

Banbury and District Tennis Leagues

Minutes of AGM
4th February 2016
Souldern Village Hall

Present

Nick Adams (League Secretary), Bronwyn Adams (Deddington), Trevor Stevens (League Treasurer), Sue Mercer (Harbury), Colin Mercer (League Chairman), Judith Haynes (Charlbury), John Werner (Charlbury), Shirley Griffith (Brackley), Jim Griffith (Brackley), Mark Gregory (Byfield), Paul Christie (Middleton Cheney), Garry Liversage (Middleton Cheney), Sue Jelfs (Banbury West End), Lizzie Cooke (Warwick), June Ward (Deddington), Libby Gibbs (Deddington), Trevor Barnes (Towcester), Barrie Smith (Hook Norton), Steve Rogers (Banbury), Alison Stokes (Priors Marston), Rob Jones (Banbury West End), Sylvia Wilcox (Tysoe), Liz Finlyson (Tysoe),

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:31 p.m. by welcoming all attendees and thanking Bronwyn for arranging the meeting venue, food and drinks.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Tanya Gardner (Kings Sutton), Rob Morrissey (Priors Marston) and George Newton (Towcester)

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (5th February 2015)

The Minutes were circulated. They had been previously posted on the Banbury Tennis Leagues website. The Chairman asked the meeting to review them page by page and asked whether there were any questions, comments or corrections.

Garry Liversage (Middleton Cheney) mentioned that fixture deadline extension was included in these minutes then enquired whether there were any similar plans this season. The Chairman replied that it would be discussed later.

Mark Gregory (Byfield), proposed the Minutes be accepted. The proposal was seconded by Barrie Smith (Hook Norton) and the Minutes were accepted by all those present.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

The Chairman asked if there were any further matters arising from the Minutes. There were none.

4. Secretary's Report

The Chairman confirmed the resignation of the League Secretary and thanked him for his work over the previous few years.

In response to a question from the floor the League Secretary said he had held the position for just 5 years. The League Secretary then delivered his report - it is available on the League website. In the report he apologised for his resignation but pointed out that it needed to be planned well in advance to maintain continuity.

The report was accepted by the meeting attendees and Barrie Smith (Hook Norton) added his thanks.

5. Treasurer's Report

A written report was circulated and is available on the BTL website.

He noted that whilst Summer Fees received had increased, Winter/Floodlit receipts were down due to reduced entries. The net effect is that once again expenditure exceeded income – a situation that clearly could not continue indefinitely. However, some new Leagues will be formed this year and their entry fees may make up the shortfall.

He went on to say that whilst the League is not a 'fund-raising exercise' it may be necessary to increase entry fees in order to balance the books. The outgoing League Secretary commented that the cost structure was likely to alter and suggested that this be calculated before making any further changes.

There were no further questions. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Garry Liversage (Middleton Cheney), seconded by Trevor Barnes (Towcester) and carried unanimously.

6. Election of Officers

The Chairman and Treasurer expressed their willingness to stand for another year. There were no further nominations but the appointments were proposed by Barrie Smith (Hook Norton), seconded by Lizzie Cooke (Warwick) and carried unanimously.

The League Secretary has resigned, however. This will not take place immediately as he will continue to administrate the 2016 Summer League if required, but a replacement needs to be found soon to take over the arrangement and administration of the 16/17 Winter and Floodlit Leagues. These are scheduled to commence with the circulation of entry forms on the 27th of May (*n.b. the timetable is on the website in the 'documents' section*).

The Chairman urged all members to search for a candidate from within their club otherwise the future of the League would soon be in jeopardy.

During the subsequent discussion on the attributes required, the outgoing League Secretary said that in his opinion members should investigate alternative ways of administrating the League.

It is currently very labour intensive, uses expensive and obsolete software so an unattractive proposition and difficult to hand over.

Alison Stokes (Priors Marston), said that My Division (www.mydivision.com) as used by Northants League (amongst many others) is very effective. This opinion was endorsed by other members who have experience of this system.

She also offered to discuss with the Northants League Secretary whether he would consider administrating our League. The Chairman thanked her for this suggestion asking her to go ahead and let him know his response.

The League Secretary said that he had contacted My Division some time ago. He had been told that their standard configuration would not support our Summer League format but they had offered support to reconfigure it but he had not pursued this at the time.

7. Proposals

There were 4 proposals. They are attached to these minutes.

1. Scrap Rule 14

Barrie Smith (Hook Norton) questioned why a rule that was only agreed a year ago should now be scrapped. The League Secretary replied that whilst

the members present had agreed it, players had subsequently highlighted certain aspects that would not allow many regular players to play matches. This had not been recognised at previous AGMs and was not the desired result.

This point was endorsed by Sue Jelfs (Banbury West End) who cited her husband as an example. A few members also expressed the opinion that players of superior ability would want to play at a higher level so was not a permanent problem.

The only real issue highlighted was that a club may bring in a player of a much higher standard to clinch a key result but the general feeling was that whilst this would not be illegal under this proposal it was nonetheless contrary to the nature of the League and would be considered to be very unsporting.

