

HIGHBURY TENNIS CLUB
MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held on Tuesday 20th September 2016 at 8.00 pm

Present: Wendy Proudfoot (*Club Coach*), Roseanna Pollen (*Chair*), Richard Oakley (*Treasurer*), Jenny James (*Secretary*), Caroline Griffiths, Henry Horton, Alan Rickett, Angela McCallion, Barbara Reissner, Will Porter, Alex Hicks, Alice Hamilton, Phil Wigan (*arrived 8.33 pm*)

Apologies: Paul Knipe, Jens Hills, Sarah Mulligan, Megg Nicol, Jo Sargent, Christina Hopkinson

1. Welcome and apologies

The meeting opened at 8.10 pm.

Apologies had been received from Paul Knipe, Jens Hills, Sarah Mulligan, Megg Nicol, Jo Sargent and Christina Hopkinson in advance of the meeting. Susan Hahn did not attend.

Those present introduced themselves.

2. Club coach's report on prior year

Enquiries/ new joiners

Wendy reported that there had been a huge upsurge in the number of enquiries from people wanting to join the club/ have tennis lessons/ play tennis socially, which she attributed mainly to the current success of British Tennis. Over the last few months she had had enquiries from at least 50 women and had invited around 30 of these to try out in various sessions, some of whom had subsequently joined the club. She felt that it was very positive that all the squads were being constantly refreshed with new talent.

Wendy had also had c. 30 enquiries from men, which she had directed to Alan.

In addition she had received at least 50 enquiries from parents wanting tennis lessons for their children. The club is not currently able to cater for juniors.

Coaching and courses

Wendy reported that her Rusty Racquets group was extremely popular and she now had 25 regular players, ranging in age from about 50 to 73. She had now split the group into two. The success of Rusty Racquets demonstrated the joy that tennis can bring to players of all ages and standards. The Rusty Racquets players are not club members. Wendy suggested that they be invited to join and that a member of Rusty Racquets should be invited to join the committee. No decision was taken on this.

A new initiative for 2016/ 2017 is mid-week courses on Wednesday evenings for adult beginners and improvers, coached by Wendy. The first course would be starting on Wednesday 28th September and courses would run for 6 weeks. These courses were being run under the auspices of the club. They were priced to price-match similar courses run by GLL. Once Wendy had been appropriately remunerated for her professional fees, and court hire and other expenses paid, Wendy anticipated that there would be a surplus, which would benefit the club, and could possibly be used to subsidise the costs of court hire for matches.

Social media

Wendy reported that she posted items regularly (at least weekly) on the club's Facebook page. She considered it important for the club to have a social media presence and would like to extend this by setting up a Twitter feed.

Courts and facilities

Wendy felt that the biggest success of 2016 was the successful lobbying of Islington Council by a number of Highbury Fields users, including herself and other tennis club members, to get better toilet

facilities on Highbury Fields! The campaign had been led by Green Party Councillor Caroline Russell. There were now 2 Portaloos by the tennis hut.

There has been no progress with plans for a clubhouse/ café on Highbury Fields. Wendy had been in regular contact with LBI about the possibility of extending floodlighting until 10 pm. She did not feel that the Tennis Steering Group had been particularly helpful. A question was asked about who was in the Steering Group and what their function was, to which Wendy replied that they are the interface between the tennis court users (coaches, club, tennis league, social drop-in) and LBI. Further discussion of this was deferred until the committee meeting immediately following this AGM.

The club has so far received £170 from Recycaball, for recycled tennis balls. It is important that club members are encouraged to recycle their old tennis balls rather than just throw them away. Wendy has asked for a bin to be placed next to the tennis hut to put the balls in (currently balls can be handed in at the hut, but the hut is often shut). A suggestion was made that a notice reminding users to recycle their tennis balls should be attached to each court. It was agreed that this was a good idea, but no decision was taken on how to action this.

