



**Minutes of the Tennis Annual Meeting
held on Monday 30th October 2023 at 7pm**

Present:

Andrew Wakely	(Committee Chair)
Lily Brown	
Susie Reid	
Sunil Bhasin	
Nick Yates	
Rosalind Vincent	
Penny Yates	
Astrid Drayson	
Bengt Grundberg	
Vanessa Walker	
Andy Gilbert	
Ian Walker	
David Burditt	(Liaison Director)
Michael Hill	(Club Chairman)
Fred Warneryd	(Men's Captain)

In Attendance:

Marc Newey	(Chief Executive)
Peter Bradburn	(Course and Grounds Manager)
Dan Lott	(Racquets Director)

Apologies

Victoria Stephens	
Lorna Bhasin	
Mark Young	
Howard Spence	
Kat Kovacevic	(Ladies Captain)
Nik Snapes	(Tennis Manager)

1. Committee Chair Report – Andrew Wakely.

Good evening and thank you for attending.

Yet again a year to be proud of our elite members. Joe Salisbury and his partner Rajeev Ram won the US Open Men's Doubles again - the first pairing to win three titles consecutively. Hannah Klugman made the Girls Singles QF in NYK and with her fellow Club member, Isabelle Lacey, made the final of the Girls Doubles at Wimbledon. Hannah, at 14, has also become the youngest player ever to qualify for a WTA 100 tournament surpassing Coco Gauff who was 15. Isabelle is the third youngest to do so.

As Dan is doing his report next, I will leave it to him to cover the successes of our tennis teams at the Club and acknowledge the hard work of our captains, Fred, and Katarina.

The Club Championships were, as usual, a great success with plenty of competitors and supporters and a well-attended party in the evening. Something we hope to replicate in 2024.

Courts 15-18 have been resurfaced in Advantage Red and are playing very well but slower than 4-6 which underlines that these will need attention soon as they have speeded up due to age being 12 years old.

Could everyone please make sure they clean their shoes on exiting the clay courts with the provided equipment so we can limit the distribution of red sand around the club. This applies even more when heading into any of the indoor courts. Also, after your game, as a courtesy to the next player, please brush each side of the court in concentric circles which ensures an even distribution of the sand. There are guides how to do this at each court. It's much nicer to play on a smooth court. Also, having just painted the courts in the ITC can we remind everyone that only water is to be taken in, no coffee etc. Sadly, we have had spillages already creating ugly stains, which are hard to remove. We have high quality facilities which we should be proud of, and we must treasure them and not take them for granted.

The late summer Padel Championships were excellent with an ever-increasing standard. With the Club survey having shown a decisive demand for more Padel courts we are investigating with the council where we will be permitted to install them, especially if we want them covered. The Council is not keen on them being covered but we will work hard on some sort of solution. Early indications suggested that grass courts 25-26 were the front runners, however, after the Members Forum on Thursday night there was definite lobbying that we should be creating a Padel and Pickle hub that is not split. This might mean taking grass courts 25-28 in their entirety to create this, either in one go or two stages. This is not a resolved issue and will be discussed further in Committee. If this does progress, croquet lawn 4 overlooked by Fairacres will be converted to grass - either two squeezed in or one main court embedded into the gardens with seating. Just as a point of fact courts 27 and 28 are the least used in the club.

Thanks again to Peter Bradburn and his team for producing and maintaining all our courts to such a high standard.

Thanks to Dan Lott and Nik Snapes and their teams for maintaining our club as an aspirational club to join. Also, thanks to Paul Lindsay for his dedication to the Padel section and we wish him continued recovery from his recent surgery.

2. Racquets Director Report - Dan Lott

Over the past 12 months all racquet sports at Roehampton Club have continued to thrive. Feedback from the new acrylic laid on courts 7-10 have been positive and while the airhall covered the courts it provided the club with ten indoor courts last winter, giving more access to indoor tennis for members. We did have comments about the echo sound while the airhall was up but unfortunately, it's very difficult to do anything about this given the skin covers such a large area.

At peak times all indoor courts remained extremely busy, however at off peak times many courts were available. Therefore, I would recommend any playing groups who can play at off peak times in the afternoon to do so as this will greatly enhance your chances of indoor provision. The new airhall has also allowed us to greatly enhance the coaching programme with most junior, adult, and social sessions having indoor access meaning sessions can go ahead as planned most of the time.

