

**MINUTES OF THE 2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HERTS SQUASH RACKETS ASSOCIATION
HELD AT NUFFIELD ST ALBANS ON MONDAY 19TH JUNE 2023**

Present:	Paul Drakes	Treasurer/ Acting Chairman
	Isobel Smith	Secretary/ Ladies Captain
	Mike Byrne	League Secretary
	Gary Nisbet	Junior Representative

1. **Apologies:** Adam Fuller, Steff Burkwood Bishops Stortford

2. **Minutes of 2022 AGM.**

These were agreed.

3. **Chairman's Report**

As acting Chairman, Paul thanked the current members of the Committee for their continued hard work, particularly to Isobel who has kept the committee on track over all the years. The last few years had been difficult over the pandemic, with England Squash not being particularly efficient. The committee had obtained a grant and this was used for development with juniors in particular and generally trying to get enthusiasm back into squash.

Junior Report

Gary Nisbet reported that a pool of 50 juniors were having monthly training sessions, there were two squads, one for the elite players and a second as development squad. Last season in the county closed there were 30 entries in U9, U11, and in U12 – U19 there were 65-70 entries. Committee need to outreach more clubs and try and encourage more juniors from other clubs. There is a healthy entry from Tring, Harpenden, Radlett and Nuffield

In the inter county matches, Herts were able to enter teams for U11, U13 and U17 boys and U11 and U13 girls. Both girl's teams reached the finals which was great result.

Gary also trialed a girls only training session where 11 junior girls attended. He is hoping to run more of these events this season. Four of the Herts juniors were selected for the Espire squad.

Gary would also like to find a sponsor so that he can encourage more coaches to get involved with the county juniors.

4. **Secretary's Report & County Report**

County Report 2022/2023

In Ladies O40

The team of Louisa Dalwood, Mhairi Gritz and Libby Montgomery, beat Oxford 2-1 in their first stage match therefore making it to the Finals weekend.

There, the team beat Warwickshire 3-0 and Surrey 2-1, losing to Kent 2-1. However, in a very close finish came out Champions by 2 points. A great achievement, well played ladies you are O40 Inter County Champions.

Ladies O50

The team of Isobel Smith, Jillian Lilico and Sheila Blake won their first stage match against Warkwicksire 2-0 and made it to the finals weekend. However, due to injury and sickness had to pull out of the weekend.

This was galling for them as they had a good chance of winning.

Mens O35

Ali Coker, George Walton, Paul Cousins, Dan Ludlam, Vig Gunasegaran, Julian Vecchio

Lost to Essex & Middlesex and so did not make it to the finals. There was a Stage 2 weekend but unfortunately, we couldn't get a full team together. Unfortunately, England Squash held the matches over Easter Half term.

Mens O55

Eamonn Price, Teejay Sogunro, Gehan Fernando, Dennis Arthur, Tony Stewart and Keith Ragg

Stage 1

Lost to Essex 3-2 and beat Middlesex 4-1 and made it to the finals weekend by a whisker. There the team of Eamonn, Las, Gary Raw, Teejay and Martin White beat Berkshire 4-1, beat Cheshire 4-1 and in a nail-biting final match beat Bedfordshire 3-2. Therefore, they retain their title as O55 Inter County champions, congratulations to them.

Home Internationals.

Isobel reported that seven players from Hertfordshire were selected to play for their country in the Home Internationals.

In order to be selected to play for your country you have to compete on the Masters Circuit playing in the Nationals in February or the British Open in June plus one or two of the other regional events held every season. Nuffield would be hosting the South of England Masters again this year on 28th – September to 1st October, a great chance for players to enter.

A player obtains points for each competition depending on their placing. The top five players are invited to play for their country.

Those selected were:

Louisa Dalwood (Nuffield) and Libby Montgomery for England O45.

Ali Coker Men's O45.

Mhairi Gritz represented Scotland in O35/40.

Teejay Sogunro in Men's O60

Isobel Smith England O55

Eamonn Price O55s

Congratulations to everyone.

Isobel reported that the Masters British Open was held at Colets in Thames Ditton. Herts had 15 players taking part which was amazing, 7 of the players were from Harpenden. Four players made it their respective finals but unfortunately could not claim the title. Tony Clifford losing a close match 3-2 in O80 category, yes O80. Ali Coker made it to the O45 final beating No.2 in the semi but eventually lost to the No.1 seed 3-1. Louisa Dalwood made it to the final of O45, having had a battle in the semi final beating the No.2 seed but unfortunately lost 3-0 in the final. Eamonn Price who is well accustomed to being in a final, lost 3-0 on this occasion to the No.1 seed from Sweden. All in all though a great turnout for Hertfordshire.

6. Treasurer's Report

Paul reported that we had made a slight profit last year of £88 and there is currently £15,000 in the bank and therefore we are relatively well off, this is mainly due to having a generous sponsor for the Herts Closed.

Paul explained that previously the main committee had given the Junior committee £100 a month to cover any activities they were carrying out. However, the juniors are now back in the fold with the main committee, the money that was in the junior account also added to main funds.

England Squash are changing the model on how they generate income and are looking to try and get every person who plays squash to become a member of ES. This will happen in April 2024. So instead of a club saying they have 50 squash playing members and just paying a fee, every single person will be registered, they are also trying to get casual players to register.