3. Team Captains' reports

Eight teams were entered in the **Middlesex Slazenger league in summer 2016**, with the addition of a fifth women's team.

Men's teams

Henry Horton reported that **M1**, captained by **Paul Knipe**, had had another really successful summer season. They won all their matches, including beating their nemesis, Pavilion, and finished top of Division 5. They will be promoted again next year.

M2, captained by **Will Porter**, had also had an excellent summer season, winning all but one of their matches and finishing second in Division 8, so they will also be promoted again next season.

This was the second season for **M3**, captained by **Jens Hills**. Alex Hicks reported that M3 had had a very good season, winning six of their eight matches and finishing second in Division 11, so they should also be promoted next year.

Alan commented that the three captains had all put in a tremendous amount of work and had done fantastically.

M1 also entered a team in the **Aegon league** in summer 2016. The team, captained by **Henry Horton**, played in the Open Men's Division 5 East and had a very successful season, winning 4 of their 5 matches and finishing second in the division. Matches comprise both doubles and singles, so this is a very tough competition. Congratulations to Henry and the team.

In addition, **M1** entered a team in the **Middlesex Cup** in summer 2016, for the first time. They played in Division 3, which comprised 16 teams. This is a knock-out competition, and M1, captained by **Henry Horton**, made it all the way to the finals, where they were beaten by Finchley. This was also a very tough competition and Henry and the team did fantastically well to reach the finals in their first season. Alan commented that Henry had really put himself out on a limb by entering a team in this competition and his hard work had really paid off. Wendy added that Henry had put in a lot of work brokering deals with other clubs to play matches at neutral venues.

Looking back to the **Winter Floodlit League 2015/ 2016**, **M1**, captained by **Henry Horton**, had had an extremely successful season, winning six matches and drawing one. They finished top of Division 7, and have been promoted directly to Division 5 for the 2016/2017 winter season.

M2, captained by **Will Porter**, entered the Winter Floodlit League for the first time in 2015/2016 and had an excellent debut season, winning all but one of their matches and finishing second in Division 9. They have also achieved a double promotion and will play in Division 7 this winter.

Ladies' teams

L1 had very successful winter and summer seasons. Under the captaincy of **Maxine Bligh**, L1 finished top of Division 3 in the Winter Floodlit League 2015/ 2016 and will play in Division 2 this winter. In the

summer league, L1, captained by **Alice Hamilton**, played in Division 2 and finished top of the table, winning 4 and drawing one of their 7 matches. Alice reported that they have continued to have an influx of good new players.

L2, captained by **Susan Hahn**, had a difficult winter season, and finished bottom of Division 5. They had a much better summer season, and the team, captained by **Barbara Reissner and Megg Nicol**, finished third in Division 5, winning four of their seven matches (two of them by 24-0). Barbara reported that the team improved as the season progressed. She also reported that the teams they played against varied wildly in standard.

L3 entered the Winter Floodlit League for the first time in 2015/2016 and had a very respectable debut season. The team, captained by **Angela McCallion**, finished equal 3rd in Division 8, and have been promoted to Division 7 for the coming winter season. The L3 summer team, captained by **Caroline Griffiths**, played in Division 6 and found this noticeably more challenging than the previous year in Division 7. Nonetheless, they notched up two good wins and finished the season mid-table, in fourth place. Caroline reported that the team improved as the season progressed. She also reported that despite having a relatively large squad, many of the players were not available for evening matches and it was sometimes a struggle to find 6 players for a match. However, they were helped enormously by 4 players who had played in L1 or L2 the previous summer transferring to L3 this year. They also had some good new joiners and so are optimistic about next summer.

Both L4 and L5 played in Division 9 in the summer. One of the other teams dropped out, so there were only four teams in the division, with each team playing all other teams both home and away. This meant that L4 and L5 played each other twice. **L4**, captained by **Angela McCallion**, had a very successful season, winning five matches and drawing the sixth. They finished comfortably on top of the table.

