

SQUASH COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of Meeting on Wednesday 13th December 2023 at 7.30pm in The Whitehead Room

Present: John Williams (JW) Chair
Dave Cooke (DC)
Adam Rich (AR)
Steve Maybank (SM)
Steve McIntosh (SMc)
Alisdair Shapcott (AS)
Janet Moody (Secretary)
Jacqui Bance (Chair PL MC, Guest)

1. Apologies for Absence, welcomes and introductions:

Gerard L'Aimable, Clive London and Kevin McCaughan sent apologies.

JW welcomed all attendees to the meeting and introduced Alisdair Shapcott, our new Head Squash Coach and Jacqui Bance, Chair of Parklangley Management Committee.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Minutes of previous meeting on 29.06.2023 were agreed and signed by JW.

Matters arising: JW confirmed minutes of Squash Section's meetings are posted on the website.

3. Update on Squash and Racketball Membership, Juniors, and Court Booking Availability

We have 221 adult squash players and 46 juniors. We are looking at encouraging members of other PL sections to join Squash. We have a junior team playing which is inspirational. Our next step is to grow our adult teams, we have three teams so far. AS reported that he has received enquiries from people who would like to join a team. Box leagues are back up and running. JW recorded thanks to Susan Finch for her help.

The Committee discussed ideas for court usage at weekends including reduced fees being trialled on Sundays. AS suggested free usage for juniors at weekends. SMc said we need to identify a driver and that increasing income is secondary to court utilisation. Options include free use or 'Kids for a Quid'. AS confirmed that more girls play squash here than at other clubs, the 'Gina effect' of Gina Kennedy's success. Coaching had been running into Court times and this has now been resolved with everyone having agreed slots. DC told the Committee that Chloe Simpson, a new member of staff, is reviewing the best form of communication with members via emails and mail chimp.

4. **Court 4 refurb update and interactive squash. Court 4 charges for use of system in training mode**

A survey showed that 3% would consider booking Court 4. The interactive screen arrived today (13.12.23). There will be a small charge for using the interactive games. There have been complaints that the Club is not user friendly for children. AR said he had removed children from courts then reported to Isaac, Club Warden. DC said he will add monitoring the courts to Isaac's duties and that once the courts get busier, it will be self-policing.

Children will be encouraged to use Court 4. The front wall of Court 4 will be strengthened, and the court will be used for high level coaching, target practice and matches. JB said it is essential that correct footwear is worn. SMc asked about children's parties. DC confirmed Court 4 will be popular for parties and will be used for children at weekends.

5. **Snagging and court closure over Christmas for Courts 1,2&3 and views on refurbs**

Ray reported bonding of new plaster is a problem. DC said they would talk tomorrow and asked AS/SMc to map. Snagging on Courts 1,2&3 is being done over Christmas period, funds are retained until snagging is completed. Underfloor heating is working well, walkway is heated too. Audiences have greater comfort. We have courts at ODs until further notice but without use of ladies changing rooms. JW said we can later install overhead heating in the Squash viewing area or just below the balcony area.

6. **Club Tournaments for 2023 – number and timings. Last year's Finals dates were: Racketball 5/5/23, Squash 12/5/23 (both on Friday nights)**

JW confirmed we specify finals dates in advance. Popular format is two separate Friday nights, one for Squash and one for Racketball. AR suggested Saturday afternoons may be good. There are six tournaments, single, double, handicap in both squash and racketball. It was suggested that a tots participation tournament is held and one for older juniors. The Committee discussed dates. SMc suggested setting aside weekends for early rounds. (30/35 in Singles, 12 in Doubles, ladies Squash event, mixed events).

JW said we can install overhead heating or below heat. SM said we need coolers in summer months. The refurbishment has received positive feedback from members and pay and play. Gina Kennedy is very happy that PL has invested in Squash. In the new year DC will look at the possibility of hosting England Squash satellite tournaments and teaming up with other Squash Clubs if additional rounds are necessary.

7. **Court 5 situation and future developments**

We have planning permission for Court 5 but previously received a unreasonable build quote. There is a demand for Squash membership, and we need another court once we lose the squash courts at ODs. JW has spoken to the Board regarding expansion of squash. Kent is an epicentre of squash excellence, the top junior in the UK is Bexley born. JW believes we can make Court 5 viable with excellent viewing facilities for the courts in a line. AR said the longer a decision is left, the more costs will increase. JB said it needs to be justified in a business case based on court utilisation. JW confirmed his mission is to provide the best facilities we can for our community and membership; racquet sections, gym, and social aspects of the club (CASC). He firmly believes this is where the future of the Club lies, more

of the same. SM said he believes we can have the best facilities in the country.

8. **A.O.B.**

DC – approached by Bromley Council regarding London Youth Games at Crystal Palace. DC/AS to discuss.

DC – Monday night Adult coaching group on Court 3 will be moved to Court 4. It was agreed that times on Court 4 will be universally levelled to Courts 1,2&3 after Court 4 is refurbished. A member survey is planned.

DC/AS – DC will speak to GLA regarding Sunday morning adult members club sessions between 10am and 12noon or DC/AS will find a volunteer.

DC – Thursday night Pay and Play sessions for club members are being formalised, AS is running these.

DC – Squash and Racketball Club Nights, alternating on Fridays, will be self-managed.

JW – Confirmed there is support for logo team clothing – it was agreed to discuss this item again.

JW – Suggested developing Squash by screening as much as possible in the Bar and by having large TVs near the Squash courts, possibly in the corridor by the squash board (as they could distract players if located behind courts). We should advertise and bring players down to watch matches.

SMc – asked if we would consider having paid players? After discussion, it was felt that this is a dangerous thing to re-start. SMc said it could help the initiative of bringing people in and court utilisation. DC said his preference was to bring our own juniors in under AS coaching. JB suggested paying players could contravene CASC regulations. It was agreed that our priority is to get our first team back together.

SMc – reported that opposing team players recently had nowhere to change in our men's changing rooms. DC will investigate an island facility with Cliff and Costa.

Date for next meeting – To be arranged.

Signed _____ Date _____

Meeting ended: 21.15.

