

## **MINUTES OF SLTCC 49th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 6<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2025**

**Present:** Gillian Bartlett, Chair, the following Board members: Katharine Beaudry, Vikki Chambers, Ray Franklin, Keith McMillan, Simon Taylor, and c.25 other members

**Apologies:** Carolyn Buckeridge, Joe McTague, Judi Stockwell and Pete Wyr

### **Introduction**

Gillian welcomed everyone present and thanked them for coming to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the year ending 31 March 2025. Gillian confirmed the quorum is 17 which was comfortably exceeded by the attendance. She introduced the other members of the Board, and Dez Lewington (Club Manager).

There is a slight change in the order of the meeting, with the volunteer awards item being taken ahead of the item on the new Club House, where questions are expected – which will then lead to any questions under Any Other Business.

### **Minutes of the 2024 AGM**

Gillian confirmed that the minutes of the 2024 AGM (held on 7th November 2024) had been approved by the Board and advised attendees that the minutes are available on the Club website. She thanked Simon Taylor for preparing these minutes.

### **1. Introduction, Directors Report and Chair's Report**

It is assumed that attendees have read the Chair's report which contains a lot of detail about Club developments subsequent to April 2025. The Directors' Report circulated with the papers sets out details. The AGM will be voting for the re-election of three directors and bar committee under agenda items 3 and 4.

Gillian advised that the financial year relevant to this AGM is 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and the accounts cover this period. The Club is in a healthy financial position and total income before expenditure over £292,270 enabled the Club to make further investments in facilities. Further detail is in the Accounts agenda item presented by Ray.

### **1. Tennis Court 8**

Progress has been slowed by having to wait for Bromley Council to make a decision on our application for Lawful Development. This has been very frustrating – a final delay was an issue with the new planning portal.

Unfortunately, in July Bromley Council advised the Club that the construction of Court 8 did not meet the requirements for Lawful Development. We therefore submitted a full planning application in August with further information submitted in September.

Only one comment opposing the court has been submitted and thanks are due to members and others who have put in a lot of positive comments. The Determination Date is 10 November – we are very hopeful now that planning permission will be approved by Bromley – a message will be sent out to members as to the result.

If the news is positive, we will proceed with instructing Trevor May to construct the new tennis clay court. We already have Trevor May's quote and the Club has money set aside to proceed. The court would then be constructed around March 2026.

## 2. Club house/ conversion of changing rooms

This is covered under a separate agenda item which Mark and Dez will talk through and when questions can be raised. A PowerPoint is also on display.

## 3. Garden

The Club is seeking to replace the overgrown area in the north-west of the Club grounds and replace with a garden area. A proposed plan will be shown later.

## 4. Volunteers

Several volunteers have joined the tennis and squash committees since the last AGM, but we do need more members on the Bar Committee.

Tennis – James Needham, Michael Suchanecki and Krishna Hingorani – now 10 members

Squash - Joe McTague and Alina Ee – now 5 members

Bar – Patrick Horgan was co-opted last year and is standing to join. Simon resigned from the Bar Committee last year after many years of service. We have only 3 members and we need more people on bar committee – ideally not a board director and having an interest in events.

Sustainability committee has also been formed (not on key roles list) which is currently Duncan, Michel, Bianca, Francisco, Katharine, Gillian and Dez. We plan to meet again after planning decision on court 8. We welcome any others who want to join – perhaps with an interest in gardening.

Fundraising committee – has had one meeting since last year and will meet again when plans for the new Clubhouse have progressed and certainly after planning permission. Gillian stressed that the Club will need to fundraise if we are to proceed. Any more interest in joining this committee is welcome.

## 5. Board Directors

There is room for one or perhaps two new directors. Anyone interested can observe a board meeting and if still interested there would be a vetting and induction process.

Members are Invited to read the report – any questions will be taken under Any Other Business.

## **2. To receive the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025**

Ray stated that the year ending 31 March 2025 showed the Club in a healthy financial position. The Club has had a healthy financial position since Covid as the pandemic encouraged new tennis members to join. Covid and the Club has attracted more members both for tennis and squash.

For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, income increased to £292,270, whilst expenditure was similar to the year before. This led to an operational surplus of £39,815; higher than the surplus in 2023/24.

The current cash in hand is £223,000. Ray thanked Dez for successfully managing a budget of around £250,000.

The major income streams are:

- tennis and squash membership
- tennis coaching
- hire of the club house, primarily Witty Kiddies

Overall, the outlook for the next 5 years is on track. The operating surpluses that the Club has made in recent years has enabled the Club to make substantial investment in its facilities:

- squash court building – structural repairs
- the build of tennis court 8 (assuming successful planning permission)
- new bar / cafe and changing facilities in the squash building.

Ray advised that to go ahead with new club house we will need to obtain “bridging finance” of perhaps £100,000 to ensure that the Club’s financial reserves remain at a healthy level.

Gillian explained that there is no need for a vote to approve – the accounts are deemed to be received by the meeting. Gillian thanked Ray for his work on the accounts.

