

DRAFT SENIOR MEMBER FORUM MEETING
Thursday 21st October at 3pm
in the Art Studio

Forum: Brenda Nixon, Charles Shiplee, Marc Newey, Pam Waring, Sarah Owens, Vivien Harris

In attendance: Luke Fenton, Dan Lott, Tristan McIlroy, Mariya Vlaykova

Apologies: David Blackburn, Harry Alvarez, Richard Storer.

CS welcomed everybody and the apologies were noted.

1. Minutes of the meeting on 11th June/ Matters Arising

Matters Arising:

DL reported that Howard Spence who was a Senior Member had become part of the Tennis Committee. Every Thursday Howard sent reminders to Seniors about the Vet's tennis.

LF confirmed that the Health Club bookings system had been open for three days in advance since Covid. It worked well and was showing the real occupancy as Members did not cancel as often and there were fewer No Shows compared to when the bookings were open six days in advance. The occupancy of the classes was lower than pre-Covid, considering that the classes capacity was reduced to provide a safe environment for Members. SB added that they had further reduced the number of participants of the Pilates classes from 14 to 12 people and they would review next spring if they could revert to 16 participants.

SO commented that 16 participants were too many for the tutor to be able to observe everyone.

Regarding selling gym gear in the gym, MN was supportive and said that RP should supply the clothes.

BN considered that it would be a good idea to sell gym gear in the Health Club as it would free more space in the Sports Shop. She said that the current golf and tennis offering in the Sports Shop was poor. MN felt that the comment was unfair and explained that the ordered stock was delayed for nine months. There were many issues with deliveries currently. MN asked SB to discuss with the new Gym and Studio Manager if they could sell gym clothes in the gym. DL added that a new tennis range will be available in January in the Sports Shop. He informed the Forum Members that they were working on a deal with a Sports Company which provides gym clothes, and they will be able to supply the Club.

SB asked Forum Members if they would prefer branded clothes. **The Senior Forum considered that clothes without Club's logo would be more popular.**

MN reported that the excess sand from the Astroturf tennis courts was removed shortly after the previous meeting.

SMF had a Club email that would forward to their personal email any correspondence, however since established none was received. SMF considered that the email address should be promoted again in the Recorder and on the Notice board. **SB**

SO queried if there was a special Notice board for the Forums and suggested if there was not to add a notice on the general Notice board if Members want to share anything with the Forum Members to use the forum's email. **MV**

2. Health Club

LF reported that they had introduced senior golf exercise classes. The first class on 9th November was sold out. Very good feedback was received from the online One to One Pilates with Susanne. Online pilates allows Members to revisit the videos and work on specific areas. Mature Movers class has been moved to Monday with Lauren and starts slightly earlier as requested by Members. The Aqua classes were available six days a week including new instructors.

PW queried if there was a waiting list for the senior exercise golf class. LF reported that the Health Club team had passed on the details of Members who had expressed interest in Susanne's class. She had contacted them plus the Members who had taken part in the previous classes. LF has sent the poster to TM to be advertised through Intelligent Golf and sent to Senior Golfers.

VH queried if the course was on a progressive basis and if it was possible for Members to join it if they have not done it previously. LF responded that it was possible and Susanne was contacting all participants before the actual class to understand more about their specific circumstances (health injuries, etc.).

SO queried if Chi Body Balance class had been considered. SB responded that the Club provides Body Balance classes as part of the Les Mills classes. LF said that there were four Body Balance classes per week including on weekend.

SMF considered that there was a need for some additional slow pace classes as Body Balance. **LF/SB**

3 Food and Beverage and Social Events

SB reported that following the feedback of the Food and Beverage Survey, they have done the following changes:

Reintroduced the breakfast menu in the Club Café (8am -11am) seven days a week. Plus, brunch menu on a weekend.

The children's menu was modified to include more healthy options.

Club Curry Nights on Wednesday during the winter months instead of the Club Barbecue.

New Deli fillings.

SB said that many comments were about the quality of the coffee some good some bad . They believed that the lack of consistency was the way the coffees were made, therefore had organised monthly barista training for Food and Beverage staff. Once the consistency was achieved, the management will look at the quality of the coffee and if needed to change the coffee beans.

Specials on the menu will be changed weekly and Arnaud (Executive Chef) will review the menus quarterly.

SB reported that they were working on promotions for the different types of users at different times. For example, promotion for the Bridge players to have lunch before play or cake and tea offer. Art Group to be encouraged to stay for lunch. The same applied to the different golf groups. Special offer for the ladies on Tuesday or soup and sandwich offer for the Seniors on Wednesday.

