

BATH STREET MARINE TABLE TENNIS CLUB
Minutes of AGM Held 19 May 2022

Present: Bernard Cooney (Chair), Andrew Armstrong, Fred Bainbridge, Tom Bell, Lesley Blanchard, Ian Brownrigg, Brian Crolley, Tony Delamere, Mary Delamere, Val Delamere, Anne Fletcher, Jenny Givens, Alan Hale. Jean Hale, Dave Noden, Billy O'Hara, Rick Peake, Julian Quirk, Mary Sefton, Graham Turner, Robert Vint, and Robert Wolstenholme

1. Introduction

The Chairman commenced the meeting at 7:30pm, welcoming all members present. He thanked members for their support over what has been a difficult year. Covid had impacted the club and resulted in some losses, but the majority of members had remained loyal, and in fact over the year membership has grown. He also drew attention to the significant advances in junior table tennis paying tribute to those who had led on new initiatives. He outlined the process the meeting would follow and set out the agenda, copies of which members had received.

2. Apologies for Absence

Received: - Dave Aimson, Mary Barber, Mark Benson, Robert Brazendale, Billy Clayton, Colette Connell, Barry Davis, Billy Dunleavy, Keith Hardman, Sue Kirkwood, Colin Mitchell, Tony Mitchell, Ian McElwee, Ray O'Leary, Doreen & Billy Smith, Geoff Stubbs. Dermot Tierney, Paul Whalley, Keith Williams, and Sue Young and junior members, Katherine Gao & Seb & Will Rice.

3. Minutes of 2021 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:

“This is a combined report, with contributions from our Property Manager, Social Secretary and Junior Activators.

What a year! It has been a little like beginning again! When we re-opened again on the 17 May 2021 following the closures caused by corona virus it was essential that we begin straight away the process of re-building and encouraging our members back to activity. We also had to start the process of preparing for a new table tennis season, having missed a whole season due to the virus. It has not been an easy journey.

Here I think it is really important to pay tribute first to our people. We have an amazing team of volunteers at Marine. This was exemplified and emphasised by one of our volunteers obtaining a Volunteer of the Year recognition from Table Tennis England, I am of course referring to our very own, Keith Hardman. A very deserving award, which absolutely emphasises the quality of the volunteers that we are privileged to have.

I would also like to pay tribute to you, the members; because the good news was, that when we did re-open, gradually you returned to the club! And have continued to loyally support the club since.

Over the summer of 2021 to get people playing again we were able to restart daytime social table tennis, we were also able to run our club tournament in small groups, culminating with a grand final's night in August, won by our 1st team captain, Dermot Tierney. To prepare for a new league season we were also able to operate a Marine Mini League involving 6 teams who each played 10 matches over as many weeks and also a cup competition for teams in the Mini League. With Andrew Armstrong's team doing the double.

To further promote the fact that we were open again we held two highly successful open weekends, which attracted a lot of interest in the club, and we have been delighted to welcome new members.

The autumn brought two highlights of the year! For the first time the club applied to operate a TTKidz programme. TTKidz is a Table Tennis England programme aimed at introducing children aged between 7 – 11 to table tennis. Jenny Givens & Ian Brownrigg led on this and trained to be Activators for this programme. And what a fabulous success the programme was. Fully subscribed, with a high octane, fun programme provided by the team – Jenny, Ian, Lesley, Bob Wolstenholme (who trained to be the on-hand first aider), Colin Mitchell, Ian McElwee and Steve McCormick (who has himself trained this year to be a L1 session coach). This programme is just 8 weeks long. So, the next thing was, what to offer the children after the course?

Because of this course we are now offering 3 after school junior coaching sessions (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday) and also a Teens session on a Friday evening, with some of our teens going on to compete in the Liverpool League. This is a truly amazing achievement for a club such as ours, whose niche up to now has been the provision of daytime social table tennis for the 'more mature' adult! We now have around 40 juniors playing table tennis at the club each and every week!

I said there were two highlights of the autumn. The second was the resumption of league table tennis in the Liverpool League. Due to the impact of covid and some player losses we were only able to field 6 teams in the league for the 2021/22 season, the lowest number for some time. But I am delighted that one of them was a junior team, the second time we have been able to include a junior team in the League. Not only that, but I am delighted to be able to report that the junior team achieved the runners-up spot in Div 5 this season. More about all the teams will appear in our end of year Newsletter which will be available shortly. I would like to say a very big thank you to all the team captains for the way they have managed their teams.

In the league, we struggled a little in the respective Divisional Cup competitions, but our Div 4 team did reach the semi-final of their cup competition.

