

SENIOR MEMBER FORUM MEETING
Thursday 9th June at 2 pm
in the Garden Room



Forum: Harry Alvarez, David Blackburn, Vivien Harris, Marc Newey, Sarah Owens, Richard Storer, Pam Waring,

In attendance: Simon Baker, Mariya Vlaykova

Apologies: Caroline Nettel, Brenda Nixon, Charles Shiplee, Nicki Davis, Luke Fenton, Dan Lott, Tristan McIlroy.

MN informed the SMF that VH was invited by the Board to become the Chair of the Club and one of the new Directors CN would replace her on the Forum.

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

The Minutes of the meeting on 11th February were approved as read.

Matters Arising:

SB informed that they have increased the number of participants in some classes to up to 14 people (including Pilates). They have also considered removing the 15 minutes gap between classes for cleaning. Ricky Alexis was working on a new timetable to include more classes.

A poster with SMF Members' names, photos and generic email was advertised on the Main Notice Board.

SB reported that new juices will be launched in the next few weeks in the Juice Bar. The new Executive Chef would also review the offering.

MN confirmed that DL and the Chair of the Tennis Committee had met with the ladies who had issues booking indoor courts at a certain time.

The Golf Committee has decided to keep the three booking options per week. Golfers still can book on the day.

HA has noticed that there were times when Members booked courts and did not turn up. He suggested that Members should be charged a penalty fee if they did not cancel their court and did not use it. MN explained that the current tennis booking system was sending email reminders to Members who did not check in for their courts and if they repeat the offence their booking rights were stopped (after three strikes).

Some of the Senior Members thought that post Covid Members were less considerate. VH reiterated that the Board would not tolerate any rudeness from Members toward fellow Members or staff.

MN reported that after a request from Anna Boucher, he had agreed to allow guests for the choir. The number of the choir was also increased to 35 including guests. Members will have priority and guests will pay fees each time they attend.

2. Health Club

SB notified the Forum that Ricky Alexis had included couple more classes such as Forever Fit (Mature Movers) and additional Hydro Spin classes on Wednesdays and Thursdays. LF was exploring the option to introduce a Tai Chi class.

The gym sessions have reverted to one hour and the gym was deep cleaned three times per day. Members were required to wipe each piece of equipment after use.

MN informed SMF that LF was back at the Club as Health Club Manager and he was working on updating the health and safety procedures.

SB reported that the Pool Side Pizza was open between 4pm and 6.30pm on weekdays and between 12pm and 6.30pm on weekends and was offering pizza and hot dogs. The working hours will increase during the summer holiday.

The Club was undertaking two projects in the Health Club. The old storage next to the indoor pools is converted into a Family Changing Room with a sink and shower hose for families with older children who required additional care. Later in the year (August), an airlock lobby will be installed between the indoor and outdoor pools to reduce the heat lost in the indoor pool area. The second project was the refurbishment of the Steam Room. The new design of the Steam Room was approved by the Health Club Forum. The leading time of the project was between six to eight weeks.

3. Food and Beverage and Social Events

ND's F&B and Events Report had been previously circulated and was noted.

SB reported that the hot buffet and the salad bar in the Club Café would be re-introduced at the end of June. The second pizza oven in the Club Café will be also installed at the same time.

MN encouraged Members to try the wines from a box. The wines were served in a half litre carafe.

SB notified the Forum about the new initiative of the Environmental Committee to offer a 30p discount to Members on hot drinks when they bring their reusable cups to use instead of a takeaway.

Lloyd Walker, the Executive Chef, was working on Free From menu that would contain only dishes free from any allergens.

4. Masterplan 2035/ Member Survey Update

MN informed the SMF that the House Committee had the Strategic Session the previous day following the Member Survey feedback. Some very good ideas were identified, and the Committee would work further on improving the sociability of the Clubhouse without spending large capital sums and reducing the dependency on external events as indicated by Members. The Committee had looked at how to improve the ambience of the Clubhouse, how to make better use of the Club Café, how to extend the Club Café and improve the area below for a Grab and Go Café, how to connect the Bar Terrace and the Club Café and extend the Bar.

This year, the Clubhouse Changing Rooms will be refurbished. Sparc Studio, the company that has designed the gym, was currently working on the configuration of the Changing Rooms. The new designs will include ten showers in the Men's Changing Room (increased from five) and five in the Ladies. The number of the lockers will be also increased.

The Property Development Committee was working on the feasibility to move the offices from the ground floor and use the space as a Member social area and a second snooker table.

