

# TUNBRIDGE WELLS LAWN TENNIS CLUB

Tunbridge Wells Lawn Tennis Club Limited

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held at 19.30 on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**The meeting was held face to face at the club house, those present:**

David Arthur  
Jason Baker  
Tony Barnes

Jane Brooks  
Jonathan Brooks  
David Browne  
James Charman  
Irene Clark  
Paul Darby  
Alper Deniz  
Kari Eklund

Brigid Ewins  
Sally Glynn  
Steve Graham  
Elizabeth Grove  
Paul Healey  
Barbara Hill

**Apologies:**

Chris & Yvonne Isaacs  
Alan and Linda Wilmshurst  
Stephen and Linda Pocock  
Mr and Mrs Jeremy Syers

Claire Hofman  
Angela Janousek  
Cathy Kirwan  
Charlotte Lawson  
Andrea Lunn  
Darius Mayhew  
Pam Morris  
Maria Parker  
Julia Patience  
Michael Patience  
Allison Pettitt  
Suzy Phillips  
Susan Prescott  
Alison Ribbon  
Timothy Shilton  
Shirley Spurgeon  
Adam Swan  
Shan White  
Diana Winters

Carmel Kinley  
Louise Dubec  
Ian Schlich  
Alison Stewart

## **AGENDA**

### **1. Welcome (Jason – Chair of the meeting)**

Jason welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through the list of apologies.

### **2. Quorum**

Jason confirmed the meeting is quorate with 34 members in attendance as quorum is 20.

### **3. Introduction to new Club Manager, Irene Clark**

Jason welcomed Irene as the new Club Manager since the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

Irene said how all the members have been very kind and welcoming of her to the Club and that she is looking forward to holding the reins and moving forward on the road ahead with the new Board and staff.

### **4. Ordinary Resolutions**

The **minutes of the AGM** of the Club held on 22 April 2021 were adopted by the AGM with 33 in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention.

The **re-appointment of Kevin van Doren** as auditor of the Company with 34 in favour.

### **5. Chairmans update and Treasurer's Report on the 14-month period to 31 December 2021 – presented by Di Winters**

Good evening, everyone.

It is great to be able to hold the AGM in person again this year. Whilst the wonders of technology are great, allowing us to hold a virtual meeting with over 50 people which would have been unimaginable a few years ago, I missed the personal interaction and it felt like I was presenting to a computer screen!

I would firstly like to welcome Irene onto our team. I know she has already met many of our members and worked hard getting up to speed and taking on the reins of Club Manager.

I have been on the Board as Treasurer now since 2019, so this is my third AGM and second as Treasurer and Chair. As I have already sent out the accounts and a financial report thereon, I have decided that I would do just one report tonight. It may be long but when it's over you won't have to listen to me again tonight! This will cover a few key financial points, plus more general points relating to the activities of the Club over the last year. It also covers the Articles. This will allow more time for you to meet the new Board members

afterwards in an informal setting. It will also enable me to have that glass of wine I am so desperately in need of!

Financially, in spite of the lockdowns of 2021 and the uncertainty that was around over how long restrictions might remain in place, the Club has emerged in a strong financial position. A profit of £95k, compared to £32k in 2019, the last year unaffected by lockdowns, is very positive. The Club has benefitted from a growth in subscription income and coaching net income, which, whilst we recognise is unlikely to continue to grow at the same rate, we hope we can sustain at the 2021 levels. However, we are fully aware that there is still much uncertainty for everyone in 2022, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine impacting all prices. These rising costs will impact the Club, both on an operational day to day basis, and potentially on the ability to move forward on projects.

## **Looking Back to 2021**

### **Subscription Income**

Subscription income was £226k in the 14 months to the 31 December 2021 which is £18k higher than for the prior 12-month period, reflecting the extra 2 months. The net increase from the membership churn was £36k but this was fully offset by the impact of the membership extension for the lockdown. There was no increase in subscription rates throughout the period.

We had 1008 members as of 31 December 2021. Of this number nearly 40% were juniors and distant students. This represents a net increase in membership numbers of 115 since 31 October 2020. The current total membership as of 31 August 2022 is 1,019, so whilst we are maintaining the numbers, we are not seeing the growth that we saw in 2021. This is to be expected, as 2021 saw a boom in new members when we came out of lockdown at Easter, and tennis as an outdoor sport, with fewer restrictions than other contact sports, became extremely popular. With many still working from home people had more flexibility over their hours and were able to fit in membership of a sports club instead of the daily commute.

As a Club we are conscious that the rising cost of living in 2022 will affect all our members who may have tough decisions to make on spending patterns and potentially impact membership and coaching numbers.

Whilst this growth in membership numbers has a favourable impact on the finances of the Club, the Board is mindful of ensuring that members' enjoyment of the Club facilities is not affected. We will continually monitor and review whether we need to implement a membership cap and start waiting lists for membership. There is not necessarily a golden number for any Club, as the split of membership between adults and juniors will have an impact on this figure, and the type of membership as well. We hope going forward to be able to monitor court utilisation in more detail. You can come down here on a glorious summer day and the courts are empty and come down again on a damp miserable day and the courts are full. We would like to be able to maximise the court usage as much as

possible. There are always going to be peak times when members want to play, such as a Saturday morning, so please ensure that if you no longer need your court, you cancel your booking as soon as possible. Operationally we will consider reverting to a 2-week booking, but we would probably also then go back to checking in for the court when you turn up, as there is a greater risk of members forgetting their booking the further ahead, they book. It maybe we time this to coincide with the new management system going live later this year.

