



Old College Lawn Tennis Club Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held 11th March 2025 in the Clubhouse

1. Introduction

The Chairman, Nigel Thorpe, welcomed those present and thanked them for attending. Apologies were received from David Cianfarani, Elizabeth Rowland and Charlotte Ireson.

2. Minutes of AGM in March 2024

Minutes of the AGM held in March 2024 were approved.

Matters Arising

3. The Chairman said that matters arising would be dealt with in his report to the Meeting.

4. Chair's Report

The first months of 2025 had seen Old College thriving. Membership was at capacity with 600 Adult and 200 junior members. We were in a good financial position and the committee had been busy ensuring the delivery of the facilities and services that our members need. We brought two important projects to conclusion:

The new Club crest has now been fully integrated into all Old College activities. There are new signs by the entrance and opposite court 1. It is on our website, and on our communications. Thanks to Virunee is it is also on our branded clothing which is proving very popular. Further research into the club's origins indicate that it probably began in 1882 and has been on this site since 1885.

The website has been completely revamped and is running smoothly. It is also being edited properly and is more professional. Thanks to Owen Savage, John Barton and Virunee for all that.

In addition new cycle parking and a drinking water tap was installed between courts 3 and 6 again with thanks to John. Routine maintenance has been conducted. We repositioned the hitting wall from court 3 to court 2 and repaired a crack which had appeared on the court surface. Our gardeners and Hamid have ensured that the grounds are well maintained and attractive.

Moreover, the Committee embarked on the Club's next big project, the regeneration of the Clubhouse. Those who joined the video call on the 25th February or have seen the presentations on the website will be familiar with the rationale behind the proposals. The fact is that the club is well beyond its sell by date with facilities which do not match the LTA requirements for safeguarding and disabled access. Neither do the clubhouse facilities compete with those of other clubs in this area, and this needs to be addressed.

Whilst the design and delivery of the project has been entrusted to BSA architects, the Club's Project Steering Group is in charge to ensure that the club gets what it wants and needs, particularly in determining the fitting out of the kitchen.

Funding will prove a challenge, as it does to other clubs. We will begin a campaign to back up pre-payment of subscriptions and appeal for donations with targetted fundraising.

Thirdly, some members had expressed concerns about our lease and whether we are confident that it will be renewed when it expires in 2033. We had previously received assurances but have done more work on this. Mike Chudzinski, who negotiated our

current lease, has stated that it gives us rights for renewal at a rent which is line with clubs with 6-10 courts and a clubhouse. He thought it might be a good idea if we asked DPG for a 10 year extension. This has to go to their trustees and will take some time to resolve, but the club has been on this premises for 140 years and we have never had a problem with our landlords.

The next major step is obtaining planning consent, and once this has been achieved we will put the construction out to tender.

NT stated that this was his last AGM as Chair and he would like to thank all those who had served in the club's management for the last three years including all those on the Tennis Committee, the coaching team and those who have volunteered to make the Club work as well as it does.

5.0 Treasurer's Report and Accounts

The Treasurer, Caroline Beck, displayed a slide showing the results for 2024 and the budget for 2025. There was an operating surplus of £68K and discretionary spend had been minimised to maximise funds for the Clubhouse regeneration project.

- 5.1 Membership fees had increased in line with the budget but we did not meet the 22/23 target due to administrative delays in replacing leavers with new members. Steps have been taken to reduce the time lag and subscriptions will be increased by 3.5% and where fees are lower these have been rounded up.
- 5.2 Tennis income decreased slightly due to a wet 23/24 winter reducing winter floodlight income. We have assumed that tennis income will remain at 23/24 levels and costs increase with inflation.
- 5.3 The net contribution from tennis income was lower in 23/24 due to additional costs that are not expected to recur. Net contributions from specific events are hard to predict and therefore we have assumed the contributions from social activities will remain the same in 24/25.
- 5.4 Other income included ad hoc filming location income and interest. We expect interest income in 24/25.

- 5.5 Prudence in maintenance costs contributed to 23/24 savings. As some maintenance to the clubhouse is required to keep it to current standards during regeneration we have been prudent in setting aside 24/25 maintenance provisions.
- 5.6 The surplus last year was £67.6K and it is projected to be £86K for the current year.
- 5.7 A ten year cash flow forecast was shown, which showed a positive cash flow each year to 2035, and which had allowed for no increase in membership after 2030 if the clubhouse project was not carried out, and the club became less attractive compared to other local clubs.
- 5.8 Cash flow projections assuming no clubhouse project and a 50% drop in membership to less than 200 peak members showed that there could be operational deficits. However with the current waiting list, the likelihood of this situation is considered remote.
- 5.9 For 2024/2025 membership fees would be increased by 3.5% and other membership subscriptions rounded up.

