

**MARLOW TENNIS CLUB**  
**(A section of Marlow Sports Club Ltd)**  
**POUND LANE, MARLOW, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on**  
**Thursday 11th November 2010**  
**In The Old Pavilion, Marlow Sports Club at 8.00 p.m.**

Present: Eugene and Ros Augustin, Jane and Andrew Johnson, Jocelyn Finch, Helen Strube , Mike Anderson, Georgina Jagger, Colin and Libby Upcott, Thelma Craig, Mary Crawford, Justin Cook, Tania Smith, Chris Rawlings, Wendy Aitken, Mary Green, Nigel Seager, Norman Street, Helen Roberts, Ann Gordon Cummings, Jonathan Slack, Sue Gallagher, Sarah Gregory, Julie Legge

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Jonathan Welch, Jill Williams, Chris, Victoria and Ian Benning, Guy Tomlinson, Andy Ackrell, Alison Rae, Alan Hely, Hilary Ashton, David Johnson, Diana Anderson, Nicholas Baikie, Ali Thorburn, John Finch.

**MINUTES OF THE 2009 AGM**

The Minutes of the 2009 AGM were taken as read and approved by the meeting as a correct record. Proposed by Ros Augustin and seconded by Helen Strube.

**MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

In many ways this has been the year of electronic communication within the section. We had such a small turnout at last years AGM that we were not quorate and given that there were 4 key issues to decide upon the view of those at the meeting was that we see if we could generate sufficient response to the issues we needed decision on through the use of Tennis Balls. This was rather than call another meeting.

In addition to those who were at the AGM and had supported the proposal 28 members responded by email. The key decisions we agreed were

- Fee increase
- Committee membership and changes to
- The Rules and regulations be changed as follows;
  - 2 new membership categories with full rights – seniors (over 70) and student (aimed at those undertaking a course of education after leaving school; normally an undergraduate course)
  - The 50% fee reduction for those joining for the first time commencing in Oct, not Sept
  - Introducing a trial membership of one month for people thinking of joining the club but either wanting some lessons first to help them decide or to see if practically they can make the commitment (often due to work or family commitments)

- Committee members receiving a £50 reduction in their subscription
- The quorum being reduced to 10% of membership and proxy votes being allowed.

Tennis Balls has also been used to give updates on the developments over purchase of the land. Again a key decision that had to be made by Tennis members (as well as the other sections) was whether we would provide £10k to assist with the land purchase – 28 members agreed to support this.

I want to thank Alan for always willingly sending TennisBalls out and for dealing with queries that came to him.

For me as Chair of Tennis much of the year has involved attendance at regular MSC meetings re the future of the club. I, along with the other Section representatives, have had to make decisions about the future management and governance of the Sports Club. This has not been without its challenges as one has to consider both the whole exciting development that is planned and the impact of this on the Tennis Section who, like all the sections, has operated fairly autonomously. While it is intended that this will continue there will be a contractual relationship with us as a section and the MSC in the future and if we are to achieve Community Sports Association or Charity status we will need to be seen to be a section that is accessible to the wider community. This does not mean opening the doors up to all as I know many members fear – but it will mean we have to promote ourselves to different sections of the community and think about slightly different ways of engaging with those, such as small independent schools, who may want access to tennis courts. It may also mean that we need to explore with Justin how we can make coaching more available but in a way that both he and the club benefit.

For us as a section we also need to make sure that our strong financial position is upheld i.e. we are able to maintain and replace our courts when needed. And through all of this we need to make sure that we as a section are seen to support the wider development of the Sports Club for the local community – I know for some of you it is a hard call and one you are not sure is achievable.

Meanwhile to matters tennis – we had a great finals day – the men's final did not quite match to longest Wimbledon match but in the third set Paul Morgan eventually beat Paul Valentine 14 – 12. As far as the women's events went

I can testify it was a good day for the over 50s!!! Thanks to all who entered, who played their matches on time, who umpired, who came and watched and who helped feed and water players, umpires and supporters on the day.

