



Minutes of Board Meeting held 18:30 Thursday 10 March 2022 (Virtual Meeting on Zoom)

Present:

Trustees: Howard Bennett (Chair), Christian Winder, David Pagliaro, Lisa Watch, Kate Garvie, Maurine Lewin, David Harrison.

In attendance: James Mills

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved by the Trustees.

Howard welcomed the trustees. Howard explained that any Trustees' conflicts of interest need to be advised to the board and then pre-approved so that any mitigating measures can be implemented. Howard highlighted that new trustee Kate Garvey's partner Frank Dixon is a Hackney Tennis coach and this conflict would need to be agreed on as manageable conflict. David P asked for additional clarity on how this would be managed.

Kate said that her stance would always be that HT is run across a local-authority tennis courts and felt the HT coaches were able to represent themselves.

David H mentioned that all the Board have various interests in Hackney Tennis said that the main priority was if a family member were to have a material benefit from decisions made and this would need managed appropriately on a case-by-case basis.

James highlighted the importance of confidentiality with sensitive matters at board meetings.

Kate explained that she has a code of conduct in her work as a HR professional and has experience of this daily.

Maurine explained that Trustees with conflicts should excuse themselves at those times and said that conflicts of interest should be on every board meeting agenda.

Howard put it to a formal vote that Kate's conflicts were recognised by the Board but believed to be manageable to ensure the Board would remain effective. All trustees voted in favour.

Howard asked for the minutes of the previous meeting to be agreed. The minutes were approved. Howard asked whether he needed to sign them, and it was agreed that this would be done using DocuSign.

Nothing had been approved by email.

Cristian Winder said that he had been tasked with getting advice from Westway regarding their school's programme and was chasing this up.



Managing Director's Report

There was a significant increase in revenue in the 2021/22 financial year compared to 2020/21 and to the 2019/20 accounts primarily due to the substantial increase in court revenues, various grants, and court rental of £35,000 being waived by Hackney Tennis.

Howard mentioned that this would mean that Hackney Council would take back more money from HT due to the profit share agreement contained in HT's service agreement. James outlined to Kate that the agreement consisted of a staggered surplus share. James mentioned that he was unsure if there would be any potential for this money to be ring fenced for HT projects, but Howard said he had raised this before, and it had been made clear that it would not be.

James asked for any questions on the finances.

Howard asked how the last few months were looking like in terms of court demand. James said the demand had reduced at Spring Hill and Millfields but were still significantly higher.

James outlined London Borough Hackney's (LBH) approval for HT to increase the court fees by between 2.3-3.1% and approval for HT to charge for court hours before 10am to help ensure courts are not getting booked and then not used. James asked for board discussion on the best way to release these new costs. David P said that he may make sense to scale the pre 10am court costs.

David H asked if there was any sense that people were playing on the courts before 10am because they could not afford to play tennis or if it was just people playing before they go to work. Howard felt it was more people playing before work. David asked if there was a discount for players who struggle to pay and Howard mentioned that there are free courts available, but David H said these were available to everyone and HT should consider providing more focussed opportunities to those who cannot afford to play. James suggested that the revenue from the morning courts be used to offer playing opportunities to players who could not afford them without assistance in the form of discounts or bursaries. James mentioned that there are difficulties in trying to identify those who would struggle to pay to play, and that people may feel uncomfortable about coming forward so say they need assistance to play. David H said there were ways and that people already receiving benefits may come forwards for assistance. Maurine said there are difficulties with identifying those in need of financial assistance and this would need careful consideration. Howard said he felt it would be easier to run community programmes than offer discounts on court booking, but that it would be sensible to offer a reduced court fee for the pre 10am courts and suggested £3 per hour. James mentioned that HT's junior rate of £3.25 which could be the new rate and would help keep administration simpler. £3.25 was agreed as the new rate for morning courts. The Trustees agreed that this would be communicated to HT's players in advance along with a commitment to review after 3 or 6 months.



Kate asked if LBH determine when the courts get resurfaced, and James confirmed that HT can advise and ask but LBH would determine when any resurfacing would take place.

