



HACKNEY TENNIS 2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON TUESDAY 6th December 2022 7:00PM. THE MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY USING ZOOM.

Present

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

Management: James Mills, Natalia Brebu

Members in attendance: Rebecca Stone, Eloy Mora Vargas, Philip Semper, Ivan Benette, Katy Reynolds, Gary Rice, Josh Whitehead, Roger Waite, Alex Kennedy, Yvonne Benette

Apologies for Absence: Daniel Mortlock, Fatemeh Bayed, David Harrison, Gareth Jones

Welcome

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

Howard stated that this was the third time Hackney Tennis had run the AGM virtually and depending on the views of members, could be the last.

Hackney Tennis has bounced back well after a tricky couple of years and has shown considerable growth from pre-lockdown 2019. This is all thanks to the great efforts of the entire team of staff and coaches and I would like to thank everyone for this, but in particular the Management Team of James and Natalia, who have worked with tireless energy.

We hoped to be a little further by now in our plans for developing the facilities at the venues away from Clissold Park, but we do think that there will be visible progress in the next twelve months.

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 2021 AGM minutes and as there was none, a poll was conducted, and the 2021 AGM minutes were approved.

Consideration of the Report of the Directors and Audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

Howard outlined the key highlights from the accounts.

Net income of unrestricted funds of £39K vs £88k in 2022. This big rise was following the COVID lockdowns. HT's unrestricted Reserves of £355k vs £259k in 2021. The Trustees have set out a reserve policy as we are required to do as a charity, and we have set the minimum reserves at £150k which represents around 30% of annual expenditure. Maximum reserves are set at £300k. Our intention is to use our reserves above the minimum to develop the facilities and programme and we are confident we will be able to spend a reasonable proportion of this over the next 12 months. We do want to use the funds we invest as a way of attracting further funds from granting organisations to invest alongside us in developing facilities.

Revenue from Charitable activities was £589k which compared £317k in 2021 and £450k in 2020, which is a strong bounce back from last year and a good increase on pre-COVID times. The strong growth comes from both increased court fee and programme income.

Expenditure has also gone up significantly to £525k vs £354k in 2021, due to increased coaching fees and the fees to the council returning to normal following concessions in 2020 due to the lockdowns.

Howard asked if there were any questions on the accounts. A question had been submitted by a member in advance regarding page 21 of the accounts note 15 Related parties. The note does not state that these transactions were at arm's length, and Fatemeh asked if this was because as per section 9.21 of the SORP, such terms can't be substantiated?

Howard read out the note in full 'Arrangements between Hackney Tennis and related parties are managed in accordance with the benefits and conflicts provisions of the charity's articles of association.' HT's article 6.3.2 states that 'the nature and level of the remuneration is no more than is reasonable in relation to the value of the goods or services.' The rates paid for services are believed to be reasonable and in line with market rates.

The member also asked if the auditors were aware of a tennis holiday Ivan Bennett (son of Howard and Yvonne Bennett) was taken on in 2010.

Howard explained that the auditors have not been informed about the Tennis Holiday dating back to 2010 because HT was not a charity at the time and the trip was not organised by HT but independently by the coaches and Howard was not on the board at that time.

There were no further questions, and a poll was conducted, and the 2022 accounts were approved.

Managing Director's Report

It has been an extremely busy year for Hackney Tennis with continued high demand for tennis carrying through 2021 & 2022. The Hackney Tennis team of coaches, operations staff and volunteers have worked well as a team to meet this demand and provide HT players with lots of tennis opportunities.

HT's coaching team has successfully delivered our community tennis coaching programme, which comprises of over 90 group coaching classes each week during term time and an additional 10 weeks of junior holiday camps. The coaching programme has involved over 2500 players of all ages and abilities and sessions have been well subscribed and well received, which is thanks to the success of our coaching team.

HT's disability tennis programme at Stormont House School headed up by HT coach Allan Bairstow has continued to flourish and the programme's success resulted in the school being awarded the Lawn Tennis Association Middlesex School of the Year award.

We have expanded the free parent-and-child sessions, which now run at three sites (Clissold Park, London Fields, and Hackney Downs), which provide free court time and tennis coaching to parents and their children. The sessions have been an enormous success and can currently accommodate 64 players each week.

A volunteer project was established that provided local community members with in-house training and funding to apply for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate. This programme will enable suitable volunteers to assist Hackney Tennis's coaching team with school and community sessions.

School links have been re-established and Hackney Tennis has delivered 11 hours per week of coaching to Hackney schools during term time providing over 175+ school children with tennis coaching either onsite at their school or at tennis courts within Hackney's parks. We have recently piloted a scheme to provide primary school children who receive free school meals with free places on our holiday tennis camps and this programme will be put in place in 2023.

HT's Junior Performance Programme continues to provide a high-quality performance pathway for players aged 4yrs-18yrs. The performance team suggested we bring in a fitness trainer and we found fitness coach Don Allen who has been an excellent addition to our academy and squad sessions.

There have been some excellent results from HT's players and below are some highlights:

Shanice Weekes- Accepted to American Uni Wayne State University in Detroit

Marucs Weekes- played in his first ITF event

Amani and Alyia Osman- recently played in their first Tennis Europe event in Greece

James thanked HT's coaches for their commitment and work on court throughout the year.

Operations

During the financial year, Hackney Tennis has managed over 45,000 tennis court bookings made by over 7000 members of the public. HT's new website was launched this year and provided a fresh new look that has received good feedback from our players. Operations Manager Natalia Brebu and our team of Ops assistants have done a sterling job keeping the systems running in the background. The recent move to the ClubSpark booking system has gone pretty smoothly and the Operations team have made that possible. A big thank you to Natalia and our Ops team for all their hard work and flexibility this year.