Senior Members considered that it made sense for the Café to be on the ground floor (as it used to be in the previous Clubhouse) and that the ambience and the lighting should be changed in the first floor Café to provide more of a restaurant/bistro type of dining, smart casual dress code should be encouraged (no sports gear in the evenings), however, the Club should not fixate on the dress code and Members should not feel excluded.

HA suggested non-alcoholic cocktails be offered in the Bar. SB that they would be soon on the menu. Nikki Rogers was very keen to introduce cocktails.

MN reported that they were pleased with the Survey Results and he and his team were working through the 180 pages with Member comments. They were considering the feedback and what they should improve with short, middle and long-term strategies.

5. AOB

TM's Report had been previously distributed and was noted.

SMF considered that Members should be encouraged to indicate that they play 9-hole golf on the booking system and also suggested a reduced-price membership for Members who use the facility off peak or the reverse – the Club should charge a premium for a membership that provides full access to all facilities at any time. **MN will take the proposal to the Membership and Marketing Committee.**

MN

SB reported that he was working on a couple of projects that would regulate better access to the Club. The gate between the hedges of the Member Car Park and the Health Club will open with a membership card. New cameras will be installed that would provide face recognition, so if the intruder comes again on site would alert Security. **A number plate recognition system that opens the barriers for Members if they pre-register their cars with Security will be installed.**

DL's Rackets Report had been previously distributed and was noted.

SB

SMF noted that from the seven vets' events that the Tennis team had offered for the Tennis Club Championships, there were players only for two of them – over 60's men's singles and over 70s men's doubles.

Padel and Pickleball sessions were becoming popular in the Club.

MN reported that the works on Airhall 2 would start on 4th July over the tennis courts 7-10. The works should be completed by November. During that time grass courts 23 and 24 will not be in use but will be back repaired for play in 2023.

Regarding the shadow over the croquet lawns from the Airhall 2, the Club has purchased frost cover sheets for lawns 1 and 2, plus UV growing lighting that would be moved during the night as they do not cover a huge area.

RS commented that all the Club's sports were very well run by staff and committees.

MN informed the Forum that the Board would review at their next meeting the rising cost that they faced operationally. Potentially, the Board may decide to increase the Food and Beverage prices.

Senior Members agreed that the prices should be regularly reviewed and advised the Board to inform Members about the increase, so they could be prepared.

MN/VH

Business Pods

MN notified the Forum that currently, they were encouraging Members to use the Bandstand when they wanted to work from the Club and take calls.

The long term strategy was to divide the Reading Room and have a business area where Members would be able to work and use a soundproof pod in the corner to take calls.

SO queried what was the Club policy on people who were texting or broadcasting, especially in the Gym. Unacceptable behaviour will be tackled by the staff in the relevant area, however, the technology is part of everybody's life and if there is a quiet online interaction, Members should accept it.

SO reported that some Members had complained to her that children of a visible age over 7 years of the opposite sex were in the Changing Rooms instead of waiting at Reception. It was considered that the age of the children allowed in the opposite sex Changing Room (up to 7 years) was too high. MN explained that this was the standard for Sports Clubs across the country. **MN will ask Reception to be more vigilant** about who was entering the Changing Rooms and **will pass on the feedback to the Membership and Marketing Committee** for consideration.

MN reported that the Club would install a stair lift in the Art Studio and the toilet in the Sports Hall would be refurbished this year.

RS queried what was the biggest challenge (problem) for the Club. MN responded that recruitment was the biggest issue currently, especially in the hospitality sector. The Club did not have any reserves and controlling costs to keep within the target was relatively challenging each year. Recruitment, lack of training and increased Member usage were his daily challenges.

VH commented that the Board did not score highly on Board transparency. She believed that the Board was communicating openly and clearly all decisions with Members, but many of them did not read the Recorder for example.

Senior Members agreed that the Board was putting adequate efforts to communicate their decision. AH suggested the Board Directors be more approachable and go and interact with Members.

MN clarified that there was a difference between transparency and communication, the Club had scored very highly on communication and less on transparency. Some Members wanted to see the Minutes of the Board meetings. The Chair had always included the outcome of the Board discussions in his Recorder piece but Minutes of the Board meetings were confidential.

DB suggested that many Members were not interested in how the Club was governed.

VH considered that the long waiting list was disappointing for prospective Members who would like to join and when they joined, they were making full use of the facilities (golfers were 14% up).

SO queried if the Club advertised the vacancies with Members. MN confirmed that the vacancies were on the website. MN also promised that they will promote again with Members.

The meeting concluded at 4 pm.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Date to be confirmed in late September- early October.