

THE LANSDOWN TENNIS, SQUASH & CROQUET CLUB LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE 2020/21 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD VIA A ZOOM LINK AT 7PM ON TUESDAY 16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Es Murray, Kenneth Foulger, Jill Kingaby, Barbara Gooch, Richard Weatherhead, Karen King and Joy Thomas.

**2. President's Opening Remarks**

Jeremy welcomed those members present to the meeting, noting that at the start of the meeting there were more than 25 people in the clubhouse room and 12 attending on line, so the meeting was quorate. He commented on this AGM being held in November of 2021 was in fact the formal AGM for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, the delay being due to ambitions for covid restrictions to allow for a more normal AGM, and then the departure of Philip Torjussen as general manager. Jeremy further expressed his thanks for the 9 years Philip had given the club and welcomed Natalie Curtis as our office administrator, congratulating her on the speed and efficiency with which she had picked up on office tasks to date.

Regarding the next AGM (for the year ending 31 December 2021) Jeremy commented that he hoped that the new committee would agree to bring the date for that back to the more usual timing of May 2022, also noting that this would mark the end of his third and final year of Presidency. As he did not expect to stand for re-election, Jeremy asked all members to start to consider who amongst them would like to stand for that office and committed to wholeheartedly help to transition to whoever might be successful.

**3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting**

Last year's AGM was the first 'Zoom only' AGM. Good feedback was received and noted.

**4. Matters arising from the 2020 Minutes**

There were no matters arising.

**5. Treasurer's report**

Mark Groves acknowledged that it had been a challenging time for the club, but that it had come through Covid well. As well as the staff furlough financial assistance from the government, we also qualified for a government provided Business Continuity grant of £25,000 which had helped greatly.

He spoke of the new courts, refurbished corridors and changing rooms which all enhanced the club considerably and noted that the club was in profit as shown in the accounts that had been shared, with cash balance today standing at £477,000.

Mark spoke of the process involved in changing accountants, the retirement of John Fuller and the reappointment of Fuller and Roper in a competitive process where Fuller and Roper offered the best value for the Club. He warmly thanked Jon Fuller for his many years of service. Mark

further commented on the change to office staff and how further staffing additions may be made once Natalie understood fully the workload demands.

There was a question raised by Anthony Griffiths regarding a large increase in non-recoverable VAT and bank charges. Mark replied that the club is unable to recoup the VAT and he was not aware of significant bank charges but would speak with the accountant and follow up before the next AGM.

**Action:** Mark to advise Anthony promptly, and be recorded for the next AGM

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

There were no matters arising from the report.

## **7. Adoption of the Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2020**

Proposed by Jeremy Labram and seconded by Anthony Griffiths, the proposal was unanimously carried.

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

Jeremy commented on the good work carried out by Berkeley Hall Marshall over the last several years and recommended that we continue to employ them for this.

Proposed by Mark Groves and seconded by Jeremy Goulding, the proposal was unanimously carried.

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

### Welcome and thanks

Andy Ewings welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave his thanks to all for taking part. He mentioned that a lot has changed since the last AGM. He spoke about the club being 'under the unwanted umbrella of Covid' and how the committee's policy throughout the pandemic has been to do at least what we are required to do, but often going further. He mentioned how the committee has worked tirelessly to best balance the safety of all members, while enabling them to use the club as freely as possible.

### Office

Andy spoke of the office and changes that have happened over the past few months, with our long-standing general manager of over nine years, Philip Torjussen leaving in September this year, for pastures new. Andy acknowledged that Philip was a great part of the fabric of the club and his warm and friendly demeanour was recognised by all. He worked tirelessly for the benefit of the club and its members and Andy remarked that he would like to express his thanks on record for all Philip has done for the club during his time here.

### Bar and Clubroom

Andy explained that the bar was hit hard from the enforced closure due the pandemic. He acknowledged Jo Bray and her team who are glad to be back working again. He was delighted to be informing members that Jo's role has now changed from Catering Manager to Bar Manager. A subtle change but an important distinction and Jo now reports to the committee and has an overall responsibility for the performance of the clubroom. Jo is relishing this opportunity. The main challenge facing the bar is the staffing, as finding food and beverage staff at present is

extremely challenging. Jo is looking to add to the team, in particular anyone with catering experience and asks members to reach out if they know of anyone who could help Jo.

### Membership

Andy informed all that membership numbers were extremely healthy at present. This may be due to the work done over lockdown to improve the changing rooms, it could be the fact that more people are venturing out and getting back to exercise and good on-boarding by the club. He was very pleased to share that the club has currently a 901 strong membership including 615 adult members which is the most we have ever had.

