

EXETER AND DISTRICT TENNIS LEAGUE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, 13 March 2012 at 7.00 pm at Buckerell Lodge Hotel, Topsham Rd, Exeter

MINUTES

The Meeting was attended by about 45 people including representatives of all but four of the clubs and members of the Committee. It was chaired by Andy Malcolm.

1. **Apologies** Apologies had been received from Teignmouth.
2. **Minutes of AGM on 15 March 11** The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.
3. **Matters arising** There were no matters arising
4. **Presentation of trophies** The trophies for the 2011 Summer Leagues were presented by Georgina Loosemore, Tennis Development Manager, Devon LTA. Before the presentation she complimented the league on its provision of competitive tennis for a large number of teams and drew attention to some initiatives in the county, particularly those to encourage a larger number of ladies to play competitive tennis and congratulated the winners of trophies (listed in Annex 1).
5. **Devon LTA report** Andy Malcolm presented the report (copy in Minutes Book). He drew attention to success by Devon players nationally and internationally and initiatives taken to encourage tennis in the county. The county has some reserves and clubs may apply for interest free loans with grants. He reminded clubs that with LTA incorporation, clubs needed to change their governing documents to ensure LTA protection. It is also suggested that a visitor to a club should sign that they agree to abide by the LTA rules. He and Catriona Batty, as our LTA representatives, are there to help clubs in their contact with the LTA.
6. **Chairman's report** Andy Malcolm reflected on a successful year for the league with increased number of entries, particularly in the Winter League This has also lead to increased workloads for some of the committee and a baptism of fire for our new winter league match secretary, who's coped well. As promised at the last AGM a questionnaire was sent out to club contacts and team captains. Over 50 responses were received and they reflected broad satisfaction with the way the League is run. A summary of the results was sent to club contacts with the Committee's responses to the views expressed and the suggestions made. One or two results can be seen in the rule changes proposed.
The Committee tried to take on board the request for early sight by clubs of the proposed divisions and moved the entrance date forward to accommodate this. Unfortunately we then had 5 teams withdraw. This was extremely disappointing and has left us with unbalanced leagues. He also drew attention to problems with incorrectly completed scorecards.
Andy thanked the Committee for their efforts over the year. He noted there had been some turnover in committee members this year but that new members are coming forward.
He thanked all of the Committee for their support.
7. **Match Secretary's report** Maureen Sowerby presented her report (copy as Annex 2) on the operation of the 2011 season and preparation for 2012. She stressed (a) the need for registration forms to be in time and that only fully paid up members can be registered (b) the procedures to be followed for re arranging matches, and particularly that home teams decide the match night, (c) the need for score cards to be fully completed and submitted in time by post or email.

Team entries were received by 27 Jan (earlier than previously) and the Committee were able to work out divisions with excellent balance in team numbers and following the new rule on promotion and relegation. These were posted on the web and circulated to Clubs for comment. The only comments received were supportive and no suggestions were made for change. Unfortunately over the next weeks there were withdrawals of five teams, from Budleigh Salterton, Teignmouth and Cranford (3 teams). These were mainly in the lower divisions and in order for divisions to have at least six teams, adjustments had to be made and three teams that had originally been assigned to higher divisions had to revert to a lower division lower (none of these teams had earned promotion by finishing in the top two). In order to minimise the magnitude of change the Committee accepted that there was more variation than ideal in the number of teams per division; this varied between 6 and 8.

The meeting was appreciative of the problems created and the actions taken to resolve the difficulty. Cranford referred to changes in their club and apologised for the problems caused by their withdrawal of teams. In discussion, it was thought that the earlier entry date for teams was not a major factor in producing this large number of withdrawals. The importance of Clubs only entering teams that they are confident can complete the season was stressed. This problem was debated further in Agenda Item 9 on rule changes.

Maureen thanked captains and the Committee for their support. The Chairman presented her with a small gift, to great acclaim by the meeting.

