

Victoria Park Club Tennis Section AGM Minutes 16 January 2023

Attendees

Liz Bell, Chris Pennington, Lance Cresswell, Kate Adams, Matt Olczak, Barry Flicker, Tim Cartwright, Sue Stott, Jon Rycroft, Pete Cornelius

Apologies

Michelle Rutter, Gail Dixon Smith, Alistair Macintosh

Tennis Chair update

1) LED lights - now implemented and under a five-year warranty. As well as improving playing conditions and providing instant access to light, they have been quoted as using 48% of the electricity compared to our old bulbs ... just in time as our electricity rate is now approximately 3 times higher!

2) New members - membership has almost doubled in the last five years from just over 100 juniors and 200 adults to over 200 juniors and nearly 350 adults. We have around 70 potential members on the waiting list to keep these numbers and revenue stable.

3) Ukrainian members - 3 families originally ... now down to one. As well as free membership, they have been given free access to Jon's coaching program and have been lent rackets to play with.

4) Team tennis - 5 men's, 2 women's, 1 mixed and a men's team in the National League. We have begun holding regular mixed tennis tournament days for match players ... thanks to Simon Witt for coming up with this idea and running the sessions. We have also enjoyed an influx of new women team tennis players – and hope to enter a mixed national league team this summer. Past and present results can be found on the Exeter and District and East Devon Tennis League websites.

5) Social tennis - thanks to Barry and Sue who continue to be the unofficial organisers of these sessions. We would like to build more of a playing development pathway (from beginner to rusty racket to improver to social to competitive) at the club so the format of these sessions is something that we will discuss going forwards to ensure we are able to encourage all members whatever their standard to get the most out of their membership.

6) Coaching – Thanks to Jon for all he has done this year. His junior program is full and continues to represent great value for money. Thanks also to Matt for his help on and off the court. As for adult coaching – Jon Wills has left us. He has done a brilliant job of starting up our rusty rackets program and was extremely well liked and thought of as a coach. I would like to ensure that we continue to develop the Sunday coaching and adult coaching in general – see minutes below.

7) Finally - We have increased the number of committee members over the last couple of years to ensure more people are involved in the running of the club. Lance has joined the committee to assist with the day to day financial transactions of the club. Michelle has been running the court resurfacing program. And Kate has recently joined and will be using her experience to ensure we communicate with members and non-members as effectively as possible. Thanks to them and the rest of the committee for all the work they have carried out.

Confirmation that committee members would like to stay on for another year

DECISION - All committee members are happy to stay on for another year.

Nominations for honorary membership

Matt Olczak has continued to spend a huge amount of his time this year further developing ClubSpark – the LTA software that is transforming the way we communicate with our members, manage court bookings, and pay for transactions. He is a key part of Jon's coaching team, a team captain, and has spent a great deal of time setting up the waiting list and membership renewal process to ensure it is a much easier and less time-consuming process going forward.

DECISION - Matt should be offered free membership for 2023/4. This will be taken to the main committee for approval. It is also proposed that Jon is offered free membership.

Subscription rate for 2023/4 and early payment incentive

Based on stable membership numbers (something that our membership waiting list allows us to do) we can assume that our income going forwards will be approximately £70,000. Last year it was £63,000 without Bridge revenue and allowing for a 10% discount. This year our total expenses were £62,000 but this included a one-off floodlight renewal cost of £27,000 (which had already been set aside as part of our annual provision of money into a separate account for court renewal).

This means that without bridge membership contributions and a 10% discount we still were able to make a surplus of £30,000 – this compares to an average of around £10,000 pre-COVID. Going forwards, even considering continued increased costs of electricity, we can assume that our annual expenses will remain below £40,000. This means that based on last year's potential revenue we are likely to be able to make between £20,000 to £30,000 surplus on a normal year – money which will be set aside for planned maintenance and unexpected eventualities. Next year we obviously have the one-off charge of court resurfacing – but this has been previously set aside and we have enough to cover the cost even if it significantly increases.

In conclusion we are in a very fortunate position to be able to forward plan and prepare for future costs based on stable membership figures. Our membership rates represent extremely good value for money and underline our key objective to be an accessible and affordable facility for the local community.

