

**MINUTES OF THE 2026 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HERTS SQUASH RACKETS ASSOCIATION
HELD VIA ZOOM MONDAY 8th JUNE 2026**

Present:	Eamonn Price	Chairman
	Louisa Dalwood	Treasurer
	Isobel Smith	Secretary/ Women's County Captain
	Mike Byrne	League Secretary
	Ali Coker	Men's County Captain
	Gary Nisbet	Junior Representative
	Mhairi Gritz	Committee Member
	Julian Craxton	Committee Member
	Andrew Eilfield	Committee Member
	Katie Winterstein	Committee Member
	Steve Malduca	

1. **Apologies:** Jillian Lilico, (Radlett) Laura Taylor (Nuffield)

2. **Minutes of 2025 AGM**
These were agreed.

3. **Ladies County Report**

Isobel reported that Herts had entered a Women's O40 and O50 team this season, going straight to the finals in May. However, due to injuries etc, the O50 team decided to withdraw from the competition.

The O40s team of Kate Bradshaw, Mhairi Gritz, Jo Preston and Helen Walsh won all 4 of their matches in a gruelling 5 team Round Robin.

They had 2-1 victories over Bucks and Warwickshire and 3-0 victories over Avon and Essex which sealed a well- deserved National Title for Herts Women's O40.

4. **Men's County Report**

Ali reported that similar to the [Women's O50s](#), the Men's O45s had struggled to raise a team. They had won their Stage 1 weekend but then unfortunately they could not get a team together for the finals. This was due to [other](#) commitments and the fixtures being so close together. Also, England Squash had not allowed any players to be added to the nominations. All players should have been nominated for the Stage 1 weekend, but this was not made clear. Eamonn will contact England Squash to raise our objections to this rule and to the structure of the Masters Inter County Competition.

Herts Men's Senior team comprised Rui Soares, Joe Green, Lee Rossiter, Tim Dixon, Nick Rossiter and Oli Dixon, who travelled to Pontefract in April for the Premier Finals. The team managed to beat Avon 3-2 , but then came up against an extremely strong Yorkshire team in the semi-final, who fielded 3 top professional players and Herts lost 5-0 unfortunately. They beat Surrey 4-1 in the 3rd/4th playoff, therefore coming 3rd overall. Still a very good result and they stay in the Premier division for next season.

Having won the Stage 1 weekend, Eamonn reported that the Men's O55s played Cheshire in the quarter finals beating them 4-1, and then in the semi-finals they played Avon, winning 3-2. However, in the final they were missing 2 key players and lost to

Yorkshire 4-1. Eamonn felt confident that if they had been able to field their full team, they would have brought the trophy home.

Eamonn picked up on the eligibility/nomination rule from England Squash and said that he did not think that they were policing it. However, he will be contacting ES to raise concern.

Ali raised a few points and will send these to Eamonn who will contact England Squash, these are

- All re-organisations around the Masters' events have been counter-productive.
- Proximity of the stage one and finals weekend is too close
- Holding all age categories on the same weekend is ridiculous and precludes people playing in two different categories.

5. Treasurer's Report

Louisa reported that Herts SRA are in a good position at the moment. There is cash in the bank. Going forward, the more than £5,000 that was received from England Squash as a subsidised rebate will be cut on a sliding scale. Herts will lose £1,500 this year, bringing it down to £4,000 and it will go down further to £2,000 next year. Our county's membership take-up rate with England Squash is in line with our peers and this decrease just reflects the new England Squash approach. Therefore, at the moment Herts are surviving. There were some savings of approximately £750 per team from the Mens 055 and Ladies 050 withdrawing from the Inter County championships. However, long term we need to consider where we can raise more funds i.e. with sponsorship or make income on various activities as a longer-term plan.

Eamonn reiterated that the England Squash grant is basically getting cut by 75% over the next four years. He had compared Herts to other local counties and it seems we are no different from any of them on number of players signed up to ES. Eamonn didn't think that we could miraculously sign up a large number of new players to bolster the grant from England Squash. So, Herts will just have to manage money well. There have been no explanations from England Squash as to their strategy for taking money away from the counties. We could raise team fees, but even that will not bring much more money in. Herts will have to have a smaller budget going forward.

The accounts were proposed by Andrew Eilfield (Harpenden) and seconded by Jan Brynjolfssen (Melbourn).

6. Junior Report

Gary Nisbet reported that Lee Rossiter had been helping with the county sessions. So, they have both been coaching, which has seen a slight rise in participation. They have been running two squads monthly and have been getting approximately 12-15 in each squad consistently. There is a pool of 40-50 players that attend but they would still like to increase this.

This season there were more teams entered than before in the Junior Inter County Championships. The U15 Boys stayed in the Premier League, after they were promoted last year. The U13 Boys finished 2nd in the National Plate so they get promoted to the Premier division and the Girls U17s will be in the Premier division. Other teams narrowly missed out on promotion.

Looking to arrange match play against other local Counties, which Gary is arranging for July.

