

LANSDOWN TENNIS, SQUASH AND CROQUET CLUB LTD
MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY, 25th NOVEMBER 2021
Start Time: 19.00 hrs

Present:

James Scully (JS)	Deputy Chairman
Jeremy Goulding (JG)	President
Mark Groves (MG)	Treasurer
David Barnes (DB)	Fabric Manager
Jeremy Labram (JL)	Committee Member
Claire Ackerman (CA)	Committee Member
Joan McLoughlin (JM)	Committee Member
Jon Foulds (JF)	Committee Member
Mark Radley (MR)	Squash Secretary
Howard Grove (HG)	Croquet Secretary
Natalie Curtis (NC)	Administrator

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Brian Levine.

2. APPOINTING A CHAIRPERSON

JG proposed a tremendous vote of thanks to Andy Ewings for his work over the years, that was unanimously endorsed.

Following Andy Ewings' recent withdrawal from his post, JG explained the process and offer of Andy's role as chairman to all attendees. No-one from the committee other than James expressed a wish to do this. James proposed to step up to chair with the condition of working towards the AGM in May 2022. He also proposed CA as deputy chair until that time. CA announced that she was happy to go ahead.

A question was raised as to whether any other committee member would like to contest the proposal to hold the title of deputy chair. No-one stepped forward and so a unanimous vote was cast for JS as chairman with the condition he requested, and with CA as deputy chair.

All were in agreement and congratulations noted. JG passed the chairing of this meeting to JS.

JM was welcomed to the meeting as a new committee member.

3. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting dated the 7th October were agreed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

a. **General Manager**

JL raised the question of Philip's departure, what decisions were made and steps taken. JG explained that the decision had been delegated by the main committee to JG, JS and Andy Ewings. He shared that Philip had received a loyalty bonus in addition to his notice, which was not a formal settlement, but more a 'thank you' for all his work which he did over and above his contracted hours, and a gesture of goodwill given Philip's offer to support queries from Natalie after his departure. This bonus was less than his contracted on target performance bonus should he have stayed for the whole of 2021.

b. Membership numbers

JL asked a question around the couple membership and why the figures implied an odd number. JS and JG suggested possible answers could be due to relationship status changes. JS asked NC to look into this further when convenient and review Commence.

ACTION: NC

5. CHAIRPERSON'S MATTERS

a. Office update

JS informed the committee that all is proceeding well.

Tina Williams joined three weeks ago, working 15 hours per week as assistant to Natalie. She has only worked with us 45 hours to date and the amount of training and support she needs impacts what Natalie has been able to do. More support may be needed, but this will be reviewed weekly as Natalie and Tina adapt to handling all club matters.

JL asked whether a decision had been made to recruit a general manager.

JS replied that a view was taken at the last committee and management meeting that the need for a general manager was uncertain. JG added that the covid lockdown and all that entailed with the furloughing of staff, closure of the club and reduction in activities for a general manager highlighted that the primary need was for greater efficiency in administration. JS confirmed that the new staff need some time to settle and the committee to see the levels of efficiency of administration being achieved, before a further decision is taken as to the requirement to add further management expertise. It would not be known if there is a general manager role until then.

There was a discussion around the levels of decisions being made with staffing and JS recommended a limit of £10k p.a. for office resource adjustment without full committee approval. This was agreed by all.

JL asked the question around understanding the work that Andy Ewings did, which was not related to his role as chairman. JS mentioned that Andy's company Bluefuse Systems provide web-based support and are contracted to work on the Lansdown website. JS informed the committee that Andy is happy to continue with the work.

JM asked the question of whether the contract could be provided if needed.

JS suggested Natalie to look into this.

ACTION: NC

b. Coronavirus situation

JS spoke of the implemented updates by the Covid group (JL, JG, MR) regarding the wearing of masks at Lansdown.

JL asked the question of whether we continue the request of asking people to wear a mask inside the club house when moving around, due to Bath's high rate of Covid. JG mentioned the UK cultural fatigue with wearing a mask and MR's suggestion that pushing members could have an adverse effect. JS suggested a brief reminder in the newsletter asking people to wear a mask when moving around the clubroom.
All agreed to keep with the current Covid requests.

c. **Membership for those on lower wage / universal credit (and specific)**
to be carried over to the next meeting

d. **Tennis Floodlights and facilities**
JS gave an overview of the issues with the floodlights.

Courts 4 & 5 issue with the lights.
DB has been sourcing parts but these are becoming harder to get hold of. The electricians are coming on site on Friday 3rd December.

