



**MINUTES OF THE 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HERTS SQUASH RACKETS ASSOCIATION  
HELD AT BROXBOURNE SQUASH CLUB ON 28<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2016**

|          |               |                  |
|----------|---------------|------------------|
| Present: | Martin Miller | Chairman         |
|          | Mark Blake    | Secretary        |
|          | Paul Drakes   | Treasurer        |
|          | Isobel Smith  | Ladies Captain   |
|          | Mike Byrne    | League Secretary |
|          | Peter Newman  | Development      |

1. **Apologies:** None

2. **Chairman's Report**

Martin Miller introduced himself as Chairman of the Herts SRA.

Martin asked the meeting whether they had read the minutes of the last AGM which had been circulated. Carl Nofki (Chantry) proposed the minutes and Owen Davies (Luton & Dunstable) seconded them. Martin thanked the committee members for their help and support over the year, particularly to Mike Byrne for running the men's leagues so efficiently, Paul Drakes for keeping the finances in order and thanks to Isobel and Peter for running the website. Martin said that if anyone had any photos or reports they wanted putting on the website to contact Isobel. He also thanked the team captains as it was a thankless task.

Martin gave a brief resume of the Herts Closed Results and said that it had been a great success with some exciting squash. We need to try and increase entries this year.

Martin mentioned that the committee were working with Chris Vine and England Squash to pursue an initiative to help clubs in Hertfordshire in obtaining more members, particularly juniors and women and to help coaches at clubs expand their roles within the club. This is an ongoing project.

3. **Secretary's Report**

Mark Blake told the AGM that there was a mixed bag of results for the men this year. The Men's 1<sup>st</sup> team had been short of key players and ended up coming 7<sup>th</sup> in Premier Division and therefore were relegated. They hope to spring back up into the Premier this coming season though. The O35 did not have a great season. In the O45 there is an ongoing appeal. Peter explained that at Middlesex had fielded a full team against Herts but only had two players for the Sunday match. England Squash are currently looking into this. If Herts win the appeal they will come first and if they lose they will come 3<sup>rd</sup>. The O50 team did well and came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Premier Division.

Mark then informed the AGM that England Squash are trialling a new format of the Inter County matches following a survey. The Masters and main intercounty matches will be regionalised and held over one day, not a weekend. Also all matches, including Masters, will



be PAR scoring. This new format will start all counties from scratch i.e. they will be put into regions.

Mark will be contacting team captains and collecting contact details to submit to England Squash for the upcoming season. There are enough players to enter a Men's O55 county team; it would just need someone to step up as Captain. The team entries need to be submitted by late July.

## 5. Ladies County Report

Isobel reported that Ladies first team travelled to Leicester for their Stage 1 Weekend. Their first match was against Leicestershire, a strong county, a 3-2 win.

The team was Grace Gear, Amber Marshall, Louisa Dalwood, Maureen Morrison and Isobel Smith

Their second match was against Nottinghamshire, their No.1 was injured but still a very strong team and we won 3-2. We then had a walkover from Worcestershire which meant we were going to the promotion weekend.

Unfortunately none of our juniors were available for the second stage weekend but Herts team was Louisa Dalwood, Cathy Abernethy, Isobel Smith, Libby Montgomery, Maureen Morrison and Sheila Blake. Their first match was against Staffordshire which we won 3-2 In the afternoon they were up against the hosts Nottinghamshire, a strong team. Again it got to two matches all and it was all down to Cathy to win for the team. After a fantastic performance Cathy lost 12-10 in the fifth and the team therefore lost 3-2 overall.

On Sunday morning they played Merseyside and the team won 5-0 and won all matches 3-0, therefore getting maximum points. A great performance by the team and narrowly missing out on promotion.

The O40 team members were Louisa Dalwood, Libby Montgomery Maureen Morrison, Sheila Blake, Laura Wood and Isobel Smith; they competed in Division 1 South but could not gain promotion this year.

The O50 team members were Isobel Smith, Maureen Morrison and Sheila Blake. They narrowly lost out on getting to the playoffs again this year, so were unable to defend their title, but will re-group and try again next year.

Isobel then went on to list some other noteworthy achievements from the ladies in Herts. Grace Gear goes from strength to strength and is looking forward to her first European Championship in Holland.

Isobel said that she and Sheila Blake both got to quarter finals of O50 in the Nationals this year.

