



HACKNEY TENNIS 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON MONDAY 29th November 2021 7:00PM. THE MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY USING ZOOM.

Present

Directors: Howard Bennett (Chair), David Harrison, David Pagliaro, Maurine Lewin, Cristian Winder, Lisa Watch

Management: James Mills, Natalia Brebu

Members in attendance: Phil Semper, Christian Coombes, Yvonne Bennett, George Howe, Nigel Ware, Katy Reynolds, Eloy Mora Vargas, Fatemeh Beyad, Kate Garvie, Simon Dormon, Gary Rice, Daniel Mortlock, Gareth Jones

Welcome

Howard Bennett (Chair) welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining the meeting.

Howard highlighted that the past year has posed similar challenges to 2020, and thanked HT's management, OAs and coaches for their flexibility and dedication in facing those challenges.

There have been direct frustrations and consequences of the various lockdowns which have prevented people from playing tennis and Hackney Tennis (HT) from delivering its programme. HT's main partners London Borough Hackney (LBH) and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) have been focused on their response to lockdowns and COVID which limited their ability to engage with HT during the year. Fuller engagement has recently been possible, and we are feeling positive that we will be able to deliver some ambitious projects. These projects are aimed at the priorities agreed with Hackney Council in terms of delivering schools, community, adult competitive tennis, and junior performance tennis. Some of you have concerns about areas of tennis participation that it is perceived Hackney Tennis is neglecting - at least, we have had emails in the past year questioning our commitment to junior and performance tennis as well as the opposite, from people believing that adult players do not get enough courts available for general booking. The Board is very aware of Hackney Tennis's roots as a junior tennis club and the success of its junior community and performance programme, but we also recognise that Hackney Tennis needs to deliver for all its users across all age ranges. The extra interest in Tennis that is evident post lockdown has made it clear that improving facilities at the less used sites is an even greater priority than before, and that we need to increase the number of floodlit courts, and ideally increase the

number of courts. We also recognise that part of our objective as an organisation is to improve the quality of life of residents through increasing participation in sport. We feel that a key part of this is increasing the reach and engagement in our schools' programme and making sure pathways are available for whatever level a player wants to pursue tennis to. All of this will only be achievable if we are successful in developing many of our facilities and now that we have the engagement of Hackney Council and the LTA, I am confident we can deliver that.

Howard handed over to James Mills (Managing Director) who provided some instructions to members on Zoom procedures and outlined the Zoom polling feature that would be used to cast votes during the meeting.

Ordinary Business

Approval of the 2019 AGM Minutes

Howard asked if there were any questions on the 2020 AGM minutes and as there was none, a poll was conducted, and the 2020 AGM minutes were approved with a 94% majority.

Consideration of the Report of the Directors and Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

Howard outlined the key figures from the accounts. A surplus for the year of £8k vs £41k the previous year. Reserves of £267k, which was slightly higher than last year.

Howard noted there were several items that are affected by lockdown grants that were paid and received and outlined the basis that these were arrived at together:

HT received furlough grants for employees on payroll who were furloughed at 80% of average payroll over.

Self-employed coaches could directly claim 80% of their earnings from HMRC. However, some coaches were not entitled because they had previously been employed prior to being contracted by HT.

HT paid furloughed employees the additional 20% of wages that HT did not receive in furlough grants and offered additional HT grants to the coaches of 20% of their average billed hours on the HT programme. This appears as Grants of £9,310 under Expenditure. In addition, coaches were able to invoice in advance for up to 40 hours per month which would then need to be worked back later. This appears as Prepayments of £20,962 under Debtor's line of Balance Sheet. HT received furlough grants and local restriction grants totaling £42k. Hackney Council waived £35k of payments due from HT under the service agreement.

Revenue was £362k compared to £427k in 2020. Programme income dropped significantly £131k (2020: £246k) due to the three lockdowns curtailing operations.

Although courts were closed during the lockdown, the increase in demand once HT reopened, enabled increased court fees of £186k compared to £156k in 2020. The increase was primarily from a significant increase in court bookings at Millfields, Spring Hill and Hackney Downs.

No Equipment sales or room hire revenue due to the covid restrictions.

Expenditure was £331k compared to £361k in 2020. Employee wages were £233k compared to £242k in 2020 £242k which was due to less overtime.

