



SWINDON & DISTRICT TENNIS LEAGUE

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 28 November 2017 at 1930

Venue: Gerard Buxton Sports Ground, Brinkworth Rd, Royal Wootton Bassett, SN4 8DS

Committee		Clubs represented	
Neil Allen (NA)	Chair - Swindon	Fairford	Richard Harrison
Jackie Wood (JW)	League Coordinator - R Wootton Bassett	Great Bedwyn	Bill Wells; Rachel Bond
Lindsey Hall	Treasurer - Purton	Lechlade	Gay Oliver, Kate Trotter, Bob Deane
Andy Dickinson (AD)	League Coordinator - Minety	Marlborough	Hilda Moore
Charlie Foster	Committee Member – David Lloyd	PAKT	P Mazzota
Steven Williams	Committee Member - Nationwide	Pewsey	Keith Hampson
Louise Crawford	Secretary - Burbage /Purton	Purton	Janet Saunders, Jason Stevens
Clubs represented		Ramsbury	Amelia Tester
Aldbourne	Simon Hutchings	Swindon	Richard Hughes, Beryl Watts
Burbage &ER	Andrew Gordon, Ros McGowan	Royal Wootton Bassett	David Lukens, Liz Lewis, Maggie Snell
Chiseldon	Sara Brazell, Carol Gibbon	Uffington	Ross Heyburn
Cricklade	Janet Back, Chris Petrie	Wanborough	Ron Carter
CS Nalgo	Jane Halstead		
Defence Academy	Dick Tudor		

	Item	Main action/discussion points	Action by:
1.	Apologies/ Attendance	<p>Apologies for Absence were received from: Claire Fitzpatrick – Calne TC; Mitch Bakos – Highworth TC; Greg Buckle – Ashton Keynes TC</p> <p>Clubs not represented: Ashton Keynes, Calne, Chippenham, Delta, Devizes, Highworth. League admin to ensure £5 fees are collected from clubs not represented at AGM via 2018 Summer League entry forms or direct if not participating in League.</p>	AD/ JW
2.	Minutes of last AGM/ Matters arising	A Tester asked about the loss of the 2 trophies mentioned in Point 3) NA advised that replacements for both had been paid for by the offending clubs. Minutes agreed.	
3.	Chair's Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NA said that the low point of the year had been the passing of the League President, Dawn Hopkins, after a long fight against illness. She had contributed a huge amount to tennis in Wiltshire and would be greatly missed. The only major issue related to the eligibility of players. This would be discussed with later on in the meeting. NA paid thanks to Jackie and Andy for the league admin, Louise for the secretary role, Lindsey as treasurer, Charlie and Steve for their active support roles on the Committee and Richard Vernon for all his work on the League sort, entries and reports relating to the same. Additionally, Anne Carroll and Marlborough TC were thanked for hosting the Presentation Evening, and Royal Wootton Bassett TC were thanked for hosting the 40th League Anniversary Event in August. 	
4.	League Report	JW gave a summary of the Winter and Summer seasons. Last Winter, there were	

