



Minutes of a Meeting of the Tennis Committee
held on Tuesday 29th September 2020

Present (all via Zoom):

Andrew Wakely	(Chairman)
Lily Brown	
Alessandro Noce	
Alan Flitcroft	
Victoria Stephens	
Puk Kroijer	
David Burditt	
Jan Menneken	(Men's Captain)
Catherine Michie	(Ladies' Captain)
Rachel Godsave	(Next Ladies' Captain)

In Attendance:

Marc Newey	(Chief Executive)
Peter Bradburn	(Course and Grounds Manager)
Nik Snapes	(Tennis Manager)
Dan Lott	(Racquets Director)
Ricky Pharo	(PGA Services Manager)

1. Apologies: No apologies as all present.

Ricky Pharo (new Sports Shop Manager) introduced himself and gave update on the Sports shop. Ricky as a PGA Pro is very experienced in running golf shops but is keen to stock tennis clothing/equipment that members want to see in the new revamped Sports Shop. He is interested in feedback from the Committee in terms of any ideas they have.

PK – has ideas and would like to get involved in choices of clothing as has fashion experience.

CM – asked about balls and where they will be sold now.

MN- Currently staying within the clubhouse along with the re-stringing service, this is due to the later opening hours of Reception therefore providing a better service to members.

RP- we are also looking to provide a dedicated tennis presence in the Shop to give a better all-round service for the tennis membership.

Action – DL to introduce PK and RP so they can discuss ideas.

RP was thanked by AW and left the meeting.

2. Minutes from previous meeting:

Minutes of the meeting held on the 15th July discussed and approved.

3. Reports

AW- The Club Champs went very well this year and we had a lot of positive feedback about the format etc.

AF – Would this stay the same for next year?

DL – yes it worked well for several reasons, we are currently looking at the best week to run it

so we can make the most of the evening light and warmer weather. So would probably programme before the end of the summer term.

AF – Will GANT championships happen again this year?

MN- we are in talks with them now. This year was supposed to be their third and final year, however with Covid-19 it didn't happen therefore they are looking whether to host it in 2021. We hope they will as it will be just before the start of Wimbledon.

AF- Will that effect the week of the club champs?

DB- It may be a win win as more people may come down for club champs and may result in more coming for the GANT once they see its being staged. We will report back once we know more.

AW – Have we had any feedback on the Leggings situation?

CM – Spoken to a few ladies and 50 % want to wear them and 50% don't really have a view on it.

DL – I think if the junior girls etc want to wear them as they see the top players training in them, I don't have a problem I feel they should be allowed.

Committee discussed, voted and passed that they are allowed.

Action – MN to report back on GANT Championships and DL to decide on the best week to stage the Club Champs so members can put in their diary.

Course and Grounds (PB)

Grass courts 25 – 28 have now had the renovations completed. The courts have been taken up reseeded and top dressed. They are now covered while we wait for germination.

Courts 19 – 24 Renovations are nearly complete; they have been over seeded and top dressed.

We are having electric points installed near these courts for us to use the growing light rig. This will start in Autumn on the Southside of 19-24. This will hopefully produce more growth in the areas that get shaded due to the ITC.

The Airhall is to go up the 2nd full week in October. This will be the final year we use this skin. This will be replaced with a new skin next year.

CM – What if the Covid situation prevents us playing indoor sport? Will we still put the airhall

up?

MN- As we are using the same skin, we will go ahead with the installation and if we need to take it down due to COVID the grounds team are able to do this as it will be the last year of use.

PB- The plans for the 2nd seasonal Airhall over courts 7 – 10 have gone to Planning as part of the pre application. Verified views have been requested by the planners before we make an official submission.

The ITC court surfaces have been repainted and the small lumps have been taken down to the base coat and repainted. Contractors have said the lumps could be possibly due to the curing time not being long enough when originally done in December 2018. They seem to think the issue has been fixed. We will monitor.

AW- The grass courts have been superb this year and all members have been positive about them.

PB – Thank you – this is why it's so important that we get the right germination period. We must close them by mid-September as the grass needs to germinate before the weather gets too cold. We gave members an extra week this year as the weather was good.

Action- PB to start using the light rig on courts 19/20/21 to promote stronger growth.