The Clissold Park pavilion was redecorated which is shown in repairs £13k (2020, £1400).

On the Balance Sheet on prepayments - £21k referred to earlier, was because we allowed coaches to invoice for work in advance. In accruals and deferred income of £91k was because the March 2021 programme did not take place and was deferred to start in April. So, the revenue was deferred until the next fiscal year.

Howard asked if there were any questions on the accounts and as there was none, a poll was conducted, and the 2020 accounts were approved with a 95% majority.

Managing Director's Report

James started by thanking the whole HT team for their professionalism and flexibility throughout a difficult year. James thanked the HT players for their support and adherence to all the necessary Covid measures and Hackney Council for their financial support and assistance.

On the facilities, considerable damage was done to the tennis fencing at Clissold Park during lockdown 3, by people breaking into the courts to skate and play football. James thanked the coaches who helped with emergency fence repairs ahead of reopening the courts and the Clissold Park rangers who helped with putting nets back up under trying conditions. The Council have confirmed that Clissold Park's tennis fencing will be fully replaced in 2022 with works starting on 14 February and expected to last between 5-7 weeks.

In 2021 HT took on ETC Sport Surfaces to clean and spray HT's tennis courts. Twenty courts have been cleaned so far in 2021 across six sites and the new maintenance programme appears to have helped significantly with keeping moss at bay and ensuring all the HT courts remain playable throughout the year.

HT has been in joint discussions with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and Council, drafting an overarching plan for facility development in the borough that may be able to benefit from the LTA and government's £30.5 million investment into public courts. The next step will be for the LTA to conduct site visits and provide an assessment of each of HT's sites and this is expected to take place early next year.

Since tennis opened again after lockdown 3, HT has taken 36,702 online bookings this year, comprising of 6,365 unique HT users. These figures reflect the continued high demand for tennis throughout this year and the healthy increase in players accessing HT's courts. Currently, HT has 888 members (which is up from 690 members last year).

Since restarting the HT coaching programme in April, demand for coaching has remained remarkably high with excellent take-up across HT's courses. New sessions have been added to the programme in 2021 including new junior sessions on Fridays and additional adult daytime sessions. Currently HT's coaching team are delivering 89 HT classes each week. The coaches ran 9 weeks of junior holiday camps for all ages and abilities in 2021 and provided an excellent level of tuition to 576 juniors.

Following a successful pilot in 2020, a new parent-and-child community session has now been set up on Saturday mornings at Clissold Park for the Autumn term. The sessions are overseen by HT coaches and aim to get more parents playing tennis together with their children on a regular basis. The sessions are free and have attracted over 60 players in a single term. HT will be expanding this programme across its venues in 2022 and creating volunteering opportunities linked to the programme.

A new partnership was formed with Stormont House Special School this year and HT coach Allan Bairstow is doing a fantastic job leading two classes per week at Hackney Downs on Tuesday afternoons to the school's students. School clubs have started back at Shacklewell, Jubilee, Grazebrook & Mossbourne Academy and this will be expanded during 2022 and linked to a new schools' tennis volunteer programme.

HT's Junior Performance Programme continues to provide a high-quality performance pathway for players aged 4yrs-18yrs. There have been some excellent results from HT's players and below are some highlights. Shanice- gained her first ITF ranking points, Tom- selected for the Middlesex Men's County Cup team, played in his first ITF professional tournament Annika- secured a place at US College Mount Holyoke where she is now playing full time Marcus- 18U Doubles County Champion Zahid- 14U LTA G3 Billericay Champion

James congratulated HT coaches Frank, Paul, and Seth who all qualified as LTA Level 3 coaches this year and Nigel who qualified as an LTA Level 2 coach. HT has one of most highly qualified coaching teams in Middlesex, which is a fantastic achievement and will help enable growth as HT's less developed sites are enhanced.

James thanked HT's operations team and noted that new IT equipment (monitors and laptops) was purchased which has helped with improving work efficiency.

James reported that a website designer has been appointed and is working on a new website for HT. The site will provide a fresh look for HT and be tied in with a modern rebranding and will be released in 2022.

