



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Kent County Lawn Tennis Association

Held 7.30pm on Monday 6 December 2021
via Zoom video call

Present:

Council (23):

John Ratcliffe in the chair, John Watton (President), Mary Evans (Deputy President), Jason Baker (Hon Secretary), Nigel Jordan (Hon Treasurer), Denis Costelloe (Life Vice-President), Angela Darby (Life Vice-President), Stuart Smith OBE (Life Vice-President), Stephen Woodley (Life Vice-President), Jacqueline Darby, Tom Debrates, Susan Finch, Tony Fisher, Luke House, Lisa King, Sarah Langford, Rosemary Lee, Clare Lilley, Graham Silvester, Malcolm Smith, Vanessa Webb, Keeley Wicks, Anna Wilson.

Representatives of Clubs, Schools and Other Affiliated Organisations (34 clubs represented):

Abbey Wood (1), Avenue Tennis (1), Bearsted & Thurnham (1), Bexley (1), Blackheath (1), Broadstairs & St. Peters (1), Bromley CC (1), Bromley TC (2), Canterbury (1), Catford Wanderers (1), Chislehurst (1), Crescent (1), Gravesham (1), Hartley CC (1), Hayes (1), Headcorn (1), Herne Bay LTC (1), Hildenborough (1), Horsmonden (1), Maidstone (1), Margate (1), Oakwood (1), Old Wilsonians (2), Sellindge (2), Shooters Hill (2), St Johns (1), Swanley Community (1), Sydenham (2), The Parklangley Club (1), The Sundridge Park Club (2), Trottscliffe (1), Twist Fizz CIC (2), Walmer (1), Wickham Park (1).

Kent Tennis Office Team (3):

Phil Lynch (taking minutes), Janice White, Harri Izzard.

Kent Tennis Supporters Club Members (4):

Tony Aylett, Charlie Falconer, Sue Myhre, Chris Russell-Vick.

Others (6):

Hazel Lindfield (Ladies Seniors County Team Co-Ordinator), Tim Freeman (Trevor May Contractors), Steve D'Almeida (Kent Tennis Comms Group), Katherine Montague (LTA), Andy Hanks (Sundridge Park & North Kent LTA), Nick Skelton (Kent Coaches & Sellindge).

Apologies for absence (27):

Austin Smith (Life President), Roger Bottomley OBE (Life Vice-President), John Darby (Life Vice-President), Jim Barton, Sandi Procter, Geoffrey Stephenson, Graham Sutherland (all Councillors), Andy Burgoyne (Men's County Captain), Jim May (Kent Mens 35s Captain), Cynthia Smith (former Ladies Seniors County Team Co-Ordinator), Colin Coombes, Simon Gent, Dino Skeete, Susan Long, Norma Smith (all Kent Seniors team players), Steve D'Almeida (Communications Volunteer Group), Andy Morris (HSBC LTC), Beric Wickens (Sidcup Recreation), Mariska Adamson, Phil Adamson, Noreen Cluney, Adrian Crust, Paul Obey, Maureen Reynolds, Colin Shipton (all Kent Tennis Supporters Club members), and Kathleen O'Hanlon (East West Connect), Penny Toogood (Head UK).

77 people attended (73 in 2020)

Welcome.

John Ratcliffe, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting and set out some ground rules to follow for the online Annual General Meeting.



1. Minutes of Annual General Meeting 7 December 2020:

The Minutes were introduced by Jason Baker. With no matters arising, he requested the meeting's approval of the minutes. They were approved unanimously.

2. Kent tennis - Highlights of 2021

Nigel Jordan (Kent and LTA Councillor), presented a review of all the year's highlights. He advised most of the information was in the Annual Review and highlighted the following:

