BLT&SRC Council Meeting

Monday 9th June 2026 at 7.15pm in the Clubhouse

MINUTES

Attendees: John Shaw (JS), Adam Suggett (AS), Pete Walker (PW), Tracey Mackey (TM), Mark Shattock (MS), Matt Markwort (MM), Vicky Pudney (VP), Susannah Crowther (SC).
Apologies: Phil Trimmer (PT).

1. Intro

JS has designated this meeting as a second vision/strategy session, following last June's meeting, and for this now to be an annual exercise where we clear the agenda of operational matters and focus on strategy.

2. From Strategy to Execution

A brief recap of the 2025 meeting was given, along with a summary of what we have already implemented since then, which include:

1. Revised Vision Statement completed and published
2. Review of clubhouse design by architects
3. New club website
4. New member subscription system (and new court booking system coming soon)
5. Members' Opinion Survey undertaken
6. Overhaul of the tennis coaching programme
7. Reboot of Tennis Committee
8. Completion of upgrade to LED lights for all tennis courts
9. Completion of upgrade to glass backwalls for all squash courts
10. Major refurb of the ladies toilets
11. Substantial improvement to the pedestrian entrance and fencing
12. Deep clean of the ITC playing surface
13. Full re-guttering of the clubhouse
14. Improving the appearance of the driveway and maintenance access to court 7

JS commended everyone on a remarkable delivery record and commented that for most clubs a couple of the above would be enough, and as much as you ever see when you visit other clubs for a team match; we successfully bridge from strategy to execution.

3. Current strategic / delivery initiatives

Football club/Padel proposal

JS advised that Berkhamsted FC have broached the idea to us of building [three canopied] Padel courts [at their cost] across our shared boundary, using some of their area and our tennis court 6b area (our tarmac tennis court), in a joint venture.

We have been in discussions with them about how the proposition could be structured so that it is materially beneficial, particularly if it helps to secure the expansion of our club if/when BFC relocate to fulfil their stated aim to climb two more levels to the top tier of non-league football.

Negotiations have progressed to the stage that BFC need to know whether it has our committed support before they invest material time and money into detailed plans and applying for planning permission.

We have a meeting with Berkhamsted Sports Grounds, the freeholders of the football ground and tennis court 6b, early in July to brief them on the proposal.

Then the next step, in accordance with our Club Constitution, is very likely to be proposing a members' consultation and a Special General Meeting on the subject.

Council was unanimous in agreeing that discussions should be taken to the next stage. It was acknowledged that there are important details that need consideration before taking the proposal to members, e.g. timelines, guarantees on land ownership, how Padel might be run and a visualisation of what it might look like.

JS has already introduced the proposal to members in his April newsletter and encouraged members of Council to reach out to their playing committees, and playing groups to start to disseminate the overall scheme.

Manage My Match (MMM)

JS talked through the MMM roadmap. We have completed the first step of migrating our membership database, which includes taking payments for subs. Shortly, we will be engaging our electricians (Kingson) and our IT support (Equity Networks) to work with us and MMM in upgrading our hardware to enable a switch over to the new court booking system. After that will come door security. There is the option to integrate an online bar payment system but we are leaving that for now, due to the current systems and payment separation between the club and Isalie.

The cost of the hardware upgrade is c£10k and includes installing ethernet cabling, new court clocks and fob readers and a new kiosk. We are well overdue an upgrade to keep up with technology, so we see this as a necessary investment (and it gives us swapability to any other supplier in the future), albeit it slightly costlier than we originally anticipated.

We are aiming for the end of September to launch the new booking system and the end of the year for door entry.

Outdoor/grounds works

Leedstone have almost finished the outdoor improvements which includes the pedestrian pathway, driveway entrance and low-level wall alongside courts 10-12. Along with their work on the squash court ceilings, this work has come to a total of £36k.

4. Capital Spending

JS advised that £50k has been earmarked in the cashflow to March 2027 for capital projects.

AS asked how we arrived at this amount; why not more or less? How do we decide our project investment spend?

JS advised that it was predicated on the candidate investment bids provided by Council members as we go through the year, which we then select and finalise at the year end, take into the AGM to communicate our plans for the following financial year. Phil then builds them into the cashflow forecast for the coming year and we instruct to contractors from April onwards. There can be in-year changes if necessary, but broadly it's then into delivery and update reporting

JS took an action on this and, subsequent to the meeting, set out the following project planning cycle which we'll embed at Council meetings:

- we kick-off a discussion of potential items both for the near term and medium term at our annual Strategy session in June;
- we develop this at our subsequent meetings, as do Adam and Pete with their playing sections committees;
- we finalise the near term items at the turn of the year in readiness for the AGM; and
- we have project updates on those items as a standing agenda point for cost quotes, cost updates and delivery updates.

It was generally agreed that the club has done all the 'heavy lifting' projects required, and we should be taking the opportunity replenish cash reserves.

5. 2027/28 Project Planning

With the above planning cycle in mind, JS asked Council to revisit the questions below that we posed at last year's Strategy session and share where they would like money to be invested.

1. If we had £500k to invest, what would we do?
2. We are probably the best members' tennis and squash club in Herts and the surrounding area. How do we become one of the best members' club in the country?
3. Our tennis and squash courts are now excellent after considerable investment. What else needs to be done to take the club from Good to Great?

Feedback included the following (which included ideas suggested for the meeting by the club's trustees):

1. Buy the whole football club. *Unaffordable.*
2. Buy one or both of tennis court cottages. *Probably unaffordable and would we get pp to demolish.*
3. Relocate with BFC to a bigger purpose-built site. *Not on our watch; we'd all resign.*
4. Invest in solar battery storage. *Yes, and a commitment to investigate from 2026 AGM.*
5. Driveway club signage. *Yes, deferred from this year due to lack of bandwidth.*
6. Unisex disabled toilet. *Potentially but no pressing need.*

7. New saunas (one in each changing room). *Only if the current sauna was repurposed for a disabled toilet.*
8. AC in the ladies changing room (as in the mens). *Probably not. The men's AC is needs-based given the steam from heavy usage of the showers and no window ventilation in the changing area.*
9. Updating the changing room corridor. *Potentially. At some point we should 'join-up' the refurbished players' bar with the refurbished ladies toilets by doing the hallway and toilet lobby area.*
10. Squash court balcony ceilings to 4&5, viewing gallery staircase balustrade, robo vacs for the squash courts. *One of these a year would be a good candidate for continuous improvement of the squash courts.*
11. New main front door to replace the rather cheap UPVC club entrance door. *Potentially a good upgrade candidate, in the same way as we have updated the patio doors with aluminium bifolds.*
12. New/better coffee machine. *Yes, but not a capex/project consideration.*
13. Bursaries for disadvantaged juniors. *Potentially, and one for playing committees to consider and develop, but not a capex/project consideration.*

6. AOB

Next Council meeting: JS to send a poll on the WhatsApp group to determine next date, once through the BSG meeting early July, to reconvene and update on the BFC/Padel proposal.

END