8. **Treasurer's report** Catriona Batty presented her report and the Accounts (copy in Minute Book). The Committee had decided to alter the financial year for the League so that it finishes at the end of December. This will facilitate checking of the accounts prior to their presentation at the AGM. Consequently the presented report for this year covered only a nine-month period. The balance on 31 Dec was £1517.41 indicating a surplus of £271.69 for the accounting period. She noted though that this period did not include the costs for new shields and engraving and when this cost (£294) was allowed for, it showed that the League were operating on about a break-even basis, despite having experienced some one-off costs setting up the new website. Her recommendation that the fee for Summer League teams remains at £6 was accepted.

The meeting also agreed a change of cheque signatories with Andy Malcolm replacing Roger Wilkins as a signatory.

9. **Proposals for changes to rules** Proposals were presented, discussed and voted upon.

Proposal from Committee for New Rule, probably after Rule 8 on withdrawal of teams. The proposal was amended to include 'Unless there are exceptional circumstances' at the beginning and was then carried unanimously.

It reads: *Unless there are exceptional circumstances, if a Club enters a team, but then withdraws the team before it has played any matches, the maximum number of teams that the Club will be able to enter in the following season will be the number that fulfilled their fixtures in the preceding season.*

Proposal from Kingsteignton for New Rule, probably after Rule 11 on the introduction of a waiting list system. This proposal had been withdrawn by the club prior to the meeting

Proposal from Committee to amend part of Rule 18 relating to the offering of dates for rearranged matches. The proposal was passed unanimously without amendment.

It reads (the new text in red, without italics): *In the case of bad weather, the Home team must, within five days, inform the Match Secretary of the postponement and offer the opponents at least three alternative dates for the rearranged match, which must be in different weeks but not including dates upon which the Away team already has a match fixed. The opposing team must agree a date within two weeks of the postponement and the*

Match Secretary notified of the new date by the Home team. If dates are not offered or agreed within the above time span, then the offending team will be fined 2 points.

Proposal from Committee to amend Rule 23 d) in relation to transfer of players to a lower team. The proposal was passed unanimously without amendment.

It reads (the new text in red, without italics):

d) Should a club decide a player has been registered for too high a team, that player may be transferred to a team below provided that:

(i) He/she has not played more than twice for the higher team.

(ii) The higher team have played at least three matches, but have not completed their fixtures for the season.

(iii) Where fewer than four players remain in the higher team another player is registered in his/her place.

The Match Secretary must be informed of the transfer before the player plays for the lower team. A transferred player may not play for a higher team during the current season.

Proposal from Committee to amend Rule 25 relating to fines for incomplete or incorrect scorecards. The proposal was amended to include 'substantially' before 'incomplete or incorrect'. It was then carried unanimously.

It reads (the new text in red, without italics):

(a) The Team Captains shall forward the completed score sheets in respect of all home matches played to the Match Secretary, within five days of the match being completed. Home teams whose score sheets have not been received after seven days will be fined 2 points. (b) Following an initial warning, a fine of 1 point may be imposed on both teams for any scorecard that is incomplete or incorrect.

10. Election of Officers and Committee The following Officers and Committee Members were elected:

President: Des Shears

Chairman: Andy Malcolm

General Secretary: Roger Wilkins

Match Secretary: Maureen Sowerby

Treasurer: Catriona Batty

Minutes Secretary: Nicola Keele

Committee: Joan Bolden, Rosemary Browne, David Carter, Peter Clarke, Dave Knightley, Wendy Smith, Matthew Wheadon

The Chairmen particularly welcomed Nicola Keele, David Carter and Matthew Wheadon as new Committee members.

He presented an engraved tankard to Roger Wilkins who had stood down from the position as General Secretary. He paid tribute to Roger's contribution to the Committee. Since joining the Committee in 2004 he had held the posts of Treasurer, Chairman and General Secretary. In accepting the gift, Roger wished the League and the Committee well for the future. The Chairman explained that some of the tasks previously undertaken by the General Secretary would be devolved to other members of the Committee.

11. Any other business

11.1 An invitation was given by Exeter Golf and Country Club for entries to a tournament to be held at the club on 1 April with competitions for both Men's and Ladies doubles.