This was the first season for **L5**, which comprised five players who had previously played in L3 or L4, two returning to the club after an absence of some years and three new joiners. Unfortunately one player fell and broke her wrist during the first match of the season and another was unavailable for all the matches, which left the team struggling to find enough players for most of the matches. However, they were delighted to be helped out by a number of players from L2, L3 and L4. The team, captained by **Jenny James**, finished at the bottom of the 4-team division, but Jenny reported that there were some positives to take from the season, including winning two of the six matches, and not losing any with a score line of 0-24. Jenny thanked Wendy, on behalf of L5, for her coaching and encouragement.

Phil Wigan joined the meeting at 8.33 pm.

4. Club membership report

Jenny (Club Secretary) had circulated, to committee members, a membership report in advance of the meeting. This is reproduced below.

The Club currently has 125 members: 55 men and 70 women.

There were 110 members at the last AGM (September 2015). 2 new members joined at the end of 2015, and a further 31 during 2016. However, 17 people who were members in 2015 did not renew in 2016, and one member has left during 2016. Therefore there has been a net gain of 15 members in the last 12 months.

The men's side of the club has grown significantly stronger in 2016, with a net gain of 11, compared with a net gain of 4 women.

The majority of members are playing competitively, with 50 (of 69*) women (72%) having played at least one match in the Middlesex Summer League in 2016 and 36 (of 55) men (65%) having played at least one match in the Middlesex Summer League, Middlesex Cup or Aegon Team Tennis in summer 2016.

**Excluding Wendy from the total*

Henry Horton played a phenomenal 20 matches during the course of the summer (representing every Men's team!), with Lauron Shaw playing 15, Will Porter 10 and Paul Knipe 9. Among the women, Jane Grimston played the most Middlesex Summer League matches, playing in 9.

5. Treasurer's report and approval of accounts for year ending 31 March 2016

Richard (Treasurer) circulated a report at the meeting. He reported that the underlying profit for the year was £827.68. The year-end bank balance was £4,010.48. *[If anyone would like a copy of the Treasurer's report please contact the club secretary or treasurer].*

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

6. Approval of minutes of AGM held on 30th September 2015 and matters arising not on the agenda for this meeting

The minutes of the AGM held on 30th September 2015 were accepted as a true and accurate record of that meeting and were signed by the Chair.

Matters arising

- **Social media/ virtual clubhouse:**

As discussed in item 2 above, Wendy actively posts on the club's Facebook page. There had been no progress in setting up a closed Facebook page, as discussed at the 2015 AGM (*see minutes of that meeting*).

- **Whole club social events:**

The whole club social event which was planned for the end of the summer 2016 summer season (*see minutes of 2015 AGM*) had not taken place. Alan apologised for not having actioned this, and said that he, Jens and some of the other men would aim to arrange a whole club social event to take place at the end of the 2016/2017 winter season and before the 2017 summer season.

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 – **Roseanna Pollen, Wendy Proudfoot, Caroline Griffiths, Jenny James, Richard Oakley, Henry Horton, Alan Rickett and Phil Wigan** - all indicated that they would be willing to serve on the committee for a further year. In addition, **Sarah Mulligan, Jens Hills and Paul Knipe**, who were not present, had indicated in advance that they would be willing to continue to serve on the committee. The remaining member of the outgoing committee – Susan Hahn - had not clarified whether or not she wished to continue; the assumption was that she did not.

Club rules allow for between 5 and 13 committee members. None of the other members present at the meeting indicated a desire to serve on the committee.

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

It was noted that Alice Hamilton (Captain, Ladies 1), Barbara Reissner and Megg Nicol (Joint Captains, Ladies 2), Angela McCallion (Captain, Ladies 3, Winter League and Captain, Ladies 4, Summer League) and Will Porter (Captain Men's 2) were not on the committee. It was agreed that they would continue to be invited to attend committee meetings, as is the case at present.

8. Any other business

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