Howard said that the government parks grant will provide a minimum specification of renovation and if HT were to be awarded any funds, consideration should be given to putting in additional capital to ensure works will have a longer lifespan.

Kate asked if it was LBH who were overseeing the fencing project at Clissold and James confirmed that it was.

Kate highlighted that most HT players are not aware that Hackney Council are responsible for the court resurfacing and fencing. Kate said that if HT is asking players for an increased court fee there is an issue if the courts are sub-standard which will result in complaints to HT. Kate asked if anything could be done about this. Howard said that this has been discussed with the Council, but they would want to keep control of the renovation and repair of courts.

Howard said the Council were in support of HT and would be reasonable with regards to required works.

David P suggested that the HT trustees get training on governing a charity. Howard agreed that this would be money well spent and Kate and David agreed to look at courses.

David H said that he would like HT to have a new campaign that creates a bit of a buzz. James highlighted the new parent and child programme that has started at Clissold Park and that this project would be opening at additional sites. David H said that this was a modest ambition and that as a charity we should do more. David H said we should have a wide remit to promote tennis and better health to the community and proposed that a member of staff could be solely responsible for the community side of things. Howard said he felt that the schools and delivering tennis were the priority. Maurine asked James to prepare a paper on the community side of Hackney Tennis works and the resources currently used. James said this information was in his annual AGM report and said that HT can add any new agreed campaigns at any time but there was great scope and areas for growth with the current programmes.

James said that he would send the reserves policy to HT's accountants Knox Cropper to review provide any advice ahead of the next board meeting where the policy would be considered for adoption.

James outlined the details of the pre-circulated draft volunteers' policy, and this was formally adopted by the Trustees.

James asked the Trustees for feedback on the pre-circulated Head Coach advert. David P asked what the current coaches think about the recruitment and James said there had not been minimum feedback but that the advert would go out to the HT team ahead of going out nationally. James said that the coaches had asked whether the Head Coach would have court



priority for individual lessons, James explained that he did not think this would be an issue due to the structure of the head coach role.

David P asked for a breakdown of the recruitment process and James confirmed this would consist of an initial interview followed by full on-site interview with some Trustees in attendance and ideally the same Trustees for each interview.

James reported that twelve adults had attended the volunteer training held at Clissold Park and the intention was to get these volunteers to help HT coaches at local schools with longer term plans to get them trained up as L1 and L2 coaches.

James said that the website was due for release in March and that he would send over to the Board for review to get for any bugs and evaluate the booking functionality. James said the launch would be in two parts with an initial launch with Open Play and then potentially another move over to Clubspark later in the year.

James reported that the fencing works were ahead of schedule and progressing well. There is an issue with gaps in the gates' hinges, but this would be resolved before completion.

James visited five sites with the LTA who seemed positive about HT's chances of receiving the government's park funding.

HT were awarded £25k from LBH's Adapt Your Business Grant which will be used to upgrade the tennis shop and come with additional business advice and support.

The first team trials were held for men's and women's teams with an email going out to HT members and we had 6 Men and 9 Women. David P asked if the club championships would be running this year and James confirmed this would happen in addition to separate men's and women's doubles events which could be fundraising events.

David H said that he would also like more information on being a Trustee and asked James if there would be changes to his role now that HT is a charity and if any support was required. James said that the main priority was to ensure the Trustees are all fully aware of their responsibilities.

It was agreed that all HT's policies would be reviewed ahead of the next board meeting.

James was actioned with putting a draft charity risk assessment ahead of the next board meeting.

James outlined an issue that came up at the AGM and a request from a HT member to stop Hackney Tennis coaches from coaching after 7pm to enable HT players better access to evening courts. James reviewed the court bookings with the Trustees and highlighted the vast increase in court bookings. The Trustees discussed and agreed that the current court booking policies in place are sufficiently balanced.



James announced that Stormont House School won Middlesex Tennis's School of the Year Award for the disability project headed up by Allan Bairstow.

Howard thanked everyone and closed the meeting.