

COOMBE WOOD LAWN TENNIS CLUB

Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting held on Monday 28 March 2022 at 7.30p.m. as a virtual meeting by Zoom.

Attendees:

Michael Bourne (President), Heather McAtackney (Chair), Robert Gale (Honorary Secretary), Paul Baxter (Honorary Treasurer), John Walton (Honorary Auditor), Ian Stewart, Jan Stewart, Penny Bourne, Daniel McQue, Nandini Narayanan, Gopalan Narayanan, Naseem Saheecha, Heather Korzilius, Lester Lorzelius, Meryl Lloyd, Allan Lloyd, Nicki Tattersall, Ollie Lloyd, Alison Brennan, Richard James, Margaret Iles, Brian Iles, Val Jermy, Fiona Spence, Alan Bentham, Peter Chugg, Claire Randall, Darlene Pecuch, Richard Power, Ghulam Mustapha, Mary Cruickshank, Eileen McGowan, Skye Pickin, Nikki Dobson, Hannah McLean, Shaun Bullard, Charles Cruickshank, Clare Turner, Jay Bishoprick, Jo Haigh, Andy Brownen, Kerry Ono, Chris Durkin, Gary Jordan, Louise Jordan, Elena Martino, Richard Senger, Bob Blunden, James Cruickshank, Fadi Takla, Veronica Gibbons, Marilena Figna, Ozgur Onat, Belinda Grove, Dusko Delic, Stefan Opitz, Frances Bance, Claire Arthur, Matthias Russwurm.

The President, Mike Bourne, opened the meeting.

Mike noted that because of the current surge in Covid cases, in the interests of the safety of members we were holding the AGM virtually for the second successive year. He explained certain meeting protocols that would need to be followed, including how to register attendance, how to ask questions and how voting would be carried out.

1. 2021 AGM Minutes:

The minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting were approved.

2. President's Address:

Mike then gave his report on the activities of the club over the past year.

The Covid pandemic had curtailed activities at the start of the year and our priority at all times had been the health and safety of our members. Sympathies were extended to all members who have been affected by Covid or have had family members impacted.

Sadly, one of our former Committee members, Matthew Cruickshank, passed away in October 2021. Matthew joined Coombe Wood in 2007. He helped set up and administer our subscription billing systems and undertook a tremendous amount of work in leading the update of our safeguarding and other club policies. Together with his wife, Mary, he also helped run a successful junior social tennis session on Friday evenings for several years. Matthew was always friendly and good humoured. He was a true gentleman and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

The Club was closed for the first 3 months of 2021 and various levels of restriction remained in place for the next few months. It was not until mid-July that club activities were fully back to normal.

A Covid sub-committee of four senior Committee members: Heather McAttackney, Rob Gale, Paul Baxter and Ian Stewart put in an incredible amount of work during this period, ensuring the club operated in line with the ever changing Government regulations and LTA guidance. Mike noted that he was sure he was speaking for all members in thanking Heather, Rob, Paul and Ian for managing this so successfully.

The Committee members as a whole have once again worked tirelessly to manage the Club's activities and Mike thanked them on behalf of the club.

Membership:

We have had another terrific year for membership growth, partly helped by people wanting to live a healthy lifestyle in the pandemic world as well as by the promotional activities undertaken by the Committee and coaching team over recent years.

Adult membership numbers have increased by 18%, juniors by 14% and cadets by 41%.

We closed the 2020-21 membership year with record numbers of adults and juniors and, in common with other tennis clubs, we saw a continuing surge in membership applications throughout the 2021-22 year. By December, we had added over 60 new full, off peak or parent members.

During the course of the year we also recruited 134 new juniors and cadets taking this year's numbers to a new record high in all categories.

After September 2021 we closed our membership, but despite clear messages on the club website that the club was full and operating a waiting list, membership applications continued to arrive. We currently have 76 adults on the waiting list. In April, after existing members have renewed and we know how many spaces

are available, we will begin the process of playing in new members. To manage these numbers, we have decided to only accept applications from beginners when there are places available for them to learn the game through Ollie's classes.

Despite the increase in numbers, an analysis of court usage and feedback from the members survey showed that we still have unused capacity, mainly during the daytime on weekdays and in the evening on weekends. We have now expanded the times available to off-peak members to include Saturday and Sunday evenings and hope that more applicants, or indeed current members will choose this option.

The court booking system that was introduced by necessity during lockdown has proved popular with members and is now a fixture at the club. The recent survey was overwhelmingly in favour of the system. During the last year Ian Stewart has further developed the club systems to manage social tennis on Saturday afternoons and the popular singles box league. He has also added online booking and credit card payment for all adult and junior group coaching, greatly simplifying Ollie's administration tasks.

Last Sunday, we ran a very successful charity tournament on behalf of Ukrainian refugees. Through the generosity of members, we raised almost £1,000.

