Minutes of GMC meeting 29 March 2022

Present: SN, AdeW, BT, MZ, TD, JW, WM, SL; apologies CL, PH, JS

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting on 7 March were approved.

Unexpected balloon deflation event

At around 0630 hrs that day the balloon had suffered deflation, but was now back up. SL had become aware and Dickie was able to attend. It is likely that an electrical circuit had developed a fault. It was agreed that the Club would benefit from a survey report from an Mechanical & Electrical consultant on the state of all our heating and electrical systems. AdeW would talk to knowledgeable colleagues for a recommendation.

Tennis courts re-surfacing programme

AdeW reported that the top courts (12, 13, 14) had now been completed and were already playing well although should do so even better in a couple of weeks’ time. There was discussion of the desirability of enhancing the area beside the courts. Work was proceeding well on courts 6, 7, 8; this was weather dependant, but we could reasonably hope that it would be concluded by the end of the following week ie 8 April. Other work was in hand: the fencing on court 8, lines on the hitting wall. As far as the maintenance shed is concerned the replacement would be a stouter PVC-covered metal green coloured structure with corrugated roof; as with many other such items there would be delays in obtaining it.

There was discussion about enhancement to the Coolhurst Road entry area and the approach to the clubhouse terrace in front of courts 9, 10, 11. A member had offered to sponsor the cost of new gates. A design that had already been prepared for improvement of the land by courts 9, 10, 11 would be circulated by SL. A seating area and a bike rack facility would be included. This would leave decisions to be made about the entrance area between the gates and court 11. In relation to the latter, contact would be made with the owner of 7 Coolhurst Road by SN. It was agreed that it would be desirable to carry out enhancement of these areas this summer. Enhancement of the interior of the clubhouse, its design, layout and furniture – also high on our agenda - would probably be best carried out in the autumn, but advice was already being sought. When clubhouse plans were ready, members would be consulted.

Squash update

A recommendation for subs for 2022/3, incorporating the monthly option if it is feasible would be brought forward by the squash committee.

The tournament was open for entry and filling up well in all categories. Trophies will be sponsored by estate agent David Astbury, with finals night on 20 May.
Further coaching at a support level( 1 or 2) was needed, as support for beginners was busy and most of our young coaches are not available as they are students. Finance some new member coaches would be sought. Box leagues were well supported and well run, and Club nights were now running on a self-serve basis.

Bar operations

Approval was given for a consultancy review of bar operations, cash handling, staff hiring, and stock handling from Messrs Venners, our stock-taking contractor.

Finance

The 2021 accounts would soon be audited by Collards, and the audited accounts would be available well in time for the AGM. They would show a profit at the end of the year of around £200k. At present the bank balance stood at £190k. In the next few weeks the contract invoices from Chilterns sports contractors amounting to £160k would be payable, but at the same time some £300k income could be expected in tennis subscriptions. In due course the GMC would be invited to consider both the likely cost of enhancements earlier considered together with whether outstanding member loans amounting to £255k should be repaid.

AGM 9 May

Although formal notice of the AGM must be given not less than 21 days before the meeting, it would be desirable to post a brief reminder of the date on the Club noticeboard in the next few days. It was agreed that the meeting should take place in Squash Court 1 as had been traditional before Covid restrictions. Voting would be online. In some previous years facilities had been arranged for remote viewing of the meeting. The member who had arranged this had since left the club. A request would be made of any member with experience of providing such facilities.

General Manager’s report

SL reported on the following:

The balloon deflation was scheduled for 20th April 2022. Squash and tennis Junior camps would take place 4th to 22nd April.

Kym Hooker (insurance broker) is investigating changes to the insurance clause related to any future damage to the balloon during adverse weather conditions in order to protect the club's position.

Updating the globus system was being carried out to fall in with Tennis Renewals and the facility of monthly payments. There may still be some adjustments to make but the change-over has been so far very smooth. It was hoped that the facility of monthly membership payment will make squash more appealing for new members and increase membership numbers.

The kitchen franchise along with the bar have experienced staffing shortages due to staff leaving and Covid infection. Ewa had now secured the services of a new chef and 3 new members of bar staff have been employed.  As consistent with other hospitality venues hourly rates have increased in order to secure competent staff. Coolhurst is paying an hourly rate of £11/12 for evening staff and day staff £9/10. Together with the planned NI and minium wage increases this will mean a rise in bar and other staffing wage costs going forward.

The redundant sofas have been collected by the charity North London Hope who were very grateful for the donation. SN is in contact with a company who may be able to help with design for the clubhouse seating and to provide furniture at competitive prices.

Once Chilterns have completed works and the extra paving requirements are complete to the side of the terrace (opposite courts 9/10/11) it is planned during May the club will host an opening event for the new tennis courts, a tennis tournament to raise funds for Ukraine and a 'Open Mike' evening with BBQ. The squash finals Friday 20th May will also  be an important club event and for which a bar extension has been applied until midnight.

Andris Berzins

Finally, news of the death of Andris Berzins, a long-standing squash member and supporter of the Club, was received with great sadness.

Date of next meeting

Monday 11th April at 5.30