8-10 update on the application for lights
JF informed all that the application for lights on courts 8-10 is very likely to be refused. JF has asked that the application is reallocated to an officer at BANES given the last officer left BANES, but is waiting to hear further. JS acknowledged the work of John Morgan and Jon Foulds for the enormous effort that has gone into the application and gave his thanks.

LEDS on 1-7
JS spoke of the issues with the existing Tennis floodlights and parts as discussed. There is concern over the quality and reliability of the lighting. LED lights would solve the problems, reduce energy bills and the amount of energy used. He suggested that LED lights are in place by next winter. There would still be a requirement for a planning application. There was a discussion around the cost of the LEDs and safety around the poles and whether they are structurally safe. DB suggested these are also looked at. JS proposed that quotes are obtained for the LEDs and with a specialist consultant. All agreed.
DB / JS to speak with John Morgan to ask for his support
JS to arrange a cost estimate from Lee West from LTA.

ACTION: DB, JS

Facilities
JS touched on the subject of Squash and talks of upgrading facilities. CA mentioned a suggestion from a member to replace the handrail on the balcony over the squash courts. MR agreed and spoke of some photographs he had seen of a glass balcony and new flooring and comments that the current Squash courts are tired and in need of an upgrade. It would be a good opportunity to upgrade.
DB suggests a light composite staircase.

JS suggested the committee encourage a facility upgrade where needed and the squash sub-committee come back with a proposal. MG spoke of a previous upgrade enhancement scheme and will send the information to MR.

ACTION: MG, MR

e. Membership communication and volunteers for 2022

Membership communication

JS encouraged all to let Natalie know if they have information for the newsletters or informing members.

Volunteers for 2022

JS said that there is a lot more support needed at committee and tennis / squash sub-committees, as we are lacking in some areas eg: maintenance of courts. He asked for volunteers to work with him and others to start documenting potential roles which could be filled by volunteers for defined roles.

JL and CA volunteered. JS to collaborate with JL and CA and come up with some defined roles.

ACTION: JL, CA, JS

6. ACCOUNTS

MG summarised the third quarter accounts. The profit year to date is £183k.

He expects the club will incur losses leading up to May 1st 2022 when subs are due.

At the date of the recent AGM, the club had funds of £477k.

Expenditure – down on last year regarding maintenance, as last year there was a refurbishment project.

JS asked for bar profit and loss figures. There is around a £3k loss year to date which is an improvement on last year.

MG noted that member Anthony Griffiths asked a question at the AGM around non-recoverable VAT which he will reply to shortly.

MG will circulate the figures to the committee and asks for any questions to be returned to him.

MG mentioned NC's concern over support from the new accountant. MG will speak with Simon Roper of the accountancy firm. Natalie also raised a question over the costs of the accountants. MG to pick this up and discuss with JS, CA and NC.

Budget assumptions

MG expects to compile a budget for the January management committee meeting.

He raised the question of whether or not there should be an increase in the 2022 subscription fee, as there is a healthy bank balance. He did also note that the national living wage and National Insurance contributions had increased significantly and salaries appear to be increasing too.

JS advised that the committee review staff salaries. It is a tough time to attract bar staff. He had also received an email from David Munn which suggests that we need to be looking to pay £1.00 - £2.00 more per hour than we are currently paying.

There ensued a brief discussion about whether there was a need to increase subscriptions, even if it was a minimum increase. All agreed that for planning purposes MG should draft the budget under the assumption of no increase and the committee could review in March in light of any further cost pressure developments.

MG spoke of the Capex and Squash court upgrade and will need the figures for the budget.

JS received a suggestion from a member around electric charging points in the car park and it was agreed that this should be looked into.

JS brought up the subject of banking and the ongoing difficulties with getting access to bank accounts and processes. JG agreed with this and suggested the committee decide who will be signatories on the account so that it does not fall only on one or two people. Those currently able to authorise are JG, Andy Ewings and John Fuller.

JM proposed it should be the directors known to Companies House. The additional signatories should therefore be JS, MG and CA and Andy Ewings and John Fuller would be removed. This was unanimously agreed.

JG proposed a limit of £20k for one signatory, otherwise two signatories to be required. All agreed.

There was a discussion around who will be updating the details held with Companies House. JG to take action with NC to make the necessary updates.

ACTION: MG, JG, NC

7. FABRIC UPDATE

Barrier

DB announced that the new barrier is working well. No issues to mention. He would like to thank HG for his support with the barrier and electronics required.

Legionella

DB informed the committee that he and NC will be meeting Mark Taylor to look at the risk assessment he produced and discuss further. DB will report back at the next meeting.

