

**BATH STREET MARINE TABLE TENNIS CLUB**  
**Minutes of AGM Held 24 May 2023**

Present: Bernard Cooney (Chair), Dave Aimson, Andrew Armstrong, Fred Bainbridge, Tom Bell, Ian Brownrigg, Colin Carrington, Brian Crolley, John & Grace Donnelly, Keith Dudley, Janet Gilbertson, Hervé Gillet, Jenny Givens, Rafal Glowacki (also representing Jakub & Oliver Glowacki), Alan Hale, Jean Hale, Keith Hardman, James Haskell (also representing Ellis Haskell), Ivan Maksym, Olena Maksym (Parent), Steve McCormick, Colin Mitchell, Tony Mitchell, Billy O'Hara, Jean Price, Tony Rimmer, Audrey Rogers, Geoff Stubbs, Dermot Tierney (also representing Ronan Tierney), Colin Turner, Graham Turner, and Mal & Irene Clark (Guests)

**1. Introduction**

The Chairman commenced the meeting at 7:40pm, welcoming all members present. He thanked members for attending the AGM, for continuing to be covid compliant, and for their continued understanding, allegiance, loyalty and support. He also paid tribute to those who had led the TT Kidz programme and delivered for the club the growing programme for juniors. Saying he hoped it would continue long into the future. He outlined the process the meeting would follow and set out the agenda, copies of which members had received. He reminded those present that only fully paid-up members were entitled to vote where voting is necessary.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Received in advance or offered at the meeting: - Mark Benson, Lesley Blanchard, Marcin Bytnar, Val Delamere, Barry Davis, Anne Fletcher, Mal Kent, Sue Kirkwood, Ian McElwee, Dave Noden, Ray O'Leary, Rick Peake, Jean Ross, Mary Sefton, Doreen & Billy Smith, Val Smith, Dave Stoddern, Bobby Vint, Matt Wilson, Bob Wolstenholme, Richard Woodley, Sue Young and junior members, Seb & Will Rice.

**3. Minutes of 2022 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. Special Presentation**

The Chairman asked members to remember members of the club who had passed away in the past year. The club lost its President, Billy Clayton, member John Wheeler and most recently former member Lil Randles. The Chairman advised the meeting that although Billy Clayton had passed away, his appointment as President was 'in perpetuity' which in effect meant that he remained a President of the club for a further 21 years! The Chairman said he was delighted to welcome to the meeting Mal & Irene Clark, relatives of Billy. The Family had made a special donation to the club to be used to acquire a new trophy. He invited Mal & Irene to come forward to present the trophy to the club and to its first winner. The trophy to be known as The William Clayton Trophy, will become a new Junior Singles trophy. For the first time ever, the club held a Junior Singles event as part of its club tournament in the autumn of 2022 just months after Billy passed away. The first winner of the trophy was Ivan Maksym. The presentation of the trophy to the club was made, also the presentation to Ivan.

**6. Change of Constitution**

The Chairman introduced Resolution 1 – copies of which had been provided in advance. He explained

that the purpose of this change was to clear up any ambiguity in the present definition in Rule 10 of what constituted a 'quorum' for the purpose of club meetings. Both the present terms and the proposed new terms were read out. The change was unanimously approved by the meeting to apply with immediate effect.

## 7. Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported as follows:

“In the post covid era 2022/23 has seen our club return to just about normal functioning! And as always, I would want to pay tribute to all the volunteers who have made that happen and have looked after our property, run our finances, or managed our teams and junior coaching.

The year began, or rather the previous year ended, with the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of our Club President, Billy Clayton. Sadly, as we have already heard, Billy passed away 3 months after that. Not the best start to a year!

At the same time that we were thinking about one end of the age spectrum, the club's junior coaching team were invited to go into Lander Road Primary School, Seaforth. To run a 6 week 'introduction to table tennis session' as an after-school activity. We had a great time, and I think the children that attended did too! Certificates of achievement were presented at the end of the course and the school were then looking to add table tennis as a regular after school club from September 2022.

As a club we also joined the Children's University, this is a scheme that encourages children to take part in approved activities outside of school hours. As a result of our participation the Children's University has added table tennis as an approved outside school activity. We have children who come to our junior coaching sessions who bring their Children's University passport so that we can stamp it to say they are participating and progressing in an approved activity. I believe we are the only table tennis club in this region that participates in this.

We have participated with both junior and senior schools this year. In the autumn providing facilities, coaching and support to Chesterfield High School for students using table tennis as one of their sports for GCSE Sport. The idea being to help the students demonstrate their ability to play certain shots and be filmed performing those shots.