DECISION – The committee agreed that based on the financial information available and the underlying objectives of the club, the membership rate should remain the same for 2023/4. This will need to be ratified by the main committee and then approved at the main club AGM.

In terms of early payment incentive - this is something the club are moving away from given the ease that we can now monitor payment, and the fact that a waiting list exists to replenish membership for those who decide not to re-join. Last year a 10% discount was given as compensation for likely inconvenience to members for court resurfacing. Taken this into account and the fact that a further discount was initially envisaged for the repainting of the courts (something which will now take place at the same time as the resurfacing itself) it was felt that a 5% discount would be appropriate. It was also agreed that this discount should be removed completely for the membership year 2024/25.

DECISION – The committee agreed that a discount of 5% should be given to current members renewing before April 1st. This will need to be ratified by the main committee and then approved at the main club AGM.

Proposals that could impact membership category or constitution

A great deal of time was spent looking at membership categories a few years ago. Other than the formalisation of the Ukrainian Family Membership (bought in mid-year and already on the agenda for the main AGM), the tennis committee did not feel that there were any other changes required.

Coaching update

Junior coaching courses were fully subscribed in the autumn and are continuing to prove very popular. There are still some spaces in the older age-groups for the current courses (that started last week) – these are likely to get filled in the next couple of weeks. It was felt that junior membership for 2023/24 should be kept at the current numbers to ensure that everyone re-joining would have the opportunity to join a coaching course.

A possible short-term replacement to Jon Wills has been found. We will be looking to extend the adult coaching Sunday morning program to include beginner and improvement group sessions. It was felt that to ease administration, adult group sessions should follow the same procedure as junior sessions and be bookable for a set period (for example six sessions). This would be booked via ClubSpark. Jon is also looking into providing drill sessions at women's match practice.

Action – Jon Rycroft to look at possible dates for holding a junior club championship over a single weekend in the Spring

Action – Jon Rycroft to set spring dates for all coaching courses before membership renewal – so that as part of this an email can be sent out explaining all the events and courses on offer

Waiting List Update

There are around 70 on the list. Committee members felt that the junior membership should be kept at current numbers but were more flexible on the adult numbers – it was felt that there is still space to invite more adult members if necessary. In terms of timing, it was felt that membership renewal invites should be sent out earlier this year (in theory this could be done any time from the 23rd February when the main AGM will have ratified any proposals on category and rate changes). This would allow waiting list invitations to go out in early April.

Action – Tim Cartwright to set up a Tennis Committee meeting in February to discuss timing and arrangements

Tennis Court Resurfacing update

Plans remain on track. The pre-resurfacing power washing has had an immediately positive effect on the drainage capacity of the courts. An exact start date has still not been given but our booking has been confirmed and is expected to commence end of July and will run throughout August. Discussions have begun with Exeter School around the possibility of being able to use their courts in a limited way during this period – for example, so that we could continue running match practice and social sessions during the week. Further updates will be sent to members as details are firmed up.

Bar Summary

Peter Cornelius continues to ensure that pricing is reasonable but reflective of the purchase price. Takings are up since COVID but still not as high as before. This is mainly because members are still getting used to the idea of using the clubhouse. Matt Olczak has purchased and set up a card reader so that bar payments can start being made electronically. It was agreed that the app should initially be sent to all team captains as well as bridge and tennis committee members.

Action – Matt Olczak to send card reader app to team captains and committee members

Website / ClubSpark duplication

With the development of ClubSpark, our website is fast becoming outdated and unnecessary. It was agreed that a meeting should be held to see what else needs to be transferred to the ClubSpark pages before a decision is made on whether to shut the previous website down. A discussion on communication – and the potential of a club email address – will also be held as part of this meeting.

Action – Tim Cartwright to set up a Tennis Committee meeting in February to discuss timing and arrangements

Membership Communication

It was agreed that a separate meeting was required on this so that it could be effectively planned and implemented. This would involve discussions on club branding, noticeboard configuration and purpose, communication to and from members,

Action – Tim Cartwright to set up a Tennis Committee meeting in February to discuss

Any other matters

Safeguarding will be discussed at the main AGM – Alistair was not able to make the meeting.