The Accounts for last year had been on the website for some time. These were proposed by Eamonn Price (Harpenden) and seconded by Laura Taylor (Nuffield)

7. Herts Closed 2022

The Herts Closed 2022 was held at Radlett Squash Club this weekend after a two year's absence due to Covid. Thank you to Radlett for agreeing to host the tournament again, always a great venue and very welcoming.

There was a noticeable drop in entries in all categories unfortunately, but this did not stop those who entered having a great time and playing some very entertaining squash. Thanks to everyone who entered the event and made it such a great weekend of squash.

The Committee also purchased a new silver cup for the Men's B competition and have called it The Apthorp Cup as a thank you to John Apthorp who has kindly sponsored the competition for a number of years now.

Racketball was included again, with an unfortunate clash with the British Racketball Championships, but the committee are hoping to have a larger entry next year.

All categories were still very competitive and lead to some great finals. The results are below:

Mens A	Rui Soares bt Nick Mulvey	3-0	11/9	11/6	11/4
Mens B	Bilal Ahmed bt Ryan Fitzsimon	3-0	11/8	11/8	4/11 11/8
Mens C	Nick Cooper bt Daniel Wolfson	3-2	8/11	11/8	5/11 11/4 11/5
Mens O35	Paul Cousins bt Vig Gunasegaran	3-0	11/3	11/8	11/8
Mens O45	Andy Duckworth 1st Nick Henderson 2nd				
Mens O55	Teejay Sogunro bt Tony Stewart	3-1	11/7	11/9	4/11 11/8
Mens O65	Julian Craxton 1st Peter Quarman 2nd				
Ladies	Grace Gear bt Mhairi Gritz	3-0	11/1	11/1	11/7
Ladies O40	Libby Montgomery 1st Jillian Lilico 2nd				
Racketball	Adam Grilli bt Vig Gunesagaran	3-0	11/7	11/6	11/9

Date for Herts Closed will be 6th – 8th October 2023

8. Ladies League

This season, there were only six teams in the league, Harpenden unfortunately having to withdraw due to injured players.

Isobel reverted back to the normal league system of home and away matches, which meant a much shorter season.

It was close at the top but in the end Tring ladies came out on top winning 9 out of there ten matches, with Nuffield 2 coming second. The player of the season was Mhairi Gritz for the second year running, but this was by a whisker, just beating Jo Preston from Tring, Mhairi having two less games won against her.

Mens League

Mike Byrne reported that the leagues had all run smoothly with consistent number of teams. There were more teams this season rising from 31 in 2021/22 to 40 this season.

Mens Winter League 2022/23

Division 1	Radlett 1	Best Player Nick Mulvey (Stortford)
Division 2	Berkhamsted 2	Best Player Richard Carr (Berkhamsted)
Division 3	Radlett	Best Player Oscar Dial (Stevenage)
Division 4	Biggleswade 2	Best Player Tom Archer (Ickleford)
Division 5	Chantry	Best Player Andrew James (Nuffield)

In the Herts Cup

Junior Cup	Broxbourne 3 beat Letchworth 1	4 -1
Senior Cup	Radlett 1 beat Harpenden 1	5-0

9. Nomination of Officers

Paul told the AGM that he would be standing down as Treasurer having been on the committee for 18 years. He had taken over from Dean Clayton in 2005. He said that it wasn't because he had fallen out of love with squash, rather that he needed to spend more time with his wife. At one stage he was sitting on 12 committees!

After circulating a call for help asking for volunteers for the committee, they had received several nominations for the various positions that were vacant.

Nominations were;

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

Committee Members	Mhairi Gritz
	Scott Richardson
	Andy Eifield
	Jillian Lilico
	Julian Craxton
	Greg Millhouse

The new committee were nominated en bloc unanimously.

As newly elected Chairman, Eamonn Price expressed thanks to the current committee for their ongoing hard work and a big thank you to Paul for his work as treasurer and gave best wishes on behalf of the players in Herts. He hoped that this newly formed committee could keep the 'train' on the tracks and continue the good work and will be looking to form better communication with clubs and players and also on the junior side to get more coaches involved in the development of our young players.

10. Any Other Business

Jillian Lilico expressed thanks that Herts Squash had partly funded her Level 3 coaching course. She also advised that Radlett had been approved to host 2 x satellite tournaments for juniors.

Isobel Smith said a few words about Paul who joined the committee in 2005, taking over from Dean Clayton as Treasurer. He immediately became an integral part of the committee and had served for 18 years. He had always been proactive and helpful and had kept a tight grip of the finances for Herts Squash, which is why they were in a such a good place at the moment, even after the pandemic.

Paul had also stepped in as acting Chairman on a number of occasions when the committee had been left Chairmanless, which had been quite a lot recently!

Isobel said that they were very sad that Paul was retiring from the committee but quite understood that after 18 years he wanted a bit of time to himself.

Isobel presented Paul with a gift on behalf of the Committee and Herts Squash as their appreciation for all his diligent hard work over the past 18 years. He will be missed greatly.

Meeting ended 8.15 p.m.

Wilkinson Sword

Post Meeting Note.

After discussion it was decided to award the Wilkinson Sword to the Ladies O40 county team who won the Inter County Championships.

The meeting finished at 8.40 p.m.