Although Jillian was unable to make the meeting she sent through a brief report:
At Radlett we've got a women's session (beginner/ beginner intermediate) every Tuesday 7:45-9:15. Will be using social media to grow participants. Contact and interest from nearby school (walking distance) to potentially start afterschool club, court usage during the day and age 4-5 minis on a Sunday morning from winter. One teacher is a squash player which is good and a member on the PTA. Funding will be used to train teachers and volunteers to shore up capacity and to provide 4-6 week tasters. All will be given info on the junior pathway as set up by ES and county pathways.

7. Herts Closed 2025

The Herts Closed 2025 was held at Nuffield St Albans.

Unfortunately, the worrying trend of falling numbers of entries continued, compounded by injuries etc.

Isobel was supported over the weekend by Lesley Garner. Rui Soares provided prizes through his sponsor, Head. Thanks to Rui.

Men's A

Rui Soares bt Joe Green	3-0	11/5 11/1 11/4
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Women's A

Mhairi Gritz bt Helen Walsh	3-1	18/16 14/16 16/14 15/11
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Men's B

Bilal Ahmed bt Matthew Savides	3-2	15/7 15/7 13/15 8/15 15/11
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Men's C

Matthew Robinson bt Daniel Wolfson	3-0	15/8 15/13 15/6
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Men's D

Kevin Regan bt Jacob Hill	3-2	14/16 15/12 15/13 12/15 15/1
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Men's O35

Ali Coker 1 st Dan Ludlam 2 nd		Round Robin
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Men's O45

Tom James bt Tom Lo	3-1	15/11 13/15 15/4 15/12
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Men's O55

Sohaim Tabassum bt Tony Stewart	3-2	15/9 15/11 12/15 14/16 17/15
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Mens O65

No Competition

Men's Plate

Mike Byrne bt Mark Castle	3-2	5/15 10/15 15/12 15/10 15/10
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Herts Closed 2026

Isobel reported that the Committee were currently talking with several clubs who would like to host the Herts Closed. Isobel will be handing over organisation this year and so the hope is that a sub-committee can be put together to cover all aspects of running the competition. The hope is to promote it more widely and bring a fresh outlook. Herts are contemplating creating a WhatsApp group or community, so that players around the county can be contacted quickly and also updated on events etc. This was discussed and there are several ways of doing this. We will discuss the best way of doing this with committee members.

8a. Ladies League

Originally 6 teams in the league, Radlett not putting a team in this season. However, before the season had started Tring unfortunately pulled out of the league and then due to injuries the Nuffield 2nd team had to withdraw also, which led to a very short season for the ladies.

We are now looking at a different way to keep ladies squash going in Herts other than a league, maybe meeting at a club once a month to play matches.

The winners this season were Berkhamsted so congratulations to them. And the Player of the Season, also from Berkhamsted was Sharon Pleasted.

8b. Men's League

Mike Byrne reported that the leagues had all run smoothly with consistent number of teams.

Summer League 2025 26 teams over three divisions

Division 2	Biggleswade 1	r/u Nuffield 1
Division 3	Berkhamsted 2	r/u Radlett
Division 4	Allenburys	r/u Ickleford

Men's Winter League 2025/26 34 teams across four divisions

	Winner	R/up	Best Player
Division 1	Bishops Stortford 1	Radlett 1	Nick Rossiter (Radlett)
Division 2	Nuffield 2	Radlett 2	Clayton Hunt (Ickleford)
Division 3	Radlett 3	Nuffield 3	Helen Walsh (Nuffield)
Division 4	Broxbourne 2	Berko 3	Rory McGurk (Chantry)

The Herts Cup Finals took place on 20th March 2026.

Senior Cup	Broxbourne 1	bt Bishops Stortford 1	3-2
Junior Cup	Nuffield 2	bt Bishops Stortford 3	3-2

9. Chairman's Report

Eamonn listed the various events that had been organised this season, Junior and Senior Herts Closed, County Leagues, Cup Finals, Junior training, Inter County Teams, Junior Inter-clubs and Julians charity graded events, Racketball Masters was held at Berkhamsted again with approximately 20 counties taking part.

Herts professionals doing well, Adrian Waller still ranked 53, Rui Soares 70, Grace Gear 33 and Katie Maliff who plays Herts leagues 67.

Masters Achievements:

At the 2026 British Closed Championships, Ali Coker won Men's O50 event, Kate Bradshaw r/up Women's O45 and Jillian Lilico r/up Women's O55.

At the 2026 British Open Championships, Ali Coker won Men's O50 event, James Ockwell r/up Men's O65s, Jillian Lilico Women's O55.

Home Internationals

Ali Coker, Eamonn Price Andy Eilfield, James Ockwell being selected for men and Kate Bradshaw, Louisa Dalwood and Jillan Lillico in ladies. Libby Montgomery was selected, but was unable to play.

Four of the players were also asked to play in the Trans-Atlantic Masters Series held in Canada: Louisa Dalwood, Eamonn Price, Jillian Lillico and Ali Coker playing teams from USA, Canada and Ireland.

Special congratulations to Ali Coker who has had a full year, winning British Closed, British Open, playing Home Internationals and TAMS.

