

THE LANSDOWN TENNIS, SQUASH & CROQUET CLUB LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE 2019/20 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD VIA A ZOOM LINK AT 7PM ON THURSDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020

**1. Apologies**

These were received from Corrina Bates, Rupert Larkin, Richard Leutchford, Pippa and Roger Green

**2. President's Opening Remarks**

Jeremy welcomed everyone to the first ever AGM via video call and let attendees know the means to contribute to the meeting. He noted that 2019 had been a good year financially and for playing at Lansdown. What's going to happen in 2020 however is likely to be very different. He thanked everyone for their hard work in this period.

**3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting**

Jeremy gave a massive thank you to the Covid committee for their very hard work over the last 6 months. This included Jeremy (Labram), Julian, Rupert, Andy, Philip and James. They had helped Lansdown manage the situation in the best way possible. He also thanked all the volunteers. He thanked Philip in particular, who had spent as much time working in his own time, as in his paid role helping to manage the situation. The new covid related rules for waiter and table service in the club would be very difficult to deliver on current staffing levels and volunteer help may be required. He asked everyone to look out for notices in relation to this.

Jeremy concluded asking that the minutes for the 2019 AGM some 17 months ago be adopted.

Proposed by David Barnes and seconded by Claire Ackerman

**4. Matters arising from the 2019 minutes**

There were no matters arising

**5. Treasurer's report**

Mark Groves opened by saying that 2019 was a profitable year with a strong cash balance. Current cash balance is just over £450,000 as of yesterday. We have the cash resources to continue to invest in bigger projects such as court resurfacing and paddle tennis. No big decisions can be taken as yet due to current uncertainty, but all should be aware that 2020 will be about minimising the losses..

**6. Matters arising from Treasurer's report.**

John Morgan asked how many bank accounts the club currently used. Philip responded that the club used Barclay's and a number of different accounts within it – a savings account, sinking account, general debit account and croquet account. John pointed out there was a risk attached to having more than £85,000 with one bank. Jeremy agreed with this but it had been difficult to change banks

during the time of the pandemic as banks were looking after their existing customers. Several applications had been made to other banks including the TSB who had not wanted to take on the Lansdown Club. HSBC / Natwest applications were under way. John responded that it would be the sooner the better to spread the cash between different banks, which all agreed with. Lorna Montgomery suggested the Metro Bank.

#### **7. Adoption of the Accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019**

Proposed by Jeremy Labram and seconded by Jean Wilson

#### **8. Appointment of Auditors.**

Philip explained that John Fuller prepares the accounts which are then forwarded to Berkeley Hall Marshall who then send them to Companies House. Berkeley Hall Marshall's price remained very competitive and had not increased in the last 3-4 years. It was proposed to continue with these auditors.

Proposed by Andy Ewings and seconded by John Foulds

#### **9. Chairman's Report**

Andy Ewings presented his Chairman's report. He thanked everyone for attending and said that he would be giving details of Covid Sub- Committee work and plans. Andy reiterated the highly unusual times for the club and the requirement to make decisions about events that no one had previously experienced. The Covid Sub –Committee consisted of James Scully, Rupert Larkin, Philip Torjussen, Tom Therrien, Julian Moore and Jeremy Labram. Due to the age demographic of members, the committee had taken a cautious approach. They had worked tirelessly on the members' behalf, and to ensure the club thrives in the long term.

Cash reserves are strong. There are some larger outlays to factor in the future, including courts 1-3 resurfacing. Reduction in income from the bar, coaching and a rebate for members were going to also potentially impact on income going forward. The furlough scheme had been used by the club and job support would be used going forward. A £25,000 grant had also been secured. Andy thanked members who had continued to pay their membership during times when the club was not open. Members who paid their full membership during that period could expect a rebate in 20/21. Andy pointed out that it was impossible to offer different rebates for example to squash players or doubles players due to the complexity of this and that all members were rackets members.

In terms of membership, there were 16 more members but overall membership was down due to reduction in coaching and camps. The club would be lucky to achieve 30% of the usual income from this area.

Andy explained the figures in relation to the proportion of a membership fee that went towards provision of food and drink services. Losses from the bar/food had been reduced to £5,000 a year in 2015, equivalent to £8.50 of a membership fee. Losses had increased to £17,500, equivalent to £30 of the membership fee subsidising the bar/food. Andy and the committee had been keen for the product not to change and had managed to increase efficiency by reducing the staff rota by 30 hours. By the last quarter in 2019 losses had been significantly reduced to £15 for each member as a

proportion of their membership fee. The club was optimistic for 2020 to be able to reduce losses to £2,500 per year. However the pandemic had created a loss of £15,000 for the first half of 2020 equivalent to £50.00 of the membership fee per member. 40 percent of revenue had been achieved but margins and operating costs had remained the same. New regulations may mean that the club is required to provide table service and face masks to be worn, unless at a table.

The revamp of the changing rooms are nearly complete and there are newly decorated walls and new flooring. The changing rooms will have to operate in line with Covid secure restrictions. There is a new app replacing the existing app which can be utilised with an android phone or iPhone. It will contain new features such as the ability to receive notifications about court cancellations or upcoming tournaments.

Andy sincerely thanked David Blake and Barbara Gooch for all their incredible help with the gardens around the club. They will now be retiring. The club would welcome any more volunteer support at the beginning of next year. He also thanked the main committee and Philip and Jo for their dedication, and the Covid Committee, including Jeremy Labram. Jeremy had left no stone unturned in his efforts as part of the team, in the same way that he ran the very successful club championships. Claire Ackerman was also thanked for her help with the club house as was Rich Smith for help with the refurbishment at cost, and Rob for his support with the plumbing. James Scully was also thanked.