### Development

Andy spoke of Mark Groves' treasurers report and that our cashflow position was looking very healthy. He suggested that although it is not clear what lies ahead, it may be possible to embark on some development projects to future proof the club. Andy touched on some of the previous opportunities that were raised by a pre-Covid development sub-committee. These included a gym, undercover courts, extending the front of house and more recently Padel courts. The latter drew in the most interest and Jon Foulds is leading this initiative. He has been working with BANES Council to gain a positive pre-app and has also been contacting suppliers to gauge costs. Jon has also been speaking with LTA to get an idea of the support on offer from them.

All the details will be circulated to members as well as informal meetings to be held in due course, prior to the matter being brought to an EGM for members to vote on an investment in Padel for Lansdown.

### Coaching Contracts

Both Elite Squash and Blue Sky Tennis contracts come to an end in January 2022 after being in place for five years. Notwithstanding that relationships with both are very healthy, it was decided at the August 2021 committee meeting that it would be the correct process to put both contracts out to tender, to ensure that the committee is applying due diligence in getting the best value for members. The squash tender is commencing on track, with Elite Squash in a strong position to be re-appointed. The tennis tender has been delayed due to changes to the tennis sub-committee members, and will be pursued by the new Committee following the AGM.

### Thank you

Andy spoke of his time with the committee for over a decade and said that he felt it was time to step back and 'hand over the baton' to someone new with fresh ideas. He added that he is proud of what the club has achieved in that time. Specific thanks were given to Jeremy Goulding who has been a great source of counsel over the years, and James Scully who, in particular over the past two years has put in a huge effort and time as deputy chair.

### Questions

There was a question as to Jo's position and about the appropriateness of her compensation in the new role.

Andy explained that Jo moved position with a revised job description in place, all conducted together with Jo prior to any change, and that Jo's compensation was reviewed with her as part of that change.

Another question was raised around how many members were lost over the Covid period.

Andy replied that very few were lost and as we approached the renewal period most renewed once things started to return to normal.

There was a question about the perception of there being a large number of Squash members not returning having paid their membership in full just before the covid restrictions were put in place.

Andy replied that there were no specific figures as both Tennis and Squash fell under the rackets membership, though he did recognise that Squash players were harder hit than Tennis players in terms of facilities available to be used while restrictions were in place.

Jeremy added that the committee did the best it could at that time with several options offered to members. He noted too that the higher membership numbers that we enjoy now are testament to what was put into place being seen as being as fair as could be in the difficult circumstances that we found ourselves in.

There was a comment as to how pleased members are with the refurbished facilities.

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

There were no matters arising.

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

Proposed by John Foulds and seconded by Anthony Griffiths, the proposal was unanimously carried.

#### **12. Election of the committee. No positions were contested.**

Jeremy read the names of those proposed for election to the committee, noting that all had been properly proposed and seconded. These are given below.

- Main committee with portfolio:
  - Chair – vacancy
  - Vice-Chair – James Scully
  - Treasurer – Mark Groves
  - Tennis Secretary – Brian Levine
  - Squash Secretary – Mark Radley
  - Croquet Secretary – Howard Grove
  - Facilities Secretary – David Barnes
- Main committee without portfolio:
  - Claire Ackerman
  - Joan McLoughlin
  - Jon Foulds
  - Jeremy Labram

Having been properly proposed/seconded, Jeremy asked for approval to elect the committee which was unanimously agreed.

Jeremy noted that as there is a vacancy for Chair, the newly appointed committee will discuss this further and see if there is any committee member wishing to take on that responsibility. *[Post meeting note – James Scully has become Chair, Claire Ackerman has become Vice-Chair].* The matter will be discussed at the next committee meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

### **13. Resolutions**

There were no resolutions.

### **14. Any Other Business**

Jon Foulds proposed that an honorary life membership be voted upon and approved for Es Murray. Jon commented how recently he and John Morgan had found Es' continued assistance for planning matters of great help. Jeremy added that Es had designed our clubhouse, had held numerous roles on committee including Fabric Secretary prior to being President from 2002 – 2008 and has been a continued source of assistance for all club developments for more than 25 years, including recently floodlights and the Padel proposal.

Proposed by John Foulds and seconded by John Morgan, the proposal was unanimously carried.

Anthony Griffiths proposed a vote of thanks for the excellent stewardship of Andy Ewings and the committee in general over the last 18 months, for ensuring that the club had come through such difficult conditions in such a healthy state. This was unanimously endorsed.

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

Jeremy Goulding reaffirmed Anthony's special thanks to Andy Ewings for his work over the last five years. He said that there had been a return to the friendly, congenial atmosphere throughout the club that was appreciated by all members, and that he was personally grateful for Andy's very significant contributions.

There being no further business the meeting was brought to a close at 7:42pm.