

Croxley Tennis Club Annual General Meeting 21 January 2014

Venue Croxley Tennis clubhouse

Present

Committee members – Colin Hewett(CH), Paul Helbrough(PH), Helen Wright(HW), Lynda Cox(LC), Liz Burch(LB), Richard Boyce(RB), Mike Coster(MC), Lee Smith(LS), Pauline Worby(PW), Wayne McDonald(WM), Lesley Nash(LN)

Members – Tina Lissenden, Dave and Emily Smith, Bev Hall, Sue Reynolds(SR), Liz Beak(LBe), Michael and Joan Bovington, Maureen Ramsden, Jonathon Solomons(JSo), Jon Taffel, Jenny Wright, Jeremie Ageneau, Elvin Stewart, Annie Carpenter(AC), Brendan Cox, James Cox, Doug Pullinger, Mark Everett(ME), Malcolm Gardiner, Gary May(GM), Julia Brooks, Angie Edmunds, Norman and Jackie Yardley, Mark Appleby, Peter Worby(PeW), Colin and Glenda Midson, Aaron Goldstein.

Apologies

Brian Linskey, Dennis Lissenden, Ian Wilkie, Janet Dann, Jeremy Shindler(JS), Gaynor Pryse, Gary Broadbridge.

Chairman's opening comments

CH welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them all for coming. A special welcome to past chairmen, Michael Bovington and Peter Worby.

Approval of minutes from last meeting

Copies of the minutes were available and CH asked if there were any questions or comments. There were no matters arising and the minutes were accepted by all present.

Membership report

The report was made available to all present.

RB once again thanked JS, LN and the coaching team for their support throughout the year.

He reported that although the LTA recognized a 9% decrease in participating tennis players in 2013, Croxley Tennis Club had actually had an increase of 5.7% in membership. He added that this reflected well on everyone in the retention of existing, and introduction of new, members.

He said that a modest increase was proposed for membership fees for 2014/5.

JS asked if there was any data available as to why new members had joined the club. He had run events throughout the year and would like to know which if any had created interest in joining. RB replied that this information is not available at present but his target for the coming year was to develop a “new member experience” and a better database for capturing this sort of data.

GM asked how new members were inducted to the club. RB and CH replied that a few ideas had been suggested such as a buddy, new member evening, a new member on the committee to improve the experience for new members, but as yet nothing had been finalised.

PW said that in the past the ratio of adult to junior members was around 50:50, but the junior numbers appear to have decreased. CH replied that a lot of junior members had been lost and the aim is to concentrate on retention of junior members.

GM asked if there was a limit to the number of members and what happens when we reach that figure. CH replied that the recommended membership for 6 courts was 360 but felt 330 would be preferable. CTC has 296 at present and would rethink if the welcome problem of too many members should ever arise.

ME asked if an online survey would help and if so he was willing to compile a form. RB thought it would be a great idea.

PW asked what was meant by EQ on the membership categories. EQ is Approved Junior.

Juniors and coaching

The junior and coaching report was available at the meeting.

WM said it had been a busy year, both on and off court. He thanked Liz and Brian for their time. It had been a successful year but could have been better.

He would like to get juniors playing tennis more than once a week, perhaps introducing American tournaments. HW asked if there was any feedback as to why they do not come and play more often. WM replied that they had sent out a survey but had received very few responses. JS said a parents' meeting and junior committee had been proposed but nothing happened. LBe said parents thought this was a good idea but no-one wanted to be involved. WM said he was limited in what he could achieve by the amount of help he could get.

GM felt that the children do not feel part of anything when they come to tennis compared with rugby or football where they are part of a team. Perhaps if they wore a CTC fleece they would have an identity. CH said he was hoping to get sponsorship for this sort of thing.

WM concluded by saying his team had a lot of ideas but now needed to act on them.

Marketing

LS reported that with help from JS our online presence through Twitter and Facebook has been really successful and the envy of others in the area, recognized by people such as Martina Navratilova. More engagement will encourage sponsorship for the club.

LS said this year work will be put into revamping the website for the club, with online interactions for members, booking courts, ordering clothing etc.