The tennis section has continued to provide a wide range of social, coaching, and competitive opportunities for both adult and juniors.

At present we continue to run 6 social sessions running through the week that are free of charge for members.

This year we have added LiveBall, Adult beginner classes, cardio sessions, clinics, and adult camps to the programme. All these sessions are very popular and provide adult players a great opportunity to play in a variety of different sessions. I am also investigating possible tennis holidays to take groups of members on.

We also continue to use the slinger ball machines that are free of charge for members to use on courts 1, 6 and 11. We also have the REBO hitting wall at the back of court 11.

Club Championships

The Tennis Club Championships took place over the summer, after the success of last year we continued to hold the finals on a Saturday so we could arrange more of a social event afterward. This year we organised an afterparty in the sunken garden area with a live band playing in the evening. I worked with Louis from the golf section to run a golf shotgun event the same afternoon so both sections could attend the party in the evening. There was lots of positive feedback from members who attended the event, and we will look to replicate this next year.

Many Club teams managed to win their summer divisions and will be promoted for next year. Our men's and ladies first teams managed to win the regional divisions in the National club league and then competed in the National finals in Bournemouth in September. The men won the National title in 2022 and managed to win it again this year and the ladies lost in the final. This was another great achievement that puts Roehampton Club at the top of the elite stage, so congratulations to Nik and the teams. I would also like to thank Fred and Kat the men's and ladies' captains for all their work throughout the year.

Racquets Team

The backbone of the Racquets team remains unchanged with Nik Snapes supporting me as the Tennis Manager and Paul Lindsay overseeing all other racquet sports as the Racquets Manager. Paul is heading up the padel section but continues to manage the squash section, he also maintains his strong links with the charity Rackets Cubed. Nik continues to run the junior programme and manage

the club competitions and adult team sessions. He also captains the men's first team in all major competitions. We have also added a mini Racquets Co-ordinator to the team this year in Danielle Snapes. Danielle will oversee the new 'mini racquets programme' for all members 5 years and under. This will replace PlayBall and give a member service that will allow juniors to begin their coaching journey earlier teaching them the skills and co-ordination they will need to play racquet sports as they get older.

The coaching team has been enhanced over the last 12 months with the addition of Marta Sirotkina who was a top 120 ranked player and Freddie Powell who played US division 1 college tennis and one of the best pickleball players in the country. We now have 17 coaches working at the club who are doing a great job delivering the coaching programme and satisfying the huge demand we have for coaching. We continue to use an online booking system for all lessons making it transparent and easy for members to search and book lessons. We have also added a hitting session available for members that can also be booked online and gives member a chance to practice what they are learning in lessons.

The Junior tennis programme is in a healthy position this year operating close to capacity with over 350 juniors in the programme currently.

This year Nik Snapes has organised some external LTA graded junior tournaments that will be held at Roehampton. These are external events that will give our juniors a chance to compete with juniors at their home club.

Padel

The padel section continues to gain popularity with the court bookings operating at 80% usage. This has encouraged the tennis committee think about the future provision of padel at Roehampton as its clear that more courts will need to be built soon. With the information from the recent member survey the board have planned to build more padel and pickleball courts in 2024. This will greatly enhance the racquet section providing more provision for padel and adding pickleball as a new permanent sport allowing us to grow the game and provide a comprehensive pickleball programme all year round.

Paul Lindsay continues to head up the section and has done another great job this year maintaining a programme that gives all member demographics chances to experience the game through coaching, social and competitive programming. The ladies and men's padel teams also had great success this year both making it to the NCL finals.

Pickleball

The onset of more indoor tennis courts has given us an opportunity to add yet another racquet sport to the Club. Together with Louis Laville and Freddie Powell from the Sports Shop we have put together a pickleball programme that allows members to play pickleball on a weekly basis at Roehampton. Each Thursday Louis now runs 3 social sessions including – ladies morning, afternoon matchplay and club night. These sessions take place on ITC court 1 with 4 pickleball court marked out. Over the summer we also trialled an open play in session on a Friday morning where members can just show up and mix in. All these sessions have become extremely popular, and the Club now has a core group of members that have fallen in love with the game. It's clear that the Club needs to plan for the growth of the game over the next 12 months.

