

# PONTELAND LAWN TENNIS CLUB LTD

*Registered with Northumberland Lawn Tennis Association*

**The Memorial Hall  
Complex,  
Darras Road,  
Ponteland,  
Northumberland,  
NE20 9NX**

## **Minutes of Ponteland Lawn Tennis Club 60th Annual General Meeting Thursday 23rd November 2023 at 6.30pm in the Clubhouse**

**Present:** Phil Atkinson, Susan Easton, Christine Fair, Ian Jeffery, Andy Wood, Susan Brown, Anne Lakey, Caroline Lienard, Chrys Hudson, Jack Heslop, Jonathan Heslop, Chris Lott

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from the following members: Gavin Warrender, Anne Brooks, Tracy Smith, Hilary Duffy, Rosie and Paul McKenna, Chris Brummitt, Jane Ainsworth, Lynne Moore, Claire Morgan, Nikki Carpenter, Chris Winks, Gill Sparrow, Robin Hudson, Gill Blissett, Michelle McKenzie, Nick Clark, Saran and Emily Heslop.

### **2. Minutes of AGM 2022 & Matters Arising**

The minutes of the previous AGM were accepted as a true record. There were no matters arising.

### **3. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman, Phil Atkinson, welcomed everyone to the AGM.

At the end of my third year as the Chairman of the club I would like to start by thanking a number of people –mainly the Committee - Susan, Ian, Christine, Chris, Caroline, Susan, Andy, Jonny and of course our club coach Tracy.

This has been a strange year for Tennis mainly hampered by the horrendous weather – I literally feel like it has rained every day since June.

That said, as ever it's been great to get out and play tennis again. Congratulations to all our teams and the players that stepped up and gave up their time to represent Ponteland. With the programme of matches also came injuries and difficulties in fielding full strength and at times any team. It's not been an easy season! However, we have delivered a consistent set of results.

In club championships we managed to see a number of pairs playing – it would be great to see a wider participation over next year....possibly one for the future.....

A massive well done and special thanks to Chris for his support and guidance. Although he is stepping down as Treasurer he will remain on the committee as our LTA advisor.

Club membership has remained in line with previous years, however, we have seen some new faces and also some keen new players thanks to the Tennis Express programme. This was so successful that it has been extended and we are hopeful to see more fully-fledged members joining.

We are also pleased to confirm that we will be progressing with the renewal of the lighting in the clubhouse and on court to help to improve out energy efficiency.

### **4. Treasurer's Annual Report of Accounts to 31/3/23 and Subscriptions for 2024/2025**

Chris Lott presented the Annual Accounts and his report for the year ended 31 March 2023 as follows:

The Club's Accounts for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 have again been prepared by our Accountants – Azets. These are statutory accounts reflecting the fact that the Club is a limited company and they will be filed at Companies House.

Much of the accounts relates to the disclosure requirements we have as a limited company, so I intend only to refer to the Income and Expenditure Account, the analysis of the Club's administrative expenses during the year and the Balance Sheet.

The Income & Expenditure Account on the penultimate page shows a surplus of £3,916 for the year. However, any comparisons with the 2021/2022 financial year are largely meaningless as the accounts for the previous year included one-off Covid Business Support Grants to the Club. Club expenditure in the previous year was also lower due to Covid shutdowns.

Income from subscriptions for last year at £21,582 was up on the previous year but also Club expenses of £19,436 were also higher reflecting a full year of activity after the Covid lockdowns in prior years. The Junior Tournament was held last year, the first since 2019, and this essentially broke even in financial terms.

Turning to the last page of the Accounts which shows our Expenditure last year, the main items of note are the expenditure on tennis balls as the N&D League season returned to some normality, and the Junior Tournament was re-started. Also, Ground maintenance costs were higher reflecting the greater level of activity within the Club during the twelve-month period.

Overall, therefore, as the Income and Expenditure Account shows, our income for the year was £21,582 and our expenditure was £19,436 giving us a surplus of £3,916 for the year.

Turning to the Balance Sheet on page 4, at the year- end we had just over £52,789 in the bank, and today our cash balances remain healthy with approximately £53,000 in our bank accounts.

This is the last occasion that I will be presenting Annual Accounts to the AGM as I had indicated to the Committee some time ago that I was looking to stand down as the Club's Treasurer after some 20 years in the role.