There will be more later on the teams but we need to congratulate the men's first team for winning their league and being promoted. Last winter was the second year of having a mixed team for some years and we are slowly making our way up the leagues Thanks to all who have captained teams. It can be a hussly job at times.

Monday night seems to go from strength to strength and be the most constant and well supported "window" in our tennis week. It is great to know that when people approach the club about join that one can suggest they go on a Monday evening to "have a go". The welcome they receive is warm and encouraging. While Thursday nights are somewhat busier than they have been in recent years we still cannot really get a second full club night going – something for us all to think about.

I want to thank all the committee for all they have done to help the club function as it does. As always there are non-committee members as well who are regular

supporters of the club often doing extra things - Jane Johnson, Rob Daly and Collin and Libby – what would we do without people like you.

Finally it was a pleasure to take Colin and Libby a small gift on their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary from the club.

## **MARLOW SPORTS CLUB TRUSTEE UPDATE**

John Fordham and Vanessa Hoare, both MSC Trustees, attended the meeting to give an update on developments re land purchase and future management & governance of the club and to answer MTC members' questions.

John outlined the background of the 5 Trustees who have terms of office ranging from 1 to 3 years. There are also 2 principle advisers (Helen North and Graham Sweet) who had been appointed by the trustees for a one year period for their fund raising expertise and involvement with the Astroturf development respectively.

After approximately 3 years of activity to try and secure the land after Whitbread announced they intended to sell the land by auction MSC is now in the position where a price has been agreed and a final decision from Whitbread on the Heads of Agreement is awaited. Their lawyers have responded and at present Vanessa is dealing with addressing their queries on behalf of MSC.

While work has been taking place to buy the front land the club has negotiated with the White Brothers and agreed a price for the back land. This will allow the hockey Astroturf to be built and the MSC to own the whole land the 6 sections use. Plans had been for the development to take place at the same time as the Environment Agency were carrying out work and while they obtained planning permission for flood relief work their financial position does not enable them to carry out the work. This has not delayed the hockey development plans.

John emphasised that the building of the Astroturf, while primarily a hockey resource, would impact on the whole club. The astro would be used every day throughout the winter and with evening training the bar would be open longer than at present with an anticipated increase in revenue.

He stressed that doing nothing was not considered an option as within 10 years all sections would have to pay market rent; likely to be £25k a year.

At present it is hoped that by March 2011 (if not before) MSC will own the land.

He went on to describe the new constitution and advised that MSC has applied for charitable status. Articles of Association whereby each section (now called a Member) has one vote. This includes Borlase School who are an active partner in the development and plans for the future.

As far as financing the plan is concerned funds are being obtained from a number of sources:

- Various benefactors who wish to remain anonymous have agreed to loan an aggregate of around £385,000;. These are partially secured and have different repayment dates.
- Handelsbanken have seen and accepted the business plan and offered a secured loan.

- A grant for £120k from England Hockey has been obtained for the Astroturf development.

Before inviting questions he concluded by saying that the Trustees wished to know from each Member what their aspirations for their section were. He emphasised that Members (sections) would continue to run their own affairs but within an overall framework and contractual arrangements with the MSC Trustees. As part of the Charity status it was necessary the Members could demonstrate their accessibility to the local community, which may require some changes to how some use is made available but on a basis agreed by the Member (section).

In response to queries John and Vanessa confirmed the following:

1. Exchange of contracts will hopefully take place 6 weeks after Whitbread have approved the heads of terms. Completion of the purchase will be shortly afterwards, once MSC has obtained charitable status.
2. There had been meetings with the Head and the Governors of Borlase school who had agreed to try to raise £250k over 5 years on the basis of £50k per year
3. There has not been a review of the business plan from the perspective of risk to Members. There was a commitment made by John and Vanessa to get this carried out now and that it would look at this for all the Members
4. The worse case scenario is £100 per Member (section) maximum as MSC is a Company limited by guarantee, plus any outstanding payments due from MTC under the hire agreement which MTC will, in due course, enter into with MSC.
5. At exchange 10% of the agreed land purchase price will be paid
6. The total price of the land is £610k
7. Each section has been asked to contribute £10k; £2.5 this financial year and the remainder next. The initial payment is to help cover legal fees. The hockey section paid for the planning application and associated costs.