Since July 2021 we have been logging why members are joining. 37% of them have attended coaching at the Club and 35% have heard about the Club by word of mouth. This is very positive and reflects the efforts of James and his coaching team. I have spoken to a few new members recently who say what a welcoming Club it is, with something for all abilities and good social and competitive opportunities to play. They also love the grass.

Nicola has also been surveying members when they leave to see if there is a particular reason for their decision. 66% of the members who left in 2021 said it was because they were not using their membership and 20% because they were moving away. Going forward as a Club we are looking at ways to encourage members to use the facilities more, with particular focus on our newer members to ensure they are getting the most out of the Club and therefore feel their membership is worthwhile. The LTA highlights that Club members who joined in the last 2 years are most at risk of leaving, as they have not built up the friendships and loyalty that our longer standing members have. I know there are many WhatsApp groups that run in the Club for social tennis, and it would be great if you could continue to encourage and invite our newer members to join yours, so they get a chance to play with members of a similar level. It can be daunting when you first join a Club, especially if you are new to the area, to meet people and get involved otherwise. Nicola and James are doing a great job in putting members in contact with each other, but we can all do our bit as well.

### **Coaching Revenue**

Income from the coaching programme was £205k in 2021, an increase of £14k (29%) in 2019, the last uninterrupted year of coaching. This gave rise to a net profit of £68k, an increase of £19k or 38% on the 2019 figure. The margin has also increased from 27% to 31%. I think we can all agree that the contribution the coaching programme is making to the net income of the Club only serves to confirm the tough decision that the Committee made in 2017, led by Ash Holding and Neil Poland, assisted

by then manager Laura Byers, to bring the coaching in-house, was the correct one.

Whilst this is a 14-month accounting period and therefore includes the net income for the whole of the Autumn 2021 term, this is largely offset by the fact we had to offer credits for the latter part of the Autumn 2020 term, and we were unable to do any coaching in the January 2021 term.

The main group programme has been built up since 2017 and continues to go from strength to strength, to the point where the Autumn Term 2022 has waiting lists. We are restricted here by the numbers we are able to have on court and maintain the ratios and standards that people have come to expect from our programme. James is keen not to increase the player to coach ratios with the potential detrimental impact on standards as this could quickly have a negative impact on the programme.

James also has coaches going into local schools to provide coaching, such as Tonbridge Girls' Grammar, and has looked into other opportunities too to allow the programme to expand. Parks tennis is proving very popular with some Clubs and is being promoted by the LTA currently to make tennis more accessible to all. This is something that, going forward, we, as a Club, may wish to investigate further.

The other key limiting factor to expanding the coaching programme is the fact we would need more coaches. Our current teamwork most days to cover all the lessons we offer, and the Club would love to have another Level 3 coach. However, many coaches left the profession over the pandemic, and it is currently very hard to find any new coaches at that level. James has recently taken on 3 trainee coaches, Matthew, Naomi and Oli, who help out with the programme, and they are working closely with James and the core team to develop their skills and experience.

We are lucky to have such a dedicated and loyal core team of coaches at the Club. They go out in all weathers, from searing heat to snow, torrential rain to gales. They teach from the tiny tots to the more mature player, from beginners and rusty rackets to team players. On behalf of the Club, I would like to thank Adam, Darren, James B, Lucy and Tom for all their efforts.

It is with the holiday camps that we have seen the greatest growth. With people unable to go abroad after lockdown, and some sports slower to re-open, our holiday camps were in high demand. In 2019 around £35k of coaching income came from camps, in 2021 this figure was £67k. In terms of numbers in 2019 we had 978 children attending camps, which rocketed to 1,750 in summer 2021. Many children return year after year to camps and much of the growth in demand has been down to word of mouth.

The improvement in margin has been positively impacted by the use of more junior assistants for the holiday camps and parts of the programme. In 2021, costs relating to junior coaches on camps was £11k, compared to £4k in 2019, whilst the costs of our core coaches were £8k and £9.5K respectively.

Many of our junior assistants have been with us for years and James has nurtured and coached them, so they are now very experienced on court, and provide a great standard of coaching, as well as contagious fun, which is overseen by the core team. Some of the junior assistants have also taken their Level 1 coaching certificate. It is a shame that we will be saying farewell to Amalie Abdali, Ed Prescott, Molly Hudson and Becky Colbran as they go off to university, but they will be back no doubt to help out in the Easter and Summer holidays. James has, however, planned ahead and ensured that there are new junior assistants who have been helping out in the Camps and Junior Club Night, who will only

grow in confidence and experience as they grow older. I should add that our coaching assistants are not all juniors, Roger Hardaway and Miles Porter have also joined their ranks.

James has also had initial discussions with the LTA about his idea of a sponsorship programme for a youngster who would not otherwise be able to move into the coaching world. This would provide support and encouragement from the teenage years in the hope that we could one day have a home-grown Level 3 coach on our team. Whilst discussions are at an early stage this is an interesting and worthwhile initiative for the Club to consider.

James will provide more information on coaching later, but I would like to say thank you to James who has worked hard to make the coaching programme the success it is. The ratios and the standard of the classes we offer mean that we have built a fantastic reputation which, in itself, is a valuable marketing tool and helps us to reach out to new people through word of mouth. Many of the children who come to the coaching then join the Club as members as well.

