

BATH STREET MARINE TABLE TENNIS CLUB
Minutes of AGM Held 26 August 2020

Present: Bernard Cooney (Chair), Liz Adams, Barbara Alcock, Andrew Armstrong, Lesley Blanchard, Ian Brownrigg, Brian Crolley, Barry Davis, Billy Dunleavy, Jan Gilbertson, Jenny Givens, Keith Hardman, Jean Hale, Martin Joyce, Audrey & Steve McGing, Colin Mitchell, Dave Noden, Ray O'Leary, Jean Price, Mary Sefton, Doreen Smith, Dave Stoddern, Graham Turner, Robert Vint, and Keith Williams.

1. Introduction

The Chairman introduced the meeting at 7:40pm, saying, "Good evening everybody. Thanks for coming to this, the AGM of BSMTTC for 2020 & thanks for remaining as Covid compliant as we're able. On that point; another thank you, for your understanding, allegiance & loyalty to the club during these stressful, worrying & trying times.

We had a successful Grand Opening on 30th August last year, when we became the only club in the North West owning their own clubhouse, including all fixtures & fittings & to be self-funding. I wish to thank you all, yet again, for your continuing support.

I've a number of minor things to say: setting out the format of the meeting, so that all can run smoothly & we can remain comfortable, well as comfortable as we're able whilst remaining Covid compliant & then have us all away from here as efficiently as possible, remaining safe & well throughout proceedings. This will be my main function this evening.

I have two 'special' mentions first. I'd like to mention our President; Mr. William (Billy) Clayton. He's not in the best of health, as we know, but what you may not know is that he's now residing in Nazareth House, Crosby. Visiting is very limited, as you may imagine, but cards, brief notes of well wishing & the like are welcomed & I know that the thoughts of us, as a club, will be with Billy during these times. There will be an appropriate moment during the meeting where we will be asked to vote on who should be our President from now & into the future; I hope that Billy will stand unopposed & continue in this honorary role.

Second, there is some more sad news; we lost a 'life member', Don Gibson, during 'lockdown'. We were unable to attend the service, due to Covid restrictions, but Don's family were extremely grateful for the showing of respect the club provided by seeing the funeral cortege away from his home address & for the two representatives who did attend the service.

Now, the 'official stuff'; you've had the first part; my introduction & welcome. We will now hear & accept Apologies for Absence. We will receive and approve the Minutes of the last AGM, held on 15th May 2019. These have been on the club website for some time now so there will not be paper copies distributed this time, cutting down potential contact & spreading of the virus. We will then discuss any Matters Arising from those Minutes, not covered by Agenda items. This will be followed by the Secretary's Report, then the Treasurer's Report. We then come to the Election of Officers; all of whom hold office from the date of appointment until the next AGM only. Can I remind you that when it comes to voting only fully paid up members are eligible to participate. But you are all of course welcome to remain for the meeting."

2. Apologies for Absence

Received:- Billy Clayton, Fred Bainbridge, Tom Bell, Elaine Core, Mary Delamere, Val Delamere, John & Grace Donnelly, Keith Dudley, Martin & Mary James, Sue Kirkwood, Pete Lyon. Ian McElwee, Steve McCormick, Tony Mitchell, Margaret Morris, Billy O'Hara, Albert Parker, Clare Peers, Pat Physick, Tony Rimmer, Sam Sandler, Geoff Stubbs, Alan Sumner, Angela Taylor, Dermot Tierney, John & Margaret Wheeler, Matt Wilson, Richard Woodley and Sue Young.

3. Minutes of 2019 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:

“What a year! It started with the closure and demolition of our club house and ended with all table tennis closed due to the corona virus pandemic!

It was in 2013 that the Club started its quest for a new home. And it has been miraculous to see that quest come to final fruition in 2019 when the dream was realised with the new build on the Marine site. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to every single person who has been part of the successful delivery of this new home. As a club we are so fortunate to have this building, and it has been amazing to see just how much interest the new building has created; and that interest turning into new membership.

Ownership has brought new responsibilities and new challenges! These have been met head-on, and here I would like to praise the efforts of our Property Manager, Keith Hardman, who has shouldered much of the responsibility for operating the new building. The Club has a fantastic team of volunteers who have taken on the teething problems and the day to day operations of the building to provide us all with a great environment in which to play table tennis.