SB informed the Forum that they were also working on special diet menus by adapting the ingredients for the existing dishes to cater for people with special requirements (dairy free, celiac, and so on).

SO commented that all meals in the Juice Bar contained sugar. SB said that many people who were going to the Juice Bar were looking for sugary items but agreed that there should be also healthy options. **SB agreed to review.**

SB

SB reported that the last Tuesday of the month was a Music Night. Unfortunately, they had to cancel the previous one as the partner of the performer had Covid.

The last Magic Carvery was sold out and the next one was in November. There will be two Punch lunches in December.

From November the Family Lunches will be relaunched.

SB informed the Forum that the House Committee was working on projects on how best to utilise the catering space. The management would like to upgrade the furniture in the Restaurant and the Bar to make better use of the Club Café in the evenings and to have function space for Members for match teas and events. It was a big project and SB and VH were meeting the next day to discuss and review the designs. The Board would look at the proposals at their November meeting and the refurbishment would hopefully be done by Easter 2022.

BN said that the way members were using the Club had changed since covid and that the outside areas had proved very popular but to make full use of these areas there was a need to find a way to get food/drinks to the ground floor i.e., some form of lift as it was dangerous for staff to be carrying trays of food up and down the stairs.

BN commented that the Senior Members would probably prefer to use the Piazza or the beautiful gardens to the cafeteria. Due to covid some areas were likely to be used more than others and that the management should consider reallocating the use of some of the areas and maybe some of the offices could be moved upstairs to make more use of the ground floor.

BN considered that the Reading Room could be transformed into a nice eating area for the Members who were using the gardens. The Reading Room could be moved to the Bar, so people could buy a drink and enjoy reading a newspaper.

VH liked the idea of a restaurant on the ground floor. She said that it was difficult to create the ambience in the Garden Restaurant considering that people were walking through and often chatting. The quality of the food had enormously improved.

BS also said that in the Piazza could be a permanent BBQ area if it was easier to get food to the ground floor.

SB said that Covid has changed the way Members were using the Club and that they will look at adding a semi-permanent structure barbecue for next summer.

PW queried who was using the Club Café, considering that Members who were doing sports were going to the Piazza. SB responded that families were using the Club Café on weekends and weekdays after school, but weekdays were currently generally quiet.

SO queried if the chairs with legs sticking out in the Club Café would be replaced? SB responded that there were no immediate plans to be replaced. SO considered that it was dangerous. She witnessed Members tripping. SB was not aware; the staff had not reported the incidents but we will check.

SB

VH commented that the armrests of some of the chairs were very dirty. SB responded that they had tried to steam wash them, but it was the fabric. He has reported the issue to the Supplier and asked for a recommendation for a specific cleaning product. SB said that both issues will be considered when ordering new furniture next time.

CS read the question from DB about the results of the Survey and if any changes had been made as a result? CS commented that over the next months, the changes that had been made would be promoted in the Recorder and through posters. SB added that they will move the Food and Beverage section higher in the Recorder and will use the Chairman's message as most popular to promote Food and Beverage offers. VH concluded that most issues were addressed – staff service training, barista training, menus, and others.

CS read the second part of DB's question: "Should the Club be managing expectations as to what was financially viable?" CS responded that they (the Board) always do. They only do what can be done. SB added that the costs were increasing and they will have to put the food and beverage prices up. In October, the VAT was increased from 5% to 12.5% and there will be a further increase from 12.5% to 20% in April 2022.

4 Sports

Golf

TM reported that there were new golf arrangements from 1st November because of the fewer available teas with the reduced daylight. The booking system will be under review as last year it could not be tried.

Bridge

TM informed that more bridge players were returning to bridge in the Club. The Committee was looking at introducing an extra session on Tuesday. The Club was hosting the Bridge Swiss Event that weekend. The online offering was still available and more face to face sessions were launched.

Croquet

TM reported that Croquet Section was very active and had many new Members. Currently, there were over 150- 160 active Members. The results of the Survey will be reviewed at the next Committee meeting and presented to the Board and membership.

Tennis

DL reiterated that Howard Spence had joined the Tennis Committee and was representing the Seniors.

Social events – Club Night on Wednesday evening, Tennis Afternoon on Saturday, Vets Match on Thursday afternoon, Ladies Morning on Thursday. Those sessions become much more popular in winter as DL was trying to book indoor courts for the events. DL considered the social events a good opportunity for Members to integrate better and meet and play with new opponents.