During this time, I have overseen the repayment of the loan to the LTA taken out in connection with the construction of the new clubhouse. I have also overseen the resurfacing of the courts some 8 years ago, the installation of a new gate to enable Replay Maintenance to access the courts for the quarterly maintenance programme under the contract we entered into 5 years ago and I have currently overseen the placing of a contract with a supplier - One Electrical Ltd – under which work will take place very soon to upgrade our court floodlights and all the security and internal lighting in the clubhouse to an LED lighting system. Whilst this work will deplete our bank balance by some £15,000, the payback to the Club from reduced electricity charges will be of substantial benefit in the years ahead.

This will still leave £35,000 as sinking fund money to allocate to future court resurfacing.

I have also maintained oversight of the financial arrangements relating to the school courts when we took over the responsibility to manage the finances of the former Community Tennis Partnership set up nearly 25 years ago when the school courts were constructed. In late 2021, we concluded a Shared Use Agreement with Ponteland Community Primary School which outlines the responsibilities of the Tennis Club and the School in relation to the maintenance and upkeep of the courts at the school site. Financing and the maintenance of these courts remains a challenge and it is conceivable that unless the school are prepared to invest in replacement of the artificial grass court surface in the not too distant future, our involvement in those courts may have to come to an end.

I am happy to take any questions on the accounts.

Chris Lott proposed that the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 be approved. The proposal was seconded by Susan Brown.

### **Membership Subscriptions**

The Committee have decided that having had an increase in membership subscriptions for the year 2023 – 2024 by 10% to cover the substantial increase in our energy and insurance costs during the current year, that there will be no increase in membership subscriptions for the 2024-2025 period. It was also proposed that a new category 'Over 80's daytime weekday' at a price of £90 be established.

The proposals were seconded by Phil Atkinson. The membership unanimously agreed.

## **5. Membership Secretary's Report**

A total of 169 memberships have been received this year.

The breakdown is as follows:

Junior Boys	18
Junior Girls	14
Ladies	69
Men	51
L Under 25	4
M Under 25	4
Students	2
PG	5
NP	2

We administered the membership of the Primary School courts only this year and enrolled 17 players (20 last year) (JB 4, JG 2, L 6, M 5.)

Non- renewing members were, as usual, sent a reminder and some encouraging words around June before their key fobs were de-activated.

My personal circumstances during the last year have meant that I have not been able to run the membership system we have used for some 20 years. It has also become apparent that our old system was becoming rather outdated. For example, most members now prefer bank transfers/online banking to cheques, linking payments with membership data has had its issues for us and a more efficient system of emailing members was needed.

On behalf of the Committee, Susan Easton has initiated the use of the LTA Clubspark Membership Package with the intention that this will become our method of operating in the coming years. For security purposes she ran an old membership data base alongside it. That has all meant considerable extra work for her and she merits our thanks for her enthusiasm and skill in implementing this.

Next year members will receive an email asking them to log in to the system, select their choice of membership type, amend any personal details and pay by some type of bank transfer. This will, hopefully, negate the need for extensive paper printing, simplify banking procedures and make the job of a membership secretary easier as well as providing members with an online process.

We certainly recognise that don't want to disadvantage any members or potential members who do not have the technology or knowledge to operate in this way. Consequently, we are thinking about how to either assist members to use this method or still offer a paper-based system in the short term.

You will see that both Susan and myself are listed as proposed Membership Secretaries for next year. Setting up and troubleshooting this kind of technology is not my forte and after some 17 years in the role of Membership Secretary it is my intention to step aside once we have this system up and running. In due course we will be looking for a volunteer for this role. Susan will deal with the technical side.

In the meantime, let me thank Susan and the rest of the Committee for their work in this new development. If there are any questions about this system perhaps you could address any technical issues to Susan.

