**BLT&SRC Council Meeting**

**Tuesday 6th October 2026 at 7.15pm in the Clubhouse**

**MINUTES**

**Attendees:** John Shaw (JS), Tracey Mackey (TM), Adam Suggett (AS), Vicky Pudney (VP), Mark Shattock, (MS), Susannah Crowther (SC) Pete Walker (PW), Wal Mackey (WM)

**Apologies:** Matt Markwort (MM)

**1. Intro and update from Chair**

JS started the meeting by thanking Wal Mackey for the work he has done since taking on the role of Treasurer.

Wal has introduced new processes and reporting since coming on board giving the club a "health check" in the process.

**2. SGM follow-up and next steps, including:**

JS thanked everyone for the work that had gone into making the SGM such a success. This included WM, AS & Mike Hawkes (and JS himself) for getting the proposal to the position where it could be taken to members for voting. This included numerous meetings with the football club, and the BSGCA. The various Consultation Meetings held with different groups at the club were also a great success.

There were 145 attendees on the night. Both the presentation and voting process ran smoothly.

MH has said that the evening was a vindication of the governance of the club.

The work now begins to move the project to the next stage. JS & WM are meeting with the football club on 7th October. There will also be a follow up with Paul Forster (Chair of the BSGCA). JS noted that the next BSGCA Council meeting will on 30th November, where the proposal is likely to be an agenda item to be discussed with the other clubs in Berkhamsted.

JS will report back to Council following the meeting on 7th October. The football club are very keen to get moving on the project, but planning, groundworks etc all take time. The football club will get 2 surveyors reports done.

AS asked whether it would be prudent to have a Padel representative on the Tennis Committee. He acknowledged that there would be a lot of work involved, and he, as Tennis Chair, does not have the capacity to add this to the current work load. It was agreed that this was a good idea and that JS would ask for a "Padel Champion" in the October newsletter.

Anna (Broony) Fitzpatrick raised a point to JS on the evening about the lack of diversity in the working party and suggested the addition of Jackie Gregory.

The current working group of JS, AS, WM & MH will remain in place for negotiations etc, but someone/a working party is required to see the project through. JS will be meeting with Jackie for her input as she has experience in such projects.

The SGM raised a few questions with regards to the **voting process** that we have in place i.e. no proxy votes, no postal or online votes. The constitution stipulates that members need to be at the meeting to be able to vote in person. A number of members have said that this process is out of date taking into account all the means by which voting can be done remotely nowadays.

That said, the turnout on the evening was considerable, and it made for a very successful evening, showing the benefits of the current constitution rule about the 'those present at a general meeting'. After some discussion at the meeting about the pros and cons of different processes, JS took the action to consider options for the future.

**ACTION: JS**

**3. Next stage of MMM rollout - court booking and court lighting:**

- MMM's proposal is 26th Oct launch and 9th Nov cutover from current system
- JS, VP & SC had an implementation kick-off meeting with them on Monday 5th October
- Kingson have done much of the wiring required
- Hardware (kiosk and court clocks) have arrived
- Detailed email communication to go to members. This will probably be in phases (i) an overview of what is coming (ii) how to book courts.
- VP & SC to host "Help Sessions" for members struggling with the new system.
- 90 days termination notice has been given to Payne, subject to the third and final MMM migration stage regarding club access.

**4. Expenditure authority limits & changes to the Club Constitution**

- WM presented a review of our existing Authority Limits and respective references in the Club Constitution.
- It was agreed that we would revise these.
- A small project group be formed to revise the Authority Table, the additional rules and changes to the Constitution wording (Wal / Adam/ and either Tracey for her accounting experience or John as Chair and final arbiter).
- When we have a final draft, we will revert for Council approval, prior to running it past the Trustees (to avoid any conflict at the AGM) and presenting at the AGM in February for ratification.

**5. Solar panel and battery: proposal from Wal issued for pre-reading 30th Sep**

**Capex Approval: Solar Project**

- The solar panel project had been raised as an action item in last year's AGM.
- WM presented a proposal for adding a modest level of new solar panels and more importantly, battery storage.
- Council approved proceeding with the Phase 1 project in principle, subject to an agreed cap.
- WM to get comparative quotes and revert to council with a final proposal.
- WM to clarify the position on grant funding and prepare an application if appropriate.

**6. CASC compliance:**

**WM provided an update on our CASC status as follows:**

- The club is registered as a CASC in accordance with Sch. 18 of the Finance Act 2002
- HMRC provide tax relief and business rates relief to support grass roots sport in the community by allowing amateur clubs to register as a sports club rather than a business for rates and tax purposes.

| Category | Relief | Impact |
|---|---|---|
| Business rates | 80% relief | £24k per annum |
| Corporation tax | 19 % on profit under £50k | £10k per annum |
| Capital Gains Tax | 25% on property | £625k one-off |

- The scheme requires certain compliance conditions which, among other things, include:
    - Section 2.15: an annual maximum in payments to players (tennis and squash) to play for the club, to be considered amateur status (£10k pa); and
    - Section 2.22: an annual maximum in trading (tennis and squash) turnover from non-members, to be considered non-taxable community status (£100kpa)
- The player payment limit applies to the club's accounting period, i.e. currently Apr-26 to Mar-27.
- Section 2.15.4: A CASC cannot make payments to a player that plays for another club. Also, any cash or benefits provided by third parties connected to the CASC will still count towards the paid player limit.