Racquet Directors Report

Club Championships

The club championships were successfully run over 8 days at the start of September. We have had a lot of positive feedback about how the tournament was run and the format of the tournament.

Two main positives to take from it were the staggered draws and the condensed format. This allowed the clubs top players to play as we could tell them exactly when they would play each match and we could also guarantee that they wouldn't play matches against club players in their first match. It also allowed us to ensure all other members could play matches against players of a similar level.

Having the tournament over the week also gave players who would not reach the later stage of the tournament a feel that they had a summer club champs instead of playing one match in April and their tournament then being over. It also created a good atmosphere throughout the week as all members knew when matches are being played – this resulted in people coming to watch matches they were interested in throughout the week.

This year we tried a new format for the handicap men's and ladies' doubles. The idea being like the squash section with members entering and then getting matches with partners by

the tournament organisers. However, this did not have a good entry so both events were cancelled this year. Next year it will go back to the original format with members entering in their doubles' pairs.

We also had a good showing from coaches playing with other members in some events – members seemed to enjoy this and could highlight the playing levels of some of the coaches. Some of the stronger older juniors entered events providing them with some adult tournament experience.

If we are to stick with this format next year, I believe it should run over 8 days with finals day on the Saturday and a prize giving party at the end of the day. If we run it earlier in the summer, we could also get 2 rounds in the evening with good daylight. Committee to discuss.

ITC

The Indoor Tennis Centre will begin to become very popular over the next few weeks. The booking system is still set to 60 minutes per member each day. I have reset the setting on MyCourts so all members will once again get one warning email if they do not show up for the court and one email warning if they cancel the court late (currently set to 12 hours before booking start time). The court surfaces were repainted in August ready for the Autumn/Winter. It is important that members keep to the rules of no drinks besides water on court and to only enter with clean shoes.

Airhall

This is set to go up the week commencing 26th October. This year we will reuse the old airhall for one more year. The plan is to replace it at the same time we get a second airhall over courts 7 to 10 depending on planning permission. Once it is replaced, we are looking to install chandelier lighting inside the dome. This will greatly improve the light in the evenings. Nearer the time I will organise a trip to the Wimbledon Club with committee members to see the lighting they are currently using in their dome.

Airhall 2

Next year we plan to install a second airhall on courts 7 to 10 along with a new playing surface. Plans have been submitted to Wandsworth Planners. The playing surface is to be approved by the Committee. This dome will also include chandelier lights.

Padel Courts Update

We are still on track to start the work on the Padel courts in January with the aim to have them playable for April 2021. The club will have 2 Padel courts both floodlit and one of the courts will be under a canopy.

Pickleball

The club has recently recruited a new Golf and Games assistant Louis Laville. Louis is a World class Pickleball player and showed the tennis team how to play with a taster session. I am currently looking into ways we can introduce the game to the membership.

Universal Roehampton Club Challenger Trophy

On the back of the success of the club champs we are giving the membership another chance to enjoy some competitive tennis. The universal Roehampton Club challenger trophy will see Men, Ladies and Juniors over 14 compete for LTA rating points. The competition will involve singles and doubles and there will be multiple divisions decided by various standard guides regardless of gender and age. Nik to give more info.

The Committee approved this idea to progress

ITF Seniors Tournament

We have a few players that are competing on the ITF seniors tour and it would be great for them to be able to play at their home club. We would be keen to introduce the tour to some of our other senior tennis players some of which are on the Committee. The ITF seniors tour goes up every 5 years from age 35 in both men and women. Most people think that the ITF seniors tour is only for the elite which isn't correct it is mainly club standard in the early rounds especially with a few former pros but most of them do not play often. You can therefore get a high world ranking and status as well as introduce them to external competitions that they could holiday to and play in a new community. This would be a great opportunity for our Members and something we would be keen to introduce to them. If we could get this confirmed early, we could contact relevant people to let them know and get them to put it in their diary, so they do not travel away.

Our tournament can be part of the British Seniors Grass Court Series which would include other illustrious clubs and venues such as St Georges Hill, All England Wimbledon, Eastbourne and potentially Roehampton Club. We have had a date of 2-7th August proposed to us. This will be a good date for us as it is normally when the club is quietening down. Normally the first year you run the event they give you grade 3 status but we would like grade 2 or 1 like the All England, St Georges and Eastbourne so we would need to run it for 1 year to achieve that status.

