

BATH STREET MARINE TABLE TENNIS CLUB
Minutes of AGM Held 20 July 2021

Present: Bernard Cooney (Chair), Liz Adams, Andrew Armstrong, Fred Bainbridge, Tom Bell, Lesley Blanchard, Robert Brazendale, Ian Brownrigg, Elaine Core, Brian Crolley, Grace & John Donnelly, Keith Dudley, Billy Dunleavy, Jan Gilbertson, Jenny Givens, Keith Hardman, Martin Joyce, Sue Kirkwood, Colin Mitchell, Tony Mitchell, Migs Morris, Dave Noden, Billy O'Hara, Jean Price, Angela Simkin, Geoff Stubbs, Graham Turner, Robert Vint, Keith Williams, Sue Young, and Robert Wolstenholme

1. Introduction

The Chairman commenced the meeting at 7:30pm, saying: "Good evening everybody & for those of you who were here last year, this may well sound like déjà vue! If that exists?!? Thanks for coming to this, the AGM of BSM TTC for 2021 & thanks for remaining as Covid compliant as we're able. Covid has not been kind to anyone & or anything, including our club; others have suffered far more seriously than we. On that point, I can't tell you the exact number of members we have but I do know that we have lost some due to Covid & other personal reasons but we have gained a number of additional members including some juniors.

On behalf of the committee, I wish to thank you for your continued understanding, allegiance & loyalty to the club during these stressful, worrying & trying times: there will be more said & acted upon about loyalty later in the meeting & I'm going to leave it at that at this point, as I don't wish to steal other people's thunder!

I've a couple of things I'd like to say; I shall be setting out the format of the meeting, so that we can be away from here as effectively & efficiently as possible, whilst remaining Covid compliant. This will be my main function during the proceedings this evening.

This seems a good point to mention our President, Mr. William (Billy) Clayton. Billy is living in Nazareth House still & has been to visit the club twice, enjoying both visits. We shall be talking about Billy more, later in the proceedings, where & when I shall be asking you to vote on Billy continuing his honorary role as Club President, in perpetuity."

The Chairman then set out the agenda for the meeting, and reminder those present that only paid up members are allowed to vote on resolutions before the AGM.

2. Apologies for Absence

Received: - Billy Clayton, Barry Davis, Mary Delamere, Val Delamere, Anne Fletcher, Hervé Gillet, Jean Hale, Ian McElwee, Ray O'Leary, Mary Sefton, Dermot Tierney, and Matt Wilson

3. Minutes of 2020 AGM

A copy of the Minutes of the last AGM had been posted on the website. Those Minutes were approved by the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising From Minutes

None.

5. Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported as follows:

"Well, it has been an interesting year!!

One marked entirely by the Corona Virus pandemic, which has impacted every aspect of our club life.

The year started with the club closed due to the corona virus restrictions. It was not until Monday 27 July 2020 that we opened for the first time in the 2020/21 year for adult table tennis. And then we faced considerable limitations, having to introduce a formal booking system, capping the number of people in the hall at any one time, having special health and hygiene measures in place and recording people's attendance at the club to comply with track and trace requirements.

That was followed by something of a roller-coaster. October & November we were again forced to close; We re-opened for December; and then closed again from January 2021 until mid-April, and finally re-opening for adult play from 17 May. By which time, our new year had started!

In effect we have been closed for adult table tennis for almost 9 months in the year to 30 April 2021. The amazing thing is that, despite this enforced closure, the majority of our members have remained loyal throughout, so much so that when there have been opportunities to play a significant number have returned to play.

We have not however been idle in these periods of enforced closure. You will have seen the range of improvements made to the interior of our building. From the addition of ventilation ducts to stop condensation, the re-painting, the installation of storage cupboards, the addition of CCTV to keep everyone and everything safe, the addition of new equipment – like the new robot and new match play table, to name just a few of the numerous things that have happened.

Whenever it has been possible to be open, we have been open. We have also continued to provide facilities for our junior members to participate whenever we could. It has been great to see the progress of our juniors despite these difficult conditions.

Even though there was no Liverpool League in 2020/21, when we were open in the autumn we were able to start our own Marine Mini League to give some match play practice to some of our league players. A tournament that has continued when we were able to re-open in May.

We also pressed ahead with the organisation of our 2020 Club Tournament, and finally launched it in 2021 when we were able to resume play. Finals Night will be advertised very soon!

Our Management Team continued to meet, albeit that we were forced into using modern technology using 'Zoom' to hold virtual meetings when physical meetings were not possible. The fact that we have had an active management team throughout this period is one of the factors that has enabled us to survive the enforced closure for much of the period. I would like to pay tribute to the part each and everyone has played in maintaining the fabric of our club and staying in touch with members.

We have also tried to use our social media presence through the website and Facebook pages to try and stay in touch as well as using the chat forums of text and WhatsApp.