Facilities

Clissold Park's new tennis fencing was completed in March 2022, and the new fencing is higher, more robust and provides a significant improvement to the site. Thanks to Hackney Council for funding these works.

Court maintenance company ETC carried out the annual jet washing and moss spraying of the courts effectively and has provided an end of year report on the condition of all of HT's courts. ETC identified several courts that need refurbishment, and HT will work with LBH in early 2023 to book these works in.

Hackney Tennis won a grant from the council for £25,000 to refurbish Hackney Tennis's community tennis shop. Works have started and the new shop will be relaunched in Spring 2023 and will offer racket re-stringing services, racket demos and equipment sales. The plan is to utilise the shop to create more links with the local community through training and volunteering opportunities.

Competitions

HT fielded 10 Summer league teams and 16 summer National League teams provided lots of competitive opportunities to HT's players and 9 HT teams managed to win their divisions. A huge thank you to all our adult & junior team captains who have put in so much effort and time over the year.

School competitions have also been run including a Middlesex Inclusive Team Challenge competition at Stormont House School and starter events at Sir Thomas Abney School for yr 5 & 6 students.

HT juniors represented Hackney at the London Youth Games competition.

We held the LTA's 14U Play your way to Wimbledon event- county finals Amani and Aliyah reached the quarter finals Kenzo reached the semifinals.

Spin Tennis App Singles league grew to 387 players in the summer (72% increase from 225 in 2021)

New matchplay sessions have been organised by Gino.

The adult and junior Club Championships had 15 events and entries grew this year compared to last. Professional LTA umpires were again invited to help oversee the finals day and make it more of an occasion. Thanks to everyone who took part across all the events.

James thanked HT's team for the successful year which has seen considerable progress and growth made. James thanked the Board for their support, advice, and assistance throughout the year. James thanked Howard for all his time and patience as Chair.

Election of Trustees

Howard noted that Trustee Kate Garvey stepped down in June and thanked Kate for her contribution. On third of the Trustees in to step down each year and Howard as the longest serving member was standing down and seeking re-election. Howard said that in line with the articles, that this would be his third and last term on the board, Howard stated he felt this was a good policy that ensured new ideas and perspectives on the board. Howard said he would like to complete a third term and explained that he has a lot of knowledge and experience about what it required at Hackney Tennis and has developed some good relationships with key stakeholders, which will be important when trying to develop HT's facilities.

Howard introduced trustee nominee Roger Waite who is a parent of two HT junior players and works as a charity lawyer.

Roger gave an outline of his involvement with HT and explained his interest in looking at the governance of HT and his professional background for the last ten years as a specialist charity and philanthropy lawyer working for some of the UK's largest charities including Cancer Research UK, British Red Cross, and sporting charities like the British Olympic Foundation. Roger said he feels he will bring relevant knowledge to HT as it is finding its feet as a charity and would be delighted to join the board.

Howard asked if there were any questions, there were none. James ran the poll to elect Howard who was re-elected and then the poll to elect Roger who was voted onto the board.

Appointment of Knox Cropper as auditors for the current financial year

Howard said the board were happy with the auditors' work during the year and they have extensive experience working with charities. The poll was run to re-appoint the auditors and this was approved.

Other Business

Phil Semper asked for clarification on how players get selected for competitions. James asked which competitions Phil was thinking of. Phil said that several men who regularly attend men's training do not get invited to take part in adult league matches while others who are not as committed to HT are selected.

David Pagliaro asked James to broaden his response and explain more generally who gets to train with the teams and how.

James outlined that HT has three men's teams in the summer and two women's teams. There is huge demand for league tennis and thought needs to be given to how best to manage three men's teams when there are so many HT users. With regards to having full transparency on selection for teams James said that he would like to sit down with Phil and look at all those who are playing and work with the captains to decide if procedures and policy need to change to ensure the fairest system possible. James pointed out that there are a lot of positives about the HT teams and that they provide a lot of players with competitive opportunities.

Phil said all team captains should be involved in any discussions, and James agreed.

James said that team trials were run this year, and this would be repeated to help provide access routes for players new to the teams.

Howard read out a question from Fatemeh Beyad given in advance on the meeting, 'I was very disappointed that you have removed free courts before 10am on weekdays and 9am on weekends, was this done in consultation with LBH and LTA? I did not see any consultation with members, users, or Hackney residents. The only thing I have seen are minutes noting this change and that Howard felt that people just played in the mornings so they could go to work after - again was this just his experience or a wider consultation? Howard of course can get free courts as an Islington resident who is over 60 at Highbury Fields so perhaps it's not such an issue for him. I feel that given you are a monopoly provider, making a surplus, with reserves above your maximum level it is hard to justify and simply not fair!

Howard said he is not over 60 and explained that all increases to HT court fees are discussed and agreed by LBH, the LTA is not involved in court fee discussions.

The early morning fee was introduced to tackle the issue of players booking courts and then not turning up to use them. HT received regular complaints from players who could not book courts but were cycling past to see them unused. A three-month trial period was implemented, and HT players were asked to provide feedback on the new morning charge.

The plan is to use all additional revenue from early-morning courts, to establish additional HT community programmes specifically for disadvantaged members of the community. The thought behind

this is that it would be more targeted, measurable, and hopefully have better outcomes than the free courts before 9/10am scheme.

James added that we had asked members to give feedback during the three-month trial and three players had written back to express their disappointment.

Howard read out another request from Fatemeh that the pavilion be opened to the local community as a warm space, and explained this would be reviewed by the Trustees at the next board meeting.

Howard thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.