been made available to club members in the website Members' Area, to be accepted as a true record.

- **Acceptance Of 2020 AGM Minutes: Proposed R McCully, Seconded S Mayhew. Passed**

REVIEW OF LAST SEASON (John Phillips)

John then summarised the year since the last AGM. The season had been dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic with the first lockdown starting on 23rd March and continuing until 15th May. There then followed 6 months of tennis under varying levels of restriction and, in hindsight, he said, we would have given anything to have that again. However the second lockdown stopped any play during November and in December, restrictions increased throughout the month culminating in the new year with the third lockdown which started on 5th January.

Moving on to League Matches, the 2019/20 winter league produced no notable performances in the adult sections apart from that of Mixed 1 who came 2nd in Division 3. In the juniors, however, two results stood out with our 18U Boys A team winning Division 2 and our 10U Mixed team winning Group B by some margin. John then thanked those responsible for organising the teams – Alison Nicholson (Ladies), Russell Finch (Men), Caroline Atkinson (18U/14U), Dom Evan-Hart (10U).

John then moved on to Social Play in which the court booking system played a big part due to the pandemic safeguards and members were initially only allowed to play singles. His feedback suggested that members enjoyed the challenge of playing singles, some for the first time for many years and taking them well out of their comfort zone.

Allowing doubles meant that things started to feel more normal and the introduction of strictly controlled and bookable club nights under Covid-19 rules proved to be a great success. Friday Club Night was first and targeted at Improvers and above while Tuesday Club Night was for Intermediate and Advanced players. Sarah Mayhew organised the Friday session with help from Alison Nicholson while John himself was responsible for the Friday one. He said that, certainly on Tuesdays, members seemed to enjoy the sense of competition due to the rule of winners moving up towards court 1 while losers took the walk of shame down towards court 4. The important thing was, he said, that it provided a Covid-19 secure way for those newer members who didn't already have connections within the club to get to play tennis at a level that suited them.

With some well organised afternoon groups restarting, Alison and Russell organising match practice for team players on Thursday evenings and Alison running monthly Ladies' Tennis Afternoons on Sundays under the same rules as for club nights, all of these areas of play can be deemed to have been successful.

The Club Tournament, run with a restricted number of events and with finals in September, was a great success and well organised by Russell who, said John, was probably still recovering from his epic Handicap Singles defeat by Joe Forrester. Another highlight of the year was an influx of very talented juniors, most of whom entered the tournament, and one of whom, Jacques Edwards, won the Men's Singles title a month before his 16th birthday.

Coaching was much restricted during the season with Group Coaching not allowed until July so our coaches will be pleased that they can get back to work this coming April. We welcomed Lewis Sullivan (LTA Level 4) to the coaching team and John said it was good to see Dan Rippon, who was only now old enough to move out of our junior section, taking the coaching route and currently accredited to Level 2.

Finally, John reminded us that, in December, we were awarded the Club of the Year award by Berkshire Tennis. This had come out of the blue but was well deserved recognition for the club's efforts on the new clubhouse and in increasing junior membership, not only in numbers but also in quality of players.

FINANCIAL REPORT (Mike Smith)

Mike presented the 2020 Income & Expenditure and Balance Sheet pointing out that they were available for members to look at more closely in the Members' Area.

Membership income had held up well under the circumstances, just over £1,000 down from last season, and it was heartening to see how many members had renewed their subscription at a time when we didn't know when tennis would restart.

Coaching income, from group coaching, however, was significantly down, and this meant that payments out to coaches were also correspondingly lower. This had obviously had a significant effect on our coaches' income although the effect on the club financially was minimal as only the non-member surcharges from the coaching income are retained by the club. There was, however, a sum of

over £2,000, which was carried forward to 2021 due to prepayments for coaching courses in 2020 and Spring 2021 which had to be cancelled or suspended. These would be offset against registrations for the Summer 2021 coaching courses.

The LTA had done their best to support clubs like ours by refunding the £440 affiliation fee for 2019. We are also grateful to St. Sebastians Sports Club who reduced the rent and membership fees which we pay and, with electricity and water payments also reduced, that meant a saving of around £500 in total.