But I can report that we had much more success in the Liverpool League, Frank Murphy Veterans Handicap Cup competition. For the fourth time in 9 seasons two Bath Street teams made it through to the final. Played at Marine, the final was an excellent match which a number of you will have watched. It was won in style by our all-1st division team led by Dermot Tierney, of Clare Peers, Colin Turner & himself. In the last 10 years our club has now won this trophy 6 times!

One of the significant impacts of covid was its effect on the social life of our club! But with the gradual lifting of restrictions in 2021 we were at last able to hold social occasions once again. Two excellent events were held in December. The Social Night at Marine starring Elvis Presley! A complete sell out. And an excellent Christmas Dinner at the Royal Hotel. Whilst table tennis is our main objective and focus it is great to be able to say that there is far more to this club than just table tennis. All credit to our social team, ably led by our Social Secretary, the tireless Keith Hardman. Keith and Bernard make a great duo when it comes to these social occasions. And thank you for supporting them.

Talking of December, we were delighted to be able to offer some teenagers from Holy Family High School in Thornton facilities for a day out from school! I think we had something like 35 teens in

two sessions visit us for some light-hearted table tennis. It was quite a challenge, and I am very grateful to those who helped manage that occasion!

The New Year has brought further new developments for the club. We were introduced to the Sefton Children's University. The Children's University promotes out of school activities for primary school aged children, so Bath Street Marine has become a Learning Destination. Any children who participate in the CU programme and who attends a junior coaching session at Marine can have their learning passport stamped to show their engagement in out of school affiliated activities. Through our participation in this programme, we were put in touch with a local primary school, Lander Road Primary, in Litherland. So, now some of our TTKidz team, led by Jenny & Ian are going back to school! We are currently running a 6-week introduction to table tennis programme in the school.

We don't yet know what the outcome of that will be. Whether the school will continue to offer table tennis as an after-school club, or whether any of the children taking part will be sufficiently enthused that they want to start attending a table tennis club. We certainly plan to advertise one excellent club they could look at! And a further opportunity has also arisen out of the involvement with the CU. Recently the TTKidz team were able to attend a school fayre, at Hope Rimrose Church of England primary school in Seaforth, which showcased to parents and children many of the local out of school activities that might interest the children, including table tennis!

We are a very privileged club! A thriving and growing youth section, a strong competitive league playing contingent, and a vibrant and growing social table tennis section. Although we have had a few losses of members over the last year it is encouraging that we still have an adult membership of nearly 90. And capacity for more. We could not do this if it wasn't for the excellent facilities we have. It is hard work maintaining facilities such as these and keeping them open and available 7 days a week. We have had a few issues with the building over this period. Issues with the roof perhaps being the most significant! And here I pay tribute to our property management team, once again led by,,,,, yes, you've guessed it, Keith Hardman. It is appropriate to also recognise the efforts of the housekeeping team, led by Lesley Blanchard, who have worked tirelessly to keep the inside of the building clean and fresh. This has been so important over these covid times.

So, what of the future? In my opinion, we should continue to drive forward to show that we are open (not just to members), Inclusive, accessible and diverse. We need to try and optimise the use of our premises, and especially seek to grow weekend use. There is a need for fresh blood to develop and grow our agenda for junior, social, and competitive table tennis and extend the range of our offering. We need to increase the number of active, qualified coaches to build on the excellent development work that has occurred in this past year or so. And, we need to continue to show that there is more to our club than just table tennis, that we are an inclusive body interested in the mental and physical wellbeing of all of our members and any others who come through our doors; offering welcome, friendship, social engagement as well as healthy physical activity at a level best suited to individual needs.

In my view, these are big ambitions, but this is a big club! This is not a time to sit back and pat ourselves on the back and say, 'well done'. Better we say, 'let's go on' there is more to do, this great club can be even better and with your positive help and support big ambitions can be achieved."

6. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented a copy of the audited accounts for the period ended 30 April 2022, the signed copy of which is attached to and forms part of these Minutes. He gave the following report.

"Good evening and welcome to the AGM and the report on our financial position, copies of which you should have.

I am pleased to say, despite the restrictions which were still in place during a large period of the year due to the pandemic, the club is in a sound financial state.

As regards income, you can see member's subscriptions amounted to £12,744 which represents an 18% increase on last year's figure. This is our most important source of revenue, and I would like to sincerely thank all members for their outstanding loyalty and support. At the time of our last AGM in July 2021 we had 72 adult and 16 junior members. Today we have 80 adults and 42 juniors. The increases are due to two successful initiatives. Firstly, in September we held two consecutive open weekends where we invited the public to come and visit the club and play for free. I think at the first event we had a total of 77 people attend with similar numbers for the second one too. In the same month we started an 8-week programme called Table Tennis Kidz devised by the sport's governing body Table Tennis England. To be honest we revised and adapted this to put our own individual stamp on it. I think the results speak for themselves.