LS concluded by saying he would welcome help in design, marketing and publicity. There needs to be a lot of branding around the club and someone is needed to arrange it. New people with areas of expertise need to come forward and be proactive. AC suggested using Twitter to ask for such people to come forward.

At this point RB reminded everyone about Spend and Raise and to please use it when making online purchases. SR suggested putting up a big poster in the club house to remind members of the advantages of Spend and Raise.

Social Secretary's report

MC reported that last year he had stuck to organizing the main events, the Revels, Dinner and Dance, Finals Day. He gave thanks again to Tina for doing most of the work.

MC said he and Tina were handing over the running of social events to SR and her team. He would help and facilitate ideas from the floor and from the ladies themselves. They had already successfully organized the Christmas mulled wine evening.

MC said he felt the Revels showed real club spirit, many helpers turning up for the setting up, the pulling down and so on.

CH added that the Dinner and Dance was the flagship event and needed more members to attend. At the moment it attracts more guests than club members. JT said that a lot of the older members had stopped attending because the music was too loud. Aaron said "silent disco" is becoming popular – guests wearing headphones!

PW said that members missed the summer parties. It was explained that there were too many events to organize at the same time and this was why it had not taken place. Peter Worby offered to organize the party this year if the members wanted it. A show of hands proved this to be the case.

Club Tournaments

LBe reported that the summer tournament had been a success with some very close matches and glorious sunshine on Finals Day. Unfortunately there had been some late withdrawals from the Ladies events.

The present 2013-2014 Winter Shield allowed all members to enter, including Associates.

Unfortunately there are still a lot of empty boxes where matches have not been played.

This year summer tournament Finals Day will probably take place in September. This had been discussed by the club committee and LS and LBe, the tournament committee, were willing to give it a try.

LBe concluded that she and LS were always open to suggestions from members regarding club tournaments.

Treasurer's report

A copy of the accounts was handed out at the meeting. LN reported a good year for the club financially, particularly with the opening of a deposit account which managed to raise over £1000 in interest. Thanks to RB for setting this up.

LN was concerned about people not getting money to her in time for the end-of-year accounts. To ease this process it has been decided to compile a list of those people LN should expect money from each year.

CH added that £60000 was required to renew courts 4, 5 and 6 which was hopefully going to take place later in the year.

PeW said this was an excellent set of accounts particularly as income was greater than expenditure, and in view of this could there be no increase in membership fees this year. RB and CH explained this would not be a good idea this year but perhaps next year if finances were still looking good then maybe there would not have to be an increase.

JS said he thought now that coaching sessions had been introduced at social events this repays the increase in the fee. He thought this was a great initiative.

CH then asked the members to accept the accounts. The accounts were unanimously accepted.

Chairman's comments

CH reported that over the last year many good things had come about, some not so good .

The good :-

- Clubhouse maintenance – thanks to PeW and his boys for painting etc.
- Coach led sessions on Friday nights, Sunday mornings, Wednesday nights and Wednesday mornings. Fridays and Sundays had been a major success, Sundays seeing 15-20 players.
- Change in visitors' fees – fairer pricing. Members are asked to write in the visitors book and collect payment.
- There had been a new approach to teams and team captains giving transparency and efficiency. Trials were introduced for team players.
- Set4sport – credit to JS for organizing this successful event.
- Social media a new venture for CTC. Credit again to JS for helping to set this up.
- New coach – credit to WM for the advertising, interviewing etc.
- New membership categories have been successful due to RB.
- Girls' Fun Days – LBe had put a lot of time and effort into these and there had been a lot of interest.
- Scout and Guide introduction evenings
- Gardening and grounds – thanks to Dave Smith
- Clubhouse management – credit to Emily for keeping everything in good order.

- Dinner-dance
- Schools programmes and camps
- Emails and newsletters – these contain a lot of information
- Tournaments
- League entries and team's management
- Printing, artwork and branding
- Clothing
- Accounts

The not-so-good:-

- Work parties had been badly attended
- Posters and noticeboards are not being kept up-to-date
- Website needs updating
- Clubmark – CTC is in danger of losing its Clubmark status – we need a representative
- Clubhouse interior needs attention to provide a more homely space
- Contacts' list to be compiled

Real successes:-

- All teams had performed outstandingly resulting in 11 promotions in 2 years and no relegations. This is due to more people hitting more balls and ultimately making better players.

