

LANSDOWN TENNIS, SQUASH AND CROQUET CLUB LTD
MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY, 28th FEBRUARY 2022

Start Time: 19.00 hrs

Present:

James Scully (JS)	Chair
Claire Ackerman (CA)	Deputy Chair
Jeremy Goulding (JG)	President
Mark Groves (MG)	Treasurer
Brian Levine (BL)	Tennis Secretary
Mark Radley (MR)	Squash Secretary
Howard Grove (HG)	Croquet Secretary
Jeremy Labram (JL)	Committee Member
Joan McLoughlin (JM)	Committee Member
Jon Foulds (JF)	Committee Member
Gray Olliver (GO)	Observer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from David Barnes (DB).

2. CO-OPT NEW MEMBER TO COMMITTEE

Gray Olliver has recently shown interest in joining the committee and potentially standing for Chair at the AGM. JS welcomed him to this meeting as an observer and thanked him for his support.

NC to email membership and ask if there are any other volunteers, if not we will look to co-opt Gray on to the existing committee.

All welcomed Gray to the meeting

ACTION: NC

3. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meetings dated the 13th January 2022 were agreed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no specific issues from the previous meeting however, the following was discussed;

- Mentoring Plus actions MG
- Internal marketing - CA is looking into this and she and NC are working on Squash tins
- Membership on a lower wage / universal credit - JL gave an update. Cost model required if membership is over £520 as per Gov website. JS proposed a draft plan with a set of rules of how this influences fees. JL happy to take to the next step. JM offered help
- Volunteer support - JS mentioned that he and CA will pick up as this is ongoing
- NC, DB to discuss what happens if someone locked in the car park out of hours and inform members
- Promotional material discussion needed regarding Table Tennis. NC, JF to discuss
- HG asked about the barrier contact list and position of the barrier. JS suggested that NC, HG, DB and Jo to discuss separately.

**ACTION: MG,
CA, JL, JM, DB, HG,
NC**

5. OFFICE AND BAR UPDATE

JS advised that Caroline has settled in very well and is proving a great support to Natalie, and the office has been catching up on various matters thanks to Natalie's ongoing efforts

In the bar, Jo has now recruited Red as her assistant which should allow us to progress with further catering and menu plans once Red is trained up.

Discussions / planning are ongoing for a new and enhanced Audio Visual setup for the club room CA to put a proposal together.

ACTION: CA

6. FLOODLIGHTS AND PLANNING UPDATE

JS advised that in the past two months we've had input from Lee West (LTA recommended consultant), Kingfisher and Luminance Pro companies on both LED replacement for Courts 1-7 and the ongoing planning application for 8-10 lighting.

This has led to a completely revamped lighting scheme for our bottom courts to address various concerns from the council and neighbours and we now have an estimate of £80k for

this work inc. VAT. JF to submit lighting drawing tomorrow, prior to a meeting with the planning officer. A decision could be made in 6-8 weeks.

There was a question from MG over the process for the planning and costs with the number of hours light required. He will revisit costs with courts 8-10.

Courts 1-7 LED proposal is ongoing but the optimum approach means replacement of all existing lighting and poles with a cost of up to £200k which is way above any previous estimates. We're awaiting a quote for this work and also considering alternative cheaper options.

John Morgan, David Barnes, Es Murray and Jon Foulds have all made valuable contributions to this project which has taken up a lot of time.

JF asked the question of what the club was doing to facilitate the coaching, as the lights on the lower courts are used much less than the other courts.

ACTION: JF, JM, DB

7. MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

Natalie has been reviewing Commence in detail to check membership records / couples and the usual sheet has been updated:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1lh5wr4PyRLu7MoaDWsk-aXoNeI7DglSuWuHvYhHT-w/edit#gid=454275432>

8. TREE REMOVAL FROM CAR PARK

JS / DB advised that we'd like to remove the Goat Willow tree in the car park to free up two parking spaces. The club will commit to replacing this with other tree planting in more suitable areas of the club.