We also received a total of £670 which you will see under the heading guest fees. I mention this because it included £380 paid to us by the Greenbank (Anfield) club to play their league matches and train on a Monday. We are not sure whether this arrangement will continue this coming season, but it illustrates an interesting potential the club has.

We also received a final covid grant of £11,600 from Sefton Council and a total of £893.05 in grants from Table Tennis England and the LDTTL. All in all a very positive outcome in terms of income considering the unique period we have all been through.

Moving on to expenditure we benefited from a 3-month rent free period granted generously by Marine FC, which explains the reduced figure of £3375. Electricity at £1603.93 was in line with last year. However, we must bear in mind we will be faced with significant increases in these costs as indeed we all as individuals do in our own homes. As you know due to the nature of the building condensation has been one of the major problems during the colder months resulting in higher electric consumption. We think it is important to try and address this issue by finding a permanent solution and reducing our costs in the long term. We accept this will involve investing funds initially and are about to start looking for suitable firms to advise us on what is the best answer.

Moving on, the most important expense this year was the refund of 50% of fees to qualifying members. It was pledged at last year's AGM. It amounted to £4,483.75 and was paid out during the year to members. It must be said we found some members generously either did not cash their £75 cheque or donated their refund back to the club. The donation figures this year include £300 of fee refund. This is really appreciated and thank you to those members. You know who you are!

Continuing, over £1,100 was spent maintaining the premises which included £600 for urgent repairs to the roof. We installed more storage cupboards, and we have a fully stocked first aid cupboard. We invested in coaching courses for junior and senior club members and sponsored a first aid course for another member. I think this demonstrates two things: one the club reinvests income back into the club, and two the club will support members who feel they wish to further contribute to the club in helping for instance adult and junior members improve their play.

Our fees to the LDTTL this year of £157.50 were significantly lower due to the club entering fewer teams and the league paying a refund. Whether this will change for the new season remains to be decided. You will perhaps gather we benefited this last year in several areas in reduced costs, but I must advise this will not continue this year. For example, our rent is due to increase as will our electricity and possibly our league fees.

I should also like to point out that, as a result of the grants, we have received we have been able to set aside £7,000 this year into our sinking fund which now amounts to a total of £13,000. For the benefit of new members, it is a requirement of the Sport England grant we set aside funds to cover

the cost of replacing the building in the future. As I have stated previously to my mind this is a proper and intended use of the grants we have received from the government. In other words, to ensure the future of the club.

I hope this has given an insight into how the club is managing its financial affairs and to the work that goes with it. I would like to thank Jenny Givens for all her outstanding efforts in maintaining all the necessary records, reports and for her invaluable support and insights. She has devoted a huge amount of her time to help run the club in a professional and business-like manner. I would also like to thank Sue Young for her hard work in the auditing of these accounts.”

Brian Crolley, in noting the extent of guest fees, asked about the future of the Greenbank (Anfield) 1st division team at the club. Secretary advised that dialogue was ongoing. The team had been invited to join the club and become a club team as we could not guarantee a free night for next season if our own club entry increased, which he thought very likely.

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, a position he should hold as agreed last year 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 – Sue Young was nominated and unanimously approved as Auditor.
- f. Other Committee Members – The following were nominated and unanimously approved: Andrew Armstrong, Lesley Blanchard, Jenny Givens, Keith Hardman, Dave Noden, & Keith Williams.

8. Finance Resolutions

Three resolutions were presented by the Secretary, copies of which had been issued in advance and were available at the meeting and are attached to and form part of these Minutes.. In presenting the resolutions he provided the following comments:

Unusually we are bringing 3 separate and distinct Resolutions before you today. The reason for this is fairly simple; to allow you to debate all of the different options, if you wish, as we know that not everyone shares the same view about the Club’s current policy! If there were just 1 resolution before you, it would simply be a case of accept it or reject it! We can only debate and consider matters that are before us in a formal resolution. We can’t make resolutions up on the day!

In considering these resolutions all members should keep in mind what the club needs to keep itself operating. You may think our current balance sheet looks healthy and that we did well last financial year. But we also need to keep in mind that we are committed to certain costs, like the site rent, for a number of years so, we need to have the reserves available to ensure that we can sustain this building. In broad terms for this year. From fees we need to generate around £13,000 to stand still.

With the resolutions before you, a membership of around 90 adults paying £150 would be needed to raise that sum. Please keep that in mind, our current membership is just below that.

