

HALESWORTH TENNIS CLUB

1ST NEWSLETTER 2023-2024 SEASON

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AGM 2023

The AGM was held on 12th April 2023 in the Pavilion at Dairy Hill

1. Welcome and Apologies

Simon Thackray (Chair) welcomed those present to the AGM.

Present

Trustees: Simon Thackray, Pam Fenner, Mick Binder, Lyn Burnett, Tessa Summers, Mike Davies, Nicola Frost

General members: Sue Foster, Ann Jones, Caroline Rodbourne, Scott Fishwick, Sheryl Meldram, Heather Laws-Smith, Mathew Hunt, Sarah Giles, Kate Batten-Phelps, Steve Burnett, Ross Wilson (Coach)

Apologies

Trustees: Charlotte Binder, Dan Sanders, Ben Sharratt

General members: Barry MacDonald, Shayne and Jane Davis, Lee and Zoe Morley, Roger Webb, Liz Cunningham, Christopher Jenkins, Pat Rennie

2. Approval of the minutes of the AGM 2022

Ahead of the 2023 AGM, the minutes of the 2022 AGM were circulated via email to all members. These were agreed as a correct record with one exception – Sue Foster's name had been incorrectly written as 'Sarah Foster' in the Apologies. There were no matters arising from the minutes not otherwise covered within the agenda. These will be signed by Simon Thackray (Chair).

3. Officers Reports

(a) Report from the Chair

Simon Thackray read his Annual Report which is presented **verbatim** below. Additional comments/notes made at the meeting are underlined and in italics.

“It's been a year of calm & stability in Halesworth Tennis Club.

The Open Day early in the season brought in some new members and there have been a few additions as the year has progressed. However, because a few members have retired from tennis due to age or injury, the overall membership at the end of the year has remained roughly where we started at around 65 members. From where we were only a couple of years ago, we should be pleased that we have at least put the club on a sound foundation with sufficient income to cover outgoings and with a small surplus. About two years ago we went down to as low as 30 members.

In early summer, we experimented with a **Round Robin Box League** of mixed doubles. Only 8 pairings took this up; the intention is to go again with this in 2023 and maybe get a bigger take-up. This may also take on a different format.

We rejoined the **Lowestoft League** for the first time in quite a few years. The Club has struggled to have a hard core of members combining the necessary playing standard with the level of regular commitment to participate in inter-club league tennis. Using a squad system, we were able to meet our league commitments and not finish bottom of the league! We have committed the club to entering a team again this season.

I'd hoped to report that we had tied up the Club's security of tenure at Dairy Hill by entering into a 25yr lease with the freeholder, Halesworth Community Sport & Leisure. Whilst terms have been agreed, the documentation is still in the solicitors' hands and so not yet signed, sealed & delivered. I think I can say with confidence that we will get this over the line in the next few months. Mick Binder acknowledged on behalf of the Committee all the work done by Simon so far with matters relating to the lease. Simon emphasised his hopes that we were nearly there.

There are **2 big challenges** facing us over the next couple of years. **First**, we need to ensure we have a **united purpose**. There was a point where there were spoken aspirations for quickly restoring the Club to a membership of over 100 members. There was a time over 20 years ago when the Club did apparently have a membership of around that number. Whilst this may happen, the way the Club is set up, its location, the nature of the surrounding area, we need to be content if we can hold our own at present levels. That does not mean complacency; if the Club does not continue to bring in around a dozen new members every year (that represents nearly 20% growth year on year), then the Club will decline simply because of the demography of the existing Club members.