### **The Bar and Social Events**

With the lockdown in early 2021, restrictions on numbers allowed to sit at one table and then the resurgence of Covid last Autumn, numbers using the bar did drop off for a while. Kari and her team worked hard keeping up to date with all the latest guidelines, including the one-way system and table service for a while. Not to mention the Perspex screen which I know Kari hated as it was difficult to hear anyone's orders, let alone have a friendly chat. The bar team remained as cheerful and welcoming as ever though, but I think have breathed a sigh of relief that things have returned to normal. Now we have all started to learn to live with Covid, numbers have picked up again and hopefully we will continue to see the bar busy in the evenings and at weekends as members share a drink together after a tough match on court.

We only had a couple of events this year, the Summer Party which Tim Shilton kindly organised and performed with his band at, and the End of Summer tournament kindly organised by Claire Hofman, Maria and Erik Parker. The profits from the ticket sales, charity auction and tournament of £1,600 were donated to Hospice in the Weald. Much of this was due to the refund on the marquee which we received when it got lost in transit, and Julian Leefe-Griffiths kindly stepped in and loaned us his gazebos. The team have some events planned over the next few months, the first one is Tea and Tennis on Saturday 24 September, so please sign up on the website for this. I know we are only just out of the summer holidays, so it is a bit early to mention Christmas, but the Christmas Dinner and Tennis should be back this year after a 2-year absence. Christmas jumpers optional!

Junior Club Night always draws a crowd in the bar, but sadly due to Covid we were unable to start this up again until June 2021. Gradually the numbers attending have picked up and we now regularly have 40 to the 4 o'clock session and over 10 to the 5 o'clock session. The hot dogs, burgers and chips are always popular with the children afterwards, and the parents like a glass of wine or beer as they wind down at the end of the week. Last term we also

welcomed some children from Ukrainian families who are in the UK under the government sponsored refugee scheme. They enjoyed this immensely and their parents enjoyed being able to meet up with others in a similar position. Thank you to Nicola and Kate Malone for the initiative. For those of you who met Diana who worked on a Monday and Wednesday morning, she and her family have returned to Kiev this week. We wish them all the best.

The concept of small bowl food, originally introduced in April 2021, has been taken on by Steve Graham and he has made it his own with “Bat and Bowl” on a Thursday evening. This has built up over time and is popular with those members who attend the Thursday evening social mix-in. It is available on a sign-up basis, with a few extras available on the night if you are lucky, and is open to all, so why not come down one Thursday and try it out. Steve also does a great brunch menu on a Sunday if you fancy popping down here then.

Irene and Kari are working on a bar and social survey which will be going out in the next few months to get your thoughts on what you would like to see going forward. We would also welcome your views on a cashless vending machine.

### **Courts**

During 2021 we converted courts 11-13 from hard courts to clay which I think all members agree has been a great improvement. The cost of £60k was met partly out of current cash deposits and partly out of the Sinking Fund. The Sinking Fund was originally set up to replace like for like and so the decision was taken not to overly deplete it by taking the full amount from it.

The Sinking Fund has since been reviewed and projected forward. Based on costings received earlier this year, we should have sufficient funds to follow a programme of resurfacing courts and upgrading floodlights and fencing over the next 5 or so years that will ensure they continue to be of a high standard. Paul Healy will give you more information on this later. With the rising costs we will continue to monitor the plans we have and ensure we have sufficient funds in this ring-fenced account. There is an assumption that we will continue to transfer the £26k per annum into it as set out by the terms of the LTA loan, even after the loan has been repaid.

### **Capital Expenditure**

The £11k relating to the services of surveyors and architects required to get the planning for the clubhouse refurbishment has been capitalised and will only start to be depreciated once the project has been completed. Paul Darby will give you an update on where we are with this later. We will need to do cash flow forecasts and review costings before we can commence the project. We can now be confident that this project will not affect our ability to maintain the courts as the Sinking Fund is currently fully funded. We hope given this financial security, and the fact the uncertainty of Covid and its restrictions would appear to have gone, that we will be able to move this forward in a phased manner.

The other capital expenditure item last year was the deposit that has been paid for our new Club Management System, Clubserve. It represents 50% of the cost of the 5-year licence. The new system is due to go live by the end of the year. For various reasons it has taken longer than we had initially thought to get to this stage. However, it is a bespoke system so allows us to have a lot of input into how it is set up and the reports it can provide, and the team are confident that we are getting close to the finish line. It will incorporate a virtual wallet for members which they will be able to top up online and also allow for payments of subscriptions and coaching online. We are currently working on the integration of the EPOS system and then we hope to be in a position to do some member testing of the portal next month. If you feel this is something you would like to be involved with, please contact Irene.

## **Moving forward to 2022**

### **Grounds**

I think we can all agree that Kevin has done a magnificent job with the grass courts this season. Even though we have had all that hot, dry weather they are still playing well for the end of the season. I understand more members than ever have been playing on the grass which is great news. It is important that members use them to ensure they are a viable asset for the Club, given the relatively short season they are in use for. They are a real selling point for the Club and such a joy to play on.

### **Teams**

The summer of 2022 saw 19 teams play in the Kent Leagues and 2 Teams in the Maidstone League. This meant over 100 members represented the Club over the season. The number of teams that we enter means we are able to have the advanced player as well as the good and intermediate player all able to represent the Club on the various teams. The standard of play amongst some of the juniors who have come through the Club coaching programme means that they too play on the senior teams.

Congratulations to Neil Rogers and the Men's' Vets Mid-Week who won their League in the of Summer 2022. Congratulations too, to Jason, Adam, Malcolm Hillier and Tom Rinker who play this weekend in the National Over 50's Quarter Final in Stoke. They played in the same round last year at the Club and Andrew Castle was on the opposing team!