- Emma Raducanu has had an exceptional year, firstly reaching 4th round at Wimbledon but then going on to win US Open, and now ranked number 19 in the world.
- Jack Pinnington Jones played in the junior events at Roland Garros, Wimbledon and US Open, peaking at a high of number 6 in the ITF World Junior Rankings. Jack also won his first ITF M15 Mens Singles event in Turkey, and peaked at a career high ATP World Ranking of 757.
- Anton Matusевич won his first ITF M15 Mens Singles event in Finland, and peaked at a career high ATP World Ranking of 388; the highest singles ranking by a Kent Men's player since Colin Beecher in 1997.
- Hugo Coquelin won the National 16U Boys Singles, which qualified him for the Boys Singles at Wimbledon.
- Ben Gusic-Wan won the National 14U Boys Doubles and was runner-up in the National 14U Boys Singles.
- Pat Brady won through the qualifying and won his first match in the Boys Singles main draw at Wimbledon.
- 10 National Senior titles were won by Kent players this year; Hazel Lindfield (won 3), Niall Sweeney (3), Joe Cooper (1), Jane Gentle & Sally Holmes (1), Jim May (1), Steve Weatherall (1).
- Kent Men won Group 1 County Week, retaining their title from 2019, and are crowned National Champions for the fourth time in seven years. Kent Ladies won promotion back to Group 1.
- Kent Men's 35s won Group 1; not only have they been National Champions for 3 years, but with promotions before that, they have an unbeaten run stretching back to 2015.
- Ladies 55s and Men's 75s won their regionalised County Cup Groups this year.
- Kent Boys 9U were National South Champions and Kent Girls 11U were National Runners-Up. 4 more junior teams won regionalised groups (with no finals due to restrictions this year); Boys 14U, Boys 12U, Boys 10U and Girls 10U.
- A new County Lead Coach was appointed; Craig Allen, who has settled in very well into his new role.
- The County Championships were a big success this year, with Kent having on of the largest events in the country.
- The Annual Awards were presented online this year, with 225 people in attendance.
- Deal Parochial School (School of Year) and the Sundridge Park Club (Club of the Year) were National Runners-Up in the LTA Awards. Kati Rust (Young Volunteer of the Year) and Old Wilsonians' Jack Petchey 21st Birthday Celebration Series (Competition of the Year) were National Finalists. All four won the South East Regional Awards, with Kings Hill Community TC being highly commended in the Parks and Community section.
- Kent Tennis Day was held at Sundridge Park, with Padel exhibition, family tennis cup and Kent Tennis LTA Awards presented, with Renee Raducanu accepting player of the year on behalf of her daughter, Emma.



- Kent Tennis Coffee Mornings continue to be very well attended with 20 meetings held in the year. These were attended by 200 people representing 86 different clubs.
- Kent Tennis Instagram, having hit the target of 1000 followers in 2020 went on to reach over 1500 followers in 2021. Thank you again to Carol Harrison for keeping our social media so current.

3. LTA Update

Nigel Jordan then talked the meeting through some slides from the LTA, highlighting what an amazing year there has been for GB Tennis, both in the increase in participants and success at Grand Slams (as well as Emma, there was Joe Salisbury, Neal Skupski, Gordon Reid and Alfie Hewett all winning Grand Slam titles).

Nigel went to mention the following (for which the slides are all attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes):

- There was an 8% growth in the number of adults playing tennis last year, with juniors also rising following the launch of LTA Youth.
- LTA Play Your Way campaign launched to get people into tennis
- Disability Tennis has been slowest area of tennis to recover after the pandemic lockdowns
- LTA Serves is a Community Tennis Development Programme that is taking tennis to people and places they haven't been to yet
- Looking to 2022, the vision for tennis is Tennis Opened Up with key LTA projects being:
 - Counties collaboration to help remove barriers to open tennis up to everyone
 - Parks Strategy (making funds available jointly with Government to improve park tennis facilities and introduce more gated access). The Government have committed £22m to this.
 - Competition Calendar – developing an enhanced calendar with more UK events with ranking points
 - Coach Education & Development
 - LTA Youth brings together all youth initiatives together, with Kent's Emma Raducanu as an ambassador for these programmes.
 - World Tennis Number launches 1st January 2022 with separate singles and doubles rankings. 134 nations have signed up to this.
 - Sustainability projects

John Ratcliffe thanked on behalf of the meeting Nigel for his thorough run through of the LTA initiatives.

4. Annual Review

John Ratcliffe asked the meeting to approve 2021 Annual Review. The acceptance of the Annual Review was approved unanimously.

5. Financial Report

The Hon Treasurer, Nigel Jordan, provided the report for the financial year ending 30 September 2021 and advised on the following points:

Thank you to Kent's sponsors for helping out in a very difficult year. The larger expenditure this year is down to staff costs, county training and county cup. In a normal year, without restrictions, a loss of £30,000 was anticipated but through careful management of costs when events were cancelled, Nigel was pleased to report a positive outturn for the year.