Resolution 1

This represents the status quo and is our Finance Teams preferred option! For a considerable number of years now this club has offered a single 'one-size-fits-all' pricing structure, and we are delighted to be able to offer this again – AND for the 4th successive year at the same price of £150 for adults! Bearing in mind the way general prices are rising at the present this represents excellent value for money.

The advantages are clear. It is simple and easy to operate. The price you pay is clear. It helps us with budgeting as we will have a fair idea of what to expect over the year and when to expect it – as we will continue to offer the option of paying the fee by monthly instalments over the year (again this is our preferred means of payment).

The main disadvantage is that perhaps it favours those who play more, and especially our daytime social players. But every member has a choice of how much they make use of the club and its facilities.

Resolution 2

This is a kind of halfway house and aims to try and offer something different for those members who only want to play competitive league table tennis at the club. It combines an element of fixed fee for membership and pay & play fee for when you play.

The advantages are clear, it offers a slightly better deal primarily for those choosing league play only at the club. Although over a full season, depending on number of matches, it won't necessarily work out very much cheaper than Resolution 1.

The disadvantages are similarly fairly clear. It is more difficult to administer, doesn't provide the club with a fixed regular income stream making budgeting more difficult, and doesn't give those who choose the 'basic fee' a clear picture of what they will have to pay overall for table tennis at the club.

Resolution 3

Offers completely the opposite approach to Resolution 1. In effect it says, the more you play the more you pay!

This resolution includes a very low basic membership fee, as we remain a private members club at present, so those playing at the club need to be members to be allowed use. We do have a 'guest' policy – where a guest comes with a member and we also, now, have occasional pay & play open sessions.

The primary advantage of this resolution is that those who play most, pay most. This would be the same for anyone using a sports centre, when you want to go and play at the centre, you pay your fee and then play. For example, playing once per week for 50 weeks would carry a cost of £175. But someone just playing league table tennis matches and nothing more might only pay around £85 based on 20 matches.

There are though significant disadvantages. It would be complex, and difficult to administer, keeping track of attendance would require everyone using the premises to book through the online booking system, and possibly pay when booking. It does not provide a certainty of income for the

club and so makes budgeting and management difficult. Like all things though, it could be made to work. It would not necessarily mean a significantly lower overall cost for regular attenders or for league players.

Conclusion

If you have questions, Ian or I will do our best to answer them. If you have views on these or comments you wish to make, now is your chance! I suggest that when it comes to voting, we take the resolutions in reverse order. The outcome to be decided by a simple majority of votes of those present at the meeting.

The Treasurer added, concerning the three resolutions before you regarding fees. In terms of the funding of the club the only one I can recommend is the first one. We are as I know I have said before a club which has to run as a business. A business has to have a certain amount of certainty, particularly in terms of income. We have managed to keep our fees at £150 per year and this is the intention once again this year. This is less than £3 per week. Unofficially, I believe in keeping things simple and I think we have a principle in effect of one member one vote, one member one fee. In my opinion the other two resolutions would be extremely difficult to implement in practice and risk one of our most important sources of income. Of course, you must make your own minds up but I feel I have a duty to make the finance team's views clear.

Several members voiced comments. Brian Crolley thought that the pay & play option would be a nightmare to operate. Dave Noden spoke of the concerns of some league only players and those few individuals who played league matches for the club as occasional substitutes. Tony Delamere thought that the resolutions were a lot to get to grips with and that the pay & play option would need significantly more managerial input and so very difficult to operate. Fred Bainbridge felt it was a 'no brainer' to support the one-size fits all fee. Andrew Armstrong asked about likely increases.

Following a period of discussion, the meeting unanimously approved Resolution 1.

9. Appointment of Team Selection Committee

It was agreed that a group consisting of the Club Chairman, Secretary and the previous season's (2021/22) 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 2022/23 season and then to look at the potential constitution of each team.

10. League Matters

The Secretary reported on the following issues:-

- a. The LDTTL had postponed its AGM which was due to be held on the 25 May. This will now be held on 22 June. Some issues of concern had arisen at the end of the season which had unfortunately cast a shadow over what had otherwise been a very good season despite the difficulties presented by covid. 2 League Officers had resigned as a result of the issues that had arisen.
- b. The LDTTL will again be operating a Summer League at the Anfield Sports Centre. This will commence on 23 May and the Club is participating in that, but with just 1 team.
- c. It is hoped that the club will be able to increase its number of teams in the League for 2022/23 and so the Secretary invited any potential new league players to step forward and express an interest in league play.

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business raised and so the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20:58.

These Minutes approved at AGM dd mmm 2023 (B Cooney – Chairman)