The standard of these matches is often really good so I would encourage you to come down and watch sometime. From experience, you might want to bring earmuffs too though!

Thank you to the Club team Captains, James, Jason, Liz Grove and Alison Stewart for all the efforts you have, and continue, to put into arranging the matches. Thank you too to all the individual team captains and players.

In recognition of the time these members all put into representing the Club at venues all over Kent, the Operations Committee has decided that as from this season match fees will no longer be charged to players.

### **Tournaments**



Club Finals Day 2022 was well attended, and the standard of tennis was much appreciated. Fortunately, we avoided the peak of the Mediterranean heat that day. Congratulations to Pete Henshall and Liz Grove who won the Singles and to Dan Jones and Megan Houghton who won the U18 Singles, as well as to all our other Finalists.

Brian Goldsmith who has been the Tournament Referee for many years was unable to attend this year, and sadly passed away last Friday. Our thoughts go out to his friends and family at this time. Brian was Club Secretary here in the 1980's and played a key role in seeing the building of the new clubhouse through to completion in 1987. He was then appointed Club Administrator and continued in this role until his retirement in 2011. He continued to be a big supporter of the Club after this, and regularly dined at the Club on a Thursday evening and chatted with friends in the bar. We hope to have an event, probably a tournament, to commemorate what he gave to the Club later this year or early next year. I know many members knew him well and he will be greatly missed.

The summer tournaments organised by Jason and his team were a great success. Congratulations to our juniors Dan Jones and Izzy Coker who reached the Finals of the American Doubles mixed and were beaten by fellow Club member Elena Holland and her partner Oscar Gordon Reid in a closely fought match. Thank you too to the Tournaments Team who work and support Jason in the organisation and running of the tournaments. Jason will give a fuller update on the tournaments and teams later.

### **The Articles and tonight's Resolution**

At the AGM last year, you, the members, approved the transfer of the assets and liabilities, as well as the business of the Club to the newly formed Tunbridge Wells Lawn Tennis Club Limited, a company limited by guarantee. I can confirm this transfer took place on 1 January 2022. Thank you to Ed Fowler who helped with the finer detail of the assignment of the lease.

This change of status protects all Club members, by limiting any liability in the unlikely event of insolvency, to £1 per member. However, converting to a company from an unincorporated association does bring with it different regulations and administration requirements and a period of adjustment for all.

An updated set of Articles of Association of the Company was circulated to you all recently and you are being asked to approve these at the AGM today. Thank you to Shan White who assisted me working with our legal adviser to put these together, and our new Chair, Alper Deniz, who helped finalise them.

For these Articles to be approved and adopted, we require a vote in favour of the resolution of 75% from members present today and those who have submitted proxy votes. If approved these Articles will be adopted with effect from the end of the meeting. These revised Articles are intended to incorporate all the old Club rules and ensure these are current and relevant to the Club today.

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In any organisation there is a need to ensure some continuity at a high level, and we have tried to achieve this via the changes to the election terms. This should allow for fresh ideas and skills to be brought to the Board, whilst ensuring that there is some continuity in management, for the team. I am sure, going forward, when there are elections, that members will bear in mind the need for continuity as well as the skill sets needed when voting for their chosen candidates.

We have also increased the numbers required for a quorum, so it is more relevant to the size of the current membership. It is important that voting is representative of all the Club membership, and now you are able to vote by proxy we hope to encourage more interest. This is in line with other Clubs and LTA recommendations.

### **Club Management Structure**

Whilst the Club reporting structure largely remains the same, the role of the old Committee has effectively been split into two. The elected Board will be responsible for the strategy and direction of the Club, as well as overseeing the finances.

The Board will delegate certain responsibilities to the Operations Committee, which is comprised of a minimum of 5 elected Board members. This Operations Committee will be responsible for the day to day running of the Club, meeting at least 7 times a year and the Manager will present a management report at these meetings. James will also be invited to give coaching updates and the other team members as projects develop. Members will be made aware of when such meetings are to be held, and Minutes of these meetings will be made available to members on the Club noticeboard.

The Club has had sub-Committees for a while, such as the Tournaments Committee and Coaching sub-Committee, and it is hoped to expand these out to cover other key areas of the Club such as the Clubhouse Refurbishment Project, Marketing, Social Events and Welfare. These sub-Committees, comprised of a minimum of 3 Club members, will either have a Board member on them, or be invited to send a representative to attend the Operations Committee as required. They will discuss ideas and make proposals to the Operations Committee.

By joining a sub-Committee, you are increasing the diversity of the skills we have amongst those managing the Club, and you are increasing the number of members' interests and views that are being directly represented. If you are interested in giving some time and experience, please contact Irene or any Board member.

We would also like to have a Junior Sub Committee. Given 40% of our membership are juniors it would be great if they could have a say and voice their opinions, we all know they have them. If your child might be interested in this, please do let us know. It can always go on their Personal Statement.

Board members voluntarily spend a lot of time running the Club in the best interests of the members. Sometimes they have to make difficult decisions and at times it can be stressful. The Club team is also dedicated to the success of the Club and making it an enjoyable place for members. There is a saying "never mix business with pleasure" and I have to say it is

partly relevant here. It is hard to enjoy your tennis if you are interrupted by members asking questions or wanting to raise something when you are trying to have a nice afternoon of sport or a chat in the bar afterwards. I would therefore ask, in the politest possible way, please raise matters or concerns with the relevant team member or Irene direct, when they are in the office, and not on court. We all deserve some downtime and to be able to enjoy playing tennis with our friends and having a drink in the bar afterwards at the Club we love.