## **6. Captains' Reports for 2023**

A summary of the final positions of each of the teams is outlined below

Team	Captain	Division	Played	Won	Lost	Draw	Finishing position in division	Promoted Remain Relegated
Mens 1	Jack Heslop	A	6	1	5	0	7/7	Relegated
Mens 2	Phil Atkinson	E1	6	0	6	0	7/7	Relegated
Ladies 1	Chrys Hudson	B	6	1	5	0	7/7	Relegated
Ladies 2	Nikki Carpenter	LE1	6	2	4	0	5/7	Remain
Vet Mens 1	Ian Jeffery	C	6	2	4	0	6/7	Relegated
Vet Ladies 1	Christine Fair	B	6	4	2	0	2/7	Promoted
Vet Ladies 2	Anne Lakey	E1	6	3	3	0	4/7	Remain
Vet Ladies 3	Hilary Duffy	F	5	0	4	1	5/6	Remain
Mixed Vets 1	Susan Easton	B	6	2	4	0	5/7	Remain
Mixed Vets 2	Megs Rogers	D	5	2	3	0	4/6	Remain

### **Ladies' 1<sup>st</sup> Team – Chrys Hudson**

This was our second season in League B. Although it has sadly ended in relegation, we enjoyed some competitive and satisfying tennis, good teas, social times, and fun along the way. We had 2 very narrow losses to Stocksfield (5-7) and Gosforth (6-6, it went down to games) and ended the season on a high with a win against Durham Archery 8-4.

Many thanks to all the squad, always ready for a challenge- Susan Easton, Chris Fair, Megs Rogers, Caroline Douglass, Emily Heslop, Olivia Rodda, Qun Li, Emily Allison, Kirstin McLeod, Carrie Walker and me.

### **Ladies' 2<sup>nd</sup> Team – Nikki Carpenter**

Another good season this year with the ladies 2s remaining in their league, with 2 wins and 4 losses. Some very close matches with one or 2 maybe with a bit of luck would have resulted in a win rather than a loss.

This year we had a pool of 13 players which shows how versatile a team we are and how well we have done to stay up considering that some players had never played with each other!! A warm welcome to Sara-Halman Thompson who played her first match for us. As always, we had lovely matches which were competitive but friendly and as always, the teas were the star of the show. I for one have enjoyed their return as it allows the players to chat and be social with each other. I would like to thank the players for their enthusiasm and help as this makes my job so much easier. The good relationship with captains also means that we were able to discuss players and they were willing to help find players, especially when there were 3 ladies teams all playing on the same day!! That was a fun match to organise!!

I hope the team enjoys playing the matches as much as I do as we are all about the enjoyment. Here's to next season.

### **Men's 1<sup>st</sup> Team – Jack Heslop**

Ordinarily, 1 win has been enough to survive in Division A, but that was not to be the case for the Men's 1st team this season. Other teams fielding weakened lineups against our relegation rivals did little to help us, but we sealed our own fate with a loss on games to Churchill in the final match of the season. There were however several positives to take out of the season:

- We had a comfortable and impressive 10-2 win against David Lloyd Newcastle, a team who we had lost to 9-3 the previous year.
- We had a respectable 43% sets won percentage - far surpassing the two teams above us.
- We had Matt Lott playing again after missing last season through injury.

Special thanks to everyone who played this year:

- Jack Heslop (6)
- Matt Lott (6)
- Bailey Dawson (4)
- Kyle Upton (4)
- Matthew Lawson (4)
- Marcus Jeffery (3)
- Robert Docherty (3)
- Mark Alexandrov (2)

I have every faith that we can bounce back next year.

#### **Men's 2<sup>nd</sup> Team – Phil Atkinson**

Men's 2nd Team produced no victories this season in a tough league. I feel that is as much as I would want to say on that note from our league. We were as noted, exceptionally consistent!

Hopefully next season in a more appropriate league will see us return to winning ways.

#### **Veteran Ladies' 1<sup>st</sup> Team – Christine Fair**

Ladies' Vets 1 started the season well with three wins in their first three matches over Northumberland 2, Jesmond and Blaydon. Injuries hit early but our usual team was well assisted in our first match by Anne Lakey and Carrie Walker and later by Lynne Moore. Overall we won four out of our six matches and finished second in B league with Durham Archery as champions. That means we will be promoted to A division with a tough year to come. I am hoping we will treat it as a training year and a way to practise some tactics especially as three of our team are playing in County Veterans' teams. The other players were Susan Easton, Megs Rogers, Chrys Hudson, Qun Li, Caroline Douglas. Thanks to all for your great support and enthusiasm this year.