Overall, it's been a great year for racquets sports at Roehampton club on and off court with major competitions won, new developments carried out and lots of member engagement. I look forward to another successful year in 2024.

3. Peter Bradburn – Grounds Report

Court Synopsis

Courts 1 to 3

This summer, the courts and the surrounds had a total repaint. This was deemed the best course of action after several areas on court had lifted in the last year and due to the amount of coffee stains that marked the surrounds. Members have been advised to only take water on to court from now on.

Courts 4 – 6

The courts were renovated this spring by Trevor May to reinvigorate the pile of the carpet to allow water to percolate more effectively through the sand material quickly enough to allow play to resume after heavy showers. Since the new Advantage Red courts were commissioned, the ball bounce and speed of the court surface of 4 to 6 is being assessed as the two sets of courts are now being more closely compared by players. The Club will look at when the refurbishment of these courts can be done in the future, to equalise the play experience.

Courts 7 to 10

The renovation of these courts was completed last year and generally the feedback is good so far regarding the new acrylic surface.

Courts 11 to 14

The courts were re-painted, around the court perimeters, to spruce up the surfaces and mitigate the issue of coffee spillages again.

Courts 15 to 18

Resurfaced this year as Advantage Red and have been very well received.

Grass Courts

In general, this has been a good year for grass court play. We have had enough rainfall and sun light hours to produce good playing surfaces. Base line wear has been minimal except for 25 & 26, which wear under higher foot fall use. Generally, court base line wear is kept to a minimum because the Club could switch courts between tramlines, so wear is spread over the entire surface of the block of courts. Other clubs do not have this ability and so their courts wear and 'pit' on the baselines through the season.

Renovations proceeded well this year. The courts were Korroed off, a technique where the surface is scalped off below several inches. Fresh top dressing is then incorporated into the surface and over seeded. The subsequent germination of the grass has produced good coverage which is all good news for next year's courts due to open at the beginning of May.

4. Padel and Pickleball Hub

MN discussed the plans for courts 25 – 28 to be converted into the padel and pickleball hub. This would mean potentially turning courts 25 and 26 in to 3 padel courts and 4 pickleball courts. Although this would mean we lose the two grass courts it's the only position in the Club Wandsworth planners would consider.

The planners have said that floodlighting for the padel and pickleball hub could be possible however they are not keen about the idea of covering the area due to the impact of openness on MOL. We will investigate options but therefore at this time its very unlikely the courts would have a cover.

If the IGC is approved to go ahead then it would allow us to convert croquet lawn 4 into a grass show court. The practice putting green would then move to outside the IGC and the current golf practice green could change into lawn 4, so all lawns are together. However, since the Member Forum on the 26th October it was highlighted that no tennis players would want to play next to these padel and pickleball due to the noise. The Forum suggested that the hub should use all 4 grass courts 25 – 28. That way the club could build a dedicated padel and pickleball hub that boasts 6 more padel courts and 8 pickleball courts. MN explained that the club would now be looking into this option and how best to configure the space. MH also suggested that it would also allow us to investigate expanding the outdoor pool area to cope with the huge demand at peak times over the summer months.

If all the above happens then courts 19-24 would need to be enhanced by developing the viewing areas at the back.

This was discussed at length with members who attended and was agreed that 25-28 was the best place for the new padel and pickleball hub. It was also agreed that keeping these 2 racket sports together away from tennis was a sensible idea.

AOB

VW mentioned it was a shame that our grass courts never get full use and always seem to look like new towards the end of the season and would it be possible to play more on the grass as they seem to be closed too much. PB explained we benefit from being able to have the courts on rotation, so the baselines never get too worn. The grass courts are due to open at 11am due the moisture but if they are ready earlier and its dry then the grounds team open them at 10am. This summer the top block did open at 10:30am so allowed members more time on the grass. We do also start our grass court season earlier than any other clubs in the area on 1st May each year. We close mid September to allow the new grass seed to germinate before the end of October ready for the next season.

VW and AD asked if the dress code rule could be relaxed its frustrating having to always having to wear white. AW states that this will be looked at with the tennis committee further down the line and run a mini poll to find out Tennis Members thoughts on this.

The meeting ended at 8:40pm with AW thanking all Members for their positive contributions.