## **Board Update**

This year has seen a number of Board members retire. I think this is in part a reflection of the unusually long term, but also the commitment in terms of hours that the Board has put in over the last couple of years for a variety of reasons.

**David Arthur** left the Board earlier this year, having completed the challenging project of the change of status of the Club. He has been a Board member since 2017, bringing an in-depth knowledge of various aspects of law. I am pleased that Alper Deniz, who also has a legal background, has now joined the Board as Chair.

**Louise Dubec** was a proactive Committee member since 2016 and brought her marketing skills and experience to the Club. She has spearheaded various marketing campaigns over the years, stood handing out flyers at the station, helped with sponsors as well as played a large part in the design of the website. She has continued to lend support to Irene.

**Tim Shilton** joined the Committee in 2020 and nobly took on the role of Chair. He organised and played at the successful end of summer party, and it is a shame that as a result of Covid we could not hold more events, as I know Tim loves the social side of the Club.

**Kevin Yates** joined the Committee in 2018 and took on the role of Secretary in 2019. He was a vocal member of the Committee, but willing to listen to others as well, and never shied away from a challenge.

I thank them all, on behalf of the Club, for their time and experience which has been freely given over the years. I am sure they are now all enjoying their tennis more, unencumbered by the pressures of the Board.

**Jason Baker** is also stepping down this year. He has been a member of the Club for nearly 20 years and has served on the Committee for much of that time. He has led the tournaments Committee for most of this time, organising and running national and international tournaments, both junior and senior. A lot of work goes into these before, during and after the event, and he has built up a strong team to support him. He is a qualified LTA referee and has served on the Kent LTA Board since December 2013, where he is currently Honorary Secretary. Not only that he also plays on the teams for the Club and is the Mixed Teams Captain. Sorry Jason, it is beginning to sound like the TV show "This is Your Life". The Committee has benefitted from his extensive knowledge of Club tennis and his experience. He will be missed by the Board, but I am assured he will continue running the Tournaments Sub Committee and sit on the Coaching Sub-Committee. Thank you, Jason, on behalf of all the members.

We will welcome onto the Board **Alper Deniz, Brigid Ewins, Darius Mayhew and Cathy Kirwan**. They will have a chance to introduce themselves to you slightly later on this

evening. **Paul Darby, Paul Healy, Ian Schlich and myself** will remain on the Board. I am looking forward to handing over the reins of the Chair to Alper and the Secretary to Brigid and getting back to being the Treasurer again, and actually playing some tennis.

### **Thank you to The Team**

I would like to thank the main Club team, James, Kari, Kevin and Nicola on behalf of the members for all the work and dedication they put into the Club. Over the last 18 months they have ensured the smooth running of the day-to-day operations and have always remained positive and cheerful. We are fortunate to have such a loyal and supportive team. I would also like to welcome Irene onto the team, who in the three months she has been here has made an impression on the members and is now getting to grips with all the many demands that are required of being Manager of the Club. It is unfortunate Nicola could not be here tonight due to last minute hitch in childcare arrangements.

I would also like to thank my fellow Board members for all the hours they have put in over the last 18 months, and the support they have given to me. I look forward to working with you all again over the coming months.

### **And Finally**

The Club has grown massively over the last 20 years. In 2005 membership was only 564, in 2014 it was 690 and now we are at 1,019. This means we have effectively grown from a small club to a medium sized one. We have also now changed to a Company limited by guarantee, which means we need to comply with the Companies Act as well as the previous regulations and guidelines from the LTA. These factors bring with them many positives, but they also create a lot more administration and require a greater degree of management and control than before. However, I would like to reassure members that this has no bearing on how the Board is running the Club. The Board has always run the Club as a Members' Club and never as a business. I don't think Board members would give their time so freely if they viewed the Club as a business. They give their time because they care and because they want to give back to the Club they love. The Committee has always had the responsibility of managing the Club and its finances. This remains, although the Board now has extra responsibilities and liabilities. This will mean that sometimes business-like decisions have to be made in the best interests of the members to ensure the long-term financial viability of the Club. This does not mean, however, that we have forgotten where the true roots of the Club lie, which is with you the member.

I thank you all for your time. Does anyone have any questions?

David Arthur asked whether the Articles needing preapproval by HMRC?

Di Winters responded stating that once approved it was fine that they were adjusted providing the key points relating to CASC status were not changed.

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Di Winters then presented David Arthur, Jason Baker and Tim Shilton with a small gift in recognition of the Club's appreciation.

Jason then presented Di some flowers in recognition of all the hard work she has done with the articles and acting chair role and covering the treasurer role.

## 6. Special Resolution

Approval of the new set of Articles of Association for the Company which will be adopted with immediate effect, these were adopted by the AGM with 32 in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions.

## 7. Election of the Appeal Panel

Appeal Panel Candidate	Member Proposing	Member Seconding
Claire Hofman	Ruth Marshall	Carmel Kinley
Don McIntyre	June McIntyre	Richard Sweaney
Kate Malone	Margaret King	Andrew King
Shirley Spurgeon	Judy Walker	Rosalind Packer
Alison Stewart	Alison Ribbon	Michael Patience

All members **elected in favour of the Appeal Panel** with 30 in favour (plus 8 proxy), 0 against and 4 abstentions from Board members as they cannot vote on this point

## 8. Election of the Officers of the Club

Board Candidate and Position	Member Proposing	Member Seconding
<b>Alper Deniz - Chair</b>	Jacqueline Hardaway	Jane Brooks
<b>Di Winters - Treasurer</b>	Alison Ribbon	Dawn Ellingham Lord
<b>Brigid Ewins - Secretary</b>	Carolyn Woodward	Damen Biggs

34 (plus 8 proxy) members **elected in favour of the Officers**, 0 against and 0 abstentions

Jason introduced **Brigid Ewins** as the new Secretary to the Board and invited her to say a few words.