The contractor will apply to BANES for the necessary permissions. Costs for the above are £1,260

JS asked the committee if they had any concerns regarding the above and there were none

ACTION: DB / NC

9. FLOODLIGHT FEES

A member has contacted us wanting to express their 'annoyance regarding the club's policy on floodlights' and believes we should be providing free floodlights for members. In this case they work full time and don't think it's fair that in winter they are penalised for playing outside daylight hours compared to a member who can play in the daytime.

JS view on the above is

- The club would incur massive cost if it covered the lighting costs (several thousand pounds per year)
- The costs of the lights has not gone up in years
- We are about to incur major expense to upgrade to LEDs
- No other members have complained about this
- In my experience it's normal for members to cover such costs

The committee agreed with this view, NC to go back to member to say it was discussed

ACTION: NC

10. MEMBERSHIP CREDIT - SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

A member who contracted cancer just after renewal last year has not used their membership at all due to illness. Usually we'd only credit a maximum 3 months suspension but in this case JS thinks we should offer full credit.

JL commented that there should be a distinction between injury and life threatening illness. JS agreed stating that this should be on the grounds of exceptional serious ongoing illness without any ability to play whatsoever. The committee agreed.

NC to respond to member

ACTION: NC

11. COVID UPDATE

JL updated that the core of the covid group have been convening by WhatsApp frequently, often weekly, for the last two years. So thanks to my colleagues – JeremyG, MarkR, AndyE, Tom, Jo and Natalie.

Committee members hopefully saw the message in Friday's newsletter.

The government's 'Living with COVID-19' plan went live yesterday which relaxes most of the disciplines we've lived by for the last two years. The SW region still has the highest case rate in England and the club has members who consider they are vulnerable and feel they need to

wear a mask - we simply need to be respectful of their concerns. We will also continue to run the Medicaire Air Purifiers in the clubroom. Thank you to all members and staff for working with the club on this for the last two years.

This was as a result of this week's deliberations by the Covid Group after viewing the recently published national guidelines and the regular update each Thursday from the B&NES Public Health Director. Covid is not over and many people generally are still cautious and careful. We are trying to strike the right balance.

As we have been doing, we are providing eye-catching signage at the key relevant locations in the clubhouse as a reminder to all members and to give staff and others something tangible to point to if there is any form of dispute. We have also removed the track and trace posters with the QR code as this government process has stopped.

[OBJ]

If the downward trends continue we will no doubt be expected to relax what remains further in due course.

MarkG had asked about offering a 6 Nations event last weekend in the clubroom. Jo, with our support, decided there was not enough time between the Government's publishing of 64 pages of guidance and the match to make this viable.

Pilates is running again and may now increase numbers up to their previous operating capacity.

Just to sum up on where we are:

- if staff are ill they are not expected to work
- the clubroom screens are still up
- the seating and table restrictions are still in place in the clubroom
- all members and staff are asked to respect those who choose to wear a mask.

JS thanks JL for his support over the Covid committee.

12. CLEANING CONTRACT

JS updated that the quality of cleaning was still not up to the required standard and we've received complaints from members about this. The situation is under further review.

ACTION: JS / NC / JG

13. ACCOUNTS

MG shared an update with draft 2021 accounts

- Despite COVID the club has made healthy profits in overall accounting, largely due to the grants we've received and various furloughing
- The bar showed a profit of £2.6k, that is the first time in many years, due to being able to cut costs, but that is likely to be a one off
- Cash at the end of 2021 was £450k, reserves are very healthy
- What the 5 year forecast tells us is that if we go ahead with lights on 8-10 and updated LEDs on 1-7 at a cost of £110k, this scenario leads to a projected cash position of £84k in 2023. That is lower than we have had for a few years but I believe that we are doing more work on lighting quotes.
- MG confirmed the forecasts are put together to help us with cash management and are not definite figures for 2022. It is probably unlikely that all projects factored into the forecast will be completed in 2022.
- At some stage we may have to look at the timing of Capex and decide between padel/ lights/ court 8 to 10 replacement.
- Also note that LTA interest free loans only apply to NEW projects, so Padel and lights on courts 8 to 10.