A membership survey was conducted at the end of the year and a few minor changes to social tennis arrangements will be made to address some of the specific results. The results indicate that members are generally very happy with the way the club is being run.

Juniors and coaching:

It has been another successful year for the club on the coaching front. The numbers attending our junior programme are at a record high and our ever expanding adult programme is also proving to be extremely popular.

Our coaching team continues to thrive and goes from strength to strength. Hugh Impey did a fantastic job before leaving us in the Autumn. Joe Parfitt joined us from Surbiton Tennis Club and has fitted in extremely well.

Thanks were noted to Chris Durkin, our Juniors Secretary, who continues to work with our junior teams where the general standard of play has become highly competitive. Coombe Wood now has at least four junior players who are currently training and representing Surrey, which we believe is a first for the club.

Thanks were extended to all the parents who helped captain a junior team over the last year. For the upcoming summer season, we have entered a record 15 teams and it is even more important that parents help run things. If any parents are able to volunteer to help please let Ollie or Chris know.

On 22nd May, there will be a doubles competition played between some of our top juniors and a selected adult side. The winners will receive the inaugural Matthew Cruickshank Cup.

On 19th June, we will host the Junior Club Championship Qualifying Day, which has become a major highlight of the junior calendar in recent years.

Mike noted that Ollie extended his thanks to all his coaching team, Harry, Ed and Joe, along with all of the assistants and helpers who help to make the sessions so fun and enjoyable. Ollie believes we have something very special here at Coombe Wood and that it is an honour and privilege to be the clubs' head coach.

Mike echoed those sentiments and gave a special thanks to Ollie himself for his great work leading our coaching activities.

Tournaments and teams:

Team tennis continues to be strong at the club. We have had several new players interested in playing competitive matches for the club's teams. As a result, we have been able to enter an extra team in each of the Women's, Men's and Mixed Surrey leagues and we now have 4 Women's 6 Men's and 2 Mixed teams. The competition for team places is stronger than it has been for several years, particularly in the Women's teams and this is reflected in the successful recent results of the higher teams. Congratulations were given to both the Women's 1st and 2nd teams on winning their respective divisions in the Winter league. The Women's 1sts also won their division last summer and will be in Division 7 this summer, the highest they have been for some time. Our mixed team also won their division last summer.

Congratulations also once again to our Men's Over 55s 1st team for finishing top of the Surrey 1st Division in both the Summer and Winter leagues.

Thanks are due to all the team captains for running the teams.

Because of the Covid restrictions, we delayed the 2021 club tournament until later in the year culminating in a very successful Final's Day held at the end of September.

We again had first-time winners in each singles event. Congratulations to Doan Le on his victory in the men's singles, and to Palak Balsara for winning the Women's singles. It is fantastic seeing a young player like Palak coming through the junior ranks.

Thank you to Daniel McQue, for running the tournament. Daniel has since stood down as Match Secretary and thanks were given to Nicki Tattersall for continuing to run the Women's teams and Rob for overseeing the Men's teams in addition to his already very full workload as Honorary Secretary.

We now have an urgent need for someone to join the Committee as Match Secretary taking overall responsibility for team tennis as well as running the tournament. If anyone is interested in this important role, please contact Rob directly.

The singles box leagues have also become incredibly popular with a record number of players signing up. Thank you to two non-committee members, Jon Rushforth and Mark Fox, for running this.

Safeguarding:

Thanks were also given to Val Jermy, our Welfare Officer, who fulfils this important role very diligently and ensures Safeguarding matters are properly considered in everything we do.

Social activities:

A few events social events took place over the last year, despite Covid social distancing restrictions meaning we were not able to run any significant social activities in the first 6 months of the year.

The lifting of restrictions was celebrated with a cocktail evening in July.

Finals day was later than usual, in September. It turned out to be a lovely day and was well attended with record numbers staying on for the Columbian street food.

The Deadly Famous event was held in November and was a resounding success. Thank you to Skye Pickin and Eileen McGowan for organising this evening of fun and laughter. It is fantastic to see new non-committee members being so enthusiastically involved in club activities.

Mince pies and mulled wine served after Saturday tennis in December rounded off the year.

We have several events planned throughout the coming year and we hope members will participate to make them a success.

Many thanks to Nandini Narayanan, our Social Secretary for her continued great work overseeing these activities.

Bridge:

The Bridge Club has continued to operate very successfully since transitioning online because of Covid. Regular sessions take place on Tuesday evenings using new software that allows players to see and talk to each other as they play. This has been very popular and has resulted in the club being able to attract several new bridge members. We are also playing teams matches in face to face against other clubs in Surrey and have a solid set of wins including against the All England club. Thanks were given to Jan and Ian for running this so successfully.