Brigid said I am interested in what members want and don't want and why they'd like to join the Club.

Firstly, I am an Accountant, and I am interested in the financial health of the Club and have some ideas of how I can add additional revenue streams. I am keen on policies, and I know these are on the website and the details of these policies are important, what I believe is missing are the protocols under the policies and I believe these would be useful for members. I have visited the social club mix in at 3 other clubs and I believe ours are not strong. There are lots of new members to get more involved and this would improve the cohesiveness of the club. With Irene as the new addition to the team I believe it will be organised and efficient and she will just need assistance to get on with running the club

## 9. Election of the Directors of the Club

Board Candidate	Member Proposing	Member Seconding
<b>Board Members Standing for Re-election</b>		
<b>Paul Darby</b>	Roger Hardaway	Gill Allen
<b>Paul Healey</b>	Peter Maltz	Dennis Flower
<b>Ian Schlich</b>	Daniel Mathew	Isabelle Schlich
<b>Members Standing for Election</b>		
<b>Cathy Kirwan</b>	Shan White	Sarah van Doren
<b>Darius Mayhew</b>	Han Zhong Zhang	Stuart Burton

34 (plus 8 proxy) members **elected in favour of the Directors of the Club**, 0 against and 0 abstentions

Jason introduced **Cathy Kirwan** as new Director to the board who would be focusing on Teams and Tournaments to say a few words.

Cathy said I have been a member for 18 years and a previous Board member. My interest lies with Teams and Tournaments, and I have worked alongside Jason for 15 years which has been both challenging and fun. My aim is to make changes to raise the profile of Teams through adding more news behind it and improving team practise.

I am advanced Nurse Practitioner for a local GP. I have been working on the tournament committee and with Jason now stepping aside I thought I'd step up onto the board to be as efficient as Jason.

Jason introduced **Darius Mayhew** as a new Director to say a few words.

Darius said I have only been here a few months and firstly I am interested in the new member experience and from day one I knew I wanted to be here forever. Secondly, I have been to lots of sports clubs and thirdly I'm interested in the sustainability of the future and getting the balance right. I would like to contribute to the balance in the future. I work with Boards and institutes and regulate lots of professionals and understand GDPR. I am on the board of a Table Tennis Club, and I helped them stay solvent over covid. My day job is part of a team for a major insurance company in the UK.

Jason congratulated the new members elected to the board and introduced Paul Healey to talk about the Courts and Grounds.

## **10. Report on the Courts and Grounds (Paul Healey)**

The Grass Courts have been excellently maintained during the summer period and a big thank you goes to Kevin for such an excellent job. You will see a skip being delivered over the next few weeks to start the scarification process. Courts 11-13 clay courts which were upgraded last year has proved successful. The 9 clay courts get serviced 2 times per year and have been serviced in May and are now planned to be serviced again on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. You will have noticed that there were a few floodlights out too and we have recently found a supplier who has visited and replaced 3 lamps.

With the floodlights on Courts 1-4 we are looking at a full service or upgrading to LED from metal Halide. We have recently found an excellent contractor who is coming to do an in-depth service. To upgrade to LED would be a 6-month process. The wooden fencing contractor was booked in and then had covid and now is due to fix the fencing 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> September.

The wire fencing has had a good deal of wear and tear along the 1-7 pathway and 7-10 are the priority. Courts 1-4 were painted in 2020 and are due to be resurfaced in 2023. The hard courts could be re surfaced or upgraded or even artificial grass or half hard and half soft, whatever is decided. We are keeping a watchful eye on courts 5-7 which are 11-12 years old and have a lifespan of 14-15 years. We have options of clay, artificial grass and or hard courts we have the budget in the sinking fund to make these choices.

In summary, courts 1-7 are our next focus, 11-13 are new and 8-10 are 5-6 years old and will review their performance over the next 5 years. It could be a further consideration as to whether Padel becomes part of the club strategy, Padel would cost £150k for 2 courts. There could be challenges with pay and play, noise challenges and location.

Question from Charlotte Lawson – Is the lighting of the pathway going to be looked at as it is dark and not safe and some of the lights do not work.

Paul agreed there was a problem with the courtesy lights. There is a legacy of different switch boards timers and boxes and a nightmare for the electrician to diagnose. These lights will be tested during the service when the floodlights are reviewed, and timers and they will recommend a way forward.

Charlotte Lawson said she knows she has seen floodlights on during the day and what a waste of members money this is and if staff see these on as they were on court can they turn them off. Paul said he was unaware, and he would look into this.

Darius Mayhew asked if we'd considered solar lights as his wife uses solar lights in the forest and 9 months of the year solar lights are used. He can ask her for a few and hang these on the fence near the hedge to see if the light can get to them as a trial as Paul was concerned that the overhanging hedge would hinder light getting to the lights.

## **11. Report on Tournaments held at the Club (Jason)**

### **Tournaments**

- With the covid restrictions still in place in 2021, we held three external tournaments instead of the usual four. These were the ITF Seniors Tournament, the Summer regional open tournament with adult and junior events and the Open Doubles Tournament. The Easter regional open tournament was cancelled due to covid. I will also cover the Club Tournament.
- It is therefore difficult to compare figures with previous tournaments and years due to the abnormal circumstances.
- Total profit for the year was over £2,900, (almost identical to the like for like figure in 2019).