14. 2022 SUBSCRIPTION RATES

MG, JS, CA, and JG propose a minimal increase in subscription income for the next renewal year. Although we have increased utility and staffing costs and the rate of inflation is over 5% we believe an increase between 1.5% and 2.5% is what we should be looking at. As part of this increase we would offer £25 bar credit to anyone that pays in full upfront and before the end of April.

The incentive is important as it encourages members to pay on time - the less chasing the better from an administrative perspective.

JS proposed a 2% increase. JG commented that although there are a wide range of views on whether we should increase subs or not, he feels the club should never stand still with zero increase but should increase subs by some amount whatever, because it is important to build up a fund for use in the future, to pay for the unexpected, such as replacing lights, or other unexpected issues the club may face.

MG commented that some of our costs will be driven up by CPI, energy cost increases and the staff costs and the club keeping ahead of the national minimum wage and national insurance.

JL commented that he is aware that we did deprive a lot of members of court time and facilities throughout the pandemic and he noted that there was compensation for that but

he is thankful to those members that have stuck with us. JL raised the question that some members may still feel let down despite our best efforts.

The question of whether there was scope to increase the subs by more than 2% was raised, and why were we keeping the increase so low considering CPI has increased from 1% to 5%. It was commented that our large cash reserves allowed us to keep the increase to a minimum.

JS asked GO for his views. GO said he was happy with the proposal but wanted to ensure that this was explained clearly to the membership so that the members felt reassured that this is a well thought through decision. JS confirmed that members will be informed in advance of the renewal email.

The committee voted unanimously on the 2% increase as well as a £25 bar credit to those members who pay in full upfront before the renewal deadline.

JS commented that renewal emails will be sent out in early April.

ACTION: JS / NC

15. FABRIC

DB confirmed in his update that the following has occurred:

- Fire risk assessment updated
- Health and Safety risk assessment updated
- Legionella risk assessment completed
- Fire Alarm System updated.
- Fire Extinguishers inspected.
- PAT testing of plugs completed.
- Central heating Boilers test in date.
- Hot water system inspected
- Richmond road east wall awaiting inspection for insurance.
- Kitchen vent system and gas cooker inspected
- Squash Court Roof inspected
- Main and rear flat roof awaiting yearly inspection.
- Coping blocks above rear entrance reset and made safe.
- Two number Air Purifiers installed
- General Inspection of building and grounds done with recommendations logged

16. SQUASH UPDATE FROM MR

1. Elite Contract update

Contract talks are still ongoing - so far they have been pretty smooth, but slow progress has been made, which is due to both parties being busy. I am trying to have a contract signed before the extension expires, on the 8th of March, but realistically will likely need another 1 month extension.

Together with input from the squash sub committee, CA, Andy Ewings and Elite we have identified sessions that we want provided to our members from Elite, paid for by the club. These are club night, targeted group coaching sessions, and new members sessions. We strongly believe that Elite organising these sessions will significantly improve the existing package both for a large proportion of existing and new members.

All expenses either direction are now detailed, as opposed to just having a general 'retainer'. We are expecting to pay Elite more money than before, but are also increasing our court costs which will offset a lot of this. I am confident that what we will receive is significantly better value for money than the previous deal and maintain our good relationship with Elite.

2. Squash area upgrades

MR has been involved in discussions to bring forward a proposal to improve the squash area of the club. There is a feeling among many members that this should be done, and from recent discussions I have understood that the club could be significantly improved at a reasonable cost.