Grounds:

It's been another very busy year for grounds activities.

The old wall along the boundary from the entrance gate up to the clubhouse was removed last year as it was in a dilapidated and dangerous state. It's exciting to see the new shrubs along that border beginning to establish.

New roses have been planted to the right of the clubhouse to keep this eye catching corner attractive. Extensive tree pruning occurred earlier this year, on grounds surrounding courts and in the carpark. Fence panels along the lane are in the process of being replaced or repaired following the recent storms.

Thanks were extended to 'Willow Landscape Design' who continue to look after our grounds.

We have had assistance from junior members to help clear leaves from courts, and clear rubbish from the site. Thanks to Sandy McDonald and Euan James.

We reviewed our Court Maintenance services early last year and decided to change contractors. The new arrangement is working well, and courts are now being serviced 3 times a year. By investing in a regular service programme, we have helped extend the life of the courts. The clay courts on courts 4 and 5 were first put down 10 years ago and we would normally be expecting them to need resurfacing this year. As they have been so well maintained they remain in excellent condition and we now expect them to last for several more years. Thank you to Heather McAttackney for overseeing these maintenance activities.

Many thanks to our Grounds Secretary, Chris Lewis for all her hard work in overseeing these activities and ensuring the club's grounds remain in excellent condition.

Thanks also to Louise and Gary Jordan for their work ordering and ensuring new tennis balls are regularly available.

Unfortunately, our initial planning application for the lane footpath was turned down by Kingston Council. Bob Blunden was thanked for doing a fantastic job to keep the project moving forward, coordinating the various specialist advisors needed to complete a revised application. This was submitted just before Christmas and we are expecting to hear the outcome soon.

Finances:

Thanks to the efforts of the Committee and the continued excellent financial management by our Treasurer, Paul Baxter, the club's finances remain in a very healthy state. More detail was provided by Paul later in the meeting as described below.

Other initiatives:

The Committee has also started a project to review the Club's rules and legal structure. It is clear from this review that we have outgrown the current format – as an informal unincorporated association - and it is no longer realistic for the club to operate without a formal legal identity. We propose moving to an incorporated legal structure more appropriate for a club of our size. This will enable the Club to enter into contracts in its own name and limit the personal liability of the Committee and other members.

Mike ended his address by thanking once again all members of the Committee for their amazing work. The club is very lucky to have such a dedicated and hard working Committee. If any members are interested in joining committee member in the future or would like to volunteer to support the club activities in any way, please speak to Rob or any of the current committee.

3. Treasurer's report:

Paul Baxter presented the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021, copies of which had been made available to the meeting. It was noted that:

- Total income for 2021 had increased by 36% to £143,498 from £105,465 in 2020 mainly due to higher membership numbers and the impact of club closures and the resulting credits offered back to members in 2020.

- Expenditure excluding projects had also increased by 41% to £47,940 mainly as a result of costs being lower than usual in 2020 due to the club closures.
- Expenditure on projects was also lower than in recent years because of the impact of closures, including the delay in the planned lane development.
- Overall, the club had a surplus for the year of £73,071, compared to a surplus of £48,761 in 2020.
- The club remained in a healthy position at the year-end, with net assets of £211,705, including cash balances of £207,911.

A resolution to adopt the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021 was approved by the meeting.

4. Subscriptions fees:

A resolution to approve the following subscription fees for the membership year starting 1 May 2022 was approved:

Membership category:

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|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| • Full | £280 |
| • Under 26 | £105 |
| • Country & midweek members | £180 |
| • Off peak | £180 |
| • Parent | £84 |
| • Non-playing (including Bridge) | £30 |
| • Junior members | £84 |
| • Cadets | £38 |
| • Joining fee | £100 |
| • Visitor's fee | £7 adult, £3 junior |

5. Club Officers and Committee Members:

Gary Jordan is standing down from the committee after 15 years and was thanked for his contribution during that time, particularly for looking after the supply of tennis balls.

Two new members who have been co-opted to the committee during the year and are now standing for election, Jo Haigh and Kerry Ono. All of the other officers and committee members are standing for re-election once again.

The election of the officers of the club and members of the committee were approved as follows:

Officers:

- Mike Bourne - President
- Heather McAtackney - Chair
- John Walton - Honorary Auditor
- Robert Gale - Honorary Secretary
- Paul Baxter - Honorary Treasurer

Other committee members:

- Ian Stewart - Membership Secretary
- Chris Lewis - Grounds Secretary
- Chris Durkin - Juniors Secretary
- Nandini Narayanan - Social Secretary
- Val Jermy – Welfare Officer
- Belinda Grove
- Gary Jordan
- John Lewis
- Meryl Lloyd
- Oliver Lloyd
- Daniel McQue
- Jan Stewart
- Nicki Tattersall

6. Honorary Life Memberships:

Mike explained that honorary life memberships are awarded based on two criteria: longevity of membership, with the award made after 40 years of membership, and secondly for exceptional Committee service.