Isobel told the AGM that she had been selected to play for the England O50's and had a played at the Home Internationals in May. It was great weekend up in **Aberdeen, and it didn't rain!!!**



The British Open was held a few weeks ago. In O40 Louisa Dalwood had a great win in her first round match against Sam Mueller, an England capped player, but then unfortunately lost in her semi final.

Isobel Smith and Sheila Blake unfortunately had to play each other in O50 and Isobel just scraped a win and went on to lose in semi final against the eventual winner.

Isobel then told the AGM that she had organised a ladies squash event on 11<sup>th</sup> June at Nuffield St Albans with over 40 ladies attending throughout the day. There was a fun competition and she also presented the winter league shields to the Nuffield Ladies, who had won for the third year in a row.

Also the committee had donated a new silver trophy for player of the season in memory of Jan Ingham who died last year. Jan's husband Clive and her mother Mary were there to present the cup to Louisa Dalwood.

The event was a great success and all the players seem very keen for it to happen again next year.

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

Paul presented the set of accounts for the year. These had been sent out to contacts via email for people to read through and had also been posted on the website. Paul said that the closing balance as of end of April 2016 was £13,250 in the account. In the new regional forum Herts were approached to put money into the fund and then England Squash would match this. Herts have put £2,500 into this fund. We have currently spent £500 from this fund. Paul said that John Althorp from Radlett had generously supported the 2015 Herts Closed and squash in Hertfordshire and he thanked him again for his generosity. There hadn't been many county expenses last year just men's O45, O50 and the 1<sup>st</sup> Team and Ladies 1<sup>st</sup> and O40. We still support the Herts Juniors with £1,200 per annum.

The accounts were proposed by Carl Nofki (Chantry) and seconded by Alistair Ambrose (Bishops Stortford)

Accounts attached.

## **7. Herts Closed 2015**

Isobel thanked everyone who had entered the tournament held on 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> October. The Herts Closed was held at Radlett again last year. Entries were very low unfortunately but those who did enter were involved in a great weekend of squash and have undertaken to spread the word further this year and encourage other players to get involved and support the county, there had been a particular request to run an Over 60 event this year, so there will a category this year.

John Apthorp, the President of Radlett Squash Club, sponsored the event very generously which allowed Committee to provide t shirts again and to buy new replacement trophies and to video the finals again.



There were some epic matches in all categories of the competition.

The most closely fought match was the Men's B Final, with last year's winner Dan Ludlam just beating Paul Cousins in the fifth. Ali Coker came from two games down to beat Simon Evans in the Men's O35. In the Men's Plate Owen Ledger also came from two games down to beat Adam Clarke. The Ladies O40 final was between sisters Maureen Morrison and Sheila Blake with Sheila just losing in the fifth.

Sheila was also in the main Ladies Final against newcomer Cathryn Abernethy and after a hard fought match Sheila unfortunately just lost out again in the fifth. The Men's A Final was contested between Adrian Waller and Joe Green with Adrian the winner 3-0.

Full results are as follows:

|            |                                   |     |
|------------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Mens A     | Adrian Waller bt Joe Green        | 3-0 |
| Ladies     | Cathryn Abernethy bt Sheila Blake | 3-2 |
| Mens B     | Dan Ludlam bt Paul Cousins        | 3-2 |
| Mens Plate | Owen Ledger bt Adam Clarke        | 3-2 |
| Mens C     | Thomas Horton bt David Gray       | 3-0 |
| Ladies O40 | Maureen Morrison bt Sheila Blake  | 3-2 |
| Mens O35   | Ali Coker bt Simon Evans          | 3-2 |
| Mens O45   | Tony Stewart bt Peter Newman      | 3-0 |
| Mens O55   | Gary Spindler bt David Wells      | 3-0 |

Isobel said that the committee was looking forward to this year's event. The calendar had not been released by England Squash but it's most likely to be either of 1/2<sup>nd</sup> of October or 8/9<sup>th</sup>. A venue has not been chosen as yet, it could be Radlett again or maybe Broxbourne or Nuffield St Albans.

## 8. Ladies League

In the Ladies Winter League we had five teams, Harpenden, St Albans, Activeless Ladies playing out of St Albans, Allenburys and Tring.

The winners were Nuffield 1<sup>st</sup> team, winning for the third year in a row. The player of the season was Louisa Dalwood.