The **second** big challenge is **the decline of the courts' surface** to the point they have virtually reached the end of their natural life. Three tennis court resurfacing companies have paid us a visit, inspected the courts, broadly agreed that the courts are beyond patching and require total resurfacing. They also broadly agree on price; including VAT which the Club cannot reclaim, the Club will need to find around **£40,000**. For any club, this would be a tall order but for a small club like Halesworth, it will be impossible without obtaining grant aid and possibly even a loan from Suffolk LTA. Once the new season gets underway, this project will be the highest priority to see if we can raise the money to make resurfacing possible in the autumn/winter 2023 or at worst, by the spring of 2024. As external grant funding tends to be more accessible if we can get **matched funding**, that means in effect raising 50% in-house i.e. £20,000. This must be done sooner rather than later. My proposal, subject to discussion, is to have a ringfenced pot, and we start the pot with 3 things – (i) the surplus we have already built up; (ii) we ensure our **membership subscriptions** are set at a level to create a small surplus; and (iii) we put out a request to all the membership asking for **one-off voluntary donations** which would be used for no other purpose than the court resurfacing. A suggested amount could be given but people could decide for themselves if they want to give more or less than the proposed amount. The more we raise as a club, the less we'll have to borrow or be dependent on grants being available. Matched funding was emphasized and explained. An increase in Membership subscriptions was proposed and agreed, which will be as follows: Single membership - £80 to £90, Family membership - £140 to £150 and Junior membership - £25 to £30.

Thank you to Ross Wilson, the professional allocated to our club by Heads-Up, for supporting the coaching programme for the second year. It is hoped that this relationship will kick on in 2023/24.

And last but by no means least, the **Club does owe its thanks to the Trustees** who give up their time to keep the Club alive and kicking. Without them all doing what they do, there would be no Halesworth Tennis Club. I've avoided naming individuals throughout this report as everyone performs a task, but I will conclude by giving **special thanks to one person, Pam**, who is stepping down as a trustee and as Club Secretary. She has served the club with great energy for many years and taken on several additional duties above & beyond the job description. So, it's a particularly big thank you to Pam. AGM attendees acknowledged all Pam's efforts and contributions."

(b) Finance – Treasurer's Report

Mike Davis explained that after **Barry MacDonald** had stepped down as Treasurer at the AGM on 12/04/22 he took on the role of Co Treasurer alongside Ben Sharratt. At the 2023 AGM, **Barry** will be appointed as our auditor to ensure that our financial records and statements are accurate and completed properly. His appointment was proposed by **Tessa Summers** and seconded by **Mike Davis**. **Mike** presented a draft copy of the Final Annual Accounts for the year ending March 2023 which is to be audited by **Barry**. **Mike** went on to explain that we have had a relatively low year of expenditure (last year we had more wear and tear costs and general maintenance e.g. lights) and took attendees through some of the

financial figures including the Total Funds amount of approximately £7,640.14, subject to the audit and remaining expenses. The accounts were accepted by **Mick Binder**. **Mike** then returned to the resurfacing of courts and the idea of ringfencing an amount of this surplus to go into the pot for new courts (introduced in the Chair's report above). This would go alongside a slight increase in membership fees, voluntary donations and fund-raising in order to have the **matched funding** for grants etc. (see Chair's report). **Mike** concluded that the overall look for finances is better than last year.

Sue Foster then thanked the Committee for the maintenance work done around the courts to improve Health and Safety. The wooden boards at the base of the fencing were particularly mentioned. **Simon Thackray** indicated outstanding invoices from HCSL (2 x £200) and Ross Wilson (approximately £200) which brings finances more in line with a typical year. Questions on the Accounts were invited from the floor but there were none.

4. Club Developments

(a) Membership Club Developments

Open Day

Simon Thackray outlined the Committee's intentions to have the annual Open Day on Sunday, 28th May between 10am -1pm. This date falls at the start of the school half term holiday. **Sue Foster** advised that we check the local calendar to avoid clashes.