The next issue discussed was the request from MSC that MTC loan an additional £25k to match a loan from an individual. One of the benefactor's funds may only be issued to a charity, so this money will not be available by exchange of contracts if MSC has not obtained charitable status by that time. In this situation, the MSC trustees have asked whether MTC would be happy to loan MSC £25,000, which will then be matched by another benefactor, to pay the front field deposit. John advised that a legal agreement had been drafted and Mary Crawford confirmed that Chris Rawlings, a MTC member, had looked at the agreement and raised a number of areas that he felt were in need of clarification. John and Vanessa confirmed that the loan would be paid back incrementally, as the fundraising brought in funds, to MTC and the individual loaning the other £25k. John confirmed that the approach to MTC as they were the only section with this level of funding and be in a position to loan this amount.

Once questions had been answered it was agreed that John and Vanessa would leave the meeting and Mary Crawford would advise them the following day of the decision of the meeting.

The meeting took at 20 minutes break at this point for those present to toast Colin and Libby and to allow informal discussion on the information presented by the 2 MSC Trustees.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

## **Treasurer's Report**

Eugene Augustin presented the accounts for the year ended 30 September 2010. These had been subject to an Accountant's report.

Key points made were that while overall membership had decreased Andrew had been very vigilant in chasing people for payment; the sale of tokens was down but due to the snow last winter this was not surprising. There ha been no significant additional spending in the year. He emphasised that our strong financial position was essential to be able to plan for the annual cleaning, and the replacement and maintenance of the courts.

## **Accountant's Report**

Eugene presented the accounts and Accountant's report.

Some members sought clarification on the cost of new courts which Colin Upcott indicated would be approximate £25k per court based on the cost of Court 4. Conformation was given that public liability insurance was covered through the MTC LTA membership and a copy was placed in the clubhouse.

The adoption of the Accounts was proposed by Libby Upcott and seconded by Justin Cook and approved by the meeting.

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## Income & Expenditure

### **INCOME**

- Subscriptions
- Ball Sales
- Match fee income
- Visitor fees
- Bank interest
- Building society interest
- Sundry income including socials
- Floodlight token sales

### **EXPENSES**

- MSC levy
- Draw
- Tennis balls
- Affiliation/league fees
- Club tournament
- Repairs and maintenance
- Electricity
- Coaching and court hire
- Contribution to MSC legal fees
- Postage
- Website
- Sundry
- Depreciation

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## SURPLUS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE

	2010			2009		
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Depreciation</b>	<b>net</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Depreciation</b>	<b>net</b>
Court 4	28,318	19,824	8,494	28,318	16,992	11,326
Floodlights 1992 - 10 years	11,729	11,729	0	11,729	11,729	0
Fencing 1987 - 10 years	3,755	3,755	0	3,755	3,755	0
Tennis wall 1991 - 7 years	3,300	3,300	0	3,300	3,300	0
Resurfacing 2000 - 5 years	18,701	18,701	0	18,701	18,701	0
Wall resurface 2001 - 5 years	1,557	1,557	0	1,557	1,557	0
Floodlights 2003 - 10 years	10,502	10,502	0	10,502	9,450	1,052
Floodlights 2004 - 10 years	9,470	6,629	2,841	9,470	5,682	3,788
	<u>87,332</u>	<u>75,997</u>	<u>11,335</u>	<u>87,332</u>	<u>71,166</u>	<u>16,166</u>
 <b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>						
Bank Current Account		84			0	
Building Society Account		9,722			9,722	
Bank Reserve Account		88,915			75,430	
Debtors and Prepayments		<u>216</u>			<u>639</u>	
		<u>98,937</u>			<u>85,791</u>	

