

Minutes of Tennis AGM held on Thurs 6th November 2025

Thirty nine members attended the meeting

Apologies for absence were received from Debbie Maurantino, Ian Marland, Geoff & Alison Williams, Kim Todd, Steve Hillyer, Barbara Yeomans, Ann Dewick, Mary Crowshaw, Jonathan Grant

Steve Ellis Jones chaired the meeting in the absence of a Tennis Chair. He apologised that Jonathan Grant was unable to attend and do the Q&A session shown on the agenda. He also introduced the new Club Treasurer, Peter Latham.

To approve the minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting

The minutes of last years meeting were formally approved.

Matters arising from last years meeting:

We have explored the possibility of having a Padel Court at the Club, but it is not viable at present due to planning restrictions.

To receive the Tennis Committee's reports for the year 2024/2025

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Steve Ellis Jones

This has been an unusual year, overshadowed by the issues surrounding the coaching provision which led to the resignation of several committee members part way through the year. I was then asked to be interim Club Chair and to help out the Tennis section in the absence of any other volunteers.

I would not propose to comment further on the coaching issue other than to thank Jonathan Grant and the sub-committee for their sterling work, which has included taking the views of members, analysing coaching needs and aspirations and putting together tender documents, with a view to having a provider up and running before the start of next season. There will be a presentation by Jonathan at the AGM outlining the work carried out by the sub-committee, with an opportunity for you as members to ask questions and make comments.

I should also like to thank Matt, Adam and Kate for continuing to provide valued coaching support and provision in the interim and also the members of the committee who remained in place (and Suzy Reynolds Lee who joined the committee to help with communications), to ensure the business of running the tennis section continued.

I would like to report on the achievements and developments of the tennis section over the last 12 months, as follows:

Facilities

One of the highlights of the year was the completion of the long awaited Clubhouse refurbishment, which I will mention in more detail in the Club AGM Report. I would however like to mention the new Honour's Boards that have been installed in the function room and which look fantastic. If you have not yet been into the newly refurbished Clubhouse, I would urge you to take a look. Details of earlier winners that were included on the old Honour's Boards will be displayed elsewhere in the Clubhouse, once a new format and location has been decided.

Planning permission was obtained for the lights on courts 1&2 which has increased our capacity for evening tennis. A new wind break/ privacy shield was erected. A deep clean of the mini courts was carried out and a pickleball court marked out.

Advice was taken on the condition of the courts and maintenance steps taken including decompacting the surfaces to improve the playing quality. The good news was that all of the courts are aging well but we need to be aware that they have all been down for a few years and we will need to factor in the cost of replacing the courts in the next few years and ensure we have reserves available to do so. We are continuing to maintain a sinking fund in the Club Accounts for this anticipated work.

Membership

The decision was taken not to increase the adult headline subscription figure but the renewal date for next year was brought forward by a month to revert to the pre covid position and tie in more with the tennis season. This will be an ongoing procedure over the next few years.

Steps were taken to try and simplify the categories of membership, in particular with regard to the ages of juniors.

The Membership Secretary will report on the detailed numbers but the overall position does appear positive despite the usual turnover of both adult and junior members with some not renewing but these being offset with a pleasing number of new members. A Rusty Rackets initiative replaced the previous trial membership and led to some new members signing up.

The committee have endeavoured to follow up with new members after a few months to check they have settled in, that expectations have been met and to encourage participation in box leagues and teams.

Social Media/ Comms

A detailed monthly newsletter has been emailed to members and has been well received.

Plans to revamp the Website have not been followed up and will be a task for the new committee to review.

Club play/Box Leagues

Monday and Wednesday evening club play has regained its previous popularity and continues to be one of the strengths of the Club. At the start of the season, coaches joined the sessions to give guidance and support which was generally well received.

We added in monthly BBQs to compliment the club-play suppers organised by Kim and also tried to restart the Sunday morning club-play sessions. The Sunday session has a What's App group with nearly 40 members so will hopefully become a fixture going forward.

The Box leagues continue to be a success with 115 members signed up for the doubles league and 76 for the singles. Continued thanks to Geoff Williams and Adam Reid for running these.

Teams

The captains will provide their detailed reports but we had numerous Ladies, Gents and mixed teams playing regularly. Special thanks to Geoff Green who took over as fixture secretary from Sharon Gurney. This is a time consuming role, but without someone taking it on we would have no matches!

Reciprocal agreement with Squash section

An agreement was reached with Squash whereby Tennis members can use off peak squash courts and the Squash member can use certain courts at off peak times paying a guest fee. Now that the days are becoming colder and wetter, why not take advantage of this reciprocal agreement by trying

your hand at racquetball- it's a lot easier than squash but has the same advantage of being indoors. If you do play, please remember that clean, grit free, non-marking trainers are required.

Tennis Section Membership Report – Ann Witter

Total Membership was slightly up on last season (Jun 24 – May 25) rising to 628 from 618 in the previous year. We are now 6 months into the new season and membership stands at 603, which is 39 more than at the same point last year when we had only 564 members. Both Adult and Junior memberships are increasing.

