

HIGHBURY TENNIS CLUB
MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held on Wednesday 30th September 2015

Present: Wendy Proudfoot (Club Coach), Caroline Griffiths (Treasurer), Jenny James (Secretary), Henry Horton, Alan Rickett, Phil Wigan, Faye Billingham, Sarah Mulligan, Paul Knipe, Richard Oakley, Angela McCallion

Apologies: Roseanna Pollen (Chair), Susan Hahn, Maxine Bligh, Judith Laurance, Jens Hills, Dee Tamlin

1. Welcome and apologies

The meeting opened at 8.10 pm. In the absence of the Chair, **Alan Rickett** agreed to chair the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Roseanna Pollen (Chair), Susan Hahn, Maxine Bligh, Judith Laurance and Jens Hills in advance of the meeting. Apologies were received from Dee Tamlin subsequently.

2. Club coach's report on prior year

Website

Wendy said that the new club website, which had been set up by Caroline, was brilliant. A large number of enquiries were being generated through the website. Over the last few months Wendy had invited at least 20 ladies to try out in various sessions, some of whom had subsequently joined the club. She had also had c. 10 enquiries from men. Alan asked that all enquiries from potential new male club members should be directed to him; this was **AGREED**.

Wendy had also received a large number of enquiries (at least 20) from people wanting to play social tennis. She had directed them to the Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon social tennis sessions run by Jill McLoughlin (n.b. these are NOT club sessions). In addition she had received at least 40 enquiries from parents wanting tennis lessons for their children. This is an issue, as the club does not cater for juniors and there are no scheduled group lessons for children at Highbury Fields, although some of the coaches do coach children either individually or in groups.

Social media

Wendy said that the club's Facebook page got about 75 likes per week. She posted items regularly on the Facebook page, but was the only club member who did so. She considered it important for the club to have a social media presence.

Coaching

Wendy continues to coach Ladies 1 weekly on Saturday mornings. She also runs a monthly session for Ladies 3 and Ladies 4, on a Sunday and Saturday morning respectively, and also weekly mid-week morning drop-in sessions on Thursdays and Fridays for those able to play then (mainly Ladies 3 and Ladies 4, although some non-club members also play occasionally). Both Ladies 3 and Ladies 4 also organise informal un-coached practice on Sunday mornings. Viren continues to coach Ladies 2 on Saturday afternoons. The Men's teams continue to practise regularly on Saturday mornings.

Courts and facilities

All courts had been re-surfaced in 2015 and new floodlighting installed. There is now floodlighting on all courts. Wendy felt that the courts were now better managed. A number of club members, led by Caroline, had been involved in a campaign to get better toilet facilities at Highbury Fields. Consequently, there were now 2 Portaloos, as well as the 20p in a slot toilet.

The club has so far received £125 from Recycaball, for recycled tennis balls. The target is £1,000 which would enable the club to buy a defibrillator, which would benefit all users of Highbury Fields. It is important that club members are encouraged to recycle their old tennis balls rather than just throw them away.

ACTION: Captains to encourage their team members to recycle old tennis balls.

3. Team Captains' reports

Seven teams were entered in the **Slazenger league in summer 2015**, with the addition of a third men's team.

M1, captained by **Paul Knipe**, had another very successful season, again winning all but one of their matches. The only match they lost was against their nemesis, Pavilion. They finished 2nd in Division 6 and will be promoted again next year. Paul reported that there have been several new members of the team and a good injection of talent. There is now fierce competition for a place in the team.

M2, captained by **Will Porter**, also had an outstanding summer season, topping the table in Division 9, so they will also be promoted next season.

This was the inaugural season for **M3**, captained by **Jens Hills**, who competed in Division 11. They notched up two wins, a draw and 3 defeats so a very respectable first season. They were able to field a full team for all but one match, sometimes helped out by players from M1 and M2, all of whom were happy to play down if required. Alan said that with the increasing number of men in the club it was great to have a 3rd team, as this gave the opportunity to compete to more players.

L1, captained by **Maxine Bligh**, had a fantastic summer season, winning 6 of their 7 matches, and coming top of Division 3, ensuring promotion for next year. Their ranks have been swelled by several very good new players, thus leading to increasing competition for a place in the team.

L2, captained by **Susan Hahn**, had a very respectable season, finishing 5th in Division 5, to which they were promoted at the start of the season. Unfortunately their last match was cancelled, so they were unable to pick up as many points in this match as they had hoped. They started the season with a squad of 13 players, but unfortunately two were injured for the entire season and they also lost other key players to injury during the course of the season, including both members of their 1st Pair.

L3, captained by **Caroline Griffiths**, were promoted for the second year running and played in Division 7. They led the division all season and finished top, by a 2 point margin. They had a core group of 6 players who played in the majority of matches, one of whom was new to the team this season, and they were also helped out in most matches by a number of L1 players playing down, and in one match, an L4 player playing up, at very short notice. There was a great deal of improvement in the squad during the course of the season and everyone remained cheerful and optimistic throughout.

It was a disappointing season for **L4**, captained by **Jenny James**. Having been promoted to Division 8 at the start of the season, the team found it tough going in this division and didn't manage to win any of their matches, finishing bottom of the division. L4 had a small squad of only 10 players, each of whom played in at least 2 matches. They managed to field a full team from among their own players on all but one occasion when they were very grateful to be helped out by a pair from L3 who won the only set of the evening. All the players were extremely committed and worked very hard and will be determined to do better in 2016.

