

Portsmouth & IOW District AGM

Venue: Avenue Tennis Club

Date: Thursday 12th March 2020

Attendees:

Michael Isaacs (Stand-in Chairman & District League Secretary), Lois Nash (Committee Secretary), Karen Downie (Warsash & Committee), Paula Fuge (Ladies Winter & Summer League Secretary), Rob Mort (Avenue), Caroline Hardy (Canoe Lake), Chris Weatherill (Carlton), Gwen Isaacs (Sarisbury Green), Richard Perkins & Caroline MacDowell (Seacourt), Dawn Dewilde, Etienne Sharkey, Emily Last & Chris Hill (Southsea), Maureen Parker (Stubbington), Maggie Allan (Wickham), Matt Bennett (Rowland's Castle), Trish Smart & Gordon Guttridge (Alverstoke), Nick Challis (Lee-on-the-Solent)

1. Acting Chairman's Welcome – New Committee Member

Michael Isaacs acted as Chairman in the absence of Barbara Wilkie. He welcomed Richard Hutchins from Ryde Lawn as a new member to the committee.

2. Apologies

Barbara Wilkie – Lee-on-the-Solent, Alan Best – Rowland's Castle, Carrie Bateman – Ryde Lawn, Andy Giliat – Avenue, Lynn Candlish – Canoe Lake, Bob Murray – Fishbourne, Jane Capper – Wellow, Simon Baughan – Ryde Mead, Sam Marston – Active Academy, Linda Jones – Ventnor, Sue Foote – Chichester.

3. 2019 Minutes and Matters Arising

No matters arising

4. Treasurer's Report

There has been a profit after 2-3 years of expected losses. The losses were due to the website costs and new trophies because of an increase in number of teams. The forecast is an increase in profits. However, as the league is not run as a profit-making entity, only to cover costs, therefore it had been decided that the entry fees will remain unchanged for the time being.

5. Secretaries Report

MI said this winter had been challenging with the constant bad weather. There was storm after storm late in the season which gave limited time to rearrange matches although the ladies were almost finished with Lee 1 the champions. The Men's League were not as proactive at rearranging matches but after a nail biting finish Warsash 1 came out on top of Men's 1. The Mixed League is still a bit behind with Ryde Mead having only played 2 matches. As this might affect the league standings the results may have to be reorganised to fairly reflect the matches played.

Paula Fuge said there was nothing to report regards the Ladies League. Paula is now looking after the Summer League for the ladies as well as the Winter League.

MI thanked all the captains and match secretaries for all their hard work rearranging matches with all the bad weather.

6. Summer Leagues

There is a record entry with now 26 clubs entering teams. PTA have entered a men's team. MI has asked all captains to check their contact details online are correct.

7. Coronavirus

Michael said that the COBRA advice today is to isolate for 7 days if you have symptoms. He said there will be lots of matches that do not get played. As you can't make people play the matches if they do not want to and you can't penalise for matches not being played under the present circumstances, then maybe there should be no promotion or relegation. The actual playing of tennis on court isn't so much of an issue due to the distance between players and it being outside, the problem being the travelling together to the match and the match tea afterwards. The situation will likely change, and the league will have to adapt and adhere to the government guidelines and treat the season as more of a season of friendly matches. In the meantime match teas should be discretionary, no handshakes, no handing over of the balls. Michael said he will send out emails as circumstances dictate and reiterate that it is individual choice to play a match and that teams will not be penalised. As we can't predict what will happen and can't have a contingency plan for everything that happens the league will have to be relaxed and act as the guidelines change. It is requested that if you test positive to Covid19 and you've played in a match then you should let the league know so they can contact the other team. The Master's League may feel particularly vulnerable at this time which should be taken into account. This is an unprecedented situation and we do not know how this will develop. It will affect us all but tennis is low down in priorities but we will do the best we can.

8. General League Administration

Michael said there was an issue that occurred very recently with some unpleasant correspondence between Alan Best and a captain of a team that resulted in Alan resigning. We are hoping that the captain will apologise and Alan will return. Everyone understands how the league is run, that Alan is essential to that and that Michael cannot run the league without him. It seems the captain made the comments without the club's knowledge so hopefully they will have words with him.

Michael wanted to reiterate that the league and committee are run by passionate volunteers and saying that Alan was not fit to do the job was very hurtful. Everyone at the meeting gave Alan their full support and wanted that to be minuted. Michael encouraged everyone to email Alan to show their support.

9. Age Change for Masters Leagues?

The Masters League has a more relaxed attitude amongst the senior players. Currently the age is 45 for ladies and 50 for men. The Hampshire & IOW Vets League has 40 and 50 for the ladies and 45 and 55 for the men so The P&D is not the only local league with an age difference. The question is why is it different and should it stay the same or change? If the age is increased, then it affects and possibly exclude smaller clubs who have less players. There is always the situation of teams putting younger and stronger players in to win

matches which some clubs have felt was not in the spirit of the league. Michael said this does happen now and again but Alan sees the scorecards and reported that most of the matches played are reasonably equal and not too many one sided so this situation isn't as bad as some people think it may be. Michael said any change made will upset some teams and not others. As there was no strong feelings to alter the age categories in the room it was decided to leave things as they are.

