



SGM 30th September 2026

Minutes

Club Expansion & Padel proposition

Introduction

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm.

Club Chair, John Shaw (JS) welcomed attendees, outlined the Club expansion and padel proposition and the motions to be voted on at the meeting.

Pre-reading materials containing full details of the proposal and motions were circulated to members prior to the meeting, along with an invitation to attend a number of consultation sessions with JS and Tennis Chair, Adam Suggett (AS).

JS reiterated that these are decisions that will have a significant bearing on the club, both for us and future generations. The sub-committee have worked very hard over the past few months to progress discussions that have led to the member vote this evening. We think it is in the best interests of our club.

Gill Trimmer asked about how dependent the proposals were on the Football Club relocating.

JS advised that the members' briefing material was clear on how the Club gains whether BFC stay or go and invited AS to address the members to provide a broader answer.

AS explained that he hadn't always been in the 'yes' camp and that his first instinct was to be protective over court 6b. However, the more he investigated the proposition and potential benefits for the club, the more confident he was about it being a transformational decision for the club.

Court 6b is hugely underutilised and the cost of re-building it now is significant. The accessibility that Padel offers, along with additional car parking and the possibility of having our 13th court back but better (funded by the Padel income) is hugely beneficial; and de-risks the potential for parking at Canal Fields becoming chargeable at some stage. The option of more land is a key prize here.

Motions

JS ran through the three proposed motions.

Each of them are considered to be 'material alterations' as defined by our club constitution and therefore require approval of two-thirds of the eligible voting members present at the SGM.

The first two are club-wide resolutions open to all club members aged 16 years or older, other than temporary and social members. The third is for tennis members only (including joint tennis and squash members) due to the specific nature of the facility in question.

Although the motions are closely inter-linked, the first can be viewed as a stand-alone item, the second and third are co-dependent. We are presenting them in the order below, so they lead with broad strategy through to more detailed granularity.

1. Club expansion

Members authorise:

- a) The Club Council to enter into negotiations to finalise an Option Agreement with Berkhamsted Sports Grounds (BSG) on terms the Club Council deem to be beneficial, that would give our club the right to acquire by purchase or lease an additional area of land currently occupied by Berkhamsted Football Club (BFC) at a future date; subject to
- b) The decision to exercise this Option Agreement requiring ratification at that time at a General Meeting.

2. Addition of Padel

Members approve in principle introducing facilities for playing padel, subject to:

- a) Court layout and court specification being signed-off by Club Council; and
- b) Agreement of the Tennis section to motion 3 below.

3. Tennis court 6b re-purposed for padel

Tennis members approve the use of the area currently occupied by tennis court 6b (plus the necessary additional c3 metres strip of the adjoining area occupied by BFC) for the development of padel courts and the grant of a sub-lease to BFC on the following terms:

- a) BFC agree to fund entirely the construction of two floodlit canopied padel courts and all costs associated with their development, including the pre-existing groundwork repairs required to 6b;
- b) BFC agree that one of the two padel courts shall be reserved exclusively for the use of our club and its playing members and their guests;
- c) Club Council agree to ring-fence all padel income from that court for the investment required to expand the club and utilise the bigger footprint to, among other things, build back a 13th tennis court to replace 6b (but built to the same specification as our Tiger Turf courts);
- d) BFC agree to allocate to our club all parking to the rear of their clubhouse (other than on match days), by installing a barrier and fob access controller to the side of their clubhouse, thereby adding 12 spaces to our current 18 spaces; and
- e) BFC agree to the sub-lease being temporary: our club will regain possession of all land sub-let to BFC (i.e. 6b) together with the additional strip and any improvements and with all ongoing revenue, at no cost upon the earliest of either:
 - I. the long stop expiry of the sub-lease, the term of which will align to BFC's timeframe for relocation; or
 - II. termination arising from BFC defaulting on any contractual terms.

Questions and discussion preceding the vote

Motion 1:

Q. David Parry: Could it change from an option agreement to an absolute agreement? Would you come back to members if it changed?

A. Mike Hawkes (MH): It is currently described as an option agreement or similar form of forward transfer commitment from BSG. We would need another General Meeting before exercising the agreement at that future date if BFC do indeed relocate. The club's situation may have changed by then too so we are not tied into anything now.

A. JS: BSG are bound by charity law that is very prescriptive about asset disposals, which is why we have caveated the type of forward commitment. An option agreement has very specific implications, including notification to the Land Registry, which could have unintended consequences for BSG.

A. Wal Mackey: The motion is about empowering us to secure the best deal possible. We are confident of a good outcome. BSG has the best interests of the local sports clubs in its charitable objectives. All the clubs involved are sports clubs with the same goal - wanting more people to play sport.

A. Jackie Gregory spoke up to clarify David's question and Steve Gregory acknowledged that the second part of the motion is an important safeguard to reassure members that we won't exercise any agreement if the price isn't reasonable/affordable.

A: Paul Forster (chair of BSG): For information, the next BSG meeting is on 30th November and this is likely to be on the agenda.

Motion 2:

JS: BFC have not gone into detail yet on the court build and layout, as that will be part of the planning permission stage, but we will need to make sure they are high quality and with a layout that allows us to fulfil our plans for the build-out of that area of the club including the intended expansion area. That build-out to be financed from the income generated by padel.

Motion 3:

JS: This motion is a vote for tennis members only, as it is tennis court 6b that is the 'bargaining chip' in the padel proposal. The concrete base on 6b is subsiding at the rear corner next to the road and has root ingress from the tall hedging, and BFC will resolve those problems as part of the groundworks.

Q. Simon Kirk: I am all for this proposition, but it is a complex one that will need adequate legal advice. The costs of the professional fees should not be underestimated. Who will build the courts? If BFC require loan finance for the build, the lender will want that to be secured by the asset. The lender will want assets. We need to consider the 'What ifs', such as the builder going bust and we are left with a half-completed project.

A. JS: The working group will ensure we consider all aspects and risk. We know we will need professional advice (legal and surveying) to tie it all down.

Voting (7.45pm)

145 people were in attendance at the time of voting.

Before proceeding to voting, MH spoke on behalf of the club trustees.

MH said that this meeting is a great example of demonstrating that we are truly a members' club and it is a fantastic turnout. As a Trustee, I can promise that we are working very hard to do the best thing strategically for our club. This is important for the club's future. Please only vote 'no' if you believe the proposition is not right for the club. If you have an individual concern disassociated with the wider best interests of the club, that is a separate matter and I would encourage you to abstain rather than vote against.

Results

All motions were passed:

Motion	Votes For	Votes Against	Votes Abstained
1. Club expansion (All member vote)	145	0	0
2. Addition of padel (All member vote)	142	1	2
3. Tennis court 6b re-purposed for padel (Tennis only vote)	110	0	2

Close

JS thanked members for coming out to vote and advised that we will keep everyone informed of progress, largely through the monthly club newsletters.

Meeting closed: 20.00