#### **Veteran Ladies' 2<sup>nd</sup> Team – Anne Lakey**

I am pleased to report that this year's Veterans Ladies II succeeded in remaining in group E.

Our final score was 6 points i.e. 3 wins and 3 losses. We had a couple of spectacular defeats albeit against Alnwick who went on to be promoted with a maximum of 12 points. They had been relegated the previous season for not having a team for one of their fixtures. Our defeat against Shotley & Bensfieldside was in part due to a ladies' fixture congestion evening when my usual players were in high demand. There is a lesson in this for me to rearrange as soon as the lists are released by League Active.

This brings me to say thanks to my team members which are too many to mention and especially to the new cohort who volunteered when I was short of players, I hope they enjoyed their first experience of league tennis.

#### **Veteran Ladies' 3<sup>rd</sup> Team – Hilary Duffy**

Massive thanks to all ladies who played this season for the Veteran Ladies 3rd team, especially to some who were either recruited at the last minute or were playing competitively for the first time and enabled us to field a team for each fixture. We finished 5th out of 6 teams, losing 4 and drawing one, although two matches were extremely close finishing 4 sets all and lost only by a handful of games. Well done to all players who represented the club against Wylam, Riding Mill, Bohemians, Cullercoats and David Lloyd Sunderland. Our team included Christine Dobson, Deb Rodda, Caroline

Lienard, Jane Harrington, Tracey Young, Sue Smith and Gill Baxter. We certainly enjoyed some memorable matches and delicious teas together with wonderfully friendly opponents across the season.

#### **Veteran Men's 1<sup>st</sup> Team – Ian Jeffery**

Following a successful year, and having won promotion to "E", we suddenly found ourselves resembling "Post Turtles" - We did not get there by ourselves, and do not belong there... in the dizzy heights of "C".

We started with more enthusiasm than expectation, and in our first match, only lost to Shotley & Benfieldside by a few games. Spurred on by this, we took on Stocksfield - the only club to beat us last year - and crushed them by one whole game...

The next three were one win, two losses, and by the last match at Boldon, it was a battle for survival. It was us or them. Sadly it didn't go our way, and although on exactly the same percentage, we were relegated because they had beaten us. We look forward to next year in "D".

My thanks to Paul, Don, Andy, Phil, and Steve. I hope to see those and more next year...

#### **Mixed Veterans 1<sup>st</sup> Team – Susan Easton**

This was our first year in Division B. We finished 5<sup>th</sup> out of 7 teams and won 2 of our 6 matches. We had an extremely close match against Jesmond, equalling on sets but losing by only 4 games. If we have won this match, we would have finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the table, so I don't believe that promotion to division B is above our abilities. Looking forward to next year!

Thank you to everyone who played myself, Christine Fair, Caroline Douglas, Paul Jones, Phil Atkinson, Steve Warren, Megs Rogers, Anne Lakey, Guy Macgowan, Don Anderson, Andrew Wood, Qun Li

#### **Mixed Veterans 2<sup>nd</sup> Team – Megs Rogers**

The XV2 team of 10 in Group D won 2 and lost 3 coming 4<sup>th</sup> out of 6. Please will our committee ask the League Executive to review their procedures for Relegation (Walkovers). We were told "last year Blaydon II had won very easily all their matches in Group C but because of a miscommunication between captains they didn't turn up for their last match and were demoted". Obviously, they wiped the floor with Div D teams.

### **7. Junior Organiser's/Club Coach's Report – Tracy Smith**

Reporting on activities that have been taking place over the last year, despite so many other sports taking place on a weekend, Junior Club Play on a Saturday morning continues to go well, even though everyone is busy with all their other activities, the children remain keen and enthusiastic which makes these sessions enjoyable for all.

This year saw 2 more juniors attending a Tennis Leaders Course held at Beverley Park Tennis Club. The course is aimed at helping young people start their tennis coaching journey, teaching communication and organisational skills, as well as understanding how variations of the game are used across all ages and abilities. These juniors are now volunteering within the coaching programme, gaining valuable experience. Junior members of the club also kindly gave their time to help with the red ball event at the Ponteland Junior Open Tournament, keeping score and umpiring the matches.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the coaches / assistants, including the ones who help as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, I couldn't run the coaching programme without their efforts and enthusiasm and it's great to see them learning a new skill and taking the initiative by gaining their own LTA Tennis Coaching Qualifications such as the Tennis Leaders Award.