This season, we streamlined our membership categories so that they are more aligned to those of other Clubs. We now have only 3 Junior categories and have removed the requirement for an Adult to join the Club along with 11 & under children. We also have a new u30 category to replace the 19-24 and Young Country categories to try and attract more young Adults to join the Club. Membership Fees remain unchanged from last season, though the early payment discount has been discontinued. We have also brought the start of the season forward to 1st May.

The Playing Parent membership category which was introduced last season has proved popular. This allows a parent to play with their child aged 11 & under for a fee of £100. It means that they have the opportunity to play with their Child without the expense of paying for Full membership. Last season 30 Parents signed up for this, and so far this season the number has increased to 42.

We have continued to conduct occasional membership checks during Junior night. Unlike last season, when we found several non-members participating, only one or two were identified.

Tennis Junior Committee Report for 2025 – Yanjie Wang

The Junior Tennis Committee successfully organised a number of junior activities this season. We also said farewell at the end of the summer term to Emily Koya, who made a wonderful contribution by running the Junior Night kitchen.

Overview of Junior Tennis Activities

Friday Junior Night

Friday night junior sessions have continued to run smoothly. The kitchen, open each Friday, has encouraged socialising among parents while the kids enjoy themselves on court, helping to foster a strong sense of community. Special events such as the Christmas Disco and Halloween-themed nights have also been great successes.

Champs Race

Our monthly Champs Race sessions ran smoothly up until the summer.

Club Champs

	Runner up	Winner
8U Mixed Singles	Archie Tapper	Tom Barnes
9U Boys Singles	Sebastian Mitchell	Ashwin Maxim Rabindrakumar
9&U Doubles	Oscar Skepper & Sebastian Mitchell	Joe Reid & Ashwin Maxim Rabindrakumar

10U Boys Singles	Sebastian Mitchell	Ashwin Maxim Rabindrakumar
11U Boys Singles	James Millington	Max Whibley
14U Boys Singles	Feliks Stera	Max Whibley
16U Boys Singles	Feliks Stera	Alexsander Stera
Family Doubles	James Millington & Klaartje Millington-Vest	Aleksander Stera & Jerzy Stera

Junior Box league

As of November, there are four boxes with 11 players participating in the league.

Play Your Way to Wimbledon

This year, Theo Whibley finished as the county runner-up.

Acknowledgments

After ten wonderful years as Junior Committee Chair, I stepped down in September. A huge thank you to everyone who's supported me over the years — especially all the fantastic volunteers who've helped with the junior teams and in the kitchen. I wish the very best to the person who steps into the role next!

Men's Captain's Report – Jonathan Grant

We have 4 Mens teams playing in the winter and 5 over the summer season. Many thanks to the team captains who manage the fixtures for each team.

The men's summer 4's managed a relative improvement on recent seasons with an 8-0 win over Flackwell Heath 1 and a draw with Prestwood 1. Other matches were keenly fought against some strong teams. Special mentions to debutante Carlos Lewis and Jake Pilbeam for winning as many sets as losing.

The Men's 3 A&D summer team finished 2nd in Div 4 thanks to great performances from stalwarts Alec S, Andy P and Paul M, with valuable sets won by Jerzy and relative newcomer (and actual young person) Kit Coleman. 8 players used in a challenging league mostly against first and second teams of smaller clubs.

The Men's 2 Bucks Shield summer team finished top of div 2b with maximum points. Chris M, Petro and Rich Saul won the most sets with 4 each. We used 13 players. We won 32 out of 40 sets. So a good summer for this team.

The Men's 1 team was unbeaten in Div 2 of the A&D league last winter season with Christian G and Fede B both putting in great performances during the season. The summer season was quite different: we only just avoided relegation from Division 2 of the A&D league, but were unbeaten in the Bucks Shield this summer and finished top of Division 1.

Ladies and Mixed Report – Louise Dobby

We are fortunate to have a large number of good standard players, and our ladies and mixed teams continue to be a presence at or near the top of the top division in pretty much all our local leagues. The ladies also continue to look for high quality opponents further afield with entries at regional level in the NCL and NPL competitions. Last year we joined forces with Halton (normally our rivals!) to play in the NPL and this worked well. We gained access to high quality matches (and indoor facilities) without having to commit to being able to field a full team on every occasion. Thanks to Jemima from Halton we will be extending this arrangement for at least one further year.

Whilst we have a large player base of high standard ladies, availability can be variable, so one challenge is to try to balance fielding the best teams possible whilst giving opportunities to the many keen ladies in the club who would like to play matches – this is particularly apparent in our mixed teams where by definition we need half as many ladies. There is no easy solution to this and we hope that people can remain understanding and take their opportunities when offered.

Some highlights from the past year include

- Both Ladies 1 and Ladies 2 retained their place in the Premier division for the Bucks Shield. In fact our Ladies 2 (under Yanjie's captainship) finished above Ladies 1 which is an indication of the depth of our squads
- The Ladies rose to the challenge of singles and finished 4th in the regional NCL competition, with great wins against Salisbury, Maidenhead and Deddington
- The Mixed knockout team (under Paul V's leadership) once more reached the final of the cup competition, although losing out on this occasion to a strong Berkhamsted team.