Ground maintenance costs were also lower than 2019, largely due to us terminating our existing arrangements at the start of the pandemic and getting the company who had taken over the rest of the grounds maintenance to take over at the tennis club as well. They are able to provide a more economical service and, being regularly on site, were able to inform us of the fence damage in January. Even though the courts were out of use for long periods of time, it has been important to ensure they continued to be cleared of leaves and other debris to prevent damage to the surface coating.

Moving to the Balance Sheet, there was just over £4,000 paid in clubhouse building costs plus £5,175 to service our loans, the latter being £2,000 lower than expected as the LTA deferred one of the 6 monthly payments of £2,000. This will be paid in 2030 but, meanwhile, we have £6,500 a year plus a decreasing amount of interest to find out of our annual surplus. Mike said that the item marked Donations Moira Macbeth was a ring-fenced amount that had been donated following the death of Moira and was earmarked for buying, for instance, a table tennis table for the clubhouse.

After thanking Karen for preparing the accounts and Mike for presenting them, John requested a proposer and seconder to accept the accounts.

- **Acceptance of Accounts: Proposed S Sheppard, Seconded M Nicholson. Passed**

CLUB DEVELOPMENT - PLAYING (John Phillips)

Looking forward to the new season, John said we would come on to the subject of the new clubhouse in a moment, but first we were all just two weeks away from getting back to playing tennis from 29th March. It would be under the same rules as previously with courts bookable for singles or doubles with participants logged and guests allowed on a limited basis as previously.

Summer Leagues are due to start in April and we have 7 teams entered for the Adult Doubles Leagues - 3 men's, 2 ladies' and 2 mixed, 2 for the Men's National League, 2 Veterans' Teams and 5 Boys' Teams. In the latter we have teams in the 18U and 14U Divisions 1 and 2 for the first time as well as a new 12U team.

John thanked Dominic for moving the Easter Tennis Camps to Edgbarrow, conscious of the need to keep our courts available for other members to book so soon after the end of the lockdown.

John said the Tuesday and Friday Club Nights would continue as before, the first on Tuesday 30th March, and Sarah had told him the Friday Club Night would go ahead on Friday 2nd April despite it being Good Friday. John said that his feedback suggested that members would want to continue with the format even after the Covid-19 restrictions were lifted. From the floor, Maggie Ingham said she had enjoyed the Friday sessions and Sarah Mayhew said her feedback was good but she would play it by ear regarding whether to continue with the format post Covid-19. Alison Nicholson had used the same format for the Ladies' Tennis Afternoons and said it worked well and the extra session planned for Easter Monday already had 16 entries and was therefore full.

John said Russell would no doubt be running another successful Annual Club Tournament and it was possible that a Finals Day in September could be combined with a clubhouse opening event.

CLUB DEVELOPMENT - CLUBHOUSE (John Phillips / Richard McCully)

Moving on to the New Clubhouse, John first said, despite the disappointment of the clubhouse still being unfinished, we had come a long way and we all owed a big debt of thanks to the Clubhouse Sub-Committee who had all put in a lot of time and effort to try to keep the project moving and within budget. He especially thanked Richard McCully who chaired the group and was the driving force behind the project.

After reminding us that final planning permission for the new building was only granted in September 2019, he said the start of the pandemic in March 2020 had severely disrupted building and associated trades and that has continued to be the case ever since. Even so, we were still within our £90,000 budget and it was worth reminding ourselves what we had achieved. There followed a sequence of pictures that showed the progress from breaking soil in July 2019 up to a substantially complete building at the end of 2019. In 2020 roofing and screeding continued with the help of members and, even during the first lockdown, members continued to contribute, some repairing field damage caused by a rogue cement lorry and others including Dave Smith who contributed work on the electrics and WiFi installation. Later in the year, the Vortex sewage treatment system was moved onto the site and a number of members have completed the majority of the painting.

John went on to say the main items remaining on the building itself are the laying of a vinyl floor, external windows and doors, installing the Vortex, some electrical and plumbing work and replacing the fencing and main gate. However, he would ask Richard McCully to bring us up to date on the latest situation.