Our efforts to keep our club alive and stay in touch with our members, as well as creating this magnificent home that we have. seem to have been recognised and we were even nominated for a Pride of Table Tennis Award reaching the final 3 for the TTE Award for 'Club of the Year'. We didn't win, but just to reach that final 3 was a tremendous honour for the Club.

It has been a slight disappointment that the corona virus pandemic has seriously impacted our social programme but be assured that social events will return as soon as we are able to do so safely. The Christmas function is already being planned!

To every one of our members, I would like to say a very big ‘thank you’! Without your loyal and ongoing support, it is very possible that we would not have got through this past 16months intact.

I believe we have exciting times ahead. We are once again starting to see new enquiries, and we are looking at how we can be even more accessible to our local community for some ‘social’ table tennis, whether as a member or not. We have been very generously supported by our local authority and Sport England as a community club, and I believe it is now our responsibility to ensure that we do indeed serve our community and truly make table tennis a sport for all, and for all ages. Thank you for your support.”

There were no questions from members about the report which was unanimously adopted.

6. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented a copy of the audited accounts for the period ended 30 April 2021, the signed copy of which is attached to and forms part of these Minutes. He gave the following report.

“Good evening everyone. What a year! One that we all survived and will never forget. In many ways for the club, it was a lost one, virtually no play, no social functions and yet we continued to operate: paying our bills and maintaining the property. I would like to thank every single member who continued to pay their subscriptions despite the almost total lack of being able to use our facilities. The fact is as you can see from the accounts your subscriptions were almost our only source of income and largely met our expenditure. I know we have received grants, but I will speak about these in a moment. I think it is a fair principle to state members subscriptions should reflect the costs involved in running and maintaining the club. Remember we are one of very few clubs where we enjoy the benefit of being able to play table tennis if we wish 24/7 and socialise at the same time. We are in total charge of our own premises and have to answer to no one but ourselves.

So, to grants, if anything positive can be said to have come out of the pandemic it is the support we have received from the government through Sefton Council. In May 2020 we applied for and received £10000 and in February this year we made further applications which resulted in three amounts of £1334, £2096 and £6001. These related to different periods of national lockdown. Altogether a total of £19431.

In June 2020 we also applied to Sports England and received £3766. I can also tell you we have received a further £8000 in June 2021 from Sefton Council as part of a restart programme and £3600 in July 2021 from Sport England and finally £500 from Table Tennis England towards coaching for children. Make no mistake though we had to apply for these grants; they were not automatically given. They involved a lot of research and particularly with Sefton Council emails and phone calls by Jenny to ensure we were entitled to make these claims. The result is they have done what they were intended to do and that is help secure our future. For instance, you can see from the accounts we have set aside £5000 to the sinking fund as we are required to do by Sport England, considerably more than last year’s £1000. We have been extremely fortunate, and we must make the best use of these resources. I would like to think this reflects the whole club, we have done things in the right way where members and committee work together. An example of this is we are at the moment enjoying a three-month rent holiday as a result of an idea put forward by one of our members worth over £1000 and agreed to by Marine. Following on from this we intend to introduce a suggestion box where members can put forward their ideas on how we should use the grants, whether it is new activities, giving something back to our local community, coaching, social events, we want to know.

At this point I thought you may find it useful to see where we are in terms of numbers compared to 2020. Last May we had 82 adults and 13 juniors. During the year we lost 13 adults and 2 juniors which I think is understandable and an almost inevitable result of the pandemic and lockdowns. So where are we now? We have 72 adults including two returning members and 16 juniors. To me this

is very encouraging, especially in terms of juniors who are the future. We are heading back to last year's numbers and beyond.

One thing I would like to touch on and I make no apology for mentioning it again is the outstanding loyalty and commitment shown by the overwhelming number of members over the last year. Your committee wishes to recognise this by making a 50% refund payable by cheque for £75 to all members who paid the full annual fee of £150 for the year 2020/21. This will amount to over £5000 in payments and as you can see from the agenda is covered by a formal resolution which needs approval by the membership. I would also like to reassure any member who for any reason is struggling financially they can speak with myself or Jenny in confidence and we will try to help. We value all members.

Finally, I would like to thank Jenny for all her hard work in maintaining all the records involved in the running of the club. Also, I would like to thank Barry Davis for once again auditing these accounts and for his contribution as auditor over a number of years. Personally, Barry has given me valuable advice and guidance on good practice as a treasurer and I have been very grateful to him for this. I am sorry to have to tell you Barry has decided to relinquish his role as auditor. Can I therefore take this opportunity to canvass our membership for a replacement for Barry in this important role.

I will conclude at this point, thank you for your attention and if there are any questions I will try and answer them.”

In response, Fred Bainbridge thanked the Treasurer and team for the amazing achievement of keeping the club so financially sound during such a difficult time. A sentiment that was echoed by all present. It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the accounts presented by the Treasurer be adopted.

