

Minutes of Club Committee Meeting

Monday 6th November 2023 @ 18.00

Present: Nick Rimmer (NR) President, Trish Harrogate (TH), Luke Van Zijl (LVZ) Chris Jones (CJ), Vicki Rogers (VR), Geoff Fidler (GF), Mandie Rose (MR) Vice President, David Balch (DB), Margaret Elston (ME), Jon Sharpe (JS) Vanessa Killick (VK).

Representing the Board: Cliff Nightingale (CN)

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Apologies** Denise Clifford, Simon Goldsmith, Natasha Adams
- 3. Minutes of meeting dated 4th September 2023** Agreed

4. Matters Arising

Draft minutes to be produced and agreed via email within 2 weeks of the meeting.

5. Management Report - Report attached.

6. Presidents Report

Rules and governance review

Cliff has met with Natasha regarding the **rules and governance**, they have set a way forward to review rules, Natasha to update CC at the next meeting.

Junior memberships and scholarships, following discussion with Geoff Bush at the September Club Committee, we invited CC members to share their views, some suggestions were made to and collated by Mandi Rose, VP. We discussed these at length due to the complexity and issues involved and decided to make a recommendation on behalf of CC to the Board. This was put forward in a document you have all seen to the Board on 16th October and discussed at length at October BM.

Being a complex area and many possible ramifications, a decision has been postponed for now. We can discuss at CC.

Events attended

Tennis committee meeting 9/10/23

Ladies Golf committee meeting 10/10/23

Padel meeting with James to review presentation to Board 10/10/2023

Squash Committee meeting 16/10/23

Board meeting 25/10/2023

John Burrows (Past President and golf captain) Funeral 01/11/2023

Golf section Committee meeting 02/11/2023.

Padel and Pickleball

We are still reviewing site locations and noise reduction options for consideration by the board. James and I are preparing a presentation including cost and income analysis now that we have some quotes on costs. My understanding is that the

possible site has been surveyed, James now working on cash flow projections based on assumed usage scenarios and new memberships. Work in progress. Would be good to gage Chris's views?

Guest fees Can I ask Chris to share an update on the dip and Dine proposal now that the indoor pool is back open? A voucher system for the £20 guest fee to include £10 voucher for F&B? **CJ** advised that implementation will be considered when more F & B space is available.

Income generation/new members

The issue of attracting new members has been discussed independently at all committee meetings attended. For golf, it is possible to play the course, have coaching and use facilities without being a member and whilst being a prospective member, for the payment of a green fee or a society etc.

Whilst tennis and squash do have tournaments and visiting teams who can sample our facilities, it was felt that when a prospective member approaches us to look around, they are shown the facilities, presumably by our staff/reception staff? It was felt that, to enhance the tour experience, prospective members should be offered, say 3 coaching sessions "try before you buy", which they pay for, where the coaching staff can explain what we offer, ie, teams, events, coaching, tournaments etc. This, I feel, would benefit the club with more new members where the coaches can sell both club facilities and their coaching services. This would also generate revenue for the club and coaches following the changes to non-member coaching rules for racquets in general.

This could also coincide with group non-member taster sessions. A record can be kept of attendance by the club with a maximum of say 3 sessions allowed. All designed to promote our facilities and club membership being sold by the people who probably know most about what we offer.

This was largely agreed at the last October BM, I asked Chris to clarify how this may work and his reply is below. To be discussed at CC

From Chris re "try before you buy" coaching sessions

"James and I had already spoken about the 'try before you buy' coaching sessions before someone decides to join the club/sports section. James and I need to discuss this in person. No agreement yet on the exact number of sessions. I agreed two sessions a few weeks ago and it worked. It is difficult for reception to manage anything to do with rackets because they like to organise it themselves, so an element of trust will have to be relied on. They do not book the lessons so if James arranges it through them that works for me, as we will need to be able to keep a clear record of who comes and how many times they receive a coaching session while not a member. I assume that these coaching sessions are paid for so the coaches will benefit first hand, and then the club will if the individual signs up to being a member. Just an honest and transparent system is all that is needed"

7. Board Report

The Board are currently considering subscriptions for next year. CN advised of the complexities of setting the budget in the current climate with so many uncertainties. It is hoped that the bar/café areas will be complete before subscriptions are due. The Club currently has 1000 less adult members than pre-covid. The current membership figure of 4,200 includes juniors. Course maintenance costs have doubled, as have utilities costs and fuel for machinery. It is imperative that members support the food and beverage department – every member buying just one extra cup of coffee a week would equate to an additional £300k.

The issue with a former member issuing a claim in the County Court in London is ongoing.

8. Membership report / Election of new members

Circulated.

9. Health & Safety - Report attached

10. Safeguarding

Nothing to report

11. Ideas form revenue generation and cost cutting

JS – suggested a loyalty scheme, buy 5 meals get the 6th meal free? **ACTION CJ** to consider with F & B Manager and Board

12. Any other business

VR expressed concern about the lack of new female golfers. Could a joining discount be offered to those who complete the 'Get into golf' programme **ACTION CJ** to take suggestion to the Board.

VR asked why golf and squash are not as well promoted on social media and around the Club **CJ** advised that committees need to provide content (including photos) which will then be shared.

JS asked whether a previously discussed 'Role of Honour' board could be put up in the Club promoting sportspeople to encourage juniors to join sections.

VR advised **CJ** of some issues in the garden pavilion with unaccompanied children **ACTION CJ** to check CCTV and talk to parents.

13. Section reports

Mens & Ladies golf

The competitive season is almost over, though we have the greatest challenge yet to play; Directors versus Golf Committee on 23rd November, having been postponed due to extreme weather expected on 19th October.