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		44 teams over 6 divisions. The Summer league was a long season with matches being played right up to end of August. Many teams still had 4-5 matches remaining to play after the scheduled fixtures had finished. 3 matches did not meet the end of season deadline. There was 1 withdrawal in Mixed Div 2. JW also summarised the fines. A discussion ensued about fines and one member commented that the aim should be for zero fines, rather than use it as a revenue stream.	
5.	Treasurer's Report	Lindsey Hall presented the Report. The accounts were unanimously accepted. Proposed: Andrew Gordon; Secoded: David Lukens	
6.	Election of Officers	All existing Committee members were prepared to serve a further term. Proposed: Beryl Watts; Secoded: Amelia Tester	
7.	Nominations for Life Members	Bill Wells of Great Bedwyn TC was nominated for life membership by Rachel Bond of the same club. She explained how he had been match secretary for the club for 35 years, organises everything club/social tennis and manages all court maintenance and refurbishment. The nomination was unanimously approved.	
8.	Annual Presentation Evening	Hilda Moore of Marlborough TC provided an overview of the recent successful Presentation Evening held at Marlborough Golf Club on 18 th Nov. NA asked if any clubs were willing to host the 2018 event, and that it was important to get an early indication of any club prepared to step forward. No club came forward at the AGM. LC to send a reminder to all clubs early in the new year. B Watts said that the event had moved to a more formal setting than it used to be. She asked for a quick straw poll to see if the preference amongst those present was for formal vs informal. The poll came out more or less equal.	LC
9.	Entry Fees, Club Deposits & Fines for 2017 season	The fines were presented by JW. It was agreed that entry fees should remain the same as last year. A discussion took place about the suggestion of ramping up fines, as opposed to removing fines, and about the flexibility of fines.	
10.	County Mini-tennis Donation/Other Funding	It was agreed to make a donation of £200 again to the Wilts LTA 10 & Under campaign Proposed: Liz Lewis; Secoded: Simon Hutchins	
11.	Proposed Rule Changes	<p>1. Under Section 3. Match Day and Start Time</p> <p>Teams in the Winter Leagues who have a match scheduled for the morning of Remembrance Sunday are permitted to delay the start time of the match to the afternoon of Remembrance Sunday, provided the home team has courts available at the new start time. The opposing captain must be informed of this change in start time at least 28 days in advance of the match, which in effect, would be right at the start of the Winter season anyway.</p> <p>Proposer: Annabel Campbell, Uffington TC; Sec: Ross Heyburn</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED. It was agreed that notice should be given as soon as fixtures have been issued.</p> <p>2. Under Section 4. Eligibility of players</p> <p>h) All players must be registered with the League 14 days before they are eligible to play in a match.</p> <p>Proposer: Nicola Gardner, Purton TC; Sec: Shane Horsell, Minety TC/Purton TC</p> <p>i) Four players to be nominated for each A team. These players cannot play for lower ranking teams.</p> <p>Proposer: Nicola Gardner, Purton TC; Sec: Shane Horsell, Minety TC/Purton TC</p> <p>AD presented his findings of other Leagues' rules on this aspect. He also presented the data he had collated on players playing for different teams in our Summer League, specifically the number of players playing for 2 teams or more in the same section. The discussion points put forward by Pewsey TC were also reviewed and various members voiced their opinions on both the proposed rule and pertinent discussion points concerning eligibility. Some of the most salient</p>	

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	<p>points debated were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boosting of lower level teams by higher standard players early in season • Boosting of higher level teams by new players/'ringers' in order to win critical matches • Restriction on registration of new players after halfway during the season • Impact of any 'new player' restrictions on small clubs • Nomination of players • Risks of introducing complicated rules <p>VOTE ON 2h) NOT CARRIED - 2 For; Everyone else Against)</p> <p>VOTE ON 2i) NOT CARRIED – 1 For; Everyone else Against)</p> <p>However, 8 people said that they wished to maintain the status quo of the current Rules on this aspect. All others present agreed with the Chair's suggestion that clubs needed time to discuss the topic within their respective clubs and should revert back with suggestions.</p> <p>3. Under Section 1. League Organisation</p> <p>All clubs entering either the Winter and/or Summer League are expected to support the Annual League Presentation Evening. As part of a club's summer entry, or winter League entry if they don't participate in the Summer League, a non-refundable deposit of one place at the Presentation Evening (£22 as at 2017) will be payable per club. If a club then books two or more places for the Presentation Evening, the deposit will be credited to the club against their booking.</p> <p>This Presentation Evening deposit is only chargeable once to a club in leagues commencing in a calendar year. All Presentation Evening deposits received by the League will be transferred to the club hosting the event in that year.</p> <p>Proposer: Swindon & District League Committee</p> <p>Some clubs were not interested in attending the Presentation Evening, so did not feel that the proposal was fair.</p> <p>VOTE ON 3). 12 For; 11 Against – NOT CARRIED AS THERE WAS NO TWO THIRD MAJORITY, AS PER AGM LEAGUE COMMITTEE REQUIREMENT</p> <p>4. Remove Rule 5 d) - Postponing & Rearranging Matches and amend wording in Rule 5 b)</p> <p>5 d): For public holidays, cancelled matches will be automatically re-scheduled (in sequence) to the first two Mondays after the end of the season, as shown on the fixture list for the season. Matches may be played before this date if both teams agree, in which case the League Committee must be notified. Matches between teams from the same club are governed by Error! Reference source not found.</p> <p>5 b) Matches shall be re-arranged only in the case of bad weather, public holiday or where a team has players selected for County Week. If this occurs, the League Committee must be informed as soon as possible. In any other exceptional circumstances an appeal may be made to the League Committee.</p> <p>Proposer: Swindon & District League Committee</p> <p>JW explained that the rationale behind the proposed change would be to help get matches played earlier on in the season and would help with player eligibility.</p> <p>VOTE ON 4) 11 For, 10 Against, 1 Abstention. NOT CARRIED – NO TWO THIRDS MAJORITY</p> <p>The discussion points below from Pewsey TC are included for reference only</p> <p><u>POINTS FOR DISCUSSION</u></p> <p><i>Proposed by: Keith Hampson, Pewsey TC; Seconded by: Jon Gregory, Pewsey TC</i></p> <p>1) RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL 1 – EARLY SEASON BOOSTING</p>	

