

SQUASH COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 29th June 2023 at 7.30pm in The Whitehead Room

Present: John Williams (JW)
Dave Cooke (DC)
Gerard L'Aimable (GLA)
Clive London (CL)
Adam Rich (AR)
Steve Maybank (SM)
Steve McIntosh (SMc)
Josh Masters (JM)
Janet Moody (Secretary)

Apologies for Absence: Kevin McCaughan

1. Position of Chair Squash Section, Recent Management Committee Changes, Articles of Association, Committee structure.

JW welcomed all attendees to the meeting. JW said he has stood down as Chair of the Board in favour of David Willan but remains as a Director to be more focused on Squash matters. Sections can run as they choose but do need to have a Committee. JW attends Management Committee (MC) Meetings as Chair of Squash. A member of the Squash Committee can deputise for JW at MC Meetings and has a vote.

2. Pressure for posting of redacted minutes on Club website, Display of Committee members on Squash Notice Board.

Historically Squash Section has held Committee Meetings only when there have been specific items to discuss eg. the Men's changing room. JW is under pressure to post redacted minutes of Squash Section's meetings on the website. The Committee agreed that they are happy for this to happen and in agreement that names only of Squash Committee Members can be displayed on the Squash Notice Board. JW confirmed that his contact details as Chair of Squash Section are available on the Club website under member search.

3. Update on refurbishment problems and specification for Courts 1,2,3, and now including Court 4

The refurbishment of all 3 courts had been signed off by MC and dates planned but the Contractor has now pulled out. Dave Cooke confirmed that following bad news from the contractor, that another, have visited, and quoted £68,000 for refurbishment of the 4 courts.

JW said some time ago we looked at repurposing Court 4 but none of the options was viable and Court 4 continues to remain the most unpopular. Board members feel that if it was refurbished, it may be more attractive to Squash Section. DC said Court 4 will have floor replace, walls repaired and repaint. AR said the walls in Court 4 are not a surface you could wipe your hand against. CL agreed that since the beginning, the plaster on Court 4 was rough and can catch the ball affecting shots. The Committee agree that underfloor heating is essential on Courts 1,2 and 3 otherwise it is too cold in the winter. The preference is for a water pipes system. SM asked how much longer it will take to install water pipes underfloor heating compared to electric heating. DC responded it would take approximately two weeks longer. DC confirmed a contractor, can start work early September. We still have two courts at ODs so we will have 3 courts available during works on Courts 1, 2 and 3. The Board welcomed installation of interactive practice technology on Court 4. JM was asked to comment. JM explained the way interactive technology works, and said it is popular for matches and useful in coaching Juniors for providing targets for them. Interactive technology works well at kids' parties, a club in Kent is using a system successfully where kids parties' income pays for the licensing fee.

Update on new Court build – objections

A Business Plan was written for the New Squash Court Project. The Report was well received by the Board, but they feel we cannot present it to the membership until certain questions regarding costs and court utilisation are satisfied. Board Directors insist on delaying the project until the effects of court refurbishment on utilisation of all four Courts is measured. DC said we are looking at programmes, membership, coaching, weekend playing and linking into communities to try to raise court utilisation. We need to improve facilities and introduce interactive technology to achieve this aim.

JW said the Board has highlighted three key points that they want more facts about.

Costs – JW said costs are down from original £1.4M which included a quiet bar to £850,000. Professional project management fees are currently £350,000. DC is going to obtain a breakdown of these fees from Ray Cole. The Board require more precise costs.

Court Utilisation - Some Board Directors are insistent on Squash Section raising court utilisation figures before they agree to the New Squash Court Project. Adam asked if we interact with schools, DC confirmed we do. It is difficult to accurately define current court utilisation as Clubsys is not picking up certain categories including members of more than one sport who play Squash and people using courts at OD's are not booking courts. We have 266 combined Squash and Racquet Ball Members. Spend per tennis member paying £450 fees per year is £767 per year. This compares with spend of £34 per Badminton member and £14 per Squash member.

GLA said England Squash are going to insist that players are registered with them. This should aid the accurate calculation of our Squash membership and utilisation figures.

Decline of Squash – JW reported that Tennis is staying at same level, yet Squash is growing by approx. 20%. JW said at a recent Board meeting, a Director shared data that he said, notwithstanding issues in the COVID years, showed squash is in long term decline. JW had counter claimed that Kent is a premier squash development area and won National Coach of the Year and National Club of the Year and is producing world class players from PL Club with players such as Gina Kennedy and Jack Mitterer.

4. **Results of Monkey survey**

The results of the Squash Court Survey were circulated prior to the Meeting and were discussed. DC sent the Survey to Squash and Racketball members and responses were returned over one weekend. The Survey showed glass back courts are the preferred choice, only 3 people would use Court 4, that members struggle to book courts at preferred times, that insufficient investment and resources had been spent on Squash and Racketball Section and the Section would benefit from additional courts and more coaching.

5. **AOB**

SMc said his Club team want to support the New Squash Court Project. DC said Squash members need to take action to support their Section including attending AGMs to ensure their support is registered and counted. SMc said if the New Squash Court Project is going to be delayed, his team would like to see Josh provided with more support.

Date of next meeting – To be confirmed.

Meeting ended: 21.15.