### **3. Election of Directors**

Gillian recalled that the Club’s Articles were amended at the 2022 AGM to change the rules for the terms of appointment for directors. The Articles now provide that each director will be elected for a fixed term of 3 years only and must then stand for re-election.

In 2022 Katharine Beaudry, Keith McMillan and Simon Taylor were appointed for 3 years. Now their three year term has completed, they all stand for re-election.

This requires an Ordinary resolution with a simple majority of those present at the AGM. The AGM voted and re-elected Katharine Beaudry, Keith McMillan and Simon Taylor as directors for a three year term running to the 2028 AGM.

### **4. Election of Bar Committee**

Gillian explained that the Club’s bar licence requires the election of a new Bar Committee each year. In accordance with the relevant statutory requirements, each member of the Bar Committee retires. Keith McMillan and Vikki Chambers offer themselves for re-election. Simon Taylor resigned from the Bar Committee during the year. Patrick Horgan was co-opted shortly after the last AGM - he stands to be elected.

The AGM voted and approved the aforementioned members of the Bar committee.

## **5. Volunteer Recognition Award and Special Recognition Award**

Gillian thanked all who volunteered to assist in the running of the Club, the current volunteers are shown on the Key Roles list circulated with the AGM papers.

There are two categories of award for recognising volunteers:

Volunteer Recognition Award (VRA) – to be considered each year but not granted unless suitable candidate. To recognise shorter and long term contributions.

Special Recognition Award (SRA) – to recognise especially outstanding service over a long period of time – only granted periodically when deserving candidate.

The criteria for both awards is in members' area on website and these were circulated to the Club and members were asked to put forward nominations for both awards. Some nominations were received and were then considered by a sub-committee of the Board. Simon Taylor proceeded to announce the rewards.

There was one nomination for Volunteer Recognition Award - the award is given to a person who has played a key role for the squash section. This person is Joe McTague – he joined the squash committee at the end of 2024; in this short time, Joe has organised and captained the first squash team for many years – leading it to runner up of the Kent league (division 5) and helping to make Sydenham a veritable fortress. When we lost our previous squash coach, Joe used his network to identify squash coaches at other clubs – and as a result we have recently taken on Matt Proctor to undertake squash coaching at the Club. He has also improved the appearance and content of the balcony. Joe is passionate for the success of squash and racketball at the Club, and is a worthy recipient of the VRA. Unfortunately, Joe cannot be with us tonight, so we will make the award at a suitable time – probably a home team match.

There was one nomination for Special Recognition Award this year to a person who has worked tirelessly for the Club over many years including the Board, tennis committee and tennis teams. This person is of course Gillian Bartlett. She joined the Board in 2014 representing the Tennis section and also the important role of Company Secretary. Then in January 2017 she became Chair, replacing Peter Lewis. Gillian has now served the longest continuing period as Chair (although Peter Lewis has served the longest total number of years). It is a vast piece of work that Gillian has undertaken, including updating the Articles of Association and Club Policies, working with and Chairing the Board, and working closely with Dez our Club Manager. Somehow, Gillian finds time to play tennis, including for the ladies team. In summary, Gillian richly deserves the SRA.

Simon presented the Special Recognition Award to Gillian.

## **6. Club Development Update**

### Garden

The Club is seeking to replace the overgrown area in the north-west of the grounds and replace with a garden area. A plan prepared by a landscape gardener who had been instructed by the Club was shown on the PowerPoint, together with examples of new vegetation. It will be necessary to first clear the brambles from this area.

The plan is then to construct a mound in the middle of the site, which could be used for viewing courts. If this is done at the same time as the building of the new tennis court, the mound would be constructed using the spoil from the construction of the new tennis court.

### Tennis Court 8

It is hoped to construct the new court in March 2026. We are hopeful that Bromley Council will grant planning permission, Dez confirmed that if the decision was negative, we would appeal. It is possible that the Club could be called to a hearing, though it is considered this is unlikely given there has been only one objection registered with the Council.

It was noted that the bio-diversity net gain is good, especially as we will use the spoil for the construction of our new garden area.

The new tennis court will allow the Club to take more tennis members. Dez explained that LTA guidance is that a court with floodlights can support 60 members. However, court 8 will initially not have floodlights so it will enable 40 new members.

Once built the Club could consider floodlight options as a Phase 2; its proximity to neighbours means that floodlights on pylons may not be suitable, but we could look at lower level floodlighting such as LED lights positioned on top of the fence surrounding the court.

### New Clubhouse

Revised plans have been prepared by our architect, Mark Barnard and a Design Pack has been prepared by Mark to assist with planning permission. Mark and Dez talked through the design with plans shown on a PowerPoint presentation:

- Mark stressed that the development is not a relocation of the existing Club House. The existing Clubhouse will remain as will many of its functions – the hall/lettings, the Club Manager's office, the stringing machine, the tennis Slinger. The existing bar will still be used to support larger events such as quizzes, music nights, AGM etc.
- The primary social area would move to the squash building (converting the two existing communal changing rooms to a bar/cafe), which will benefit from providing views over the tennis courts.
- The existing workshop/storage area will be converted to a more modern changing area with four separate unisex toilets and three showers, one of which would be a wheelchair accessible toilet (with a [non-accessible] shower). It is expected that having a wheelchair accessible toilet would be favourable when submitting a planning application.
- The design retains the existing walls and doors, apart from the dividing walls to the showers.
- The gallery above the squash courts will be improved as the existing boiler will go, allowing the large water tank upstairs to be removed and thereby leaving room for the fixed lockers to move close to the stairs – providing more space.
- Proposed to have new insulated render to external elevations around the new clubhouse and new facilities which will reduce utility costs.