- In addition, the bar takings for the two weeklong tournaments were nearly £7,000.
- The junior and adult open tournaments are two of only 6 Grade 3 regional tournaments in Kent throughout the year.
- Overall numbers of players in the three tournaments were similar as a total to last year, will approx. 430 people be playing.
- As you can see it would be difficult to make much profit without the £600 contributed per tournament by the sponsor of the open tournaments, Eastbourne College. We did not have a sponsor for the ITF Seniors event in 2021 or 2022 and are looking for one for 2023. FILA did however provide prizes for all the finalists for the last two years. A big thank you to both organisations for the support of our tournaments.
- It was great to return to the normal tournament calendar in 2022 and our tournaments continued to thrive bucking the trend around the country of fewer people entering with both the Easter and Summer Open events seeing an increase in numbers, particularly the Easter event which was the largest tournament we have run in the last 20 years. More about that in next year's AGM.
- Now to the club tournament and let's quote some numbers for 2021: 204 (206) players, 367 (380) entries across 21 events (4 junior and 17 adult) and 315 (338) matches. Figures almost identical to 2020. Culminating in an excellent final's day in July on a nice sunny day – it was great to see the juniors and adults playing their finals together. In 2021, the Men's and Women's Singles Champions were Pete Henshall and Amy Byers.
- We have obviously had the 2022 Club Tournament as well since the last AGM, where Pete Henshall retained his title and Liz Grove won the Women's Singles. Pete completed the treble winning the Men's and Mixed Doubles too. The entry levels were similar to last year with 212 players and 357 entries.
- Di already mentioned the sad loss of Brian Goldsmith last week. His loss will particularly be felt by the tournaments. After his retirement, Brian continued to put in a lot of work in helping at tournaments and as a member of the tournament committee. He acted as referee for the club tournament and quite a few people have encountered the dreaded coin toss by Brian if they had not played their match

by the play by date. Brian also court supervised all week at the open tournaments and told many a junior to improve their behaviour! His contribution to tournaments will be really missed.

- Thanks to all the people who help run the tournaments particularly the other members of the Tournament Sub-Committee in 2021 and 2022: Cathy Kirwan, Linda Wilmshurst, James Charman, Rachel Holahan and Shan White. If you are willing to help at any of the tournaments, or join the committee please let me know.
- Finally, a thank you must go to all our members for giving up their courts for the tournaments to take place. I hope you can see from the figures that they make a healthy profit for the club, and of course provide some excellent tennis for our members to watch.

### **Teams**

- The club continues to enter a number of teams in both the Kent and Maidstone Leagues. Each season we enter approximately 25 men's, ladies, and mixed teams across the two leagues, with 70 or so people regularly playing in teams.
- Over recent years our team have been very successful and won divisions and got promoted, hence all the shields on the wall in the stairwell. The last couple of seasons has been an exception with only a few teams being victorious. Most recently our Midweek Men's Veteran Team winning their division in both Summer 2021 and 2022, Men's 2 and Men's Vets 1 winning their divisions last Winter.
- We continue to look for new players to join our teams and I know James is looking to revamp the Team Practice this Winter to encourage more people to get involved in teams and to improve our results. If you are interested in playing in team, please talk to our Kent League captains, namely, James Charman (Men's Captain), Liz Grove (Ladies Captain), myself (Mixed Captain), or Alison Stewart (our Maidstone League captain).

Question raised by Barbara Hill – Can we add the names of the members in the teams and pictures in the newsletters as we don't know who they are. Jason thought it was a good idea and Paul Darby said we used to do it in the courier. Suzy Phillips suggested contacting Eileen Leahy at Times of Tunbridge Wells.

Julia Patience suggested boards with scores on the back of the court as to how the match is going. Jason said it was a good suggestion and we should consider buying some of these.

## **12. Report by the Director of Coaching on the Coaching Programme (James)**

Coaching over the past year and a half has been busy to say the least. We have seen record numbers across all aspects of our program including all 3 terms and camps. Coming out of the lockdown in 2021 March saw a surge in people playing tennis. The program in 2019 was hitting record targets and though the lockdowns we were unsure as to what tennis would look like. I am happy to report we have surpassed our targets in 2019 to the point where we find ourselves with multiply waiting lists and no more court space. The program now sees on site 650 players per week having coaching which excludes our schools, junior club night and camps. To give you an idea in 2021 which was our strongest year before covid we had 430 players per week. With numbers being so high one of our biggest and continuous goals is to make sure we maintain the value of coaching people have come to expect from TWLTC.

The adult program has nearly doubled over the last year with most our groups being fully booked. Many new players to the program have been either beginners or players coming back to the sport after a long break. We are still looking to grow the adult program further by bring more groups across the board for all levels.

The TWLTC camps have been a real highlight to the program. To give you an idea on the success of camps, 2019 summer camps saw 978 players across 4 weeks, 2022 summer camps saw 1664 players across 4 weeks. The growth has been staggering. We have been tracking the marketing to find that word of mouth has been an 89% contributor to the camps. We also introduced our first Camp festival where for half the morning there where skill-based activities in a Hawaiian theme. The feedback from children and parents was really positive which adds another unique section to our club and camps driving us apart from our competitors. Photos of the event are currently on Instagram and Facebook but will also be on the website shortly if you wish to have a look.