The LTA's review of County Governance in 2022 will look at how counties are funded but the LTA has already advised that no county will be any worse off than they currently are.

Nigel Jordan thanked everyone who has helped and supported with the preparation of the Accounts, including Martin Leonard of Hayfield Bookkeeping plus Phil Lynch, Janice White and Harri Izzard (all from the Kent Tennis Office Team).

Nigel then asked the meeting to approve the 2020-2021 Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet. This was approved unanimously.

6. Appointment of Reporting Accountants

Nigel Jordan advised that FW Berringer & Co had been in place for many years and they currently offered the best price and, although he continues to review this, he recommended that they be re-appointed. Nigel Jordan then requested that the meeting vote for the appointment of FW Berringer & Co as Reporting Accountants for next year. This was approved unanimously.

7. Proposed Charitable Incorporated Organisation constitution for Kent Tennis.

John Ratcliffe explained at last year's AGM, we asked if Kent Tennis should be incorporated. The meeting voted for the Association to investigate the possibilities. Following on from that, John thanked Nigel Jordan and the working group for the work undertaken in the past year on this. Nigel, especially, has put so much work into this and he thanked Geoff Stephenson for his work on going through this year's proposal so thoroughly.

Nigel then presented some slides to talk the meeting through the proposed draft constitution and the progress made:

- Kent Tennis is currently an "unincorporated association", a loose body of people with a common purpose with no substantial legal structure – compared to a company, for example. Contracts, agreement and property ownership rests with members/trustees and ALL members carry UNLIMITED liability in the event of a disaster, although our 3 trustees are closer to the firing line. Also, we potentially miss some "opportunities" that could be exploited if we were a charity
- We have looked at Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) –v- Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG), and the working group concluded that we must act to reduce the risks our trustees are running and a CIO was more suited to our needs than CLG.
- The Board agreed to pursue the CIO option further and a draft Constitution has been drawn up
- We have considered how we operate if/when we transfer our business into the new CIO and it is important that everyone continues with all the great work that they are all doing together now.
- The proposal is that we make an application to the Charity Commission to establish a CIO called Kent Tennis Charitable Incorporated Organisation.
- We are asking this AGM to approve that course of action
- It will take time for such an application to be processed and, if successful, we can decide when (and if) we transfer our business into the shell structure of the CIO.
- We would need time to deal with the transfer of contracts – e.g., staff, sponsors, all legal relationships.
- We would be governed by a Board of Trustees – limited to 10 people (maximum) – who would serve terms of 3 years, retiring by rotation, with a max of 9 years in total.
- Although there would be no Council as such, we want all of our volunteers to remain involved. We will have a series of delegated Committees, each lead by a Trustee, focusing on the area of



specific interest and expertise, with everyone coming together periodically for wider knowledge-sharing – to glue it all together.

- We have circulated this Constitutional document to Council, and now to all members as it would form our application to the Charity Commission. It deals largely with matters of charity. We were advised to stick very closely to the templates for CIO that the Charity Commission provides (which we have done). Much more detail will be included in a separate set of Rules & Bye Laws – most of what is in the existing Kent County LTA constitution.
- We would like everyone to approve this draft constitution.

Nigel asked for any questions ahead of the vote. He answered the following:

If the Charity Commission application is unsuccessful, would we consider becoming a limited company by Guarantee. NJ explained that although we do not expect to be turned down, if we were, then it would be a case of amending clauses to satisfy the Charity Commission. Becoming a limited company would not be an improved option since we would still need to seek Charity Commission approval, and therefore we would not see a benefit if not obtaining Charity Commission approval.

What are the risks? Nigel briefly outlined that Sports England and the Charity Commission want organisations to have trustees elected for a maximum of three 3-year terms, so that has to be managed. With some of the proposed trustees having already completed 9 years, there is a risk we cannot fill the gaps with the appropriate experience. However, there is already a risk in the current structure that the Board could become stale or outdated with people staying in roles for say 20 years or more. Overall, this will have to be managed carefully, so all the knowledge does not walk out the door in one go.

Nigel then asked the meeting if they would agree to the draft constitution proposed. This was passed unanimously.

