

STEEP LAWN TENNIS CLUB
Minutes of the Annual General meeting
Held on Tuesday 21 November 2017 in Steep Village Hall

Present: Graham Heath (Chairman), Jennie Azevedo, Peter Clist, David Gaterell, Jonathan Graham, Christine Lally, Michele Mangham, Lesley Whyte and 46 other members.

1) **Apologies for absence** received from Sue Amesbury, Susie Best, Diana Cornish, Eric Dempster, Felicity Gibson, David Panton, Brian Park, Tony Llewellyn, Judy Llewellyn, Blinky Trewby, Jeremy Young

2) **Minutes** of AGM 22 November 2016. These had been circulated to members with their Handbooks in the spring. They were accepted as an accurate record and signed accordingly.

3) **Matters arising.**

a) **Floodlighting on courts 7 and 8**

GH said that the committee had considered two specific issues: technical advances in lighting; planning issues.

On technical advances, the club had sought advice from Exclusive Lighting, who had provided the metal halide lights on courts 1-6. They did not offer an LED outdoor solution. Nor did the LTA have a recommended supplier or solution. Their view was that there was no outdoor LED of the necessary standard and performance available at present. The club should wait a while for technological advance. They had added that metal halide was already a significant advance in efficiency over fluorescent bulbs and LEDs would offer a further advance of only about 40%.

On planning, he said that the lighting on courts 5 and 6 had been fitted in 2006. The club's first application had been rejected: its second, in 2006 had been granted temporary permission only, later converted to permanent. However, the 2006 grant had subsequently drawn objections drawn objections from the South Downs Joint Committee, East Hants Landscape Officer and Steep Parish Council on a number of grounds: it was an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in a dark skies zone located near some houses. The granting body had been very clear that any application for lights on 7 and 8 would be rejected. GH added that, if any further application were to be made, it should be preceded by bridge-building with the local community.

There were various contributions from the floor:-

- Local school children were in our coaching programme and we had contributed to the recent Steep Flower Festival. We therefore had some links with our neighbours.
- We should consider a pre-application to the South Downs National Park Authority and take great note of the reply. Matt Trench volunteered to handle this, an offer gratefully accepted.
- The previous application had been 10 years earlier
- Midhurst TC was going through the process of obtaining planning permission for lights at present. The signs were positive.

- Lots of objections to similar developments were not, at root, planning objections
- In the summer of 2016, Bedales school had installed 3 new courts with lights, on a site fairly near the road.

b) Time Plan for courts 3 and 4

GH said that the club's five year plan had replacement of courts 3 and 4 in 2019, when their expected fifteen year life ended. The committee had looked into options, the current state of technology and members' opinions.

On options, there were essentially three. A hard court cost about £18k to fit, an astro £23-25k, artificial clay was dearer but he hadn't a specific price. However, the price differences were not so large as to exclude any particular option.

On current technology, no site visits had yet been undertaken

On members' opinions, he had sent an email to members in the Autumn. The 45 replies had shown a small majority for replacing 3 and 4 with a newer version of astro.

In summary, it was clear that a sizeable proportion of members wanted the courts to include an option other than hard.

He added that he had sought views from contractors. These were that an astro court, by its nature, would always be damper than a hard court. Ours were worse than expected because, they thought, ours had acquired a layer of detritus at the base of the pile. The rejuvenations in 2013 and 2016 had improved matters but not by enough. A full pressure wash was recommended. More modern designs used less sand and drained better.

He proposed a Working Party, to be chaired by PC, to report by the end of Q1, with a possibility of replacement during 2018. He invited volunteers.

There were various contributions from the floor:-

- For a hard court to be laid in 2018, work would have to start by the end of July
- Although technology had undoubtedly improved the pile, the base of astro courts was the same.
- The Working Party should consider all courts, not just 3 and 4. If astro was desired, it would be better on 5 and 6 so that there were four hard courts alongside each other.
- In response to a suggestion that astro be fitted on 7 and 8, DG said he would not coach on astro. He would move permanently to 5 and 6, making the problem of court access at mix-ins worse.
- Solving the problem of 3 and 4 was the pressing priority of the club
- Peripheral drainage on 3 and 4 was fine. Only the compacted areas on court drained poorly.

The idea of a Working Party was accepted, to report by the end of Q1 2018. However, there was no agreement on what should follow its report. Some favoured an EGM, some a simple postal and email vote without an EGM, some a mixture of the two. Item referred to Working Party.

c) Additional Lighting between clubhouse and car park

GH said that various things had been done:-

- The existing lights' bulbs had been replaced by LEDs.
- The sensors had been checked

However, after a recent committee meeting, it had become clear to him that the problem had not been resolved. He proposed fitting an extra light at the top of the car park, facing the trees to light the path from 1 and 2.

There were various contributions from the floor:-

- Technology now permitted 'dusk to dawn' low-level lighting.
- Additional lighting could distract players on 5 and 6
- The problem was upon leaving the club, not upon arriving
- Lights could be fitted to the outside of the court stanchions on 5 and 6 facing away from court.