MR is working on proposals but there was nothing to be proposed at this meeting, but here is a summary of what MR has looked at so far:

- For both health and safety reasons as well for improvements, we should replace the balustrade with a glass balustrade on all 4 courts. We are waiting on an exact quote, the provisional quote for a different type of glass had this at £11k.
- We would also like to add glass doors to courts 3 and 4 and redo the flooring on the balcony to match the flooring down by the courts.

Further proposals we are looking into involve adding glass backs to courts 1 and 2, moving the physio room and moving the balcony stairs to where the physio room now is.

MR has given MG a figure of around £20-25k as an estimate, and he will present it to the committee once ready. MR will try and provide his proposal ahead of the next committee meeting. CA added that there may be some overlap with the AV proposal she is currently working on.

JF suggested interactive squash walls but MR confirmed that this had been discussed with Elite and at the moment it was felt that the benefits of this did not outweigh the costs.

3. Other

We are hosting Masters intercounty matches this weekend at Lansdown, and have our celebrated Handicap tournament the weekend after on the 12th of March!

ACTION: MR

17. TENNIS UPDATE

Blue Sky Coaching Contract

Good progress has been made and a provisional financial agreement reached which will see the Club increase revenue from £20k p.a. (less additional ordered services) in 2019 to a forecast of nearly £30k p.a. for 2022 onwards. The amounts previously advised to the Committee for monthly revenue include non-member fees: the headline per month payment from Blue Sky to the Club will be £1,500 plus almost £1,000 on average per month of non-member fees (£11k p.a. in 2019), equating to just about £2,500 on an annualised basis per month.

Tom and BL hope to iron out any tweaks over the next couple of weeks and it is anticipated a new 3 year contract, with break clause, can be entered into and go live by 1 April 2022.

The committee thanked BL for all his hard work on the new contract.

ACTION: BL

18. CROQUET UPDATE

HG has had to temporarily close the lawn as the ground is extremely saturated and he has found multiple divots in the lawn. Once it has dried out, the lawn will be released for play again.

ACTION: HG

19. PADEL UPDATE

JS / JF advised that the Padel sub committee are putting a proposal together which is due with members by the end of March.

We've had lots of feedback and evidence from other clubs and the LTA - all of whom have responded positively, it's just taking time to pull the right information together.

Committee will all have a chance to review the proposal before it goes to membership

In a change to the planned approach, we will not call an EGM at the same time as the proposal goes to the membership, instead we will allow for membership feedback and Q&A sessions before calling an EGM

Our target, if the project is approved, is to have Padel courts installed within 12 months.

ACTION: JS

20. COMMITTEE / CHAIR SUCCESSION PLANNING

JS informed the committee that all members have been informed about several key positions being available.

JS, CA and JG have held conversations with a few interested parties.

Gray Olliver and Rick Weatherhead have both shown interest in joining the committee, Gray as chair.

JG commented that there are two up and coming 'Meet the Committee' sessions, to allow members to find out more. JS confirmed that himself, JG and CA will be there to talk to members on 3rd March and 6th April. JG encouraged committee members to keep a look out for other members who may be keen to participate.

HG mentioned that the Croquet membership had agreed that the Croquet secretary should only stand for 4 years at a time, however at the moment there is no replacement lined up as HG is due to stand down this year.

ACTION: JS, JG and CA

21. SAFEGUARDING

Nothing to report.

22. AOB

Green fencing has broken between the club and Royal High School. We are not sure who it belongs to. Royal High are looking into it, but they are asking if we could go halves. CA suggested checking with DB. Royal High have received estimates of £7k, so £3.5k each. JG recommended that we do some more investigation and we don't rush to pay if it isn't our responsibility. JS has suggested that we ask for alternative quotes.

ACTION: NC

23. DATE OF AGM AND NEXT MEETING

Proposed date for the AGM is end of May, JS to confirm and send out a doodle poll for the next committee meeting, likely to be w/c 4th April.

ACTION: JS