HT won four LTA National League titles and came runner-up in a further five Middlesex leagues. James thanked all the captains for their voluntary work with the teams. The HT Championships attracted 115 players across twelve events and although the finals day was rained off, most finals have now been played. The Road to Wimbledon event ran and all four HT winners went through to the County Finals and performed well. The London Youth games event was run and HT received a note from the organiser about the excellent conduct of the HT team. The Hackney Tennis Spin Singles League has grown rapidly in 2021 with a record 278 players competing in the summer Spin league compared to 114 in 2020. There are 235 players in the Autumn league, so participation remains high.

James thanked the HT team and Board for their work throughout the year.

Election of Directors

Howard explained that one third of the board needed to step down each year and a poll was run for the re-election of Maurine Lewin and Cristian Winder. Howard said that both Maurine and Cristian make excellent contributions to the board, and it would be a loss if they were not re-elected. Each poll was run and both Maurine (95% in favour) and Cristian (95% in favour) were voted back on the Board. Two

nominations were received. One was from Frank Dixon, who is one of Hackney Tennis's contracted coaches. Frank has valuable experience in the charity sector. However, the board discussed the potential conflicts of interest and took the view that they would be too great, too frequent and would not be possible to manage effectively. Howard spoke to Frank ahead of the AGM, and Frank agreed to withdraw his nomination, but he did ask that his withdrawal letter be read into the minutes. Howard said that the board would welcome Frank's contribution on an ad-hoc basis. Howard proceeded to read out Frank's withdrawal letter:

Dear Board Members

Frank Dixon Nomination for the Board of Trustees

Following a telephone conversation with Howard Bennett on 28 November, Howard asked that I withdraw my nomination over a potential conflict of interest as I provide coaching services to Hackney Tennis as a self-employed coach.

I thought about this for some time and although I will reluctantly withdraw my nomination, I see no greater potential conflict than that which must exist for current board members who have family members who are direct employees of Hackney Tennis or undertake coaching duties.

Such conflicts are removed, by the potentially conflicted individual recusing himself or herself from the discussions around which there may be a conflict and would be in line with Charity Commission guidelines on the duties and responsibilities of trustees.

Like most people who become involved with local clubs, societies and charities, the personal and professional connections that they can bring to the role of trustee can give rise to conflicts.

I remain committed to Hackney Tennis and with twenty years' experience at board level for UK charities feel that I can help Hackney Tennis fulfill its charitable objectives.

Howard addressed why the board felt that there was a greater conflict for Frank as a coach as opposed to Howard whose wife Yvonne works part-time as a HT operation assistant. The Board felt that the conflicts with Frank would be far more frequently, and it would be not be possible to manage the conflicts.

Kate Garvie was the other nomination. Kate is Frank's partner and similar issues of conflict arise. The Board had considered this and concluded that it is a situation that can be managed by recusal from conflicted votes and exclusion from certain discussions. This would need monitored though if Kate were to be elected. Howard said that given Kate's relevant experience, it would be in HT's interest to do so.

Howard asked Kate to summarise why she would like to join the board and what she thinks she can contribute.

Kate provided an overview of her skills which included substantial HR experience, leadership skills, strategic planning, people management and knowledge of employment law. Kate said that she could help with reviewing employment documentation, HR issues, attracting and retaining talent. Kate outlined that she shared HT's vision and has been a Hackney resident and played tennis in Hackney for over twenty years. Kate is also a qualified teacher.

Howard asked if anyone had any questions for Kate.

Cristian Winder asked Kate about her teaching experience as schools are a key area for HT. Kate replied that she is qualified in adult education for 6th form colleges and up.

A vote was then held on Kate's appointment, and this was carried with a 60% majority.

Appointment of Knox Cropper as auditors for the current financial year

Howard confirmed that he knew of no reason not to appoint Knox Cropper who are specialists in the charity sector. Howard asked members if there were any questions and there was none. A vote was held on their appointment which was carried unanimously.

Howard asked if there were any questions.

Fatemeh Beyad asked James if Knox Cropper had noticed the cost of sales being negative in the accounts. James confirmed that they had not, but had been made aware of the error. For everyone's clarity Howard identified the relevant figure in the accounts and James outlined that this error would have been due either opening stock being low, closing stock high or the most likely, was that balls that were meant for sales were but into the equipment cost expenditure. Howard explained that Knox Cropper's position was as it was a small amount it was not material to the accounts. James said that he would raise it again with Knox Cropper to ensure closer attention is paid in the future.