2021 also saw the introduction of the clubs first junior tournament program. A common problem we find with our sport is that many people train but don't play, this is, in part due to the lack of grass root tennis tournaments available to juniors, with them quite often either having to travel to Bromley or Canterbury for their first match. Recognizing this gap, we wanted we brought out the junior tournament program. The program is designed to give children the opportunity to play our sport and not just train, giving them regular opportunities to play, whether is singles, doubles, or team events. This has been such a popular program only having run 8 events. Due to this, the junior tournament program will become an integral part of the yearly program.

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## TEAM

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It's fair to say that the success of the programme is down to the amazing team we have here at TWLTC. Through a turbulent couple of years, the team has gone from strength to strength and a testament to TWLC, this includes the office team, core coaches, and junior coaches, all of which form to make a highly skilled, welcoming and professional team. We simply wouldn't be achieving the heights we are without them, so a special thank you from me.

Sadly, we see some of these junior coaches leave us for Uni, they are always missed as often favourites with the children, but we wish them all the best on their next chapter.

We also say goodbye to one of our main coaches Malcolm Hilliar. Malcom was a great addition to the term and the programme/ clients have really benefited from having coaching with him. He moves on to run Marden Tennis club and we wish him all the best.

We are currently looking to replace Malcom but sadly coaching has taken a hard hit through covid and there is a shortage of coaches. We are continuing our search as well as looking into support our own juniors giving them the opportunity to look at a coaching career.

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## NEW FOR 2022/23

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This term will see the introduction of our player awareness program. This highlights players throughout the program and their achievements. Some of these examples will be player of the month awards, competition awards and skill awards.

Our outreach program will address looking into more schools. There are slight restrictions to this with coaches' availability but is an area that we wish to grow.

Overall, coaching has been a real success story here at TWLTC and something we should all be proud of. Having the support from all of you is something that we really appreciate and continue to strive to deliver the level of coaching you all deserve. There's a lot of new things to come, which as a team we are excited bring out.

Thank you all for your time!

### 13. Update on the proposed Clubhouse refurbishment (Paul Darby)

#### Notes

1. Introduction
2. Where we are now? – We have onboard an architect (Sophie George), Quantity surveyor (Matt Wenham), Structural Engineer (Jamie Cook)
3. Previous attempts for refurbishment works were looked at and discussed and adjusted to what is believed to be the latest requirement
4. We have full site drawings completed by the architect. We have full planning permission granted by TWBC. The refurbishment is fully costed by the quantity surveyor. There have been many site meetings with those concerned to fine tune the work required.
5. The work was planned to be completed in 3 phases estimated to be done in a 3-year period.
6. Phase 1 – Ground floor changing rooms and remodelling.
7. Phase 2 - First floor bar area opening up with bifold doors to the balcony and the staircase wall to make the bar area more open and increase light.
8. Phase 3 – External issues comprising of replacing handrail with glass and chrome, balcony floor and external staircase improvements. Additional removal of some excess steel in and around the staircase that would improve the look of the building.
9. General notes – The building has been maintained over the years but not upgraded since being built that means most of the services (electrical, plumbing, and final finishes) are due for renewal increasing the cost of the work.
10. Currently building costs are going up caused by shortages of materials and labour increasing the final figure considerably based upon pre pandemic costs.
11. The initial plan – Once all the pre planning and costing was completed this would be put to the board for approval and discussion I would then start to put plans and 3d sketches in the bar area for members to look at and comment on. Then of course the pandemic went into full mode, and everything stopped and board meetings were more based upon getting the club open and safe.
12. The board now need to pick up on this and discuss the plan forward for paying for the works. It may be that some compromise may be required to reduce the costs and make the work more affordable.

Alper Deniz has asked how long it will take to complete?

Paul Darby said 3 phases over 3 years

Michael Patience asked if the board had agreed the plans and when to present to members?

Paul said the board had agreed the comments from members and the plan was from the previous committee but there is now a challenge getting contractors and apologised for the fact members hadn't had sight of the plans as yet.

Claire Hofman can we not just get a price and get on with it? Look at the plans and ballot members, as the toilets are an embarrassment.

Paul responded saying costs would need to be approved

Shan White said why not send out the 3 phases to the members and give them an idea of cost. Get phase 1 sorted, have more interaction with members, we saw pictures from Sophie 6 years ago.

David Arthur said that the conversion of the club to a company limited by guarantee needed to be completed prior to the refurbishment project commencing to protect the members from any possible liability and enable finances to be raised as a Company and not an unincorporated entity.

Darius Mayhew said that priority was important to members, and I love upstairs but downstairs the message is diluted.

Paul said the ground floor men's toilets would need configuring

Shirley Spurgeon said it was the men on the board who changed this originally

Jason said I agree with the state of the changing room during tournaments is an issue

#### **14. Any other Business Brought Before the Meeting**

Jason asked whether there were any other final comments?

Darius said he would ask his wife for a few solar lights to put on the stairs to see if they would work.

Brigid Ewins said to James she knew new members who had not had their initial assessment, they need a guide as they don't know their level.

James said he was a bit behind and the fact there were 6-7 he still needed to pick up.

Jason said thank you and the meeting is now brought to a close, thank you to Di and all of the board, members, staff and volunteers for all your support.

David Brown said I want to ask about booking courts over a 2-week period

Di said she had mentioned this in her report, and it would be discussed by the Operations Committee, and if re-introduced it would most likely be in conjunction with the new club management system which will go live during November.

David said I would like to be part of the member testing for that project.