We have one member who has reached the 40-year milestone this year and that is Mark Cook. Although Mark rarely plays at the club these days, he has loyally kept up his membership. Mark was a very successful player back in his heyday, winning the Men's Singles tournament three times during the 1990s. Congratulations Mark.

An award for exceptional committee service is proposed to Alan Bentham who left the Committee a few years ago but contributed an enormous amount during his time on the Committee, serving as Membership Secretary for 12 years from 2000 to 2011, a role which was much more manually intensive at that time. In addition to this role, he almost single-handedly undertook a major project to

establish, improve and document the club's policies and procedures enabling the club to obtain the LTA's best practice Tennis Clubmark accreditation.

Mike explained that Rob Gale had originally planned to serve for 5 years as Honorary Secretary, which he has now completed. He has however kindly agreed to continue in the role for a further year, primarily to oversee the project to review the club's legal structure.

During the last 5 years, Rob has overseen a period of significant expansion in membership numbers and growth in income. He dealt successfully with several exceptional issues, including the approach by the developers of Links Cottage to acquire access rights to the lane, and the upheaval to club activities caused by Covid closures and restrictions.

In recognition of the incredible amount of work that Rob has undertaken during his time in the role, it is proposed that he is awarded Honorary Life Membership this year.

Mike also noted that there is no obvious candidate to take over as Honorary Secretary when Rob steps down next year. He once again urged anyone interested in any Committee roles to contact Rob or one of the other Committee members.

The award of Honorary Life Memberships to Robert Gale, Alan Bentham and Mark Cook were approved.

7. 2022 Expenditure:

Rob Gale presented details of expenditure and projects planned for 2022.

In addition to the normal club running costs, the main projects planned for the year are the development of terrace and completion of the lane footpath.

Lane:

The lane project had originally been approved at both the 2020 and 2021 AGMs but was put on hold because of the Covid situation. The footpath is needed to ensure the safety of members, particularly juniors, using the lane. Initial clearance work had been undertaken however the main element of the project, laying the footpath and installing lighting, remains subject to planning approval. Costs have been incurred on specialist ecological and arboriculture surveys, and planning advisors. A revised planning application was submitted in December and the decision is due shortly.

Terrace:

A project will be undertaken to fully resurface the existing terrace, extending it over the flower beds at the edge. Additional planting will also be created. The work is essential because the current paving stones are in constant need of repair to avoid trip hazards with the loose stones.

Proposed expenditure for 2022 was approved as follows:

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|------------------------------------|---------|
| • Normal club running costs | £55,000 |
| • Lane footpath development | £30,000 |
| • Legal structure and rules review | £10,000 |
| • Development of terrace | £75,000 |
| • Car park barrier | £10,000 |
| • Other/contingency: | £20,000 |

8. 5-Year Plan:

The rolling 5-year expenditure plan was outlined. This includes:

- Development of terrace
- Review of club rules and legal structure
- Lane footpath installation
- Phased conversion of floodlights to LED
- Re-surfacing of courts 4&5

9. Legal structure review:

Rob then presented an update on the plans to review the club's rules and legal structure.

- He explained that it is clear from this review that we have outgrown the current format, as an unincorporated association, which is suitable for smaller or informal clubs, with no staff, significant assets or supplier contracts.
- We propose moving to an incorporated legal structure more appropriate for a club of our size. This will enable the Club to enter into contracts in its own name and limit the personal liability risk for the Committee and other members.
- Various alternative structures were considered and the proposal is for the club to become a Company Limited by Guarantee whereby:
 - The club will be owned by its members.

- Separate legal identity will provide the club with the ability to enter into contracts in the company's own right.
 - Members will be entitled to attend and vote at members' meetings (AGM/EGMs).
 - The company will be governed by its Articles of Association which will effectively replace the current Club Rules.
 - There will be additional administrative work and associated costs to file annual accounts and meet other Companies House reporting requirements.
- The committee structure will be reviewed in conjunction with the legal structure change:
 - Under an incorporated structure, the Company will be governed by a Board of Directors.
 - Our current rules state that the club's Committee should be between 15 and 20 people, comprising the Chair, Hon Sec, Hon Treasurer and between 12 and 17 other members.
 - LTA Guidance is that:
 - The size of the committee will be a balancing act, keeping the numbers manageable and ensuring diversity whilst having enough hands to implement the club's strategic plan.
 - Typical committees are formed of 5-10 people.

When the review has been completed, any proposed changes will require approval by members at a separate EGM.

10. Events calendar:

Key dates for club events in 2022 were noted.

11. Any other business:

Questions were taken from members, following which the meeting was declared closed.