Indeed, junior activities have continued to be a serious emphasis for our club. Another successful TTKids programme was run in the autumn, led by Jenny, Ian & Ian and the team. We now regularly run 5 specific junior sessions every week, including for the first time a new advanced session for some of our top juniors who get to receive advice from and practice with some of the club's top division 1 players. This session by invitation only, for those ready and willing to put in that little bit extra table time in order to improve their play. I venture to suggest that we now have one of the best junior table tennis offerings of the Liverpool League. We now need to look at possible next steps for our juniors.

Moving on towards the autumn there was quite a lot happening! First, we held another very successful open weekend at the beginning of September. This attracted a significant amount of interest, the efforts of the volunteers who kept the club open and accessible over the weekend was really appreciated. Then in the middle of September we were once again able to hold our club tournament as a one-day event, making the most of the excellent facilities offered by the Anfield Sports & Community Centre. And what a fabulous day of table tennis this was. Including for the first time, a brand-new junior event as well as the traditional handicap singles, consolation plate and fun doubles. This is definitely an event not to be missed in the future. Everyone gets plenty of opportunity to play, and also to watch some of the best table tennis that the club has to offer.

September also saw the start of the 2022/23 Liverpool League table tennis season. We entered 8 teams this season, and full team reports will appear on the website soon after this AGM. The season included 8 derby matches! So, there was some fierce competition between teams. I would like to pay tribute to those who captained teams in the league this season, and especially to those who took on the task for the first time for the club. It is not an easy task. But I have to say the team captains did a tremendous job, and seldom had to trouble me! We had a few issues over the season, mainly as a result of health or injury problems, but we got through. None of our teams were in the relegation zone for their respective divisions and two of our teams got through to the semi-finals of their divisions respective divisional cup competitions. We didn't win any divisions either, but I think it is fair to say that we competed well in every match our teams played in.

Perhaps the highlight of the season was in the Frank Murphy Veterans Handicap Cup competition, where once again one of our teams came out as winner. For the second year running Colin Turner was involved in the winning team in this competition, this year as team captain. This was the 7<sup>th</sup> time in 11 seasons that our club has won this trophy, a remarkable achievement.

Day time social table tennis has continued to form a major part of the club's offering. And seems to be increasing in popularity. I can remember when we just had 1 morning per week for 'social' table tennis, it's not that many years ago. Now almost every morning of the week there is a gathering for social play. And it continues to attract new interest and new members for the club. It is fantastic to see so many people of 'a certain age' getting together for some fun games of table tennis, a cup of tea and a chat! This is such a worthwhile activity, and again I would pay tribute to those volunteers who keep the hall open for these social 'bat & chat' sessions.

Talking of social, if you missed the Christmas party at Marine with Elvis, Sue Young and so much more, you missed a real treat! But there have also been several very good other social 'outings' over the year. Constantly proving that our club is about more than just table tennis. Once more, thanks to those who have organised and managed and participated in these very worthwhile social events.

It is fair to say that over the year we have had a few issues with the property! Not least of which was the condensation issue over the winter months which damaged several ceiling tiles and light fittings, adding to the cost of maintaining the property. I'm sure Ian will say more about premises costs! There have also been a few lapses of security, especially relating to locking up the building after use, and closing windows. We have as a result upgraded our CCTV to help manage this issue. But we do ask everyone who uses the property to be vigilant when leaving, to make sure all windows are closed, alarm system is on, and the door double locked. Keith Hardman and his team have once again done a magnificent job in maintaining the property. Tommy Bell has continued to help by providing his handyman skills without charge with the odd repair and fitting out job, and our cleaning crew have done a great job too regularly ensuring that the highest standards of cleanliness are maintained.

In the new year, 7 of our juniors took part in the Merseyside Schools Table Tennis Association Individual Championships held at Crosby High School, representing their individual schools. Erin Riley & Isobel Boyd (14) competed in the Girls U16. Isobel reached the final narrowly losing out before beating the same opponent in the Southport Closed tournament the next day! Scott French got through to the semi-final of the boys U16. Jakub Glowacki and Myles Ambrose competed in the boys U13, with Myles qualifying for the semi-finals. Oliver Glowacki and Ronan Tierney put in very strong performances in the boys U11 event, which Ronan went on to win qualifying him to participate in the National Schools Individual Championships at that age band. Ivan Maksym played in the final of the boys U19 event, but when you are up against Rhys Davies (arguably the Liverpool League's strongest male player), there would be only one outcome! Nevertheless, some excellent individual performances from our junior players.

Overall, we have maintained our membership levels. This time last year I reported we had around 90 adult members. There have been fluctuations over the year, with members joining and some leaving, but currently we are on just about 100 adult members. There has also been considerable fluctuation in our junior membership. Juniors sometimes come for a period then go and try something else, but currently we have nearly 50 junior members. The numbers raise some very big questions about how we help those juniors move forward with their table tennis.