There have been highs and lows along the way this year; but a definite high, as far as I am concerned, was the evening of our official Grand Opening. It was so encouraging to have with us on that occasion two local Members of Parliament, together with the Chairman and other officials from Table Tennis England and so many members and friends. A memorable occasion.

Let's turn to the table tennis. The Club entered 9 teams into the Liverpool League for the 2019/20 season. This included for the first time a new style 'junior' team, following the League's introduction of this special category of team for the 2019/20 season. We included a squad of 6 juniors for this, 5 of whom had no previous experience at all of league table tennis. I have to say they all performed very well, and more importantly showed an excellent attitude throughout the season. It has been a real pleasure to have worked alongside them. Full reports for all teams can be found in our end of year Newsletter, published on the website. We had no divisional winners or runners-up this year, and only 1 relegation – the F Team from Div 4, who really didn't expect to be in Div 4 in the first place! We reached the semi-final stage in one Divisional Cup, Div 3. And, by our own high standards, had a relatively lean year in the Frank Murphy Veterans Handicap Cup, a competition in which, in the past, we have had a very strong track record.

For the first time ever the League season was ended prematurely, with 6 weeks still to play. This was due to the corona virus 'lockdown' which resulted in all table tennis being suspended after 13 March. The League eventually deciding that no more play was possible, all divisions were settled on an average points basis. None of our teams were disadvantaged by this.

The playing season started with the annual Club tournament. Held on the first Saturday in September at the Anfield Sports & Community Centre. With play on 8 tables it allowed us to complete the event in the day. The main event, the Ron Georgeson Memorial Trophy, was won by Barry Davis (runner-up Colin Turner); the Consolation Singles was won by Andrew Armstrong

(runner-up Dave Noden) and the Fun Doubles was won by Mark Benson & Steve McCormick (runners-up Colin Turner & Lesley Blanchard).

The year has also seen a full calendar of excellent social events. These have been extremely well supported, great fun, and have contributed financially to our funds. In addition, some members have actively participated in the 'Marine In The Community' initiative. That is however a separate activity from the table tennis club. Actively working with the Football Club does however enhance the offering to the local community from the Marine site, thereby enhancing the reputation of the Club.

Over the year the Club has had an active Management Committee and continues to publish minutes of all official management meetings on the website.

The Club has also continued to use the internet and social media to publicize its presence and report on its activities. We have also featured at least twice over the year in news articles published by Table Tennis England.

All new members of the club are invited to adopt the Club's privacy policy, and this is now incorporated in our membership application form. We also continue to follow the equity and safeguarding policies of Table Tennis England and have a designated Welfare Officer. Our Club Secretary also completed an updated safeguarding course through the Liverpool City Council and re-qualified as a Level 1 Coach.

As well as competitive table tennis through the Liverpool League the Club has continued to run a growing daytime social and recreational table tennis programme, primarily for the 'more mature' adult. But, we have also seen growth in numbers attending our weekly junior session, strongly supported by parents and grandparents.

Up until the start of the corona virus lockdown, it had been a very busy and successful year, with a great team of volunteers dynamically leading the club forward. We shall have to wait and see exactly what impact the corona virus has on the future of the club.

I would like to thank every member for their support over the period of time I have had the privilege of being your Secretary."

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 2020, the signed copy of which is attached to and forms part of these Minutes. He gave the following report.

"Firstly, I would like to thank all members for their fantastic loyalty and commitment over our first 12 months in continuing to pay their fees despite a delay of 2 months before our building was ready. I don't think one member cancelled during that period. I think everyone will agree we all enjoyed a great all expenses paid opening night in August when we had our official opening by Sandra Deaton chair of Table Tennis England accompanied by two local MP's Bill Esterson and Peter Dowd. I think they were suitably impressed too! For just over £420 even I, as treasurer, thought it was money well spent!

Secondly, I would like to express my personal thanks to Jenny Givens for her hard work and dedication in recording, organising and providing all the facts, figures, budgets and forecasts which are required to run our club. She has made my job so much easier. You might all wonder what's left for me to do? I do myself! Thank you, Jenny.