## 9. Mens Leagues

Mike Byrne reported that the leagues had all run smoothly with consistent number of teams. Summer leagues are slightly better this year and a racketball league had been well supported, although it would not be running this year.

### League Presentations Ladies Winter 2014/2015

Division 1      Nuffield 1                      Best Player – Louisa Dalwood

### Mens Summer League 2015

Racketball - Broxbourne 2



Division 1 - Harpenden 1  
Division 2 - Haileybury 1  
Division 3 - Gosling 2  
Division 4 - Broxbourne 3

#### **Mens Winter League 2015/16**

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Division 1 - Broxbourne 1 - Best Player  | Keith Timms, Broxbourne         |
| Division 2 - Stortford 2 - Best Player   | Andy Russell, Bishops Stortford |
| Division 3 - Biggleswade 1 - Best Player | Dave Gandolfo, Haileybury       |
| Division 4 - Haileybury 2 - Best Player  | Barry Sturgeon, Haileybury      |
| Division 5 - Tring 3 - Best Player       | Matt Oaks, Tring                |

#### **Herts Cup**

Junior Cup Letchworth bt Biggleswade 4-1  
Senior Cup Broxbourne bt Berkhamsted 4-1

### **9. Development**

Peter Newman reported that HSRA are now involved in a number of projects to Develop Squash in the County in liaison with ESR and the Regional Network to address national issues such as the participation of women and juniors.

For this year, the Association has received a grant of £2,500, which it will match fund to carry out 14 Development projects.

Some projects are part of ESR national programmes such as "Squash Girls Can" which encourages female coaches, "Squash 101" which provides squash experiences at schools and public facilities, and the Regional Junior Programme. Others are Herts. initiatives by coaches such as Adam Fuller and Joe Green in schools.

The major initiative however is a "Club and Coach Mentoring & Squash Development Programme" which is to be carried by a Consultancy Company, C & SV Consultants, and in liaison with ESR. The programme will involve recruiting, educating, training and mentoring coaches at county clubs/centres. The same initiative is well underway in other counties such as Essex and Middlesex where it has been successful and clearly showed a need for such a programme. It will include squash clubs, leisure centres, schools and local authorities. Sub Regional" (county) club and coach networks will be set up to increase participation and identify talented players. It is hoped that as many clubs and coaches as possible will be involved in the revitalisation of Squash and Racketball in Herts from the bottom upwards. The first stage of the project is underway whereby a number of clubs are being audited to establish the current situation in the County. Initial findings not surprisingly reflect National issues such as:

- An ageing playing population, 40-45+, mainly male (75-85%) – 25-15% is the rest (U40, Juniors and women/girls) · Very few women players
- Junior sections are generally only 25-30% of the total membership and sessions take place mostly on one or two days



- Player per court ratios across the six clubs visited so far is (1009 players divided by 21 courts) = 40.36/ct) · Coaching takes place but varies between part and full-time, level of the coach (mostly below Level 3), · Very few Coaches and Clubs have “active” Development Plans and feel “left alone/isolated”  
Racketball being exclusively amongst the older generation of players – but not often used as an entry level activity

On a positive note however a great deal of passion for the Squash/Racketball and the benefits that it provides however still exists. There are very keen “key” individuals (coaches and clubs reps) within clubs who once supported, valued and encouraged can create a workforce through which future county/ES initiatives can be delivered

Peter said that he will aim to put more information about these Squash Development projects on the website and update on progress as it happens.

## **10. Election of Officers**

Paul reported that all the committee were willing to re stand apart from Martin Miller. He was now less involved with squash in general and would be resigning as Chairman. Peter Newman had agreed to take the Chairman role on the committee. Therefore Paul asked the AGM if they agreed that the committee be nominated en bloc. Proposed by Owen Davies (Luton & Dunstable) and seconded by Grant Kleiner (Berkhamsted) .

New Committee members always welcome.

## **11. Any Other Business**

Colleen told the AGM about an event, Squash Revolution run by Off the Wall Squash. Its a ladies event being held in Ipswich, with a graded tournament, exhibition match and BBQ. She will email Isobel the details and Isobel will put on the Herts Website.

### **Wilkinson Sword**

This was awarded to Isobel Smith for her achievement in being selected to play for England O50 in the Home Internationals and commitment to Herts Squash. The presentation will be held at a later stage.

The meeting finished at 8.40 p.m.