4) Chairman's Overview

GH said that 2017 had been a positive year for the club. He noted:-

- Continued good attendance at weekday and weekend mix-ins
- Good participation in the East Hampshire and Aegon leagues, with a 2nd Aegon team in summer 2017
- CTS had kept the grounds in excellent condition through the year and the hedging contractor had done a particularly good job.

He thanked the committee for their dedication and hard work supporting the club.

- In particular to Peter Clist, who had served on the committee for the last 8 years, 6 of them as secretary.
- For Tournaments both JG and Carol Norris. CN had agreed to take on the role for the 2018 season. JG would assist her, particularly with the men's side of the draw.
- For the tea rota to Mary Sellars. He observed that MS would welcome additional volunteers for providing teas.
- To Rosemary Swan for her help with lights cards and Graham Swan with website and Press

He thoroughly appreciated the remaining committee members agreeing to remain in post, as he had found them a dedicated group of people supporting the club. Two posts remained unfilled and he invited volunteers or Press Secretary and Website Manager.

As far as the 5 Year plan was concerned, he noted that:-

- this was year 3
- 2017 's focus was a resurface of courts 7&8
- 2018 planned a redecoration of the clubhouse and re-painting of courts 1&2
- 2019 envisaged replacing the surface on courts 3&4

5) Committee Members' Reports

Membership

MM was disappointed to report a drop of membership from 514 at the 2016 AGM to 482 at this, a drop of 32. However, the club was busier, with fewer non-players.

The early payment discount the previous year had worked well, with memberships being renewed in a more even flow.

She asked members to register with the LTA, and particularly for eligibility for Wimbledon tickets, (deadline 23/2/2018) so as to increase the numbers available to the club.

Secretary

PC reported that the Handbook had been produced and distributed on schedule, on 8th February. There had been none of the distribution problems of previous years. He thanked those who had helped 'stuff and send'.

In Spring, there had been complaints about unpleasant bonfire smoke from the adjoining farm. He had contacted East Hants Environmental Health, who asked for photographic evidence, and offered to attend in person if alerted in office hours. However, the problem seemed to have diminished. A defibrillator had been installed on the balcony and four training sessions run for members. Over 40 members had attended the training.

He had updated the constitution to reflect the changes agreed at two previous AGMs and had distributed copies.

He thanked the committee and members for their assistance during his time as secretary and had offered to help his successor by organising the handbook for 2018 and the minutes of the present AGM.

Grounds

DP was unavoidably elsewhere and had sent his apologies. However, his items were reported on elsewhere.

Social

JA said that the year had started with a well-supported Curry Evening at the Spice Lounge in March, followed by the Wimbledon barbecue in April. She thanked those who helped at the barbecue.

She thanked MS for organising the tea rota. A couple of extra teas were added mid-season to general appreciation. More volunteers were needed.

Unfortunately, the Skittles Evening at the Black Fox in Liphook had had to be cancelled for lack of support. It needed 20 takers to run. It would be offered again.

The Italian evening, following a change of venue to ASK, had been very successful. However, its successor in 2018 would include wine within the headline charge.

The Quiz Night in November had attracted a record attendance, with St Peters Hall accommodating the increased number comfortably: there had been 9 teams, 8 of 6 players, 1 of four. She thanked David Kidd for his skills as quizmaster. She was pleased by the growth in attendance at social events and hoped the trend would continue.

Fixtures

David Mangham reported that Steep continued to have very strong participation by its members for inter-club matches in the East Hants and AEGON Leagues. More than 60 people had been involved, in the main very successfully.

The previous winter eight teams had participated, two Men's, three Ladies', two Mixed and a Vets'. The highlights were that the Ladies' B won Division 3, Ladies C and Mixed B were both runners-up in their divisions.

The previous summer, the same number of teams had been entered in the East Hants leagues. Ladies C won Division 4. Ladies A and B both finished runners-up in their divisions but Men's B were relegated from Division 1 to 2.

Tournaments

JG reported results as follows:-

Men's' Singles	Barry Carter beat Matt Thompson
Ladies' Singles	Jeannie Crook beat Judy Entress
Men's Doubles	Barry Carter and Philippe Mougine won by walkover
Ladies' Doubles	Ann Saunders and Jeannie Crook beat Jo Goodship and Natasha Harris
Mixed Doubles	Barry Carter and Lucy Fatkin beat Duncan Read and Ann Saunders

Unfortunately, the splitting of the tournaments between singles and doubles, with the doubles played over three weeks, had not worked well. The ladies, in particular, had found it difficult to meet the deadlines.

He welcomed CN as his successor and suggested that the tournament revert to a single Finals' Day. This was generally welcomed and the middle weekend of Wimbledon was suggested - probably the Saturday as there was an AEGON home match that Sunday.

There was a request for Jumbles tournaments to be restored to the calendar, a request receiving much support.

Juniors/Coach

DG updated members on his assistant coach. Following a stroke in August, he had been in hospital since. He could not use his right arm and used a stick to walk. He was due to leave hospital that week. Both he and the club had sent their best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Fortunately, he had been able to obtain the services of Tim Cook to cover the 18 hours on court plus senior groups now needed. TC was happy to continue and would leave as soon as he was no longer needed.