Huge thanks are due to Wendy Proudfoot from all the ladies in L1, L3 and L4, for all her patient coaching.

The Men entered a team in the Aegon league again in summer 2015. The team, captained by **Henry Horton**, played in the Open Men's Division 6 East and performed magnificently, winning 3 of their 5 matches (including beating Pavilion!) and finished top of the table. Congratulations to Henry and the team, who will be promoted next year.

4. Club membership report

There are currently 110 club members: 44 men and 66 women. This is a net increase on 2014 of twelve. 10 of those who were members in 2014 did not renew their membership, but there were 22 new members in 2015. The men have been very pro-active in recruitment, with 14 of the new members being men. There were eight new ladies, four of whom joined L1 and three L3.

Around three-quarters of members are playing competitively, with 33 men and 48 women having played in at least one match in the 2015 summer Slazenger league.

5. Treasurer's report and approval of accounts for year ending 31 March 2015

Caroline Griffiths talked through the salient points of her report. She informed members that the financial year ended with a net contribution of £1,172, and an underlying profit for the year of £928, once outstanding invoices had been paid etc. The year-end bank balance was £2,747.71. After adjustment for expected receipts and outgoings, this would be £2,364.81.

The accounts were accepted as an accurate record and approved by the members.

Caroline had informed committee members ahead of the meeting that she would be standing down from the position of Treasurer at the AGM. She was thanked for the fantastic work she has done as Treasurer and presented with a bouquet.

6. Approval of minutes of AGM held on 23rd September 2014 and matters arising not on the agenda for this meeting

The minutes of the AGM held on 23rd September 2014 were accepted as a true and accurate record of that meeting and were signed by the Acting Chair.

There were no matters arising.

7. Election of committee members

In line with club rules, the outgoing committee all stood down. Eight members of the outgoing committee who were present at this meeting - **Wendy Proudfoot, Caroline Griffiths, Jenny James, Henry Horton, Sarah Mulligan, Faye Billingham, Alan Rickett and Phil Wigan** - all indicated that they would be willing to serve on the committee for a further year. In addition, **Susan Hahn and Roseanna Pollen**, who were not present, had indicated in advance that they would be willing to continue to serve on the committee. The remaining two members of the outgoing committee – Dee Tamlin and Judith Laurance - had indicated that they would not be able to continue.

Club rules allow for a maximum of 13 committee members. **Jens Hills**, who was not present at the meeting, had indicated in advance that he would be willing to serve on the committee. In addition, **Paul Knipe and Richard Oakley** offered to join the committee.

The thirteen individuals named above in bold were therefore duly elected to the committee by all those present.

It was noted that Maxine Bligh (Captain, Ladies 1), Angela McCallion (Captain, Ladies 3, Winter League) and Will Porter (Captain Men's 2) were not on the committee. It was agreed that they would be invited to attend committee meetings.

8. Suggestions for possible club events

Members discussed ways in which the club could create a stronger identity and members get to know one another better.

'Virtual clubhouse'

Wendy encouraged members to share more information on the website, including photos so that people could get to know who's who. Caroline asked team captains to send her match reports and team photos which could be posted on the website.

Wendy also encouraged members to make more use of the club's Facebook page, and suggested the possibility of using Instagram.

There was some discussion about how to moderate a Facebook page, and whether it would be a good idea to create a closed Facebook group, for club members only, as well as the public Facebook page. This closed group could become a sort of 'virtual clubhouse'.

ACTION: Richard and Wendy agreed to action this and to create an invitation on Facebook for members to join the 'virtual clubhouse'.

Social evenings

The Men's teams tend to get together for a social gathering every 2 to 3 months and in fact would be holding their end of season 'gala dinner' the following Wednesday.

The Ladies' teams do hold social events for their own teams, but rarely mix across teams, partly because of the large numbers involved.

It was agreed that it would be good to hold at least one social event per year to which all club members would be invited. There was some discussion as to whether this could be held on the same day as the Annual Summer Tournament, but it was thought that this would probably be unworkable. It was decided to aim for a gala dinner, possibly with awards, to be held at the end of the 2016 summer season. Alan, Phil and Paul **AGREED** to organise this.

ACTION: Alan, Phil and Paul to organise whole club social event at end of 2016 summer season.

Social tennis

During the autumn of 2013, Wendy and Henry had run a number of social tennis sessions for club members on Sunday afternoons, with the aim of getting members from different teams to play together and encouraging mixed doubles. It had started well, but then petered out. Since then, Wendy had suggested to Jill McLoughlin that she use this Sunday afternoon slot, as an extension of the social tennis session she runs on Saturday mornings, and this now happens regularly, but is not run under the auspices of the club.

There was some discussion about trying to revive this, possibly on Friday evenings, with 4 courts booked for social tennis (mixed doubles) and then players repairing to the pub afterwards for a drink, but no decision was taken on this.

Mixed doubles team

There was also some discussion about the possibility of fielding one or more competitive mixed doubles teams in the summer, but again no decision was taken on this.

9. Any other business

There was no other business and the meeting was duly closed.