Alan Bright made the point that redefining the age category for young adults from the age of 25 on 31st August, to aged 23 on 31st August, had meant his son's subscriptions had gone up from £100 to the full adult rate. He felt that very little notice and explanation for this change in policy had been given. GR replied that the decision had been made that people of that age post university would be employed and could afford the adult rate but acknowledged that greater notice would have been beneficial.

6.0 Appointment of Independent Examiner.

Malcolm Kemp had agreed and was approved to be Independent Examiner for another year.

7.0 Tennis: Report by Chair of Tennis and Head Coach

Bernard Stillwell began by saying there was an imperfect balance with continuous rebalancing of the virtuous cycle of initiation, consolidation and professionalisation. He then handed over to Alex Heath, with whom he said he had a happy and close working relationship.

7.1 Coaching Team

Alex Heath gave his report. There was a slide outlining the coaching team. He and Hamid were level 4 coaches, with Wayne and Luke at level 3. In addition there were programme coaches including Miles Speer, Amy Sergeant and George Hope at level 2, and Freddie Ireson, Penny Burgis and Matteo Cranchi at level 1.

7.2 Juniors/Participation and Competitions

There had been a growth in junior participation and community. A junior community had been established with out of class events, a regular newsletter and junior social sessions which were now running fortnightly.

More competitive fixtures for OC juniors had been arranged between January and April with local clubs for match practice. There included u9, u10, u11 and u14 against local clubs.

More competitive events had been arranged with an LTA grade 5 junior tournament being held at OC in 2025, for u10's, u12's, under 16's and u18's (boys and girls). There would be 16 player draws with OC players getting priority entrance.

There had been excellent results in the Dulwich Cup in 2024 which was an annual competition between four local tennis clubs. Boys had won two out of four age categories, and had runners up in three of these.

Girls had participated in three of the age categories and won two of them, with a runner up in all three.

7.3 Schools and Outreach

The Schools and Outreach programme had started in 2023 aimed at giving local primary school children the opportunity of play at the club and summer camps. This began with 4 players but in 2024 had been increased to 8 to attend the camps and a smaller number to attend the junior programme weekly classes. This programme is funded by income generated by court hire by local independent schools and a donation from a club member.

7.4 Adult Participaton

Regarding adults, focus had been on Wednesday Club play with Thursday nights needing more attention.

Drop in coaching continues to be popular with the sessions times being altered to align with the booking slots.

Box leagues are popular and we are weighing up whether to use an app, Matchspace to run these.

We are also looking for ways to integrate new members more quickly and comprehensively.

7.5 Club Championships 2025

The new format successfully piloted in 2023 and improved in 2024 will be completed within a 2 week period between 14th - 28th June. One exciting improvement will be a one point tournament on the middle Saturday.

7.6 Team Tennis

In Women's tennis results to date showed five women's team in 3rd position and one being promoted.

The midweek team 1 was in 3rd place with midweek 2 achieving first.

In the men's division it looked as if there would be 3 promotions, three demotions and one position unchanged.

Bernard Stilwell thanked Alex and attributed some the successful results to his efforts.

8.0 Election of Club Committee and Men's Captain.

The following people were elected to the Committee

Caroline Beck- Chair

Robert (Bob) Henderson - Vice Chair

John Barton - Director Clubhouse and Grounds

Bernard Stilwell - Chair of Tennis

George Ranson - Director of Membership

Manjit Roseghini - Member Representative

Virunee Viravong - Social Secretary

Daniel Ajegbo was elected as Men's Captain.

9.0 Appointment of Treasurer and Executive Secretary.

As the Treasurer position was vacant Caroline Beck she would do it on a temporary basis.

As the Executive Secretary position was also vacant Bob Henderson agreed to do it on a temporary basis.

10. Appointment of Honorary President

In recognition of Joy Jackson's dedicated contribution over many years, she was nominated and approved to be Honorary President.

11. Any Other Business

Jean Sutton asked whether there could be some concession in fees for the over 80's as they did not use the courts very much.

Alyson Fox asked at what point would the proposal and costs for the extended clubhouse be approved. The Chairman said there would be an EGM. A small group would be formed for fund raising. We hoped to obtain donations rather than pledges. We hoped to get planning approval before the end of the summer by which time we would have wanted to have received all the prepaid subscription income.

Sean Bidder asked if there was a limit on junior numbers. The Chairman responded that there was no limit on junior numbers.

Caroline Periton suggested that the club consider introducing pickleball. It was highly social and one could put 2 pickleball courts on one tennis court. It would require some investment in nets, posts and bats and balls. If there were a club session it would last one and a half hours, entertain 12 players and charge £6 per person. Sydenham currently charge £10 per person per session.

They were offering it in Ruskin Park and CB said she would explore it.

The Meeting was brought to an end with thanks to Nigel Thorpe for all the work he had done for the Club in the past and in his recent capacity as Chairman.