**CURRENT LIABILITIES**

Sundry creditors

410495**Net current assets**98,52785,296**NET ASSETS**109,862101,462**Represented by:**

Accumulated Surplus

At the start of the year

101,462

92,575

Add this year's surplus

8,4008,887

At the end of the year

109,862101,462**Auditors Report**

Eugene presented evidence that the accounts had been audited by Diane Ruskell, a FCA.

Some members sought clarification on the cost of new courts which Colin Upcott indicated would be approximate £25k per court based on the cost of Court 4. Confirmation was given that public liability insurance was covered through the MTC LTA membership and a copy was placed in the clubhouse.

The adoption of the Accounts was proposed by Libby Upcott and seconded by Justin Cook and approved by the meeting.

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

Andrew Johnson gave an over view of the current membership numbers reporting that given the economic climate we were maintaining a good sized membership. Overall membership is down 5% from 336 to 319 with the greatest drop being in junior membership (20%); adult membership has increased by about 5% (207 from



196). LTA membership was also down from 124 to 105 and remains low which impacts on our ticket allocation for Wimbledon. He reinforced the fact that junior can join the LTA.

On behalf of the committee he proposed 2 changes to the membership categories

- That Student membership continues to be for those undertaking a course of education usually immediately after leaving school, normally an undergraduate course, but the maximum age at which this category could be used was 25 years.
- Junior categories are split between ages 5 – 10 and 11 – 18 to be in line with LTA Affiliation guidelines.

The acceptance of these was proposed by Ros Augustin and seconded by Thelma Craig.

In response to questions it was agreed to consider having the draw for the Wimbledon tickets done publically with a social event, possibly a fund raising one and that the list be published as had been the case in the past pre LTA membership restrictions.

The committee were asked to consider direct debit as a means of payment and they agreed to consider this for payment of 2011/12 subscriptions were due.

*Due to the length of the meeting it was agreed that Captains, Junior, Off peak and coaching reports would be recorded in the minutes but not presented on the night. This was due to the MSC Trustees attendance and the length of time taken to debate the MSC loan.*

## **LADIES CAPTAIN'S REPORT**

It has been a year of mixed success for the ladies and their matches.

Ladies 2 Winter 09.....Captain Tania Smith. We played 5 matches and then had to withdraw the team due to the fact half the team had to move up to play for Marlow Ladies 1<sup>st</sup> team.

Ladies 1 Winter 09.....Captain Mo Sullivan. We lost 2 team members Pat and Jess. The team did not do well and dropped from Division 1 to Division 2.

Ladies 2 Summer 10.....Captain Helen Roberts. Division 4. We had a successful summer winning 2 drawing 2 and loosing 2. The core squad of 6 players were: Helen Roberts, Helen Stube, Ann Gordon-Cumming, Diana Anderson, Jocelyn Finch and Miranda Robson.

Ladies 1 Summer 10.....Captain Tania Smith. Division 2. We had a successful summer winning 4 matches and Losing 2. The core squad of players were: Jane Johnson, Mary Crawford, Chris Lavis, Mo Sullivan, Tania Smith, Thelma Craig.

The Vets 2 played three matches before they had to we withdraw from the league last year. Jane Pyke captained this team.

## **MENS CAPTAIN'S REPORT**

### Captains report winter 2009 / 2010 + summer 2010

The club plays winter league matches in the Thames Valley League. Format is 2 pairs ( 4 sets ) with matched played on a Saturday or Sunday.

Our " A " team played winter 2009/2010 in division one, one division below the Premier division in the Oxfordshire winter league with the " B " team playing in division two.

Our " A " team achieved promotion see final table below. Thanks to Andy for organising our team.