Courts

JM asked the question of whether the clay courts are draining properly. JS replied that this was being looked into and that clay courts also had an algae issue which would be resolved.

Awnings

JF asked for an update on the awnings.

DB replied that he now has all the drawings from Es Murray and had a discussion with him and that a structural engineer is required due to the support beam over the windows being 500mm. He suggested that David Franklin or a structural engineer is needed for support and he will be in touch with them. DB has three quotes for the awnings.

8. SQUASH

Racketball

MR gave an update involving Racketball which has its club championships with finals day on 4th December.

RFP for Elite Squash

MR and Andy Ewings were to look through the Elite Squash proposal and finalise, but MR asked for a sign off due to Andy stepping down. It was suggested that Andy advises but that MR puts the recommendation to the committee for sign off with the proposal.

England Squash

JS asked the question of whether England Squash have helped, given the LTA are giving clear guidance of what should be paid. MR said that he had not received any guidance but could find out more and report back.

ACTION: MR

9. TENNIS

RFP for Tennis

JS suggested that a separate meeting is called with BL.

Sub-committee

JS announced that two more members of the sub-committee are stepping down and that more support is needed.

DB suggested there is some communication to members asking them to step forward.

ACTION: JS, BL

10. CROQUET

Lawn

HG updated the committee on the status of the lawn which has now reopened for Winter. The soil has been dug and replaced and reseeded in one patch of the far lawn and will be fenced off until Spring.

Shed

HG mentioned that the shed will be refurbished next year and a new sign will be placed on the shed so that visitors attending interclub matches will know which direction to go.

Lock on the gate

HG informed all about a new lock which has been installed on the pedestrian gate. The gate will also have a damp spring closer. HG will be arranging for a welder to add the part to the gate which will mean it closes firmly and quietly.

11. PADEL

JF summarised the status of Padel to date with the poster boards being put up on display. He felt the subject should go to an EGM to allow more time, justification and documentation which would reinforce the assessments that were made. Following the latest discussions, JF proposed that a Padel sub-committee would help to strengthen the proposal. He highlighted three people who have made contact and would possibly be involved.

Subjects for discussion would include the effect on coaching, financial appraisal, timescale and Q&A and a potential visit to local clubs. He mentioned that East Glos club manager would welcome members to try out the courts there.

JM asked if all agreed to the sub-committee. All agreed.

MG recommended that the number of members of the committee is specified. JF to speak with Natalie about adding something to the newsletter.

ACTION: JF, NC

12. SAFEGUARDING

a. Case update

There are no new cases.

b. Key contact update

JS announced that he is now the key contact for Connall Platts and Claire Mcguiggan

c. Review of process / rule docs

JS spoke of the LTA requesting more formal training as a committee which had to be done by the end of the year. He has spoken to Connall who says that given we are ahead of the game and systems and processes already and the changes in personnel, it makes sense to review after the May AGM.

13. AOB

a. Cleaning contract

NC explained that due to complaints, we have had to look at alternative cleaning arrangements with a professional cleaning company. She has several quotes from companies. There was a discussion over the quality of the cleaning and past issues and these should be reviewed shortly.

JS and NC to speak further.

ACTION: JS, NC

b. Pete Rogers shop

JS shared the email from Pete Rogers regarding a small enterprise and request for a designated pitch selling fresh and dried flowers. This would be a small display selling on a Friday and Saturday and a percentage of sales to go to the club if successful. There was a unanimous view that this may not be in the best interests of the club.

JG offered to have a direct discussion with Pete to find out how else we might help.

ACTION: JG

c. Refund query

NC talked about an email query from a member who has moved away and the question of whether a refund would be possible.

After discussion, it was decided that there would not be a refund as per the terms and conditions of membership, but we allow them to attend as a guest on a number of occasions for free if they are back in Bath. NC to respond to the member.

ACTION: NC

d. Mentoring Plus

MG mentioned his offer to St. Marks of free coaching and membership for their children. No response at all. Anthony gave the name of the company Mentoring Plus. MG asked the committee for their agreement on contacting Mentoring Plus. All agreed.

ACTION: MG

e. Clubroom and bar

HG noticed while on site how busy the clubroom was today with two groups of ten as well as other members of the club. Several committee members noted that Jo and Paula coped extremely well under pressure.

CA mentioned the shortage of bar staff with another staff member handing in his notice.

She met with Jo this week to discuss this and readvertising the role as an apprenticeship in a career in catering. If anyone knows anyone who could help Jo, then they should let CA or Jo know.

13. NEXT MEETING

This would take place on Thursday, 13th January at 19.00.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 21:33