With AEGON, Mens' 1 came 3rd of 6 in its division. Our first ever men's 2nd team came 2nd, a very creditable performance. The Boys' U-16 team came 4th of 6, commendable as it contained players from both the U-14 and U-12 categories. Unfortunately, there were not enough girls to enter a girls' team.

Steep had two boys teams in the winter leagues. Results were mixed.

He had held some team practices. Summer and Easter camps had been really busy. Pleasingly, numerous children had stayed on into term time, with some bringing their parents to join as members. Teenagers were helping with mini tennis. One teenager was offering hitting practice for a modest fee to younger juniors.

Junior Club Night was going well, with age-specific matchplay available on Friday evenings. Club Challenge, an idea pioneered by Hampshire coaches and adopted by the LTA, had run again.

6) **Treasurer's Report**

CL reported that the income and expenditure account showed a relatively simple story. Thanks to an absence of major court work, there was a surplus of around £8k. Reserves stood at about £80k.

She proposed no change to the basic subscription, but a small increase in the discount for early payment by adults.. This would give:-

Adults	£120 (£115 if paid by 1 January)
Students	£50
Juniors	£40
Family	£292 (£285 if paid by 1 January)
Non-playing	£18

Entrance (joining) fee to remain at £30.

Ben Russ proposed accepting these accounts and proposals, Sharon Russ seconding, passed unanimously.

She recommended retaining the auditor. Proposed by Kevin Wemyss, seconded by Chris Bardoe, passed unanimously.

7) **Election of committee**

There were no other nominations for the posts of the four of the club's officers seeking re-election. They were unanimously re-elected, viz:-

Chairman	Graham Heath
Treasurer	Christine Lally
Grounds	David Panton
Membership	Michele Mangham

In addition, Peter Clist proposed Paul Raine as his successor as Secretary, seconded by Christine Lally. Paul agreed to stand, but said that he did not envisage serving beyond three years. Motion passed unanimously.

8) **Resolutions**

The Secretary had received three resolutions.

8.1 Resolution 1

'That six courts (1-6) be allocated for mix-ins from 6-8 pm on Tuesday and Thursday evenings throughout the year.' Proposed Mike Boyce, seconded Graham Jones

MB explained his reasoning: some 20-24 members were now attending mix-ins but courts 3 and 4 were not normally playable, and 5 and 6 reserved for coaching. This restricted the mix-in to two courts when lighting was needed, entailing long waits to play. However, Thursday evening coaching ended at 6.15. Could the mix-ins not take over 5 and 6 from that point?

GH responded that the current arrangement was part of the coach's contract: DG was entitled to courts 5 and 6 until 8 pm on winter evenings when he could not use 7 and 8. However, when not in use for coaching, courts were available for mix-ins.

Discussion followed. It established that :-

- There were no private lessons on 5 and 6 on Thursday in the winter. There would be in the spring. Also, on other evenings, there were private lessons all year round.
- DG often did not know until the lesson was due to start whether he had any takers, too late to update the booking system.
- MM said the booking system itself did not allow easy amendment of a block booking for an individual evening.
- DG was happy to free Thursdays from 6.15 and at any other time when a booking was not taken up, with one caveat: during school holidays, on Thursdays, courts 5 and 6 would be booked to 8.00. Tuesdays, however, would remain as now, with 5 and 6 booked 6-8. Schedules did, however, change and these arrangements might be subject to further change.
- It was agreed to show mix-ins as starting at 5.30. *PC to action in the Handbook*
- *MM to amend the booking system advice to reflect these changes*

On this basis, the resolution was not put to the vote.

8.2 Resolution 3 (taken out of order)

'That the process of block booking courts for coaching be reviewed.' Proposed Mike Boyce, seconded Philip Chippindale

The discussion in the previous item had largely covered this. The additional point was an agreement to ensure that the fixed camera was restored to working order.

8.3 Resolution 2

'That voting on any proposed change to court surface be allowed by post or email' Proposed Mike Boyce, seconded Mark Shapley

MB said that he had been in contact with Camberley Tennis Club, which was engaged in changing court surfaces. They had allowed email voting and gained an 80% response, an unheard-of level. He felt a similar approach would greatly increase Steep's response as well.

Vigorous discussion followed. Points arising were:-

- The question asked was important. It needed to be a single, binary, choice.
- Some members wanted an EGM to be able to question and test the recommendation
- Some members saw no need for an EGM
- The question of what followed the Working Party's report was left to the Working Party

Members then voted on the resolution: 24 in favour, 13 against with 5 abstentions. Resolution carried.

9. Any Other Business

- a) Robin Shaw said that 7 and 8 would need attention to their peripheral drainage soon. Rainwater run-off from the car park was pooling on the playing surface. *Referred to DP*
- b) Ann Saunders asked for a windbreak to 5 and 6 to stop glare from windscreens in the car park. *Referred to DP*

RS then, in the unavoidable absence of the President, thanked the committee and coach for their hard work during the year.

Date of Next Meeting Tuesday 20 November 2018, 7.30 pm in Steep Village Hall