Moving forward, we face some very big questions. Is our future on this site sustainable? Can we afford the rising costs of running our club 7 days a week? Are our premises adequate for our present needs (we had a rather uncomfortable complaint in 2023 over the adequacy of our premises for our junior league team)? Do we have a strong enough management team to cover all the aspects of our club in a way which moves the club forward? If our club is expanding, how do we meet the aspirations of all players? Are we being fully inclusive and accessible as far as membership is concerned? How can we be open to those who perhaps just want an occasional game of table tennis but do not want the commitment of full membership?

So many questions. I believe we should not sit back on our laurels, saying ‘well done’, but continuously strive to be the very best that we can be. Looking to be inclusive, accessible and diverse and promoting the very best that table tennis has to offer in every aspect of the game. We should be seeking continuous improvement in every direction so that all who come to this club can find the same opportunities here as can be found at the very best elsewhere.

I commend this club to you, and with your help and continuing support and a strong and forward-looking management team we can strive to address these big questions and deliver the best table tennis opportunities possible. I thank you all for your support over the past year and hope that together we can do even better in the next year.”

The report was unanimously accepted and approved by the meeting.

## 8. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented a copy of accounts for the period ended 30 April 2023, the signed copy of which is attached to and forms part of these Minutes. He gave the following report.

“Good evening, everyone. I’m here to present the financial report for the year ended 30th April 2023 copies of which you should have. After the preceding two years it could be said this was the year normal service was resumed.

In our opinion the club continues to be in a good position financially although I should at this point state these accounts have not yet been audited (as the appointed Auditor is on holiday).

If I may, I would like to focus on the four areas which have the most financial impact. They are members subscriptions, rent, electricity and property repairs and maintenance. This is in no way to ignore or minimise other items of income and expenditure. For instance, the £640 profit earned from the sales of teas and coffees or the £592 costs of table tennis equipment. All have an impact on our finances.

So, to start with members subscriptions this year which amounted to £15107. Again, I would like to thank all members for their support which is so vital to the club. In terms of membership numbers, we ended the financial year with 100 adults and 54 juniors. This compares to 80 adults and 42 juniors last year. An indication we are offering a successful mixture of competitive and social table tennis. However, just a note of caution, experience shows we do attract members who after a period of time and for whatever reason choose to leave us. For example, this financial year we had six members leave and twelve new members join. We must take nobody for granted. This financial year rent increased from £375 per month to £458 per month and we paid a total £5333 this year.

Rent has now increased from £4500 per annum to £5500 per annum.

Electricity costs are the area of the most immediate concern. It cost £3600 this year to heat and light the building and run the dehumidifiers compared to last year's figure of £1603. This is an increase of nearly 125%. This increase is not due to an increase in electricity charges as we were at the same rate as last year. The increase was due to heating the building overnight to control excessive condensation problems due to severe cold weather. From 1st April the electricity charge has increased by 100%, hence the bill for April for £1142. In other words, based on this year's usage we are anticipating a bill of close to £9000. The only solution to reduce the electricity bill would be to permanently address the building's construction. To prevent the condensation an estimate of £15000 has been given.

Finally, then, is property repairs and maintenance, this amounted to £1544. Some of this involved the replacement of lighting panels caused by the condensation problem for instance and also included £600 for additional security cameras.

We have forecast costs to maintain the building this financial year for rent, electricity and property maintenance alone is £16000. To sustain this, we would need 106 adult members or 100 adult members and 50 juniors.

Finally, once again this year we have been able to set aside £3000 into our sinking fund, a requirement of Sports England. A further step we have taken is to move the bulk of our bank balance of £43000 into a second account where we are benefitting from the recent rise in interest rates. This amounts to £50 in interest per month. This has been done with careful management of our funds and at the same time not increasing our fees for four years. I have to say whether we can maintain this position is very doubtful.

To Jenny I would like to express my sincere thanks for all her hard work in monitoring and maintaining all the necessary records in ensuring we are keeping tight control of the club's finances. Thank you for attention and support and if there are any questions I will try and answer them."

Two questions were raised by members. The first concerned the rent increase. The Treasurer explained that the rate was set by the original terms of the lease. The second question concerned the electricity costs and whether the heating had now been switched off for the summer. It was confirmed that the heating is now off, but it was pointed out that it is the lighting, even though LED panels are fitted, which consumes most of the electricity. The club is required to have a high quality of light over the playing area, which is effectively the whole of the hall.

It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the accounts presented by the Treasurer be adopted.

## 9. Election of Officers

- a. President – there was no new nominations for President. The Chairman reminded the meeting that, in effect, Billy Clayton remained as honorary President of the Club. 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 – Tony Mitchell 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 had indicated that he did not wish to stand for a further period and so was not nominated. Nothing had been heard from Keith Williams, who was thus not nominated for a further term. There were no further nominations.