Mens ONE									
Pos	Team	Pld	Won	Drew	Lost	For	Agnst	Points	Diff
1st	David Lloyd-A	12	10	2	0	75	21	75	+ 54
2nd	Marlow-A	12	9	2	1	70	26	70	+ 44
3rd	Wantage-A	12	8	3	1	67	29	67	+ 38
4th	Oxford City-A	12	7	2	3	59	37	59	+ 22
5th	Banbury-A	12	6	2	4	56	40	56	+ 16
6th	North Oxford-C	12	6	2	4	54	42	54	+ 12
7th	Wychwood-A	12	4	3	5	49	47	49	+ 2
8th	Brackley-A	12	4	4	4	48	48	48	---
9th	Goring-A	12	4	2	6	44	52	44	- 8
10th	Faringdon-A	12	1	2	9	28	68	28	- 40
11th	Thame-B	12	2	1	9	26	70	26	- 44
12th	Wantage-B	12	1	2	9	25	71	25	- 46
13th	Hanney-A	12	2	1	9	23	73	23	- 50

The " B " team played in division 2 with results played 11 won 4 drawn 1 lost 6 and will once again play in the same division in winter 2010 2011.

In the summer we play tennis in the Bucks 2 pair league and our two teams are in division 1 ( top division of 3 divisions ). The highlight of the summer season is the match between the " A " team and the " B " team. This year the " B " team were victorious.

We also have a mixed vetrans team ( Ladies 40 + and Men 45 + ) for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year running promotion was achieved with a playing record of played 6 won 6.

Thank you to all who have found time to play match tennis.

Jonathan Welch – November 2010

## **REPORT FROM JUNIOR SECTION/COACHING /GROUNDS**

Junior report -- coaching numbers were slightly down on last year but significant. Three teams were entered in the league with the under 18 girls coming second, the under 18 boys winning their league and under 14 boys runners up having won 6 out of 7 matches, only losing to Woburn in the last match. Our top players that deserve a mention are Harry and Cameron Green, Jack Head, Peter Stephens, Ed Francis and Dale Jenkins. Peter and Dale have helped throughout the last 3 or 4 years bringing on countless younger players. These players helped make our trip to Ilfracombe the most successful for Marlow Tennis Club, Jack winning u14s, Dale and Jack winning the u18 doubles beating another Marlow pair in the final. Harry Robson was runner up in the u14 doubles, he also won the sportsman award for the tournament .Dale was also runner up in the junior mixed an event that we still haven't won since Libby and Jacob Cook won it 3 years running.

All the trips went ahead as usual Queen's club, Wimbledon and the Masters at the Albert Hall.

Adult coaching – this was up on last year with 4 to 5 groups running plus more individuals than other years.

Grounds and maintenance - the grounds have been kept up to date and the leaves have been cleared more quickly this year, but the mud is back, the courts have been cleaned so wipe your feet. The mouse problem is eliminated for now, but I'm still coming to terms with it.

Justin Cook

## **REPORT FROM OFF PEAK SECTION**

We continue to play regularly on Tuesday & Wednesday mornings which have been well attended with a turn out of anything between 4 and 12 players. We have welcomed several new members who play regularly and I think the standard is improving!!!

To play for the tennis balls five round robins have been played this season which again have been well attended and enjoyable with refreshments afterwards, Our oldest member Harry Barass sadly died in September but we were pleased to be able to give him a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday get together.

Our New Year lunch was again held at The George & Dragon in January and we will do the same next year.

Wendy Aitken

## **REPORT FROM SOCIAL SECRETARY**

The Chair gave an overview of the years social activities.

We ran the same events as usual this year despite not having a social secretary(s) to organise us all.

The spring clean was attended by about 15 hard working members who did a great job and got the garden and club house looking much better in about 4 hours – thanks to all who came along.

Our May afternoon social was what can only be called a non event – Jonathan, Riyad and I played for about 45 minutes – felt we had no tennis friends and went home!!