The Committee liked this idea and approved Dan/ Nik to progress it.

Junior News

We have restarted the junior programme but have had a slight reduction from 320 to 280 in junior group coaching numbers.

We have more courts booked by coaches for private lessons- so it appears many have opted for 1-1 tuition during this time

We have entered our junior teams into the National Junior Team Competition this winter.

We had a strong junior representation in the Adult Club tournament which was great to see and very thankful to the adult members that had to handle the pressure of competing against them.

We ran a junior finals day with 72 entries on Sunday September 6th.

Hannah Klugman won the Fred Perry Cup which was the only national junior competition this Summer where she beat all the other top national player to win £1000 and Fred Perry Sponsorship.

4. Annual Meeting 2020

MN- The Annual Meeting will be held on the 19th October at 7pm via Zoom due to COVID restrictions. This will include the Tennis Committee Chairman's report of the year and Tim Freeman from Trevor May will be showing plans and talking through them for the Padel courts as well as the potential developments of Airhall 1 and 2.

5. Padel, Airhall Updates

MN- Padel court works are due to start in the new year. The board has approved the build and we hope to have them ready for play in April 2021. We plan to have 2 Padel courts with a mini tennis court between them. Both padel courts will be floodlit and one will be under a canopy so you can play in all weathers.

We are holding off on purchasing a new skin for the airhall on courts 12-14. The reason for this is so we can get a better one for 2021. We plan to have a new airhall with chandelier lighting inside the structure, this will vastly improve the visibility in the evenings and will not diminish over time like the current skin.

The Board has approved a new airhall over courts 7 to 10 and the design has been discussed with the planners. As we are unable to get a 2nd ITC it makes sense to have some more covered courts through the winter and lets us keep the 10 grass courts. The airhall would cover 3 doubles courts and the singles court, however as mentioned in previous meetings we would lose the walkway between courts 6 and 7 to the grass courts due to the ring beam installation.

The plan would be to install the 2 new airhalls (12-14 and 7-10) ready for next October giving us 10 indoor courts through the winter months.

AN- Is the ITC 2 out of the equation?

MN- yes Planners have turned it down and we have investigated all possible locations.

MN – We will need to investigate the best court surfaces for courts 7 – 10 if it's going to be under cover for 6 months especially as tiger turf (synthetic grass) is sand based. We also need to plan for the long-term mix/ balance of surfaces so we need to look at what to install on courts 15 to 18 as they will need replacing in 2021/22.

AN- Are the smash courts good for coaching/teaching?

DL – Yes, they are good for several reasons- they perform very well in wet weather and play better when they are damp, therefore sessions and matches often go ahead if scheduled on these courts. They are also good as they produce a slower bounce, giving players more time to react to the ball which is great for coaching players and juniors but also for older players who are not as mobile.

MN- Having an airhall on courts 7 to 10 opens more opportunities for surfaces like performance acrylic like the ITC which everyone seems to like. We need to survey Members as we did before plus we can analyse the usage stats of each surface rather than just rely on Member's emotional choices. The Committee needs to do its research and make recommendations to the Board who will approve the finance.

Action – Committee and tennis team to investigate and research all surface possibilities. DL to find out from Trevor May if there is a fall on courts 7-10.

5.1 Racketlon

DL – the date for next year's Racketlon has been confirmed for 21st July to 1st August. The Open tournament will be 23- 25th July. This will involve use to the ITC and Grass courts for the week. Hopefully lots of members will take part again next year. We will also plan a member only one.

5.2 ITC Court time and league format

DL – We decided to trial 60 minutes slots in the ITC at the start of the year. This was to give more members an opportunity to play in the ITC. The feedback I've had was mixed but overall, I believe the members would prefer this to go back to 90 minutes as many felt the 60-minute time slot did not offer enough playing time for singles league matches or social double matches. The 13-game league format with sudden death deuce did not offer enough tennis either so by changing the time to 90 minutes the league format can stay the same over the winter.

Committee agreed and approved this change

Action – DL to Change MyCourts to allow 90 minutes of ITC court time per day, per member.

Date of next meeting – AGM 19th October 7pm. Via Zoom.