10. Rescheduling Postponed Matches

Michael said that most clubs and teams were very good at rescheduling matches but there were a few that were a bit slow. He asked again if captains could be more proactive and not to go for the easy option of rescheduling to the end of the season as bad weather leaves no extra dates as has happened this year. Michael said he would speak to the worst offending clubs personally to emphasise how important prompt rescheduling is.

11. After Match Teas – Discuss

Michael acknowledged that due to the competition for the Catering Cup at the awards ceremony it has made the expectations of the match tea very high and elongates the time the whole match experience takes. Sometimes when the match finishes late afternoon most people just want to go home or are going out for their dinner. Michael said that the after match social is part of the match but asked should the match tea be curtailed to just a cup of tea and slice of cake? Other considerations are what time the match starts and the distance travelled. An idea discussed was that the captains should communicate beforehand whether they should have a full or lighter match tea. Comments were that it was annoying when a match tea is provided and the away team just leave after the match and the bigger clubs with caterers have to order and pay extra for the match tea. It was pointed out that Active Academy don't have any facilities so the match tea consists of a biscuit on the side of the court which is adequate and all they can do. Michael said he would email all captains to say that a full match tea was not expected but it is up to them what they would like to provide and to communicate this to the opposing team.

12. Scorecards

Michael said that he and Alan wasted a lot of time trying to decipher the scorecards when they are sent in. The problem scorecards are either filled in wrong, have illegible handwriting or no names included. Being a captain is a thankless task and Michael asked if the scorecard should be simplified in some way. He said he is happy to receive only one scorecard from a match like some of the other leagues do as long it is signed by both captains. A few people mentioned changing the rows where the names are inserted. Michael said the summer scorecards were not available on the website yet and the league will endeavour to simplify the scorecards in due course. He suggested that captains take a couple of scorecards with them in case they make a mess of one.

13. Wightlink

Michael explained the background to the Wightlink discount that the league receives which was negotiated 6-7 years ago. Over the last few years the discount needed to be accounted for and actively renewed each year in January which usually took some time to discuss. However, Michael reported that this year he had a very productive in person

meeting with Wightlink and it had been very much appreciated and accepted that the discount is meaningful to the league and to our players. Including the teams from the IOW is very important for the league and the travelling both ways for matches is necessary for most teams. Anything to reduce the costs of the trips is therefore a huge help. Michael had a good meeting and negotiated 20% off foot traffic on the Fast Cat and 15% off cars.

The procedure for obtaining the discount was originally set up with many safeguards built in to ensure the offer would not be abused and used only for match players. However, also following the meeting, the procedure can now be simplified. It was also clarified that supporters can take advantage too if travelling with the team. One person has to book for the whole party to get the discount as before. It should now be much easier to to book and get the discount. Michael said that a lot of people weren't using the discount and encouraged people to use it more. Comments made were that it is cheaper to take a car and 4 people rather than 4 foot passengers. It does depend on the location of the match as Ventnor you would need a car and Ryde you could take the Fast Cat. If you have a library card from Portsmouth Council it gives you 20% on the hovercraft which is a more expensive crossing but is walking distance to Ryde Mead. Michael said the meeting went so well that they want to sponsor a prize. It was estimated that the business the league gives them a year was about £25,000.

14. Solent Cup

The Solent Cup will be played on Saturday 4th April at Thornden. Warsash will be representing the Men and Lee the Ladies.

15. Awards Presentation Evening - Hospitality Awards/Colin Manvell Awards

The Awards Presentation Evening will be on Thursday 22nd October at Lee-on-the-Solent Tennis Club. There will be a new Wightlink award, for what this should be awarded has yet to be decided. Alan was finding that it was getting difficult to get people to vote for the Colin Manvell Award for sportsmanship so it was decided that the committee would decide on the winner of this trophy. There will be no catering award, instead an award for hospitality will be introduced which the clubs will vote for. This will take into account communication, a warm welcome from the team and club and if the overall match was an enjoyable experience.

The awards evening is a very successful event and when the Hampshire & IOW LTA chairman, Richard Cutler, presented our awards 2 years ago he was very impressed and he changed the county awards ceremony to be more like ours. At the end of February they held their first big ceremony at the Concorde Club and had Dan Lobb as presenter and compere alongside Chris Wilkinson. There were 260 people there with all clubs invited all becoming part of the county tennis scene.

16. New Committee Members – Succession Planning – Seconding Temporarily To Committee

Michael said we still need new members for the committee and he keeps mentioning at meetings about succession planning and the need for more people to learn how the league works and contingency planning. Richard Hutchins from Ryde Lawn volunteered and came to the last meeting. An option is not to add another permanent member but to second people from clubs to join for one year so that they get some experience of the league and can help keep it going if anything happens to Michael or Alan. The commitment is 2

meetings per year plus the AGM. Michael said he will start approaching clubs with the idea of secondment.

17. Election of Officers

A vote was taken to re-elect the current committee and officers and all voted in favour.

18. Any Other Business

There was a query about what happens when teams are level on points. Should the winner be worked out by number of wins, if same points then % of rubbers? Another way is to see who won between the 2 tied teams but this might be awkward if there were 3 teams tied. Could change to 4 points for a win. Michael said that one point for a wining draw was introduced which works well but the committee would have a look at the scoring again.

19. Close Meeting

MI thanked everyone for coming and said he appreciated everyone's time, commitment and effort.

Meeting closed 9.05pm.