Finally, I would like to thank all my fellow committee members for their support and Barry Davis for auditing these accounts.

So, to the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 30th April 2020.

Taking Income first I would like to make the following comments: Fees are our main source and following our opening, and given our prime location, we attracted a lot of interest resulting in over 20 new members joining us.

Under the notes to the accounts you will see at 3. Capital Introduced: Corporate Sponsors £9,000 this refers to 3 donations of £3,000 each. I want to express again on behalf of the club our thanks to the firms involved EWS Environmental Services, Merseyside Scaffolding and Gardiner Fire and Safety Services. This made a huge contribution to our being able to complete the building project successfully. Where did we find such generous donors? We found them close to home, very close to home. We found them thanks to our very own long serving member, and totally understated, Tom Bell and his son David Bell. The same Tom Bell who very nearly severed an artery cutting our soundproof tiles to exact size with his band saw. This is what makes this club so special - people like Tom Bell.

Our social events too are, or sadly were, tremendously popular thanks to the hard work of Bernard and Keith helping raise some £1,753.

Just one final point. Note 8. At one stage, nearing the final hurdle of the property project, we found ourselves faced with the prospect of being unable to pay our solicitors bill! As we were about to sign the much-delayed lease we were put on the spot to put it mildly. At a hastily called meeting 6 members of your committee, without a moment's hesitation, offered to loan the club £1,000 each with no timescale for repayment. As I said this is a special club with special members. Happily, as you can see, we have repaid all these loans.

Now to Expenditure. As you can see there are lots of start-up costs involved like any new business, there's also lots of running costs plus the maintenance of the building on a day-to-day basis. It's not easy. If it was lots more clubs in Liverpool and elsewhere would have their own premises; but that's what makes us unique we've achieved it!

If I can highlight one relatively small item but one with a huge significance for all members and that is the £266.40 for the formation of a Community Interest Company. One of my concerns at the start of this process was the potential liability to members in the sad event of the club being unable to meet its financial obligations. We were entering into a big commitment in terms of agreeing a 25-year lease for instance. Our secretary Graham had understood the need to address this issue. We are in the process of now finalising the necessary documentation. This is thanks to Jenny Givens who has sourced the firm carrying out this work at a fraction of the cost our solicitor quoted. Another example of her commitment to the club.

So, to sum up a momentous year, a momentous achievement. We finished on budget with a surplus of £6,245 a credit to all members. I said at last year's AGM we had to treat ourselves as a business and I make no apologies for repeating myself: we are a business now and we must ensure our financial future by generating income and making sure income exceeds expenditure, i.e. we run at a profit not a loss. Thank you for your attention and if there are questions I will try and answer them."

The treasurer was asked about going forward and fundraising? At present we are not able to engage in any fundraising or social events. Also, what is the current membership and what losses there have been during the pandemic? Currently we have around 80 adult members. There have been a small number of losses, around 5 but there have also been additions, with at least 2 new members. Do we want more members? It was confirmed that we are fully open for new business and continue

to offer access to all who wish to adopt the terms and conditions of membership. Members commented on the loyalty that had been shown which demonstrated how much support there was for what the club is doing.

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 endorse the ongoing appointment of Billy Clayton 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 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 was unanimously elected.
- f. Other Committee Members – The following were nominated and unanimously approved: Lesley Blanchard, Jenny Givens, Keith Hardman, Dave Noden & Keith Williams. The Chairman acknowledged the service of Mary Delamere, Des Logan and Doreen Smith who were not seeking re-election this year.

8. Property Update

Keith Hardman reported on matters that had arisen since the acquisition of the new building:

- Initially we experienced some minor roof leaks along joints. To fully resolve it a new roof coating was added.
- Some light panels had been damaged by the water ingress and had to be replaced.
- There was a problem with condensation. Roof vents added and the room dried out with de-humidifiers and use of heaters. We wait to see this winter whether the issue is resolved.
- Overhanging trees and foliage had been completely trimmed back with the agreement of neighbours.
- A decision had been taken to introduce acoustic ceiling tiles to help improve sound quality inside and cut out 'echo' effect. Tom Bell had provided tremendous assistance in cutting tiles to size.
- The damage to the wall had been repaired and a fresh coating of protective paint applied.
- The next matter to be addressed will be the addition of a skirting around the outside of the building to prevent rubbish accumulation, vermin, and risk of children getting underneath the building. This work will be done shortly.
- More recently there has been considerable effort and cost in ensuring that the club operates in a covid compliant manner.