Fortunately the Monday nighters did somewhat better and mid June saw us BBQ and playing tennis – as always this was a really successful event. Mike Anderson and Ros Augustin deserve a special thank you for all they did to oversee this. I know lots of others helped but it was them that got everyone on the case and sorted!

Jonathan Welch, Tania Smith and Sue Hill deserve similar thanks for the July wine and cheese; an event the Tuesday nighters took on organising.

Finally Wendy Aitken did a sterling job on behalf of the of peak section and organised the fish and chip and quiz evening in October.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE**

The committee's proposals for the officers and committee for 2009/10 are as follows:

Chairman	Mary Crawford
Treasurer	Jonathan Slack
Secretary	no nominations
Membership Secretary	Andrew Johnson
Communication officer	Alan Hely
Ladies' Captain	no nominations
Mens' Captain	Jonathan Welch
Match Secretary	Jocelyn Finch
Junior	Justin Cook
Off Peak	Wendy Aitken
Social	Jane Pyke & Sarah McDonald

Jane Johnson proposed that these members be elected; seconded by Chris Rawlings.

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

The committee proposed that membership fees remain the same as the current year. The main reason for this was that MTC members were to be encouraged to join the MSC Donation scheme that all sections were being asked to support. This scheme enabled members to donate a one off sum or a regular amount to help with fundraising. MSC had introduced new membership cataloguers to reflect the size of the donation, Honorary membership over £300; Life Vice President over £1000 and Life President over £3000. These members did not have any rights to section facilities.

It was confirmed that details would be sent out when MSC had achieved Charity status.

The meeting voted to accept the committee proposals. Proposed by Thelma Craig and seconded by Ros Augustin.

## **APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS**

The current auditors, Ruskells, have resigned. The committee will need to source new auditors.

## **MSC LOAN to MSC for land purchase**

There was a detailed debate about the proposal that had been outlined by the MSC Trustees.

The Chair confirmed that the committee had been aware of the request for some weeks and had invited Trustees to the last committee meeting to discuss this. The majority of the committee supported the membership being approached re the loan and were content to support this is providing the conditions were clear and the risk to the Tennis Club were minimal. She also confirmed that Chris Rawlings had been asked to view the draft agreement and comment on this. He had done this and the lawyer who had drafted the agreement was happy to meet with him to discuss his concerns. Chris reported that a number of his concerns could be addressed relatively easily but he had a more fundamental concern about the viability of the whole land purchase business case. Some others shared this view while others felt that the plans were robust and that attempting to purchase the land was the only viable option. Having to pay a commercial rent would be crippling for some of the sections and would put the future of all sections in doubt.

Confirmation was sought that all Sections would support the fund raising and the Chair confirmed that at the Fundraising meetings this had been given. Borlase were also part of this as confirmed by the Trustees. There was an acceptance, albeit reluctant, from some members, that as the most financially viable section there was a degree of inevitability that Tennis were asked for their financial support.

Some members felt that it MTC had the funds and there was the commitment to an incremental repayment of the loan as funds came in them there a loan agreement should be entered.

The need for a risk assessment to be carried out as raised with the Trustees was confirmed.

After clarification of a number of issues and a sense that the risk of not supporting the request were greater than that of supporting it was proposed by Ann Gordon Cummings and seconded by Thelma Craig that MTC agree to the MSC request for a £25k loan if required due to contract exchange taking place before Charity status was achieved on the following basis:

1. That the risk assessment on the business plan from the Member (sections) perspective be commissioned by the Trustees and made available to all sections did not reveal any areas of concern
2. That Chris Rawlings was satisfied that any changes made to the draft Agreement were acceptable and that should he advise independent legal advice be taken this would be obtained

All present agreed with the proposals as outlined above.

The Chair agreed to advise the Trustees of this decision and thanked everyone for participating in a full and frank debate in which we had to look beyond MTC and at the wider project challenging as this was.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.55 p.m.