Wilkinson's Sword

This can be awarded to an individual, team or club for achievements over the season. This year it was awarded to the Women's O40 County team for becoming National Champions. Team of Kate Bradshaw, Helen Walsh, Jo Preston and Mhairi Gritz.

It would be great to have more coordination and cooperate regarding county events and maybe a county WhatsApp group would be a way of doing this. It would also be good if coaches at each club could share each other's events and encourage participation. Coaches tend to be focussed on their own clubs and activities, which is understandable, but we need more 'cross-pollination'. At club level Eamonn will set up a WhatsApp group for club chairmen.

Eamonn concluded by saying that all ideas and suggestions and volunteers are very welcome! He welcomed Ted Jeal who has volunteered to join the Committee.

He said a big thank you to all on the Committee for all of their hard work this year and to those in our clubs that have organised events, it is very much appreciated.

10. Nomination of Officers

Nominations were;

Chairman	Eamonn Price
Treasurer	Louisa Dalwood
Secretary	Isobel Smith
Mens League	Mike Byrne
Men's Captain	Ali Coker
Junior Rep	Gary Nisbet
Junior Safeguarding	Adam Fuller

Committee Members	Mhairi Gritz
	Andy Eilfield
	Jillian Lillico
	Julian Craxton
	Katie Winterstein
	Ted Jeal

11. Election of Officers

The committee were nominated en bloc unanimously.

12. Any Other Business

League Rules

A number of matters have been raised by various clubs, especially in Division 1 and the Committee have spent a lot of time on the challenging issues that were raised. One thing we decided to do as we went through this process was to have a look at the Rules as they currently stand. There were 4-5 things that we wanted to go through at the AGM and if necessary, to put them to a vote.

- Should we link team ranking orders to Squash Levels? How it currently works is that the team captain nominates his players in playing order. They can alter these nominations during the season as long as they give 24 hours' notice before the fixture. So, the question is, should we hard wire it to Squash Levels, with or without a tolerance level, maybe 10 or 15%?

Eamonn had spoken to number of people and the general inclination was to leave this as it is because there are a lot of variations in Squash Levels. This was opened to the meeting for opinions. Andy Eilfield felt that we should leave as is. Mostly, teams are honest with orders. Jan Brynjolffssen also agreed that it should remain the same, and noted juniors developing rapidly. Squash Levels does not react quickly enough and can give false levels. Ted Jeal said that in Kent team orders are based on Squash Levels but not hard wired.

After a long discussion, it was agreed to leave as is and if any team blatantly plays out of order it would be reported to the League Secretary, who would have the discretion to void match results.

- Limitations on top players?
The current rules allow a team to have five professional PSA players which have to be nominated before the start of the season. No more than three can play in any one match as long as one of them is a Herts player. Otherwise only two can play in a match.

The consensus is that we do not want to have a 'free for all'. There are many clubs who do not have sponsors or enough money to pay a professional player. We want to have as high a standard league as possible but we do not want to let anybody play for any team at any time.

Ted Jeal feels that clubs should be able to play any team they wish. Broxbourne have generated a lot of interest from the high-quality squash. Andy Eilfield suggested removing the restriction that a player has to be from Herts. You would have to trust the captains to be sensible when playing weaker teams.

Eamonn said we had to maintain a balance, because, in previous years, teams had dropped out the league when the other teams were just too strong.

After much discussion it was agreed that up to five players should be allowed from within the PSA top 500 and to remove the Herts restriction. Up to three can play in any one match. Mike Byrne, League Secretary agreed with this amendment.

- At the moment, a team can introduce a new player up to two games before the end of the season. The Committee are proposing to extend that, so you can only introduce new players up to the last four matches of the season. After that you are not allowed to introduce new players. To play in the last four matches you must have already played at least two matches for the club.

The league secretary can waive this rule if it is a lower division and the team are bringing someone in at No.5 to get a full team out.

Jo Preston raised the point that this could not be possible in the ladies' league as there are so few players! Isobel pointed out that really the ladies do not use the main league rules anyway.

- Another anomaly is that if a club has two teams in the same division, players in the lower team can play up to the next team, and we need to iron this out.

So, it was suggested that, if this is the case, the two teams have five nominated players who are not allowed to 'cross pollinate' i.e. play for each other's teams. So, within a division we really want squads for each team.

We are also going to extend the number of times a lower or non-nominated player can play up for a higher team to 4 times instead of 3, before becoming tied to that team (5 times or more played). There was some discussion of making it 5 times, however there has to be a limit and we will see how this goes for the coming season and review next year. For the avoidance of doubt, where a club has 2 teams in a division, a player from a lower division can play for both of those teams 4 times.

- If two, three or four teams tie on points in a division, the result will be decided on aggregate points results from the tied teams' head-to-head matches.

Nick Mulvey commented that it is good to have the rules as long as they are adhered to, but we need to make sure that all captains and teams are aware of them. The committee will publish the new rules on the website and they will be circulated to club captains prior to the Winter Season starting. If we had a WhatsApp group this would be a good way of circulating these changes.

The meeting finished at 8.30 p.m.