The proposal was therefore confirmed by Mark Gregory (Byfield), seconded by Shirley Griffith (Brackley) and carried on a majority show of hands (with one against).

Shirley Griffith (Brackley) commented that this rule had been agreed then suspended twice before so to avoid this happening again a caveat that it not be reconsidered for two years should be added.

The Chairman asked whether a note in the minutes reflecting the feeling of the meeting would suffice. The meeting agreed that it would.

2. *Only one team be promoted and one relegated if there are less than seven teams in a division.*

Proposed by Mark Gregory (Byfield) and seconded by Shirley Griffith (Brackley) the principle was quickly agreed so the discussion moved on to agree the optimum number of teams in a division for this suggestion to be effective. A vote was taken for the original proposal of seven – this attracted 7 votes for with 9 against.

Trevor Barnes (Towcester) then suggested that six would be better. This was seconded by Barrie Smith (Hook Norton) and was carried 11 votes to 2. It was agreed to apply this to all League Competitions.

3. *Teams to declare their number one and number two players before the start of the match*

Proposed by Alison Stokes (Priors Marston) and seconded by Barrie Smith (Hook Norton) the problem stated that teams sometimes wait to see who is playing with whom in the mixed rubber then tactically deciding who to play as one and two.

Attendees reported quite different experiences varying from 'it happens all the time' (Priors Marston) to 'never seen it' (Tysoe). However, as some attendees said they had done it themselves in matches it was agreed that it did actually happen at times.

Sylvia Wilcox (Tysoe) asked whether it was something that tended to be seen in higher leagues but this question could not be answered.

The proposal to add a new rule was defeated by 7 to 6 (with 4 abstentions). A comment was made that maybe it is more a convention than a rule so the League Secretary offered to include suitable wording to match cards as a reminder to Team Captains.

He asked Alison Stokes (Priors Marston) to email him with the best words to use.

4. *Add to Rule 12 that all names must be completed for the team, claiming the rubber, even if rubber is not actually played.*

Many attendees, the outgoing League Secretary included, found the discussion somewhat difficult to follow but eventually the proposal made by Shirley Griffith (Brackley) was seconded by John Werner (Charlbury).

A vote was taken and with 4 votes for, 3 against and 10 abstentions it was carried with a narrow majority and 23% of the votes.

The outgoing League Secretary said that for various reasons he would not be willing to police this rule addition.

Bronwyn Adams who helps data accuracy checks, and therefore sees all match cards, informed the meeting that many cards contained errors (e.g. wrong dates, misspelt player names, incorrect team names, Winter cards used for Floodlit matches and vice versa) adding that it was impractical to return all these to the sender to be corrected.

The good news, however, is that if it decided to use My Division to administrate the League then the rule will be unnecessary as their system does not allow missing names.

8. Formation of the 2016 Summer League

With 33 entries (one less than last season) there were insufficient to form 6 Divisions containing 6 teams in each so the meeting was asked to consider:

- a. 5 Divisions (i.e. 3 of 7, 2 of 6) or
- b. 6 Divisions (i.e. 3 of 6, 3 of 5)

Option a. was agreed 11 to 6 on a show of hands. Whilst this will mean more tennis it was noted that this has led to fixture congestion in previous seasons, especially for clubs without floodlights and this should be carefully monitored for future planning purposes.

A handout was distributed and these divisions will be posted on the website during the next few days.

9. Viability of new Summer Leagues

After much consultation three new Summer Weekend Leagues were proposed to counteract perceived decline in local League tennis but entries have been disappointing.

Nonetheless, it was decided to go ahead in the hope that more entries will be attracted in future years.

10. Any Other Business

The Chairman asked if there was any other business.

Extending the fixture deadline mentioned earlier in the meeting was discussed. The Chairman had conducted an analysis that showed the situation was mixed with some teams well on the way to completing their fixtures whilst others were not even half way through.

Under these circumstances it was decided that the Committee review the position on two weeks. The League Secretary has added a reminder.

Shirley Griffith (Brackley) informed the meeting that a Floodlit Division One team had already scheduled a match for the Monday following a Friday deadline. The League Secretary replied that this was by no means unusual and as a friendly amateur League there had to be a degree of flexibility. Although to be discouraged there have been precedents; for example Brackley A v Deddington A played on Thursday, the 10th of September 2015.

John Werner (Charlbury) asked for clarification of the rules regarding fixture rearrangements. The League Secretary described how it is intended to operate adding that he had included the following explanatory note this year:

“although each team is allowed to change just one fixture after the deadline date this is by no means mandatory. The one fixture rule is intended to deter a team from inconveniencing other teams - not to prevent two teams playing a tennis match so if it suits both teams to reschedule a match then please just let me know.”

There being no further business the final agenda item is:

11. Presentation of Certificates

The Chairman presented certificates to the Winners and Runners Up of the 2015 Summer League. The Certificates for Kings Sutton will be posted.

Congratulations to all Winners and Runners Up.

With no further business to discuss the Chairman thanked all attendees for their contribution inviting everyone to further participate in the refreshments.

The meeting closed at 8:55 p.m.