David Harrison thanked Fatemeh for raising the issue and asked whether there is another account checker service that HT should consider. James said that he would investigate this.

Fatemeh expressed her disappointment that Knox Cropper nor the Board had noticed this error and pointed out that if there are errors with balls stock it would be difficult to know if someone were to steal balls from the pavilion. James explained that most balls are kept in a locked cupboard and there had been minimal use of the shop during the year. James agreed with Fatemeh that HT needs better stock management, and a software solution will be put in place in 2022.

A vote was then held to appoint Knox Cropper as auditors, and this was approved with 80% in favor.

Extraordinary Business

Howard outlined that the Charity Commission had requested an alteration to two clauses to HT's Articles to enable HT to proceed with its application to become a charity. Brabners solicitors advised HT to proceed with the Charity Commission's suggested changes.

Howard asked if there were any questions on this.

David Harrison asked if the wording was limited to players who needed tennis rather than the public. Howard said his understanding was that the wording also included the community and that the wording would not restrict HT in any way.

Maurine Lewin said she did not feel that it would restrict HT and the wording was for clarification rather than restriction.

Howard highlighted that the articles could be amended in the future if required.

Howard outlined the proposed articles needed to be supported by 75% of the people attending the AGM or would not be approved and any abstentions would count as votes against.

The vote was then held, and the articles were approved with 95% majority.

Howard asked if there were any other questions

All Other Business

Daniel Mortlock said that booked courts not being used are still an issue and asked if this had been given any additional consideration. Howard asked if it was during a particular time and Daniel confirmed it was a general issue at Clissold Park. Howard said that this has been discussed with the Council and consideration was being given to whether a charge could be implemented on courts before 10am. Howard explained that consideration has also been given to putting key coded locks on the gates in partnership with the LTA. James mentioned that the gates could also help with general access issues to the courts and could be tested at one site and then reviewed.

Simon Dormon highlighted his concern that the public cannot book 2-hour court slots in the evening. As coaches can book courts in advance, they will book 1-hour slots in the evening, which takes away the possibility of 2-hour bookings after 7pm. Simon said that he would like a debate on whether this is fair and if the 2-hour slots that remain after the HT programme should be kept for public bookings only.

David Harrison expressed his concern that locked gates may not be in the ethos of HT.

James asked Simon if he would like the Board to review his request and Simon confirmed that it would be good if it could be looked at.

Phil Semper pointed out that Clissold Leisure Centre has a system for no shows and maybe a similar system could be adopted at HT. Phil asked if there are any plans to make the use of Springfield courts more equitable rather than the courts being dominated by groups of people.

Howard said that there are plans to put a booking system in place at Springfield courts.

Eloy followed up on Daniel's point and said it would be better if the cancellation of courts were made easier. Eloy also asked if it would be possible to have a waiting list so cancelled courts could be taken on by others. Eloy asked if there are IT solutions that could be considered.

Eloy also asked why there is not floodlighting on courts 1 and 8 at Clissold Park.

James said a more efficient system for cancellation of courts will be investigated.

David Harrison explained that to get planning permission for the floodlights at Clissold it was necessary to keep courts 1 and 8 unlit. David asked James to explain the floodlit court allocation to the public and HT coaches. James said that the council expects HT to manage the courts in a balanced way but due to there being so few floodlit courts in Hackney, demand was always going to outstrip supply. James explained there are around 10-15k bookings for coaching programme, individual lessons and team matches and around 36K public bookings which does appear to be a reasonable balance, but this did not isolate floodlight courts in the evening. James noted that it could be a suitable time to try and revisit the installation of lights on courts 1 & 8.

Fatemeh asked if it would be possible to have an open booking system to improve the transparency of the booking. Howard and James confirmed that this would be a sensible move for Hackney Tennis and would be considered in conjunction with a change in booking management software.

Fatemeh suggested that Hackney Tennis could work with the players and coaches at Springfield to deliver community projects. James said that he had met with the coaches at Springfield and has contacted the Springfield development manager and is investigating if it would be possible to run the free parent and child sessions programme at Springfield in 2022.

There were no further questions

Maurine and Howard thanked James for his work throughout 2021.

Howard brought the meeting to a close.