Conclusions: we will continue to maintain our CASC status and manage the club teams within those restrictions.

**Suggested approach re compliance:**

- HMRC rules on Gov.UK provide detailed guidance notes for the Community Amateur Sport Clubs (CASC) Scheme. Accordingly, the approach re our CASC compliance will be as follows:

1. Treasurer is responsible for managing our HMRC and CASC compliance and maintains a register of the following in order to comply with both the 'community' and 'amateur' aspects:
    a) player match fees for both tennis & squash, to comply with section 2.15 Payments to players; and
    b) trading income from non-members, to comply with section 2.22 Income conditions and community status.
2. Tennis & squash section heads are responsible for:
    a) advising the Treasurer of the player payment budget for the club's teams for the forthcoming accounting year;
    b) liaising with the Treasurer to ensure the budget is within the club's applicable CASC limit for the accounting year before league entries are submitted; and
    c) keeping the Treasurer informed of all player payments. Going forward all player payments are to go through our club bank account to maintain full transparency and comply with section 2.15.4.
3. Player payments, reimbursement or benefits to be recorded in the CASC player-payment register before being authorised, to ensure sufficient headroom remains within the applicable CASC limit for the respective accounting year.

Conclusion: Tthe above approach to compliance was approved.

**7. Membership acquisition and retention ideas: proposal from VP & SC**

Ideas included:

- Free Trial – this is already underway. There is a Free Trial button on the home page of the website. 6 "free trials" have resulted in membership.
- Connecting / onboarding new members.
- Non-member coaching membership incentive.
- Squash club night – this has recently been relaunched.
- Female Squash - JS has met with Gavin Roger-Lund and his wife. They are active at Chesham 1879 and have ideas on e.g. how to appeal to female players e.g. 4 free coaching sessions. PW to continue.
- 'Learn to play squash' 8-week course/Beginners' night.
- Bring a Guest Week/Weekend – Council agreed this was a good idea. To be arranged.
- Non-member ITC membership incentive.

- Lack of female coaches – this has recently been addressed with 2 new female tennis coaches and a female coach in the pipeline for squash.
- Tennis joining fee may be prohibitive for some, but S&V are able to use discretion where necessary.
- Inflexible payment options – Council in favour of continuing as we do currently i.e. annual fees, with quarterly option also available for a small surcharge.
- Inflexible membership options (to some degree) e.g. country, temporary, off peak etc.
- Disability and Inclusivity: AS will speak with Ollie & Josh to discuss. One coach to specialise in this area. VP happy to assist with players who have long term, chronic conditions in her capacity as a qualified PT in this area.
- TM suggested introducing a "buddy" system.

**8. 2nd half thinking - planning for 2027, including:**

- a Spring clean-up/refurb project for the Centenary Room, and 'keep tidy' responsibilities for storage areas.
- candidate bids for 2027/28 investment and maintenance projects: club and grounds / tennis / squash.
- court fees for 2027/28: squash courts and ITC courts.

Final project list for 27/28 to be agreed at next meeting and communicated at the AGM.

**9. Section and Treasurer's updates by exception**

**Treasury Update (WM)**

- Membership numbers are down 7% on the same period last year, while the subscription is only expected to be 5% below last year by year end. We are building back as customary, but at a slower pace this year.
- Our cash position is strong and tracking above last year. We have transferred our £139k sinking funds into a Deposit Account earning 3.5% interest. This will earn an additional £3.4k in interest.
- WM presented an Income & Expenditure statement showing 5 months actual results and 7 months forecast to give a full year forecast to our Mar-27 yearend. We are targeting to achieve a small surplus by year end.
- Governance Issues:
    - It was noted that we had a capex proposal for solar panels to approve.
    - It was noted from the contracts register that the Tennis Head Coach contract terminates on 12/11/26 and will need to be renewed. This will need Council sign off as it is a significant contract.
- WM provided an explanation as to why some of the changes to our accounting processes and compliance approach were needed. This identified the issues encountered, the implications of those issues and the actions taken.

**Squash Update (PW)**

- PW confirmed around a dozen members came along for the first of the relaunched club nights. These are being held on the last Friday of each month.
- It was noted that there is no Herts League Ladies league competition this Winter, but there will be a Ladies Night hosted at alternating clubs.

**10. AOB**

JS suggested that the two long standing Club Managers should have a vote on Council (1 vote between the two). MS did agree that SC & VP probably should have a vote, but questioned changing the constitution which would then include Club Managers new to the role. JS to run it past the Steve Elms and Mike Hawkes, as the architects of our club constitution to see if it passes 'the Trustee test'.

JS finished the meeting thanking Council members for all of the work that has been undertaken recently and commented on the strength of the current Council.