Coaching Programme 2023-2024

Ross Wilson indicated that he would continue to run an inclusive coaching programme with the following coaching sessions: individual lessons, group lessons, Tennis Xpress – explained by Ross as a coaching session for beginners and for those returning to tennis after a lengthy absence (known as 'rusty rackets'), intermediate/advanced coaching at Club nights, junior coaching, Cardiotennis and the possibility (new to the Club) of Walking tennis. Ross is also going to offer some coaching deals to encourage more tennis at the club e.g. a package of 3 individual lessons for £60 (buy 2 get 1 free) and family lessons (£25 per hour). **Sheryl Meldram** indicated that Cardiotennis numbers have been very low and there followed various opinions on the cardio programme and what appeals to individuals with **Heather Laws-Smith**, for example, saying how she appreciates the familiarity of what **Ross** offers. **Kate Batten-Phelps** highly praised the session and **Ross's** coaching.

Nicola Frost then asked about Club Night and how we see it going forward. **Simon Thackray** explained that we pay Ross indirectly through the membership subscriptions. Initially Ross was used simply to sort out pairings for play but then the sessions became coach-led with the aim of progressing and improving members' match play. All agreed that this was a better use of Ross's time and members' money. **Pam Fenner** wondered if skills should be advertised and become part of a rolling programme. **Sue Foster** praised the coach-led sessions where Ross decided on the skills to coach but then allowed for negotiation. **Lyn Burnett** indicated

that, like Cardiotennis, the numbers attending Club Night had also been dwindling and to boost numbers, the Committee arranged that at least 2 trustees should attend each session starting on the 14/09/22. This went right the way through until the last session on 30/11/23.

Sue Foster spoke about the Thursday Intermediate group which has recently come down to one pair – herself and Philip Gough. As members agreed, it is difficult to have numbers when individuals are committed elsewhere. Inevitably players switch groups to play at their own level and this impacts on the groups they leave. Also, some privately arranged groups may be unable to join Club Night, for example, because their tennis games fall on the same day, and it is too much to commit twice over e.g. a Wednesday morning group with **Sarah Giles** and others. It was wondered whether or not Club Night should therefore be on a different day e.g. Thursday and move the Intermediate group to a different time. All agreed that it is difficult to arrange the week to the satisfaction of all members (and our Coach) but that attempts should be made to please as many as possible. Once decided and in place, the different groups meeting in the week and their times can be publicised.

At this point in the meeting (8.05pm) Ross Wilson (coach) gave his apologies and left.

(b) Subscription 2023-2024 (01/05/23-30/04/24)

Simon Thackray outlined the proposed increases for the 2023-2024 season and the reasons behind these e.g. rent, service charges etc. for joint leases. **Mick Binder** commented that he thought these increases were reasonable. The increases will be as follows: Single membership - £80 to £90, Family membership - £140 to £150 and Junior membership - £25 to £30. The subscription increase was proposed by **Pam Fenner** and seconded by **Nicola Frost**.

Sarah Giles then asked if tennis balls are included in the membership. **Tessa Summers** indicated that balls used to be purchased by members except for Club Night when balls were free but returned to the hut at the end of each session. She also spoke on the cost which be quite expensive and the fact that League players pay for balls in their match fees. **Pam Fenner** wondered whether balls should be purchased and then offered to members at cost price and **Sue Foster** spoke about the possibility of selling old balls to dog owners to generate income. **Simon Thackray** explained that for 2022-2023 the Club had purchased 2 boxes of balls from Heads-Up at £150 each. Simon keeps the balls and gives them out as and when needed. The system seems to have worked as it is safe (there have been break-ins to the hut in the past) and fair and there are plenty of balls still available.

Clubspark arrangements for renewing membership

Pam Fenner indicated that all members will receive an email to say that they are required to renew their membership through Clubspark from 1st May 2023. **Pam** also stated that any new members who join on Open Day must go through Clubspark and a laptop will be available at the courts for this purpose. A request was then made by **Pam** that regular bookings by members are updated as and when they change.