All members had been compliant with new rules and regulations and touching emails had been received from members thanking those who had helped the club through this period. Efforts will continue to be made going forward, but the world had changed and more restrictions are likely before the club can be back in full operation. A cautious approach would continue to be taken, even if this was tough, in order to protect members.

#### **10. Matters arising**

Felicity Bryant asked if there would be a more comprehensive meal offer. Andy highlighted that the biggest contribution to the loss was prepared food. If the club offered just fast food it would be profit making. A cautious approach was being taken as there wasn't yet the footfall in the club. Previously there also wasn't the appetite for prepared food. Fiscal decisions had to be considered. The sub-committee was working closely with Jo on Specials Nights where surplus food could be used in the week. There is a standard menu and when more appetite for prepared food is seen, dishes will be added. More staff however are now required to provide table service, and the club needs to be sensible and look at peak times and when money is being spent on food.

Lorna Montgomery asked if it was time to consult with members on this. Andy's personal opinion was to try and get to the point to show the service will work for 6 months. How services could be structured would be examined by the newly formed committee. A members' consultation may also be carried out.

Lorna felt members could be alerted, and awareness built outside of the newsletter, of the consequence of not having something to drink / eat in the club, and opinion gauged via a survey. Andy pointed out that a past membership survey had been carried out of what members wanted behind the bar, but with little response.

Andy reminded everyone that Finley at a previous AGM had highlighted that if every member bought a cup of coffee once a week it would make a massive difference to club finances, turning the bar loss into profit. Income had also dropped off because of a reduction in camps which is another reason why turnover was at 40% of prior years. Summer typically is a period of good income and we were now moving into a part of the year where income is lower and events are not being held, but we have the same level of staffing. It is a real challenge to juggle costs against such reduced income levels.

Tim Jones thanked Andy and the committee for all they do. He hoped the changing rooms would be open as soon as possible. He asked if there would be a greater availability of squash courts which had been subject to restrictions. Andy said that the changing rooms were behind schedule and Rob was helping to complete the work. It was hoped that the changing rooms would be open at the end of the month. It would need to be considered how to open them safely. A gap was required between squash court use due to aerosol generation. Julian Moore was working on this and it was hoped to reduce the gap to 30 minutes from 45 minutes. The minimum requirement is 15 minutes but 30 minutes was felt to be safer for some leeway.

A question was asked about the number of tennis courts that were utilised for coaching at peak times, with 6 or 7 given over to coaching – in particular at 4.30-6pm, when it was hard to book courts. James Scully replied on behalf of Rupert that a high percentage of people being coached were members, and that it had previously been felt that this time was best for children's coaching. Hard courts were also used when possible. The issue of people not turning up for courts was addressed and that they were currently being given a friendly warning.

Martin Matthews asked a question about restarting a Thursday club mixer to help integrate new members. In reply it was noted that Club play on Tuesday and Saturday had considerably increased numbers since only Tuesday and Saturdays were available. Thanks were given to Eleanor and Richard for all their help with this. It was also hoped to introduce a weekly coach led improvers' session. The tennis sub-committee felt it should also ensure courts were available for others too. Rupert along with the tennis sub-committee would be reviewing when to bring Thursdays back.

John Foulds commented that he had been a member for 20 years and the food was currently the best he had ever experienced. He suggested that this was due to Jo's excellent food service and asked whether her position could be protected. Andy said he was baffled why more people were not eating at the club and therefore financially supporting it. The service and the product needs to meet the needs and requests of existing members. Andy also highlighted the need to attract new members and protect what we currently offer. Jon felt it was important as a sports club to offer healthy choices which was agreed by all. It was a challenge however, as chicken nuggets and chips remained the highest seller.

Tim Jones asked about padel tennis. The development sub-committee had looked at replacing centre court with paddle tennis and retaining mini tennis courts. Jon Foulds had got quotes and costings and it was due to be taken to an EGM as it changed the nature of our facilities. Mark said that there was the budget to be able to support the development.

Felicity Bryant commented that the current situation and all we were currently doing was only likely to be temporary until a vaccine could be found. Andy pointed out that the club had topped up over

and above the 20% for those furloughed and reiterated that the bar had never been self –sustaining. He felt there was a sweet spot of tolerance of around £20 per person within the membership fee that could be justified, and that adjustments may need to be made.

### **Adoption of the Chair's report**

Proposed by Jon Foulds and seconded by Mark Groves

#### **11. Election of the committee. Nominations were requested. No positions were contested.**

Philip gave the names of those on the committee. There were proposers and seconders for all in the newly elected committee.

Chairman – Andy Ewings

Vice-chairman – James Scully

Treasurer – Mark Groves

Tennis Secretary – Rupert Larkin

Squash Secretary – Mark Radley

Croquet Secretary – Howard Grove

Facilities Secretary – David Barnes

Main committee without portfolio: Jon Foulds, Jean Wilson, Jeremy Labram, Claire Ackerman

#### **12. Resolutions**

There were no resolutions to be brought to the meeting.

#### **13. Any Other Business**

None

#### **14. President's closing remarks**

The meeting was brought to a close by Jeremy and those attending thanked for joining the meeting. Attendees were also thanked in advance for their support of the Covid committee and in navigating the next few months.