Richard thanked all the members who had contributed their time and energy to the project since it started and said it was useful to see on the presentation how much we had achieved. The sub-committee had agreed that the only sensible way forward without a large additional financial outlay was to stick with the original builder and work co-operatively with him to finish the remaining work. He said that he had been disappointed not to receive an update from him in advance of the AGM but that we would continue to do all we could to get the work finished before resorting to Plan B which would require some more money. From the floor, Sarah Mayhew asked if Richard had a gut feel for the time to completion but Richard said 3 to 4 months was the best he could offer.

After thanking Richard, John said there was volunteer work remaining in completing the painting and also landscaping the area around the building, so, if anyone had skills in gardening rather than painting, we would be looking for them to put their hands up once the building was substantially finished.

Other costs not included in the original clubhouse budget includes new code locks on the other gates and furniture and equipment for the main club room and kitchen. Sarah asked if we would be using the same contractor as for the first gate lock and Mike replied

definitely not, reminding those present that they had charged around £800 for a badly fitted solution with sharp metal edges that had caused injury to members. Jim Hawes had put in a lot of work replacing the metalwork and painting and sealing the result to make it both safe and reasonably presentable. Mike hoped we might be able to produce an in-house solution for the other gates with less effort starting from scratch than modifying someone else's badly implemented one.

CLUB DEVELOPMENT - MEMBERSHIP (John Phillips)

John then quickly ran through a couple of slides showing how our membership was now on the way up towards the previous peak of 2006, no doubt due in part to the imminent clubhouse. The second slide was a forecast and predicted the membership reaching its capacity of 60 per court in around 5 years' time. These limits were to ensure the courts didn't become over crowded. With a ratio of 70:30 adults to juniors, it would mean we were not far off capacity for juniors but we would almost certainly be able to increase their numbers by careful planning as they tend to play at times when adults don't.

SUBSCRIPTIONS (John Phillips)

John then went on to present what everyone had been waiting for which was the committee's proposal for Subscriptions for the coming season.

He said that although we usually increase subscriptions every year by a small amount, usually 3%, to ensure our reserves aren't eroded by gradually rising costs, this year we were freezing subscriptions at the current level for all new members.

Category	2020/21	2021/22 (New Members plus existing members joining after April)	2021/22 (Existing Members joining before end of April)
Full Senior (25 and over)	£196 (3 x £66)	£196 (3 x £66)	£147 (3 x £49)
Off-peak senior (25 and over)	£163 (3 x £55)	£163 (3 x £55)	£122 (3 x £41)
Full time student or U25 (19 – 24)	£80	£80	£60
Junior (11 – 18)	£62	£62	£47
Mini (Under 11)	£35	£35	£26
Couple (2 full seniors)	£372 (6 x £62)	£372 (3 x £124) (6 x £62)	£279 (3 x £93)
Family (2 full seniors + 2 juniors)	£452 (6 x £76)	£452 (3 x £151) (6 x £76)	£339 (3 x £113) (6 x £57)

However, for existing members, we were offering a 25% discount if they renewed their subscription before the end of April. He said there had been other suggestions from members such as delaying the payment of subscriptions or even shifting the end of this season and the start of next season a few months, thereby giving members some free playing time. However, some of these ideas would cause substantial administrative difficulties and also, as the club has outgoings in April and May, any delay in collection of subscriptions would have an adverse impact on cash flow.

John said he thought the discount we are offering was fair and even quite generous when compared to other clubs, such as Wokingham, who are offering 13% and also no option to delay payment. He said the discount would cost the club around £5,000 if all members took advantage of it. However, he was well aware that some members had come through the past year in better shape financially than others so urged anyone who could afford not to take the discount to do so and instead pay the full amount and treat the discount as a donation to the club.

He mentioned the hard work of members devoting time and effort to fix the fence recently to save the club money at a time when savings are important, so if anyone could afford not to take the discount it would be greatly appreciated. He then invited comments from the floor.

All comments were very positive including Mike Goddard who said he thought the proposal was very generous and thanked the committee for offering such a large discount. Richard McCully also said it was an extremely generous offer and he urged those in a position to do so to forego the discount.