## 10. Life Membership

There were no nominations for new Life Membership.

## 11. Finance Resolutions

The Chairman introduced Resolution 2, which related to fees for 2023/24.

In proposing the Resolution, the Treasurer said that since we took possession of our building in 2019, we have managed to keep our fees set at £150 for adults and, apart from an increase from £15 to £20 for juniors, these too have remained at £20. As you have heard we have faced increases in rent this year and more significantly a dramatic increase in electricity costs to come. To meet these and other obligations we are recommending a small increase of £30 to adult membership, up to £180 per year and a £20 increase to junior membership to £40 per year. This equates to £15 per month or less than £3.50 per week for adults. Still great value compared to any other leisure activity and is totally our own to use and enjoy. I therefore ask you to support this Resolution to ensure the continuing success of our club.

A number of questions were raised by the meeting. Some questioned the issue of a ‘guest player’ fee, suggesting that the club should not have ‘guest players’. There was support for the increase to junior fees, but a question was raised about families and why wasn’t there some form of family membership? The issue over guest players sparked discussion about substitutes for league teams, some contending that only club members should act as subs others pointing to the difficulty that can arise of finding a last-minute substitute from within the club. There was also a question about how the increase is to be paid. To this the Treasurer suggested one approach could be to continue with the same level of standing order as now, but to make a one-off payment for the additional amount. At some stage standing orders will need to be increased to the new amount.

After considerable discussion the Resolution was unanimously approved by the meeting.

## 12. Change of Structure

The Secretary introduced Resolution 3 seeking approval for the Management Committee to take a course of action to establish a new corporate identity for the club, transfer all current activities and assets to it and then to dissolve the existing private members club. He explained that with a growing and constantly fluctuating membership a new structure was essential to safeguard all members. As a private members club each individual member can be held jointly and severally liable for any debt of the club, with the increased size of the club and the increased costs this is not a healthy position to put members in. The Resolution would enable the Management Committee to move forward and make the changes necessary.

A question was asked about the use of the word ‘corporate’. It was explained that although there are various forms of corporate entity, the club is looking to form a community interest company which is a very common format for sports clubs. The Secretary was also asked if the club were seeking legal advice, and it was confirmed that solicitors had been engaged to assist the club with the process.

The Resolution was unanimously approved by the meeting.

### 13. Appointment of Team Selection Committee

It was agreed that a group consisting of the Club Chairman, Secretary and the previous season's (2022/23) 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 2023/24 season and then to look at the potential constitution of each team.

### 14. League Matters

The Secretary reported on the following issues:-

- a. The LDTTL AGM is due to be held on the 21 June. Andrew Armstrong will be representing the club at this as the Secretary will be on holiday. There are two rule changes on the agenda which require consideration, and the Secretary will discuss these with Andrew.
- b. The LDTTL has not yet made any proposals for a Summer League.
- c. It is expected that the club will need to make its entry into the League by the end of June but there is no official word on this at the moment. The Captains Sub Committee should be able to resolve any matters relating to this. In the meantime, if there are any members who might be interested in league match play for the first time in the new season, they should advise the Secretary as soon as possible.

### 15. Any Other Business

- a. Fred Bainbridge advised the meeting of his retirement from league match play after having played a number of matches in the past season as a substitute. He explained that he had now played league table tennis for more than 42 years and now being in his 80<sup>th</sup> year feels it is time to hang up his match bat.
- b. Colin Turner – in responding to Fred, Colin paid tribute to the part Fred had played last season in helping both first division teams through some very difficult times in relation to player availability. He had also played a major part in assisting the BSM team to get to the final of the Veterans Handicap Cup. Colin explained the difficulty of finding subs for division one, as few wanted to step up to play at that level. Not only had Fred stepped up, but he had done so willingly on a significant number of occasions. Colin's tribute was generously applauded.
- c. Dave Aimson raised the issue of co-ordination of junior activities suggesting there had been no co-ordination and that the club was not offering a pathway for development. The Secretary responded in detail to this. He invited any who wished to step up and offer help to ensure co-ordination and pathway. However, he believed there was already good management and a pathway. The progression at the present is from the younger group to the teen group and onto league player. A new advanced session for selected juniors has also been introduced. It is true that at the present the club does not offer a pathway to either tournaments or, for example, National Junior League. This is simply because at present the club does not have the adult coaching resources to do that. We do not wish to lose any juniors and will continue to work to see if further expansion is possible. In the meantime, any who wish to help should come forward.
- d. Brian Crolley suggested that when it comes to the league season captains should be provided with a list of players who are willing to act as substitutes, even if at short notice.

There being no further matters the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21:45.

***These Minutes approved at AGM dd mmm 2024 ..... (B Cooney – Chairman)***