DL was working on the Club Championships for the next year. The entries have been good, except for the vets. There was a request for Ladies over 60s, but not sufficient entries to run it. On 25th November Team Tennis Social for all the vets' teams will be held.

Padel Tennis

DL reported that they have introduced over 60s Pay and Play sessions every Monday 11.00-12.00. Many elderly tennis players had enjoyed playing padel tennis as it was a smaller area to cover and less running. There was a social padel on Sunday 16.00-18.00 and a Ladies Padel Morning on Monday 9.30-11.00.

Pickleball

DL informed the Forum that the pickleball court was smaller than the tennis court and they will organise a tester session on 11th November between 9.30 and 11.00 for Senior Ladies. Plus, another session opened for everyone between 13.30 and 15.00. DL reported that they were trying to introduce the sport to the Club's membership. The sport was very popular in America.

SO queried if Tennis Membership was required to play Pickleball? DL responded that everyone could participate in the tester sessions, but once the sport is introduced only Members with tennis rights will be allowed to play.

BN queried if the Club could organise an American Tournament in the Summer, followed by a barbecue. Very popular event in the past. She considered it as an effective way to encourage Members to stay for a social after a game. DL liked the idea and said that Sally who was taking part in the Vets Match had asked him for a big social event on weekend. DL said that he could organise another one for the seniors on Wednesday or another weekday.

DL

5. AOB

BN queried if there were any changes to the Honorary membership criteria, envisaged by the Board?

MN responded that the Board had discussed this at their last meeting and had decided to not change the criteria. Future Boards may decide to review the criteria when the number of the Honorary Members increases from 73 currently to over 100, which is forecasted in 20 years time.

PW queried if there were any other issues considered by the Board that could affect the Seniors.

CS responded that the Board considered many issues across the whole membership for all age groups, family groups and no families group and singles. CS said that they would inform the SMF Members if there were anything concerning them.

MN reported that the Council had approved the application for Airhall 2. It will be referred to the London Mayor's office and potentially the Club will have ten indoor courts from next winter. It will benefit each age group of the Club.

CS reported that when they were looking at the profiles of the Prospective Members, more older people were applying to become Members. Returning Members who were coming back from abroad or extended family members (grandparents) of current Members.

PW noted that according to the information given after the previous meeting, the average membership age has dropped.

MN confirmed that the average membership age of current Members has decreased. At the same time, they have noted that more extended family members have joined the Waiting List.

CS reported that they have approved a second Waiting List for extended families and returning Members. Every year the Club will accept an equal number of Members from both lists. This will expedite the waiting time for Prospective Members with families in the Club. CS said that there were about 80-90 people on the Second Waiting List.

SO queried what proportion of the Prospective Members on the Second Waiting List were Seniors.

MN thought that they were about 20% (grandparents). The rest were siblings, other parents who had not joined with the rest of their families.

SO queried what was the increase of Seniors on both Waiting Lists?

CS responded that at the Prospective Members meeting he had attended at least 10% of the people were older.

Bike racks

SB reported that he was waiting for quotes to extend (double) the size of the bike racks in front of the Club. He was also looking where at the back of the car park could put additional bike racks. One of the companies has indicated that could take on this project after February next year.

SB

Squirrels

CS read the question from DB: "Particularly, as an example, on the 6th tee, to the right off the fairway, most of the young trees have been severely damaged by grey squirrels stripping the bark off branches. Can the Club confirm enhanced squirrel control is taking place. There is no point planting deciduous tree varieties if they have little chance of growing to be a decent specimen. Fully support the continued enhancement of the golf course and gardens."

MN confirmed that the Club has a fully licensed pest controller it uses on occasion. There were only set times when the contractor can operate and if such animals were caught, there were dispatched humanely by the contractor.

MN informed that one of the reasons the Club managed to get the Council's approval for the Airhall 2 was the support of the Racket Cubed Charity and allowing disadvantaged local school children to use the Club's facilities at certain times. The second requirement was to show ecological improvement. Peter Bradburn has proposed a new development – Queen Elizabeth II Wood, to commemorate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee next year. Peter will be planting an extra 25 different species of trees (approved by the Council) by the 15th tee on the golf course. There will be measures in place to prevent the new trees from squirrel damage.

The meeting concluded at 4.15 pm.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TBC – January/ February 2022 in the afternoon