- **Acceptance of Subscriptions: Proposed M Ingham, Seconded C Atkinson. Passed**

CLUB DEVELOPMENT – CASH FLOW FORECAST (Mike Smith)

John then handed over to Mike Smith to explain the cash flow forecast. Mike said that this was a forecast based on the actual figures inserted from the accounts for the 2020 column with membership numbers, income and expenditure increased by a small percentage in subsequent years. In this case, the membership income for 2021 was reduced by 25% from the 2020 figure to reflect the subscriptions proposal. Mike said this was an illustration of what we could afford to do regarding capital spending if membership increased as forecast.

Any increase in income from members generously donating their Covid-19 discount to the club would obviously help to bring forward these items and also ensure the clubhouse was completed and furnished sooner rather than later.

The items in yellow concerned the new clubhouse and showed interest payments on the SSPFT loan under Running Costs and repayment of both loans under Capital Funding, Spending and Reserves. Also shown is £10,000 expenditure in 2021 to include the £3,000 (approx.) still owing to the builder, £2,000 for furniture and equipment plus an extra £5,000 amount for contingencies – such as Richard's plan B.

Those items in green concern floodlights, fencing and landscaping and show £3,000 to cover gate locks and landscaping this year, extensive fence renewal in 2025 and replacing the halogen floodlights with LED lights in 2031.

In brown are items relating to the courts and show the courts being repainted in 2022 and 2023 and resurfaced in 2027 and 2029. Courts need to be resurfaced approximately every 10 years and ours were done in 2016 (1&2) and 2018 (3&4) with 1&2 repainted in 2018. Doing them two at a time means 2 courts remain available for players.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (John Phillips)

John then showed a slide of the nine committee members and said we still had vacancies for the roles of Chair, Grounds Manager and Social Secretary. He asked for nominations for the committee and was not surprised when none were forthcoming, however, he

asked members to consider whether they could offer something to the committee and to speak to a committee member later if they felt they might be interested in getting involved in any capacity.

John then asked for a proposer and seconder to re-elect the committee en bloc.

- **Re-election of Committee: Proposed W Miles, Seconded R McCully. Passed.**

The committee remains as follows...

Chairman	<i>Vacant</i>	
Treasurer		Karen Smith
Secretary		Mike Smith
Junior Co-ordinator		Caroline Atkinson
Men's Captain		Russell Finch (also Competitions Secretary)
Ladies' Captain		Alison Nicholson
Head Coach		Dominic Evan-Hart
Welfare Officer		Sarah Mayhew
Grounds Manager	<i>Vacant</i>	
Social Secretary		<i>Vacant</i>
Members		Jenny Sheppard, John Phillips

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (John Phillips)

With a final slide showing a horizontal fence at the end of courts 3 & 4 and the whole scene covered in snow, John then paid tribute to the members who had repaired the fence which was blown down in the January gales, ending up substantially replacing the whole structure and saving the club a considerable amount of money – at least £3,500.

Richard McCully and Ben Stephenson were mentioned (John modestly omitted himself), but he singled out Dave Smith and Steve Stow for special mention as they had between them planned and organised the whole project. Most recently all five had spent an entire Saturday at the club working non-stop to complete the job. John said he had never seen so much scary equipment as the load Dave had wheeled up to the club that day!

Posts are now mainly cylindrical to replace the angle iron ones that had been welded after the previous collapse and the chain link itself has all been replaced. It was noted, however, that the supplier doesn't recommend having windbreaks even on these stronger posts, so they have not been put back up.

Mark Callaghan asked whether the "Introduce a Friend" offer of a 10% finder's fee for introducing an adult member was still in operation. Mike responded that it was but it hadn't been particularly relevant during the past year. John added that it would probably be more appropriate to promote the offer once the clubhouse was ready, the Covid-19 restrictions were over and we had a more attractive package to market.

Sarah Mayhew said that once the clubhouse was finished there would be a great opportunity to market the club so anyone who had experience with any aspect of this should contact the committee. John endorsed this suggestion urging those whose expertise was more cerebral than hefting building materials or wielding paintbrushes to step forward.

There being no other business, Caroline thanked John for chairing the meeting, Mike thanked both Caroline and John, John thanked all of those whose efforts on behalf of the club go largely unnoticed and Maggie Ingham said "You've all done a great job!".

Caroline thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Meeting closed at 21:30

These minutes plus the accounts, cash-flow and a PDF copy of the PowerPoint presentation are now available in the Members' Area under AGM & Accounts.