11.2 David Carter thanked the Chairman for his contribution to the League and conduct of the meeting.

11.3 The Chairman thanked all for attending and contributing and closed the meeting at 8.41 pm.

ANNEX 1

Trophy winners for Summer Leagues, 2011

Division	Men	Ladies
1	Cranford 'A'	Torquay 'A'
2	Okehampton 'A'	Victoria Park 'A'
3	Torquay 'C'	Newton St Cyres 'A'
4	Lympstone 'A'	Tipton St John
5	Teignmouth 'A'	Teign Valley 'A'
6	Dawlish 'C'	Chagford 'B'
7	Newton Abbot	
8	David Lloyd Exeter 'A'	

ANNEX 2

2011 Match Secretary Report

Introduction

The 2011 season finished on time with only 2 Men's 1st Division matches unplayed after 51 matches had to be re-arranged for rain. Because no matches were arranged on the initial fixture lists in August or September there was plenty of time left to re-arrange those matches before the end of the season.

Fines were necessary as follows:-- 6 late score cards. 1 Ladies team and 6 Men's teams failed to field a team and 8 teams were fined for playing un-registered players.

New rule on fining teams 8 points if they did not field a team seemed to work well with the ladies, but very noticeable that men's teams were forfeiting matches towards the end of the season when playing the match would have had no bearing on their position in the table.

FORMATTED FIXTURE LISTS:

These once again worked well for everyone. Only 21 matches were moved by the closing date of April 21st. To date these fixture lists are not set in stone. You are able to move any fixture with the agreement of both captains at this meeting (which was always an AGM and Fixtures meeting), but please remember though that after this meeting the longer you leave it to move a match the more difficult it will be to reach an agreement and get both captains to agree. All fixtures have to be set by April 21st.

Play offs – No play offs this year – rule altered to give the runners up in Div 2 the option of being promoted.

Ladies – Ottery St.Mary informed me that they did not want to go up into Div 1, which meant only Seaton A being relegated to Div 2.

Men – Torquay B informed me that they did want to be promoted to Div 1 which means 2 teams will be relegated from Div 1 to Div 2 (Victoria Park B and Dawlish A)

Start of Season Problems

Registration Forms still not arriving before teams' first matches one arrived on the day of a match. If not received before 6.30 on the day of your match, then all players will be deemed unregistered and the team fined accordingly.

Fixture lists not tying up despite sending out several emails and also publishing all dates on the website. I have sent out a new form for clubs to fill out showing which matches they have moved. This will hopefully make the task of cross checking 100 team sheets a lot easier for me.

Some clubs are still trying to persuade Home teams to change matches to night to suit the opposition rather than the other way around. Rule clearly states the home team has choice of home night.

Teams still trying to move matches after April 21st by saying they have only just received the fixtures from the club contact, even though they were all sent out before the AGM.

Please make sure that all players named on your Registration form are FULLY PAID UP MEMBERS OF YOUR CLUB.

SCORE CARDS

Score cards being emailed or faxed had been more successful, but a big problem with **them still not being completed properly, with no date, any team names and even just players Christian names. One card I received was blank with just the scores on it with a score of 7 points to 6 amazing considering we only play for a max 12 points and they were all signed by both captains! Another card I received was emailed back to front, only readable when I held it up to a mirror!**

The Committee had another look at this and spent a lot of time trying to make the score sheet easier to fill in. It has changed slightly, so let's hope the captains can get it right this year. If not, there is a proposal to start fining teams if they do not complete the card properly after several warnings.

WEBSITE

Last year the old web site was updated with tables and results as they came in.

After the problems that we were getting with the old FrontPage website, I was asked to try and sort out a more up to date and user friendly website. A friend of mine was into playing around with computers and I asked him if he could help. He designed and set up the website which I am sure you will agree is a vast improvement on the old one, and all for just £100. It was then up to me to start filling the pages up with the relevant information.

In line with another request on Rogers's questionnaire, you will now find a copy of the minutes of the 2 committee meetings we have held on the web. They are posted without being certified as we only meet twice a year in Jan and October, so there may be slight changes once they are agreed.

Also in the archives section is a list of tables and winners going back as far as the 1980's. One list compiled by Roger the others by Matthew from NSC's.

The list of clubs now incorporates a map of your courts plus postcodes where possible, so no excuses for not finding your way to a match.

2012 DIVISIONS:-

Every year the format of the divisions for the new season has always been a major issue at the AGM's. Last year was no different, but because of the unrest in presenting a set of divisions on the night, we listened to your concerns and after much discussion with you all, we acted and with your agreement we brought our diary forward to January.