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	<p><i>In a perfect world, League teams would comprise two regular pairings who play in every match, giving consistency throughout the season. In reality, most players will be unable to play in all of the matches and reserves will be called upon.</i></p> <p><i>At the beginning of the season, some clubs elect to play their higher team reserves in their lower teams, as allowed by the rules until they have played three times for the higher team. Other clubs see this as dubious or unsporting conduct and do not engage in the practice, a stance which puts them at a disadvantage in the first half of a season.</i></p> <p><i>Regarding this imbalance, I propose that the League votes for one of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A) Continue with things as they are and make all clubs aware that the 'boosting' of lower teams at the start of a season is a recognised tactic that is acceptable to the league.</i> <i>B) Restrict players to playing for one team only during a season. Teams would have to select team squads carefully in order to field teams for all matches. The 'boosting' issue is removed, however, more instances of conceding whole or part matches may arise.</i> <i>C) Allow players to only play for other teams that are one division above or below their starting team. This would reduce the effect of 'boosting' but gives an advantage to clubs with teams in adjacent divisions.</i> <i>D) At the mid-point of the season, each team may submit a 'red card' to the league identifying a specific match where an identified opposing player has clearly been capable of playing at significantly higher level (e.g. 2 divisions). If the league upheld the complaint, the sets won by the individual in that match will be voided. This measure may deter/reduce 'boosting' but would require careful policing.</i> <p>2) RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL 2 – LATE SEASON BOOSTING</p> <p><i>As a season plays out, it becomes apparent which teams are heading for promotion and which are heading for relegation. The current rules allow teams to field as yet un-fielded players of significantly higher ability than associated with the team to date, in order to secure promotion or avoid relegation. This practice is again less than sporting and diminishes the hard effort put in by other teams.</i></p> <p><i>In seeking to address this practice, I propose that the league votes for one of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A) Continue with things as they are and make all clubs aware that 'boosting' of teams towards the end of the season is a recognised tactic that is acceptable to the league.</i> <i>B) Teams cannot field new players after the mid-point of the season. The cut-off could be extended, e.g. to June 30, to allow for students returning from university. This measure may reduce but does not prevent boosting.</i> <i>C) At the end of the season, each team may submit a 'red card' to the league identifying a specific match where an identified opposing player clearly been capable of playing at significantly higher level (e.g. 2 divisions). If the league upheld the complaint, the sets won by the individual in that match will be voided. This measure may deter/reduce 'boosting' but would require careful policing..</i> 	

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		<p>3) RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL 3 – New Teams</p> <p><i>New teams are entered in the lowest divisions and have to work their way up to the division appropriate to their ability over the course of several seasons. This distorts the playing field for teams that already sit in an appropriate division and makes for less enjoyable tennis.</i></p> <p><i>I propose that the league votes for one of the following:</i></p> <p>A) <i>Continue with things as they are.</i></p> <p>B) <i>When new teams apply to join the league, the relevant club coach suggests an appropriate division for the incoming team so that all players enjoy better matches</i></p>	
	AOB	None	