



BLT&SRC Council Meeting

Tuesday 30th September 2025 at 7.30pm in the Clubhouse

MINUTES

Attendees: John Shaw (JS), Phil Trimmer (PT), Adam Suggett (AS), Tracey Mackey (TM), Matt Markwort (MM), Vicky Pudney (VP),

Apologies: Pete Walker (PW), Mark Shattock, (MS), Susannah Crowther (SC)

1. Intro and update from Chair

2. Work-in-progress updates

- Court 10-12 fencing and gate project: Chiltern have gone a bit quiet, and Kev Mcermott is chasing them for a start date. The quote is now cheaper at £10k + VAT. We are also looking to get a quote on adding some fencing above the rebo wall on court 6b to stop balls flying into the car park.
- LED lighting on courts 1-3: Planning has been granted but we are awaiting a final letter from National Rail confirming they are happy (this has already been done verbally) before work can start. The contractors, Luminance Pro, estimate the work will take 3 days (1 day per court). Total cost is £46k which is a lot. AS is wondering if this money might be better spent elsewhere or cost savings made by not doing the work even though it has been approved. PT reiterated the benefit of 40% energy savings by having LED lighting on these courts which provides a business case payback over time. JS agreed and felt moving to LED is important from a sustainability perspective.
- Following on that note, JS has asked TM to take on the role of the club's 'Sustainability Champion' to which she has agreed. This is not so much a doing role and more an advisory role.
- Members' Opinion Survey: The original link was circulated in August and to date we have around 100 respondents. JS is keen to get nearer the levels of the last survey (220) and will re-send to members in 10 days' time (with a deadline) for a final push on feedback.
- Drone film: Filming took place at the club on in early August by Gerry Sims, one of our members. Gerry's company is Blumonkey Media. We are really pleased with the result which will feature on the new club website in due course.
- Website: This has progressed significantly since the last meeting and content is currently with Indigo Tree for their input on layout and usability. We should then have a development site that we can share with a small group of committee members, friends and family for final feedback. In order to go live Jenny at Elite and Indigo Tree need to liaise with a migration plan. The goal is to have it live by the end of the year. Following the website launch we will be looking to move our database, invoicing, box leagues and email capabilities from Elite to another provider.

- Squash court glass backwalls are now complete and Oxbridge have just finished the flooring strip.
- Women's toilets: These are coming along nicely. This week it will be the 2nd fix. They should be completed by early next week.
- Architect's report and strategic planning update: Local firm, Contour Architecture, are reviewing the viability and order of magnitude cost of making adaptations to our clubhouse in order to (a) provide a more attractive and welcoming first impression as you approach and enter; and (b) potentially expand upwards to create a first-floor terrace overlooking our tennis courts.

They are working on two broad concepts. A bronze option, to meet the core requirements deriving from the above two directions of travel. A gold option, which additionally improves the functionality and visual appeal of both the overall scheme and the clubhouse as a whole.

It was noted that we would need an SGM to do any of this, and we would need to be 100% sure as a Council before doing that. The purpose if the exercise is not necessarily to do that. It is to understand the art of the possible; to get ideas; to get a sense of the cost involved; to get expert opinion rather than us amateurs battling away on a piecemeal basis; to check that if we continue to do improvements on a modular basis we can do so with a master plan in mind, or at least ensure we're not compromising what we or our successors may want to do in the future.

In JS' view, our court facilities are now generally in an excellent state, aligning to our vision and strategy, but not certain aspects of our building. There are many relatively low-cost things we can do to improve our surroundings, but the report will be a valuable resource for us. Potentially it will also be informative in responding to the survey results.

3. Section reports (by exception for any items not already covered)

Tennis

Tennis Committee:

AS has restructured the tennis committee to give members more specific roles. Changes are as follows: Andrew Hitch and Tim Pratt have resigned but are happy to help on key projects where needed. Tracey Mackey is now Head of Team Tennis, Kevin Mcdermott Head of Projects and Shrina Patel Head of Junior Tennis Coaching. Joanne Lloyd Evans and Phil Casserley join the committee in the capacity of Junior Tennis Development and Social Tennis respectively. Meetings will be more regular (once every 8 weeks), and each member will run their own section of the meeting. As part of this restructure, AS is drafting a new Terms of Reference. All members of Council were welcomed to join a tennis committee meeting at any time.

JS will encourage PW to look at a Terms of Reference for the squash committee.

Coaching Programme:

The club's share of revenue is down by a third on this time last year and this is being investigated/addressed.

National League:

It was a shame to not progress further at the finals in Bournemouth on 5/6/7 September. Phil Casserley and Josh Sapwell will be taking over as joint team captains going forward. AS is in support of the Club running a NL team but there is a question around entering both the summer and winter leagues that needs further discussion.

Pickleball:

Pickleball was available to try at the club for the first time at the recent Open Day with temporary markings in the ITC. It was well received by a dozen or so people who all thought it was a great game and good fun to play. A key selling point of the game is that all ages can play. Next steps are to survey a few more members and find someone to run the sessions (preferably a coach) before deciding whether to invest in permanent markings. There is a one-day Pickleball course that would be suitable for what we need so it's not a big investment there. Halton have 3 indoor courts with permanent markings and there is no issue from members in terms of confusion or conflict with playing tennis.

ACTION: MM /AS

Tennis Finals Day 2026 has been confirmed on 27th June. PW was happy to arrange for England Squash to hold their junior squad training on another weekend.

Squash

- PW is going to paint the squash corridor walls and gallery staircase with Kev's help. And upstairs the wooden floor where we've lifted the carpet needs sanding and varnishing. ACTION: PW

Social

- Cafe/coffee: Claire & graham have been using the A board to advertise when they are in and the café is open which seems to be working well for the morning social sessions. To make this work though a coffee machine upgrade will be needed. A new water heater/urn would be extremely helpful too. MM to ask Claire to research and come back to Council with 3 options. ACTION: MM
- Claire & Graham have now stopped opening early on Saturday afternoons after trialling this through the summer. There just wasn't the footfall to make it viable longer term.
- Great feedback on Claire's squash suppers. Apparently, we are the envy of all the other clubs with our offering!
- Next 3 events: Quiz Night – 29th October, Rock and Roll Bingo – 28th November and Elvis – 6th December.
- We need to do more on social media to advertise events – ideally Instagram.

Finance

- PT will shortly circulate a cash update. The revenue numbers are going to be revised down due to the low numbers of new joiners at the recent open day (approx. 20 compared to the usual average of 30-40. This includes 10 fewer senior tennis members compared to this time last year.
- The cost centre analysis has been done for last year. Both sections are financially pulling their weight.
- The half year results are imminent and will be circulated in due course.
- PT has started to research other clubs for 2026/27 subs benchmarking. He advised that CPI is running at 4% and this will be confirmed when the inflation figures are out mid-December. PT proposed to discuss subs further at a Council meeting in early January 2026, with the AGM to be held on Monday, February 2nd.

Office

- Kingson Electrical are coming in in a few weeks' time to do the fixed wire, emergency light and PAT testing which is approx. £6k.
- VP advised that the gutters on the clubhouse were at end of life and need replacing sooner rather than later after many years of patching up. Two quotes have been obtained, and both were £14k inc VAT. Council agreed to get the work done but in the next financial year.

4. AOB

- JS would like to update the Club Constitution to include the following: a table of Financial Discretions, Terms of Reference for the committees and guidance for club notices. These amendments will need approval at the next AGM.

ACTION: JS

Next meeting: Monday 17th November 7.30pm