

Steep Lawn Tennis Club

Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting

Held on Sunday 10th June 2018 at 8.00pm in St Peter's Church, Petersfield

Present: Graham Heath (Chairman), Jennie Azevedo, Lucy Fatkin, David Gaterell, Christine Lally, Michele Mangham, Christine Musker, Carol Norris, David Panton, Lesley Whyte and 41 other members.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Eric Dempster, Sarah Shadbolt, Ann Saunders, Mary Sellers and Felicity Gibson.

Introduction by the Chairman

Graham Heath (GH) opened the meeting. He explained that the purpose of the meeting, as set out in the Calling Notice, which was issued to members on 24th May 2018, was to decide the future surface for courts 3 and 4. GH said that the Working Party (WP), set up after the AGM in 2017 to investigate alternative surfaces for courts 3 and 4, had reported back to the Committee. Having considered the WP report and gathered further information, the Committee had decided to put the matter to a vote by the membership.

GH referred to the Resolutions set out on the voting slip which had been handed to members eligible to vote at the beginning of the meeting. He noted that:

- the Resolutions referred to courts 3 and 4 only;
- those present and eligible to vote could vote on both Resolutions, even if they voted No to the first Resolution; and
- In the event of a majority No vote for Resolution 1, it would not preclude another court surface being considered on other courts in the future.

GH then said that before voting those present would have an opportunity to hear and discuss the information gathered by the WP and Committee.

The Calling Notice and voting slip template form part of these minutes.

2. Findings of the WP and subsequent Committee review

Graham Swan (GS) volunteered to present on behalf of the WP. He said that the WP had considered four types of surface:

- Hard;
- Artificial grass,
- Artificial clay; and
- Porous acrylic

The WP had taken input from Chiltern Sports, Havant tennis club and David Gaterell. As part of their research, members of the WP had visited other clubs to play on artificial grass and clay courts. Porous acrylic was quickly discounted as a viable alternative surface as it requires cover in winter.

GS said that the artificial grass and artificial clay courts they tested both played well; but there were differences in the way they played; the clay was slower and took spin. He confirmed that the type of artificial grass tested was different to that currently in place on courts 3 and 4.

GS noted that ongoing maintenance was a key issue that the WP had considered. Chiltern Sports had flagged that the current artificial grass on 3 and 4 had not been properly maintained and this had contributed to the problems with drainage.

GS said that the WP had recommended a new artificial grass surface. In reaching this recommendation they had considered:

- the member survey undertaken in October last year: which indicated that a majority of members favoured the club having an alternative surface on some courts;
- ongoing maintenance: GS said that the WP had reservations about clay because the courts would need dragging after each play and they believed it would require a higher level of regular maintenance involving a tractor; and
- the club finances: GS said the capital cost of installing artificial clay was higher than for artificial grass.

GH said that after receiving the WP report the Committee had undertaken further investigation into the relative installation costs and ongoing maintenance. He said he had received advice from both Chiltern Sports and SSP that the maintenance schedule for clay and grass was the same; both surfaces require drag brushing (preferably with a small tractor) every 2 weeks, anti-algae treatment every six months and an annual replacement of fill. The fill for clay was slightly more expensive than for grass.

GH invited David Gaterell (DG) as club coach to give his opinion of each surface.

DG said that his preference was for clay and gave the following reasons;

- he considered it better for match play and for learners;
- artificial clay is now used for major tournaments, artificial grass is not;
- he considers it a nicer surface which plays best when damp;
- it has the same under surface as artificial grass, giving the same benefit of a softer surface;
- clay would be better future proofing for the club.

GH then asked Christine Lally (CL) the club treasurer, to summarise the club's finances.

CL said that the club currently has £95,000 in reserve in the bank and savings accounts. The projected spend to the end of the 2018 calendar year is £17,000, excluding any other major costs, leaving £77,000 for this project. In 2017 the club had a cash surplus of £70,000 and on that basis she predicted an annual surplus of around £70,000 going forward.

CL said that the estimated capital cost of replacement for each surface is as follows:

	£
hard	25,000
artificial grass	39,000
Artificial clay	53,000

Costs for both grass and clay include the cost of a tractor and suitable storage.

3. Membership Q&A

There was a lively debate among the club members present, bringing forward some excellent points covering relative disadvantages and merits of the various surfaces, as well as how the choice of surface could influence encouraging new members to join.

Questions arose regarding the lighting on courts 7 and 8. GH said that the club has looked into engaging a specialist lighting consultant to put through a planning application at a cost of £4,500. Lighting work is likely to cost in the region of £28,000. GH confirmed that this will be discussed at the next Committee meeting with proposals to go before this year's AGM.

4. Resolutions (Voting)

Voting slips were counted by Michele Mangham, Jennie Azevedo and Lesley Whyte.

GH announced the result of the vote as follows:

Resolution 1

No	15
Yes	35

A majority were in favour of an alternative surface on courts 3 and 4. Therefore the votes were counted for Resolution 2.

Resolution 2

Artificial clay	29
Artificial grass	17

The majority were in favour of artificial clay. GH confirmed that the Committee would proceed with the installation of artificial clay on courts 3 and 4.

AOB / Close of meeting

Rosemary Swan asked what measures would be taken for the security of the tractor. GH said that the Committee would look at all options for the provision and security of a tractor.

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm.