In general CH thought the main jobs had been done well. Thanks to LN and Jerry for their excellent work on the accounts, to MC for his social events, LS for marketing and to LC for the minute-taking, without which no-one would know what they were supposed to be doing. However the random jobs had not been pursued.

Thanks also to both PH and RB for their work through the year. PH has however suggested he would like to step down at the end of the year and RB has indicated he would like help with membership this year, and would seek to step down at the end of the year.

Election of committee

CH again thanked Tina and MC for their hard work organizing successful social events over the year. They are handing over to Sue Reynolds and her team under the guidance of MC for the time being. He also gave thanks to LB and PW for their work on the committee as they were now stepping down.

Gary May and Jonathon Solomons were both willing to stand on the committee.

The rest of the existing committee was willing to stand for another year. The members were asked to elect those standing on block.

Chairman – Colin Hewett

Secretary – Paul Helbrough

Minutes Secretary – Lynda Cox

Treasurer – Lesley Nash

Membership Secretary – Richard Boyce

Social Secretary – Mike Coster

Publicity and Marketing Manager – Lee Smith

General member – Jonathon Solomons

General member – Helen Wright

General Member – Gary May

Head Coach – Wayne McDonald

The committee was unanimously elected.

Mark Everett volunteered to help with online matters.

CH added that there are key roles to be filled, not necessarily by committee. These include maintenance, Clubmark, Revels, Teams manager.

In a year's time a secretary and membership secretary will also be required.

CH asked anyone who may be interested to please come forward.

Any Other Business

MC asked for a vote of thanks to CH for his work over the year and his persuasive approach that got things done.

CH asked for a show of hands on the following.

- Who does not receive/read CTC newsletters – only 2 do not receive but a small number did not read mainly because of time constraints or mailboxes too full. Emily asked to be added to the mailing list.
- How many are on Twitter or Facebook – about half do not use social media
- How many know how to lock up when leaving, what needs turning off. This has become a weekly problem, gates left unlocked, clubhouse and container left open, heating left on. Everyone needs to take responsibility and check person left behind knows what needs doing and how to do it.

Dogs Mark Appleby said CTC was a great club in many ways but he had an issue with dogs running around the club grounds and sometimes fouling. Many members have a fear of dogs, do not like them running up and down when play is in progress and they are beginning to spoil the grass. After some discussion a Club Rule was proposed that dogs brought to the club must be kept on a lead at all times and a poster to this effect should be displayed. This was agreed by all.

Rugby club and parking JS asked if contact could be made with the Rugby Club as to when parking may be a problem due to big events. He also suggested maybe leaving a mobile phone number visible in cars parked in awkward positions.

Additional teams PeW asked if there was demand for a 3rd ladies team and a 4th mixed team. CH replied we are 4th on the waiting list for a ladies team but there is a problem with court space to have a 4th mixed. There is a possibility of using Rickmansworth School for this.

Doug P asked about a 5th men's team. CH replied that it would be difficult for a 5th men's team to enter the league but there is the opportunity to play friendly matches if someone would organize.

Michael B also suggested people try county matches. HW replied that these matches are held at weekends and it has been a problem getting a team prepared to play all day. Hot racquets has taken over and been successful.

CH concluded by saying the Club would start afresh (vis a vis Mens E, Ladies C and Mixed D) and ask for helpers to organize matches and see what happened.

Actions

- “New member experience” and possible online survey
- Members with areas of expertise to be sought via newsletter and Twitter
- **New Club Rule** – dogs brought into the club grounds must be kept on a lead at all times
- Poster for keeping dogs on lead
- Add Emily to mailing list for newsletters
- Request for volunteers to organize new team matches
- Someone required to look after Clubmark
- Clubhouse interior
- Contacts' list to be compiled

CH then declared the meeting closed and invited everyone to the Guild for refreshment.