Members were reminded of the responsibilities the club now has for the maintenance of the building and all were asked to apply their best efforts in helping to maintain the fabric of our club.

KH was asked to ensure that when the new skirting is applied that there continues to be adequate ventilation to the building to avoid any risk of further condensation. Another member asked about the radiators and heating (as they were not visible for the meeting). Members were assured that all heating was still in place and fully operational. KH and the team were complimented by members on the work done, and also on the measures taken to prepare the building for re-opening following the lockdown.

9. Subscriptions 2020/21

Two Resolutions were put before the meeting, a copy of each is attached to and forms part of these Minutes. In presenting Resolution 1, The Treasurer said:

“Firstly, I would like to thank all members for their outstanding loyalty and commitment in continuing to pay fees during these extremely difficult and trying times. At this moment and for the foreseeable future you are the sole source of the majority of the club's income. This means you bear a great responsibility for its direction of travel. This is your club.

In presenting this resolution to maintain fees at the current level not only for this year but next year as well, the committee is seeking to maintain the financial stability, viability and future of the club. The committee feels the best way to repay members is to invest in the building and provide the best equipment within our means.

You can see the results of this: the brilliant new paint finish, you can hear the reduction in noise levels, the new match table ready for the return to match play. That is not all, this week the skirt to protect the underside of the building will be fitted. This is and will be an ongoing policy. We hope to purchase a new robot, nets and posts in the near future. Many of you I know would like to improve their play, myself included, and we hope at some point to be able to introduce regular professional coaching to those wishing to have the opportunity. All achieved during a pandemic thanks to your support.

And yes we have received outside help - Sports England granted £3766 from the Community Emergency Fund to help sports clubs get through the covid pandemic. When I say granted, we had to apply, it was to assist the survival of the club during the period March to July.

I will now take this opportunity to announce a further piece of good news. Sefton Council invited all registered rate paying businesses, sports and leisure facilities to apply for a government financed Covid-19 grant. At the time we did not know the amount, but we made application even though we are exempt from rates. We were stunned and delighted to receive £10,000 and we were not sure if we were entitled to it! So yes, I would say we are in a good financial position but I have to state again both these grants were given to help ensure the future survival of businesses and sports and leisure clubs. To meet this objective and in line with our Sports England £57,000 grant requirement to establish and maintain a sinking fund for our new building. The committee unanimously agreed this sum should be set aside to meet these twin conditions. Perhaps I need to explain why we need a sinking fund. Here goes: our club is classed as a temporary building and we need to set aside money to replace and or repair it at some point in the future. The life expectancy is 25 years. You can see from our year-end accounts what the building cost. This grant is a windfall, an unexpected bonus, which we must not squander. It's a great down payment but there's a long way to go.

I can reassure you all, your committee is acutely aware of the fact the club has not been available for some six months out of the past eighteen. Having said that this is something completely beyond the control of anyone. The fact remains we are still liable for all the costs involved in running the club. We must think of ourselves as a business.

I think, I speak for all the committee when I say if any member for whatever reason whether it is through illness or financial difficulties feel unable to continue their membership please let us know and we will strive to help. We are a special club, which values its members.

The choice over fees is simple; £150 per year per member raises £12,000 if we maintain 80 members. Our expected expenditure is £12,600. Income roughly matches expenditure albeit a deficit of £600. If we go for the second resolution £100 per year per member raises £8,000. Expenditure exceeds Income by £4,600 and consumes the whole of the Sports England award.

No business in my experience votes to reduce its income by 33%, even allowing for a windfall grant. In fact, if we did, we would still lose nearly £1000. Yet what amounts are we talking about here? £150 is less than £3 per week, it's 41p a day! But we only want to pay 27p per day? I'm afraid if the lower option is taken it will only mean we may well end up raising next year's fees not just by £50 but quite possibly even more. We are committed to maintaining the current fees for two years. We are the only table tennis club in Liverpool to own our own first-class premises offering 24/7 access in normal times and we believe it represents good value for money. We are unique, we should be proud of what we have all achieved let's make it even better.