8. Election of nominated Officers and Councillors for 2022.

- Officers:** Jason Baker explained that both the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer were due for election for a further period of 3 years, but that in light of the proposal to form a CIO and restructure both Board and Council, it had been agreed to leave the post of Hon Assistant Secretary vacant. Jason then asked for the meeting to vote on electing the following en bloc:
 - Hon. Secretary - Jason Baker
 - Hon. Treasurer – Nigel Jordan

These were both elected unanimously.

- Existing Councillors:** Jason Baker explained Councillors are elected for 3 years. This year he advised that the following were all standing for re-election to the end of 2024, and asked the meeting to vote en bloc:
 - Jim Barton
 - Tom Defrates
 - Susan Finch
 - Tony Fisher
 - Rosemary Lee
 - Sandi Procter
 - John Ratcliffe
 - Malcolm Smith
 - Graham Sutherland
 - Vanessa Webb
 - Keeley Wicks
 - Anna Wilson



The above councillors were all elected by a vote of 50 for and 1 against. Existing Councillors who did not need to be re-elected this time but will need to be elected at end of 2022 are Luke House, Sarah Langford, Clare Lilley and Graham Silvester. Councillors due for election at end of 2023 are Jacqueline Darby and Lisa King.

- iii. **New Councillors:** Jason Baker explained there were vacancies on Council for which two new nominations were received. Nigel introduced both of them, Adrian Packer and Jonathon Dawes, as existing independent LTA Councillors who are currently based in Kent and have terrific experience to bring to Kent Tennis. Jason asked the meeting to vote en bloc for the new councillors:

- Adrian Packer
- Jonathon Dawes

These were both elected unanimously.

- iv. **Geoffrey Stephenson** – Jason then paid tribute to Geoff Stephenson who did not seek re-election at this AGM, after completing 23 years on Council. A Barrister by trade, a significant volunteer at Sundridge Park and a Board member of Kent Tennis for the past 5 years, Geoff managed the Legal and Discipline side of Kent Tennis for many years. He has spent a considerable amount of time on the County Centre project from the late 1990s and more recently advising on the Bromley Tennis Centre itself, saving Kent Tennis a great deal of expenditure. Jason thanked Geoff for his significant work for Kent Tennis, and he will arrange for a small gift as a token of our appreciation to go to Geoff as a thank you from us all, when the opportunity to present this next arises.

9. Presentation of Seniors Colours

Stephen Woodley (Men's Seniors Co-Ordinator) paid tribute to five Seniors players who have represented Kent 25 times or more, showing great commitment in practicing, playing and travelling across the country for Kent. He congratulated the following, and advised that they will be presented with their Kent Seniors colours at the earliest opportunity:

- Colin Coombes
- Simon Gent
- Dino Skeete
- Susan Long
- Norma Smith

10. Winners of the 2019/2020 Winter & Summer 2021 League Competitions

Harri congratulated all the Kent Summer League winners, and without a face to face meeting this year, the 2021 Summer League winners were shown on the screen. Harri advised that, as one-off following two years hit by the pandemic, the Inter-Club League winners' shields would be distributed by herself, Keeley Wicks, Janice White and Phil Lynch after Christmas.

11. Kent Tennis Awards - announcement of short-listed candidates for the 2021 awards

John Ratcliffe informed the meeting that this year Kent received its highest number of nominations for the Annual Awards, with 149 nominations. He advised that the quality of nominations was also rising. He gave thanks to Mary Evans and her Awards panel for their work on reviewing all the nominations.

Janice White then introduced all the shortlisted nominations for the 2021 Awards, which will be presented at the Kent Tennis Awards Dinner on Saturday 5 March at the Tudor Marriott Hotel, Bearsted.



11. Any Other Business

- John Ratcliffe thanked everyone present and volunteers at all clubs for continuing to run things in the most difficult of climates, keeping people safe and playing tennis. Very well done to all!
- Nigel Jordan reminded the meeting that the following weekend the Winter County Cup is taking place, with both Kent Men and Kent Ladies in Group 1 in Bath. For watching good quality tennis, closer to home, one of the Men's groups is being held at Bromley Tennis Centre.
- John Ratcliffe thanked everyone for attending, and especially to Jason Baker, Nigel Jordan, Phil Lynch, Harri Izzard and Janice White for the enormous work put into organising this meeting. Finally, he wished everyone a very safe Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting closed at 9.23pm.