October saw a Mixed team play the 1895 Centenary competition at Great Torrington Golf Club in very windy conditions and managed a respectable 2nd place to the host team of Great Torrington. This competition has been running since 1995, the centenary of all 4

clubs; Exeter will host the event in 2024 though, with Wrangaton GC recently having closed, moving forward the challenge will see only Mullion, Great Torrington and Exeter.

The final leg of the Victory Bowl was held at Dawlish Warren on Sunday 22nd October. Dawlish fielded a strong team though, sadly, Exeter was unable to take advantage of their 3-2 lead from the first leg, losing 6-4. It's been a good year for the team, and we are proud of their achievement.

The annual Wooden Spoon match between the men's and ladies' sections, also postponed from the original date due to the forecast weather, was held on 15th October. This is always a very enjoyable competition and was again played in very good spirit with many of the matches taking 17 or 18 holes to find a result. After several years of being adorned with a blue ribbon, meaning the men's team lost, Geoff is delighted to say that the spoon now sports a very attractive pink ribbon! The atmosphere in the Topsham Room for our after-match meal suggests everyone enjoyed the day, and we thank the kitchen for providing an excellent meal and Darren and Lisa for their help in organising the day.

Geoff and Vicki have enjoyed the season and proud to have been involved in many different tournaments around the region. Now being in the last quarter of their tenure, our minds are focused on a smooth transition for the incoming Captains.

Tennis report

Tennis Section Report Wingfield: The innovative digital coaching and training tool has been well received by members, both in general play and in lessons. The introductory sessions went well and lots of members have been shown how to use the app at other times. It is free for racquets' members and is available for bookings on Court 1. Team Captains' Report: Due to high participation it was decided to enter an extra ladies' team in the winter league, making four in total. The extra capacity ensures that all ladies wishing to play have the opportunity. Whilst it is early in the season, and some matches have been disrupted by bad weather, there has been a strong start by several of our teams. The men's A team are top of division 1 with three other teams in close competition. The men's B and C teams have also made good starts in division 2 and 4 as they aim for promotion. The ladies A team also sits at the top of division 1. The B and D teams have had promising openings, as have the mixed B and D. There are several new team captains this season, including Al Hutchings (men's C), Anne Bills (ladies C) and Tricia Emery (mixed C). Our thanks, as ever, go to all of the captains for their work organising the teams. Juniors: The strong start from our league teams has been helped by the presence of junior members across the majority of teams. Three junior members are into the Adult Club Championships singles finals (Noah Kerley, George Guy and Amelia Badavi). The winter Nexus and Whirlwind tours have started with events for all age groups running at the club. Club Nights: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday Club nights continue to be very popular, although attendance has been adversely affected by the recent poor weather. A chance to trial racketball, under a roof, was well received by some in the tennis section. Pickleball Trial: Temporary pickleball courts are to be set up on the tennis

courts to enable some trial sessions to go ahead. This will test the popularity of the sport before potentially exploring converting the Kids Zone. Tennis Events: Upcoming events include Quiz night on 24th November, with an open invitation to all Club members. The Tennis Section Christmas Party will be held on 8th December, with live music and dancing to 'Neil Diamond', and the raffle draw for Coldplay tickets. The popular Tinsel Tournament will follow on Sunday 10th December, and a festive Triples Tournament. A surprise joint 80th birthday celebration is to be arranged for a couple who are longstanding racquets' members. Matters under Consideration: These include the provision of Padel/Pickleball, Students' Summer Racquets' membership, Tennis Scholarships, and the introduction of the new Guest Pass. The Tennis Committee looks forward to further updates. Charity Fundraising - Macmillan Cancer Support The highlight of our Christmas Party will be the raffle draw for tickets to see Coldplay on their European Tour next summer. We have sold just over 200 tickets. The target is 400 tickets. The raffle closes at midnight on 7th December, and there will be a couple more email reminders to members to buy tickets. This is a fabulous prize and ideal Christmas present!

Rackets report

The leagues have now returned following the summer break, with men's and women's teams competing throughout the Devon League structure. Choosing not to field a Premier Men's team this season, due to our top players being away for large portions of the season, it has given an opportunity to strengthen other teams in the club, certainly in depth. We are only a few matches into the season but all teams are having some very encouraging results. We have also welcomed new players into the section who have slotted into teams.

In the junior section we had two of our players attend the British U19's Championships in Sheffield at the end of November, Ioan Sharpe and Ben Jones. Ben performed admirably, finishing 38th and Ioan (still only 17) finished 5th, only losing one match to the world number 1 and eventual winner.

We have many upcoming events, including the Devon Senior County Championships on Friday 17th (evening) and Saturday 18th November, with our own Mike Harris as 1 seed and Ioan Sharpe as 3 seed in the Men's and Lauren Brown in the A Grade for the Women's event. Plus lots of other excellent players from the club participating. We are also hosting the English National Championships in January. So please come down to watch some top level squash!

As a section we continue to look at ways in which we can promote the section to the external market and are happy to take suggestions.

Meeting closed: - 19:57

Next meeting date – Monday 15th January 2024 @ 18:00

ACTION LOG 2023/24

Date first discussed	Action	Who?	Completion date	Details
Feb 2020	Golf Honours Boards	CJ	To happen when the corridors and development has been completed in the Hub, and sports corridor areas. Golf Captain and Director of Golf to liaise with GM and Board about this when we know what space we will have to use. Honours boards and anything similar that is golf related is a sensitive subject so it is important that the design team are aware of what is wanted by the golf committee.	Prices/styles will be sought for new boards. Two new locations have been agreed in the bar/lounge drawings. CJ to liaise with the captains before these are purchased.