

THE WILSON NORTHAMPTON LAWN TENNIS LEAGUE

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday November 9, 2009 at Northampton LTC...

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT – Barry Searle (BS) Chairman, Aub Draper (AD) President, Mark Beesley (MB) Secretary, Clive Geddes (CG) Treasurer, Brian Tunbridge (BT) Fixtures Secretary, Tim Graham (TG), Gill Smith (GS), Margaret Green (MG), Steve Morris (SM).

CLUBS REPRESENTED: Abington, Brackley, Collingtree, County, Dallington, Duston United, Earls Barton, Ferrers & Rushden, Harpole, Heyford, Kettering, Kilsby, Northampton, ONs, Roade, Rushmere, Scaldwell, Towcestrians, Wollaston.

APOLOGIES: Corby S&L, Rugby, Rugby LMRCA.

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS – BS welcomed the strong club representation, especially Collingtree at their first AGM. He thanked Northampton for hosting the AGM and expressed a wish the meeting should conclude by 9.30pm.

MINUTES OF THE 2008 AGM – These were confirmed a true and accurate record (proposed by Dave Mundy and seconded by Aub Draper).

MATTERS ARISING – BS reported that following the LTA's 2008 shift on affiliation which had planned to only embrace clubs with 20 members, they were now pursuing a strategy based on payments per number of courts, possibly as much as £100. However, this had been shelved until 2010.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS – AD thanked the committee for all their hard work during the year, in particular Brian Tunbridge for his unstinting devotion to the fixtures, while also highlighting 'unsung heroine' Sylvia Dean for her work with the Mixed League. He said Rosemary Swallow and Sharon Constable had performed an excellent task in organising the League dinner this year alongside BS, and he only regretted he had missed the occasion. AD also added his congratulations to County for their clean sweep of men's, ladies and mixed titles, as well as both Mellor Cups and the Stevens Shield. The message was clear to the other clubs: 'Stop County's domination!' BS added a note of thanks to Ram Gallo for continuing to run the Mellor Cups and Stevens Shield. He also said the League Dinner had already been booked again for the Marriott Hotel for October 16th, 2010.

SECRETARY'S REPORT – MB raised the plight of the smaller clubs and the importance for variety in these days of domination from the larger concerns. He said his own club Old Northamptonians had recently merged with St Andrews and he was also aware other smaller clubs such as Wollaston were hanging on, by a slender thread. While congratulating clubs such as Northampton on their excellent club house and hospitality, he said he felt sure that they, County and Dallington also appreciated the variety afforded by the likes of Roade, Harpole and Scaldwell. Wearing his publicity hat, MB said he also welcomed input from clubs when putting together stories for the Chronicle & Echo and the Kettering Evening Telegraph.

TREASURER'S REPORT – A recent transfer of £1,000 from the interest account meant CG could answer the question: 'Are we solvent?' in the affirmative and he also reported that Wilson had recently sent confirmation they would shortly be transferring across their annual sponsorship money of £650. However, it was only these factors

which had kept the position stable and there had been an increased expenditure figure of £436.54 and the Dinner Dance had been subsidised to the tune of £500. Team entry fees had not been increased in the 21st Century and he thought this situation might soon be needed to change. The accounts were proposed by Ruth Noble (County) and seconded by Ram Gallo (Northampton).

MOTIONS FOR ALTERATIONS TO RULES – Three motions were voted upon. The first related to a ‘lapsed’ rule which had somehow been dropped in the transfer to the web-site. It revolved around Rule 7, relating to abandoned matches. BS said there had been a dispute in a mixed match this summer which had brought the absence to light. The old rule stated that ‘abandoned matches should be replayed in their entirety’ and clubs voted unanimously for this to be restored. BS said there was always ‘common sense’ case for clubs to agree on a final result if the match was near a conclusion. The second proposal from Wollaston sought to revert to the 2008 ruling on player eligibility, whereby a player was tied to a higher team for his club, once he had played three matches up. This was to prevent clubs swapping players at random between teams at the end of the season, thus affecting vital relegation issues. This was passed by 22 votes to eight. The third proposal came from County LTC and suggested a merger of summer and winter leagues, into one complete nine month season.

After much debate, this was defeated with only two votes in favour of the switch. It was generally decided that summer and winter tennis were two completely separate animals and needed to be kept apart.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS - The existing officers were all confirmed en bloc. BS pointed out that Steve Morris had replaced Alex Dunn as Dallington club manager and had also taken over his place on the committee, while Margaret Green had also joined the League committee, bridging the LTA/Town League. Tony Redden, the new organiser of the Men’s Veterans League, was also elected to the committee. However, BS said there was still a vacancy for anyone wishing to join. Proposed: Bob Pooley (Kettering), seconded: Bob Griffith (Rushmere).

PUBLICITY/WEB SITE– The web-site received widespread praise for its lay-out and content. It is a vital area for communication for team captains, who are the unsung heroes of the League and in particular BS expressed heartfelt thanks to BT, the webmaster, for all his time, effort and expertise, not only on the website but also on the fixtures.

AOB– Clubs had been asked to indicate whether they wished to enter a team in the Mellor Cup for 2010 on the information sheets and Ram Gallo said perhaps the only untried answer to the recent disappointing response to fixtures in the early rounds, was to have specific ‘Cup Weeks’ rather like the FA Cup in football. Finals day has always been excellent. The issue of smaller divisions, and how best to achieve fewer one-sided matches was thoroughly aired, albeit without reaching a resolution.

* The meeting closed at 9.11pm.