Applications for entry into the 2012 summer league were sent out to all club contacts on January 4th with a closing date of January 27th. I then set about formulating the divisions – I had received 62 applications for entry into the Men's section and 43 into the Ladies section.

LADIES – I had 2 new entries – Teignmouth and David Lloyd B . At the start we had 2 Divisions with 8 teams in; 3 with 7 teams in and Div. 6 with 6 teams. These divisions were formulated using our current rules of promotion and relegation and also the new rule 14(b) proposed and accepted last year by NSC's.

MEN: - I had 5 new entries – Teignmouth B and C, Kingsteignton E, Cranford B, and NSC's D. I also had 3 teams withdrawing the previous season, Dawlish C, Tipton B and Tiverton B

This brought the total number of teams to 62 and by applying the rules as per the ladies, I started off with 2 divisions with 7 teams in and 6 divisions with the maximum 8 teams in which I am sure you will agree was a very even spread across the section.

At the committee meeting held on Jan 31st, the committee discussed the allocation of teams and the divisions were accepted. The next day Feb 1st, these were emailed out directly to the club contacts and also posted on the website for everyone to see. They were to be left on the web until Feb 13th for anyone to comment. I only received 2 emails, both agreeing with the proposed divisions.

Next day 14th Feb, I started to do the fixtures, but during the morning received 2 emails from clubs withdrawing teams. One was from Budleigh Salterton withdrawing their Ladies C team and one from Teignmouth withdrawing one of their new entries in the Men's section. Both withdrawals were from the lower divisions, so I had to quickly re-jig those divisions – The ladies meant just pulling back down Torquay D from div 4 to 5 and also pulling back down Torquay E from Div. 5 to 6. Both teams were in 3rd place at the end of 2011. In the men's section with Teignmouth C withdrawing it left Div. 8 with 6 teams. After consultation with the committee it was agreed to leave the divisions alone. With a smaller division 8 it would leave space for any new teams in 2013. With all but Division 1 having a maximum of 8 teams in there would be no room for manoeuvre next year.

The revised divisions were immediately posted on the website and the clubs in the divisions involved were notified. The fixtures were then done and sent out to the club contacts on the 20th Feb. in time for clubs to sort out their calendars ready for the East Devon AGM.

On the 27th Feb 2 weeks after closing date of the consultation period and a month after closing date for applications, I received an email from Nick Breeding the new general manager at the Cranford club. The email contained the news that he would be withdrawing both the Ladies and Men's B teams from the league. I again had to re-jig the divisions and had to reduce the ladies divisions 4, 5 & 6 down to 6 teams each.

We were now faced with a problem with Men's Div. 8 as this left them with only 5 teams, therefore we had no option but to relegate Kings D from division 7 to try and make up the numbers. It involved Kings D taking the vacant spots on the fixture list left by Cranford B. This also meant that there was no disruption to the fixture lists for the other 7 divisions. To try and re-jig the whole of the men's section for the sake of giving Div. 8 2 more games at this late stage was not an option. Having re-done them once, we had to draw the line at some point and say that's it.

A couple of days later another email from Cranford informed me that they would also be withdrawing their Men's A team from division one. As 2011 men's Champions this was sad news indeed. This is a blow, not only to the Cranford club but also to both our league and the East Devon League who I believe were left with divisions with only 5 teams in. This disruption could have been kept to a minimum, if the secretary/management at Cranford had liaised with the teams/players, when the application forms were sent out in the first place. This also applies to the other 2 clubs that withdrew teams after the closing date for applications.

It's very easy to look at the spread of teams and divisions that we have ended up with and say, why didn't we do this, or do that – Had we not had any withdrawals after the closing date the spread of teams was very even and was accepted by you all. I can only apologise on behalf of the committee to those clubs that have been directly affected by these withdrawals but we have done the best we can to lessen the disruption to the rest of the league teams. I hope you all understand how difficult it has been to please everyone due to these late withdrawals

Finally thanks for all your support over the year, keep sending the emails good or bad. Any problems please get in touch, we are here to help you and to make sure the league runs as smoothly as possible. Thanks also to my fellow committee members for backing me up when I needed it!!!

Roger Wilkins