Questions were taken from the meeting:

- Will there be a seat in the shower cubicles to assist with changing footwear? It is planned that there will be a drop down seat.
- Would noise between the bar and squash courts an issue? Mark advised that the walls and doors will have improved insulation (compared to the current changing rooms). Also, the corridor acts as a buffer to reduce noise migration.
- Longer term, is there scope for a balcony above the bar? Mark stated that a second level had been considered earlier in the design. However, the foundations of the building are not deep enough to safely support an extra storey.
- Were glass walls for the back of the squash courts considered? It was felt there was little benefit as there isn't a viewing area behind the courts. Games can of course be watched from the balcony. Also glass walls would be very expensive.
- Could the new design create a problem where there are squash and tennis teams? Mark noted that the squash courts and the changing area are in two separate parts of the building which should reduce crowding.
- Is there any risk that the new development could cause any problems for the structural soundness of the squash courts. Dez advised the squash courts themselves remain unchanged, and that around £90,000 was spent two years ago in structurally supporting the courts.
- What will happen with the equipment in the current workshop? Dez advised that the majority of this equipment will be disposed of, and there would be an external shed behind the squash courts for grounds equipment.
- How will toilets be accessed from the bar? Mark advised this could be either internally (from the corridor behind the courts), or from the new external entrance to the toilets/changing area.
- The new external terrace will be north facing. Can there also be seats looking to tennis courts 6 and 7. It was noted that seats could be installed as part of landscaping of the proposed garden area.
- Could there be an awning. Mark advised that it is a tricky space to have an awning – it would not be able to cover the whole terrace.

In terms of cost, the current estimate is £250,000, this includes contingency. As the project proceeds, actual quotes will be received which will amend this figure somewhat. Ray advised that around half of this could be funded from the Club's bank accounts, and that around £100,000 would need to be funded from loans – not long-term loans, but “bridging finance”.

Dez confirmed that a “Full Variation on Bar Licence” will be required as there will a new main point of sale of alcohol. He had contacted Bromley licensing department about this but said they could not deal with a variation yet given that the new bar is not built. As we already have a bar licence we anticipate this should not be a major issue.

## 7. Any Other Business

Other questions from the meeting:

Padel A question had been submitted before the meeting – *‘Padel is the world’s fastest growing racket sport - with significant growth in demand in the UK. I’ve seen x2 new courts successfully launched first hand, at David Lloyd Beckenham this year. Have we considered building 1-2 Padel courts where tennis court 8 would be, or putting this to a members vote - if this plan would still be feasible?’*

It was noted that Padel with its walled court and noise levels (as reported in various news stories) on the site of court 8 would be likely to face severe difficulties to get planning permission (plus the planning permission submitted is for a tennis court).

Padel courts are expensive to construct (Sundridge Park built two Padel courts four years ago at a cost of £200,000). However, Padel has high playing fees which helps generate income.

Padel would change the member ethos of the Club as Padel operates on a commercial Play to Play model, in order to recoup the capital outlay.

A view was expressed that as Padel is so popular and a growing sport, the Board could consider a Padel court/s as part of a 5 to 10 year plan. It was noted that Sydenham is a relatively small club in terms of area (most Padel courts have been constructed at larger clubs – at Sundridge Park the Padel courts replaced two grass tennis courts). At Sydenham, construction of a Padel court/s would lead to a reduction in tennis courts, which as there is a waiting list at present of 70 to play tennis and we are planning to construct a new tennis court, would not necessarily be the best way forward. Also, Padel courts are a large construction and would change the open nature of the Club grounds – even if planning permission were to be granted.

Tennis Ladder – should there be a separate tennis ladder for tennis players of a good standard. This could encourage the better tennis players to join a ladder. Gillian advised this topic was one for tennis committee to consider.

London Living Wage – subsequent to a question from the 2024 AGM it was asked if the Club pay its employees the London Living Wage? Dez explained that the Club employees are paid above the National Living Wage, but below the London Living Wage (which is an advisory standard). The next Board will review the pay for our employees as from 1 April 2025.

Squash Ball Feeding Machine – further to a question from the 2024 AGM, can the Club provide a squash ball feeding machine to assist solo practice (similar to the Tennis Slinger). There had been a poll on the squash members WhatsApp group with a level of interest expressed for a squash device charging £10 for 90 minutes. Gillian advised that this topic should be discussed firstly at the squash committee and was then a matter for the board.

At 9:30pm Gillian closed the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.