Overall, there continue to be a very large number of teams and leagues offering different formats, age groups and playing standards. Again, huge thanks to all the volunteer captains who coordinate and organise this. To all who enjoy competitive tennis: please do remember that it doesn't happen by itself; please be constructive, flexible and helpful and remember that in order to keep all these teams going, at some point you may need to step up and be captain yourself.

Team Training – The club continues to provide a number of coached sessions free of charge before the summer season which receive lots of positive feedback. Many thanks to Matt and Adam for delivering these sessions. On the ladies side we had so much demand that as well as two evening groups, we also had a daytime session. This continued to be split into two groups to ease court pressure. Alternating weeks between our evening groups to try to allow everyone a share of the (supposedly) warmer weather has also worked well

The club championships 2025 Passed successfully with some great contests on finals day. The weather didn't quite live up to the previous year but all the matches were finished (some a little more soggily than others!)

It was good to be able to put on both an Open and Vets Ladies singles this year, and we also saw the introduction of our new SuperVets O55s category for both Ladies and Mens doubles. One disappointment was a relatively large number of participants who reached the finals and then realised they were unable to play – this was particularly prevalent in the older categories (where people are clearly very good at filling their time). The consolation events also continue to be variable in terms of how keen the participants are: while the ladies are well organised and keen, most (but not all) of the men do not seem motivated enough to actually contact an opponent to organise a match and

one suggestion going forward is that we get people who lose in the first rounds to explicitly sign up for the consolation competitions if they wish to take part. This would result in a smaller draw of people who actually wanted to play and a less frustrating experience for fellow competitors and the organisers.

Junior finals were also held on adult finals day and for the non-yellow-ball events the complete event took place over the course of the afternoon. This worked well although we do have to bear in mind court capacity if it's decided to add events in the future (adult or junior). It was also good to see juniors featuring throughout the adult events right up to and including the finals: most notably winning both the Open singles events but also featuring in the later stages of some of the doubles main draws and consolations.

To elect the Tennis committee for 2025/2026

The holders of the following posts are stepping down this year:

Yanjie Wang (Junior Committee Chair);

Louise Dobby (Joint Ladies Tennis Captain, who will continue to Captain the ladies with Sharon, but will not hold a committee post)

Jonathan Grant (Mens Tennis Captain).

Steve thanked them for their significant contribution to the club.

Nominations for this years Committee were

- Tennis Chairman –
- Secretary – **Catriona Chapman**
- Membership Secretary – **Ann Witter**
- Junior Committee Chair –
- Men's Club Captain –
- Joint Ladies Club Captain & LTA contact – **Sharon Gurney**
- Members Representative – **Jason Pinkney**
- Welfare Officer – **Caroline Adams**
- Communications –
- By invitation – **Matt Reid** (Director of Tennis)

Proposed by Wayne Stretch, seconded by Peter Henry, and unanimously accepted.

Update on the future of Tennis Coaching

Steve Ellis Jones gave a report on the progress of the Sub Committee.

They have sent out a survey to all Adult members, and received responses from 50% of those surveyed. 90% of these were in favour of the process.

They also reviewed coaching at other local Clubs including GX Bull Lane, GX Dukes Wood, Gt Missenden and Chesham 1879.

From the results of both these surveys, they have set the coaching objectives and formulated tender documents and job specification.

An advert for the Coach was posted on the LTA website at the end of October, with a closing date for Tenders of 18th November. We have received several offers so far which look promising.

An interview panel will be formed with 6 members, 4 from the Subco, plus one from the Tennis Committee and one from the Main Club Committee.

Steve confirmed that there were still matters for the subcommittee to deal with and apologised for the fact that on re-reading an email sent to the subco the day before he had realised that it may have been misleading in that regard. Lisa Reid thanked Steve for making this clear but asked why the interview panel should not just be drawn from the subcommittee. Steve explained that the whole

process was a collaboration between the subcommittee, the Club Committee and the Tennis Committee and Suzy added that it should be remembered that the subcommittee was unelected.

As well as Coaching applicants, we have received a couple of offers of Mentoring to help with the management of the coach. Steve said that we were seriously considering taking this up for the first year.

Steve thanked Jonathan Grant for all the work he had done in leading the sub committee.

A.O.B

Nick Warren thanked Matt, and his coaching team for their work during a difficult year. He also thanked Paul Sweeney and his team for starting the coaching process, and Jonathan Grant for doing a great job leading the Sub Committee.

Bucks LTA have sent out a letter requesting nominations for the LTA annual awards. This will be posted on the Club website and members are encouraged to have a look and make any nominations that they consider worthy.

Wayne Stretch suggested that as we have a shortage of volunteers for several roles, now could be the time to consider restructuring the Club, and consolidating the three separate committees. Steve said that this was a Club matter rather than just Tennis.

Caroline Adams said that she was disappointed and sad - having realised the enormous expectation that members put upon a voluntary committee and at how little respect had been shown for this elected group over the last few months during the difficult period of the coaching situation.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9pm.