In the current uncertain climate I would suggest it is imperative we maintain our cash position so we are able to progress and be ready to meet any unforeseen challenges, which may well lie ahead. No one can predict the future, yet alone me, but there are some things that might affect it that we are already aware of. For instance, our membership numbers - will we retain and increase them? Or will they decline? Many of us, shall we say, are "getting on" never mind "getting by"! Can we attract new members including young people to join? In the clubroom itself, condensation is still an issue, which may require a more permanent solution that will incur additional expenditure. I mentioned earlier we do not at the moment pay any rates, but we know we have a valuation of £2,400 per year. Could we become liable?

Also, in re-opening and to ensure we are Covid-19 compliant we have incurred significant extra costs in terms of cleaning materials, sanitisers, signage, club contact phone and diary. Finally, we have not as yet had to pay any water rates as Marine FC failed to install a meter to monitor our consumption and have agreed to stand the cost of our usage up to now and the fitting of a new meter. When this is done, we will be billed from then!

These are the issues your committee have to deal with on your behalf and with your support we can find the answers and solutions to these difficult questions. I would urge you to support Resolution 1 to give this special club the best chance to move forward with confidence during exceptionally difficult and trying times. Thank you all for your attention and if there are any questions I will try and answer them."

Member Steve McGing presented Resolution 2. The primary difference being that the Adult membership fee should be £100 rather than £150. He explained that he had put this resolution forward to enable there to be a proper discussion amongst members. The fact was that in the past 18 months the club had been closed for at least 6 months. In other business areas the Competition and Markets Authority were requiring businesses to make refunds for periods where services are not provided. Also, there is some evidence of membership loss over the pandemic period and several members have still not returned to play. It might therefore be fitting to further encourage loyalty by a reduction of fees and a reduction might also be of help to any who are struggling as a result of the pandemic. Also, if the membership is around 80 then a fee of £100 would still cover costs taking into account the grant from Sport England.

In discussing the resolutions, members expressed concerns about communication and whether all members were fully informed about all facts. It was explained that every effort is made to communicate through the club website, social media or use of global messaging by 'What's App' or text. Some members expressed concern that messages could become clouded by 'banter' on some of the messaging channels, which can distract from the central message.

The Chairman invited members to vote on the two resolutions. Taking Resolution 2 first, just 3 members voted in favour. It was therefore not carried. 20 members voted in favour of Resolution 1, resulting in it being carried.

The Chairman confirmed that Resolution 1 was carried. He went on to reiterate that if any member

has any difficulties over fees as a result of the pandemic they should speak to the Treasurer and the club would listen and do what it could to help anyone struggling.

10. Appointment of Team Selection Committee

It was agreed that a group consisting of the Club Chairman, Secretary and the previous season's 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 2020/21 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 current situation with the LDTTL 2020/21 season, but believed the club was ready for league play. The League has not yet held an AGM and there is no date for this at present. The Club will however be represented at any such AGM if and when held.

12. Any Other Business

- a. The issue of communication was again raised, and the Chairman confirmed that the new Man Com will look at this issue again and every effort will be made to listen, inform and engage all members of the club.
- b. A question was raised as to whether the club wished to promote membership? It was confirmed that the club is open for business and will continue to advertise itself through its physical presence and also its online presence.
- c. A question was also raised about guest policy and whether the building was open to other groups of users. In the current climate the club needed to manage risk and so there might be limited opportunity for others to use the building at present. Guests could however come and play, for the relevant fee and in company with a member.
- d. A question also arose about increasing use of the building. Secretary explained the decision to initially limit opening in the post lockdown period because of the need to manage risk and supervise attendance to ensure covid compliance. The next stage would be to release slots for team practice, and possible use for a mini-league competition and for the annual club tournament to be run over a period of time in small groups. More detail will be given as soon as the plans are fully formulated.
- e. Member Colin Mitchell congratulated the Management Team on the protocol put in place for the post lockdown re-opening. The Chairman assured all that every effort would continue to be made to ensure the club remained open and remained covid compliant.

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21:30.

These Minutes approved at AGM 26 August 2020(B Cooney – Chairman)