2023 saw 2 brand new Adult Tennis Express courses, aimed at the complete adult beginner, it's a fun and social introduction to tennis and showcases the friendly club environment. It is very well received with participants keen to play more and start their tennis journey here at Ponteland Tennis Club, many becoming members.

Ponteland Tennis Club once again entered 2 teams in the Junior Summer Leagues, 11U & 14U

and 1 team (12U, previously the 11U boys) in the current Junior Winter League, the Winter League runs from October through to March 2024. The 11U boys came 2nd in their league in the summer which was an excellent achievement. A BIG thank you as always to the players and their parents who taxi them to the matches, (sometimes with very little notice) and take on the role of match day Captain. It's definitely not easy and one BIG team effort, so all their efforts are very much appreciated.

The Club / School link continued this year with visits to Darras Hall Primary School, delivering taster sessions to Year 3, 4 & 5 during their sports week. The children enjoyed their tennis experience and a few have subsequently joined the coaching program. Kim Sanderson continues to run a tennis club at Ponteland Primary school. A big thank you to Kim, it's great to have her on board as part of the ongoing Club / School link.

It was fantastic to once again hold the Ponteland Junior Open Tennis Tournament. Ponteland Tennis Club welcomed 80+ participants taking part from as far afield as Scotland and Cumbria with plenty of players across all the age groups from Northumberland, Durham and the surrounding areas. The weather was mixed all week, but credit must go to all who played in some very challenging conditions. Visiting players and their entourages enjoyed the friendly environment of the club whilst watching the high level of competitive tennis on display. A BIG thank you to Steven Sumner, this year's Referee for all his hard work resulting in the smooth running of the tournament. Many congratulations to the winners and runners up and very well played to all who competed. Thank you once again to the sponsor - Gardens by Serendipity, their ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

The Club Championships took place again this year in round robin format, thank you to those who entered, their support allows these events to run and encourages match play and competition for our members within the Club environment, congratulations to the winners and runners up and well played to all who entered. The results were as follows;

<u>Category</u>	<u>Winner(s)</u>	<u>Runner(s) Up</u>
Ladies' Singles	Olivia Rhodda	Caroline Douglass
Ladies' Doubles	Susan Easton & Christine Fair	Sue Smith and Tracey Young
Men's Doubles	Paul Jones and Ian Jeffery	Phil Atkinson and Andy Wood
Mixed Doubles	Paul Jones and Susan Easton	Phil Atkinson and Caroline Douglass

Here's to continued enjoyment for all things tennis at the Club and beyond. Thank you again for your continued support, it's very much appreciated.

## **8. Team Captains /Organisers for 2024.**

Phil Atkinson proposed the following for Captains for next year. The members were in agreement.

Ladies' 1st Team	Chrys Hudson
Ladies' 2nd Team	Nikki Carpenter
Men's 1 <sup>st</sup> Team	Jack Heslop
Men's 2nd Team	Phil Atkinson
Ladies' Vets 1 <sup>st</sup> Team	Christine Fair
Ladies' Vets 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team	Anne Lakey
Ladies' Vets 3 <sup>rd</sup> Team	Vacant
Men's Vets 1 <sup>st</sup> Team	Ian Jeffery
Mixed Vets 1 <sup>st</sup> Team	Susan Easton
Mixed Vets 2 <sup>nd</sup> Team	Megs Rogers

## **9. The Committee for 2024/2025**

Phil Atkinson proposed the following members for Committee for the next year. The proposal was seconded by Jack Heslop. All members were in agreement.

Phil Atkinson (Chairman)

Anne Lakey (Secretary)

Ian Jeffery (Treasurer)

Christine Fair & Susan Easton (Membership Secretaries)

Susan Brown (Social & Domestic Organiser)

Tracy Smith (Club Coach and Junior Organiser)

Andy Wood (Premises)

Caroline Lienard (Website and Marketing)

Chris Lott (LTA)

## **10. Any Other Business**

There were no items of other business.

## **11. Chairman's Closing Remarks.**

As there were no further items of business, the meeting was closed at 7.15pm. Phil thanked members for attending.