7. Election of Officers

- a. President – The Chairman asked that the meeting once again endorse the ongoing appointment of Billy Clayton as honorary President of the Club, and further that Billy should hold this position as long as he is able. Members unanimously agreed.
- b. Chairman – The Secretary invited the current Chairman to momentarily stand aside and then invited nominations for the post of Chairman. Bernard Cooney was nominated and unanimously re-appointed Chairman and restored to lead the meeting.
- c. Secretary – Graham Turner was nominated and unanimously approved.
- d. Treasurer - Ian Brownrigg was nominated and unanimously approved as Treasurer.
- e. Auditor – Barry Davis does not wish to stand this year. No new nomination was forthcoming so the post was left vacant.
- f. Other Committee Members – The following were nominated and unanimously approved: Lesley Blanchard, Jenny Givens, Keith Hardman, Dave Noden, Ray O’Leary & Keith Williams.

8. Life Membership

The Secretary was invited to speak on this issue. He explained that he would like to recommend to the meeting that the Club take the unusual step of appointing a Life Member. And went on to outline the fact that this particular member was currently not able due to personal circumstances to enjoy the level of playing table tennis that he had enjoyed in the past, however, has made a vital contribution over several years to the life of the club and the maintenance of our property. He has been able to use his

skills to support the club in so many ways, and since we acquired the new building his contributions have led to several significant improvements. Further, and equally importantly, was able to put the club in touch with very valuable sponsors who helped the club get across the line when finance was needed to ensure that we could purchase the new build debt free.

The Secretary said that by now members will have worked out that he is referring to Mr Tommy Bell, and would like to recommend to the meeting that Tom be appointed a Life Member.

This announcement was greeted with much applause. Lesley Blanchard and Jenny Givens then made a presentation to Tom and his wife Joan on behalf of the club to mark this very special moment.

The meeting unanimously approved Tom as a Life Member.

9. Finance Resolutions

Members had been provided with details of two resolutions, which are attached to and form part of these minutes.

a. Resolution 1

In presenting Resolution 1, concerning fees for the 2021/22 year, the Treasurer said, “In putting forward this resolution in line, as it states, with last year’s AGM promise to not increase fees, I have little to add. We can keep this promise. Some may think we can do more due to our healthy financial position. I would say we are doing more as you can see from our second resolution. However, as I stated in my Treasurer's Report I believe it is a fair principle that fees should reflect the costs of running and maintaining our building and at less than £3 per week we get fantastic value for our money. To be clear the grants we have been given were to ensure the future of the club not to absolve members from financial responsibility. The future remains uncertain in terms of costs, although we do know our rent will increase to £5500 in July 2022. For now, we are in a good position moving forwards and this resolution will keep us on track. I strongly recommend it for your approval. Thank you.

The resolution was unanimously approved without any questions.

b. Resolution 2

In presenting Resolution 2, recognising loyalty, the Treasurer said, “Again I don’t have a lot to add. I think it is only fair we recognise the tremendous loyalty and support shown by members over the last difficult 12 months. As I mentioned this will amount to a total of over £5000 in repayments which the club is able to afford at this moment. I believe this is a generous offer which I recommend for approval.”

A few members asked for assurance that this refund was affordable. On receipt of the assurance members unanimously approved the resolution.

10. Appointment of Team Selection Committee

It was agreed that a group consisting of the Club Chairman, Secretary and the previous season’s (2019/20) league team captains should form an initial selection committee. The main purpose would be to consider and decide on the Club’s entry to the L&DTTL for the forthcoming 2021/22 season and then to look at the potential constitution of each team. Secretary reported that he had already been consulting with such a team as part of league preparations.

11. League Matters

The Secretary reported on the following issues:-

- a. The LDTTL had held its AGM on 23 June. That AGM approved some fairly small changes to the League Rules and heard of a number of development proposals that are moving forward, in particular working with juniors and schools and in looking at opportunities for social table tennis development. A small sub group of the league is taking matters forward.
- b. The LDTTL has launched a Summer League at the Anfield Sports Centre and the Club is participating in that.
- c. The League has announced that it intends to operate a full and normal league season for 2021/22 starting in September. The Club has to make its application by the end of July 2021.

12. Any Other Business

Just two matters were raised.

- a. Fred Bainbridge wished to congratulate the Management Committee on the introduction of the new booking system. He believed this had been a real help to players in finding an opportunity to play where they were guaranteed continuous play. He hoped the system would remain. The Secretary reported that the system would be reviewed by the new Man Com, but for now would remain. He suspected that going forward there might be some small changes but hoped some form of system could remain.
- b. Martin Joyce asked about playing of doubles and whether this was now permitted. Secretary reported that doubles could now be played again and drew attention to the updated terms and conditions for booking on the club website, where the number of players per table now allowed enabled doubles play, and rotation of play between tables.

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20:30.

These Minutes approved at AGM DD MMM 2022 (B Cooney – Chairman)