(C) Court Maintenance and Developments

Plans for resurfacing

Simon Thackray spoke about the courts and plans for resurfacing. He stated that the courts are what this Club is about and if they deteriorate further, we will lose members. **Simon** has had 3 specialist companies give quotations and the cost will be around £40,000 including the vat. **Sue Foster** wondered about the possibility of getting additional quotes, feeling that the figure of £40,000 seems steep as well as looking into using a non-specialist company to bring costs down. **Simon** replied that we need a professional with a guarantee and **Pam Fenner** emphasised that part of our disclaimer for registration with the LTA is that we have properly surfaced courts which do not invalidate our insurance. **Simon** indicated that with proper resurfacing the courts have a life of around 30 years at least and that Stowmarket Club had been quoted the same figure. **Ann Jones** said that for one court at Wenhampton the figure was coming in roughly the same.

At this point in the discussion, **Caroline Rodbourne** spoke about the possibility of introducing pickleball (a cross between tennis, badminton and ping pong) to the Club, suggesting that if we have newly surfaced courts then lines could be painted on one of the courts for both tennis and pickleball. She spoke about the huge popularity of pickleball (a game for all ages) and **Kate Batten-Phelps** wondered if it could be an additional attraction on Open Day if there was a demonstration of the game and participation.

Scott Fishwick then brought the discussion back to the question of how we raise money to fund the resurfacing and **Simon** repeated what he had outlined in his Chair's Report about a one-off voluntary donation from the membership to start building towards **matched funding**. **Mike Davis** explained what had been discussed at the Trustees Meeting which took place ahead of the AGM e.g. a separate account for donations which will be returned if we are unable to proceed. Various members then commented on fundraising possibilities e.g. local businesses, adapting strategies used by other clubs, fundraising subgroups etc.

Finally, **Mike Davis** emphasised that voluntary contributions would start the ball rolling.

5. Election of Officers

The following officers were elected:

Chair: **Simon Thackray** (proposed by Ann Jones, seconded by Tess Summers)

Secretary: **Lyn Burnett** (proposed by Pam Fenner, seconded by Nicola Frost)

(The duties of the Secretary are to be redistributed and the role redefined after Pam Fenner's stepping down.)

Treasurer: **Mike Davis and Ben Sharratt** (proposed by Ann Jones, seconded by Tessa Summers)

Trustees: **Scott Fishwick** (proposed by Sue Foster, seconded by Steve Burnett)

(Scott has agreed to take over the Safeguarding/Welfare role)

*The following trustees stepped down: **Nicola Frost** (with immediate effect) and **Pam Fenner** (end of May). **Their contributions will be greatly missed.***

6. A.O.B.

Sheryl Meldram initiated a discussion about club activities during the week and suggested that they are not sufficiently well advertised. She wants the Committee to address this issue so that all members are aware of what is on offer. Also, she wondered why there are no activities organised on the weekend. **Simon** indicated that there had been a suggestion at one time to block book the 2 courts for a session immediately following the 'Experienced'/League players slot between 9am and 11am. **Sheryl** also asked about social tennis and whether the club can offer more social tennis sessions. Additional information followed from those who regularly attend club activities. The official schedule was outlined – **Monday** -Junior coaching and Tennis Xpress, **Tuesday** - Cardiotennis, and 'Experienced'/League Players **Wednesday** – Junior coaching and Club Night (suspended during winter months) Saturday – 'Experienced'/League Players. In addition to this there are regular bookings for 'privately' arranged groups. Obviously, it is up to individual members to choose what they would like to take part in, and some groups are regularly very well attended.

The committee will review activities offered, timings and publicity at its next meeting.

Meeting closed at 21.00.

**THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THE
HALESWORTH TENNIS CLUB
AGM 2023**

Final Annual Accounts Year ended 31st March 2023

| | | <u>Subs</u> | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| | | <u>& Court</u> | <u>Sundries</u> | <u>Interest</u> | | | <u>Expenses</u> | | |
| | | <u>Hire</u> | | <u>Received</u> | | | | | |
| Subscriptions | Direct | £ | - | | 4/19/2022 | 100661 Pam Fenner | Hetty's | £ | 15.00 |
| Subscriptions | (Stripe) Net | £ | 4,432.79 | | 4/26/2022 | 100663 C. Binder | Printing | £ | 60.00 |
| Sale of Racquet | | | £ 30.00 | | 4/27/2022 | 100640 Micropress | Advertising | £ | 12.00 |
| Match Fees | | | £ 99.50 | | 5/3/2022 | 100664 Max Sports | nets | £ | 349.56 |
| Scouts | | | £ 10.00 | | 6/6/2022 | 100665 Mark Websdale | balls | £ | 150.00 |
| | | | | | 7/6/2022 | DDR Stripe | ??? | £ | 29.48 |
| Bank Interest | Savings acc | | £ 0.47 | | 8/3/2022 | 100666 HCSL | Club | £ | 400.00 |
| Bank Interest | Savings acc | | £ 1.33 | | 8/10/2022 | 100667 Dan Saunders | Website | £ | 118.00 |
| Bank Interest | Savings acc | | £ 4.77 | | 11/8/2022 | 100668 Ross Wilson | coaching | £ | 491.00 |
| Bank Interest | Savings acc | | £ 9.43 | | 11/21/2022 | 100669 Gardener | Maintenance | £ | 65.00 |
| | | | | | 11/23/2022 | 100670 pam fenner | LTA mbship | £ | 240.00 |
| | | | | | 11/29/2022 | 100672 simon | gift & salt | £ | 35.98 |
| | | | | | 12/9/2022 | 100671 Heads Up | Balls | £ | 150.00 |
| | | | | | 12/30/2022 | 100673 gardener 2 | Moss | £ | 456.00 |
| | | | | | 4/26/2022 | HSBC | Bank Charges | £ | 5.00 |
| | | | | | 5/26/2022 | HSBC | Bank Charges | £ | 7.00 |
| | | | | | 6/26/2022 | HSBC | Bank Charges | £ | 5.00 |
| | | | | | 7/26/2022 | HSBC | Bank Charges | £ | 5.40 |
| | | | | | 8/26/2022 | HSBC | Bank Charges | £ | 6.20 |
| | | | | | 9/26/2022 | HSBC | Bank Charges | £ | 5.80 |
| | | | | | 10/26/2022 | HSBC | Bank Charges | £ | 5.00 |
| | | | | | 11/26/2022 | HSBC | Bank Charges | £ | 5.00 |
| | | | | | 12/26/2022 | HSBC | Bank Charges | £ | 6.60 |
| | | | | | 1/26/2023 | HSBC | Bank Charges | £ | 5.80 |
| | | | | | 2/26/2023 | HSBC | Bank Charges | £ | 5.00 |
| | | | | | | | | £ 2,633.82 | |
| | | £ 4,432.79 | £ 139.50 | £ 16.00 | Balance B/f | 4/5/2022 | | £ 5,520.59 | £3,765.89+£1,754.70 |
| | | | £ 4,588.29 | | | Banked | | £ 4,588.29 | |
| | | | | | | | | £ 10,108.88 | |
| | | | | | | Withdrawn | | -£ 2,633.82 | |
| | | | | | Balance C/f | 3/31/2022 | | £ 7,475.06 | |

Unpresented as above

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|----------|------------|
| | | £ | 7,475.06 |
| | | | |
| Money Manager A/C | £ | 3,781.89 | |
| Current A/C | £ | 3,693.17 | £ 7,475.06 |
| | | | |
| Cash Balance | £ | 165.08 | (See Over) |
| 3/31/2022 | Total Funds | £ | 7,640.14 |

£ -

Cash Record 2(2022-2023

| Subs | Court | Total | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-----------|--------------|-----------------|----------|
| | Hire | | 4/1/2022 | Cash Balance | Brought Forward | £ 165.08 |
| | | | | Income | | £ - |
| | | | | Expenses | Stationery | £ - |
| | | | | | Postage Stamps | £ - |
| | | | 3/31/2023 | Cash Balance | | £ 165.08 |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |