

**MINUTES OF THE 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HERTS SQUASH RACKETS ASSOCIATION
HELD VIA ZOOM MONDAY 23rd JUNE 2025**

Present:	Eamonn Price	Chairman
	Louisa Dalwood	Treasurer
	Isobel Smith	Secretary/ Ladies Captain
	Mike Byrne	League Secretary
	Gary Nisbet	Junior Representative
	Mhairi Gritz	Committee Member
	Julian Craxton	Committee Member
	Andrew Eilfield	Committee Member
	Katie Winterstein	Committee Member
	Jillian Lilico	Committee Member

1. **Apologies:** Greg Millhouse, Ali Coker

2. **Minutes of 2024 AGM.**

These were agreed.

3. **Ladies County Report**

Isobel reported that this season the Ladies O40 and O50's teams had gone straight to the finals weekend in May.

The O40 team of Mhairi Gritz (Nuffield), Jo Preston (Tring), Katie Winterstein (Tring) won their first match against Warwickshire 3-0, then lost 2-1 to a very strong Bucks team, finally winning their last match 3-0 against Essex. The team came second overall.

The O50 team of Louisa Dalwood (Nuffield), Libby Montgomery (Harpenden), Jillian Lilico (Radlett) and Isobel Smith (Nuffield), beat Wales 3-0, lost to Yorkshire 2-1, beat Essex 3-0 and finally lost 2-1 Warwickshire. Another sterling performance from all involved and the team came second overall.

4. **Men's County Report Report**

Eamonn reported that the Men's senior team, organized by Ali Coker, had won all their matches in the first stage, which put them into the promotion section of Division 1.

The team consisted of: Lee Rossiter, Joe Green, Tim Dixon, Oliver Dixon and Ben Roderick.

The promotion finals took place on 22/23 March in Milton Keynes.

Herts played Buckinghamshire in their first match with a team of Rui Soares, Joe Green, Rob Luke, Tim Dixon and Oliver Dixon, winning 3-2. They then beat Beds 5-0.

This means that the Men's Team have secured promotion back into the Premier League for next season.

O45 & O55

In Men's masters, we fielded teams in the O45's and O55's and both teams got through to the finals weekend which was held just a month later just after Easter. This led to availability issues which resulted in having to pull out of both competitions unfortunately. Eamonn has registered our concerns about the scheduling of the inter county matches since changing from having Stage 1 in November and then the finals the following May. Now they are within five weeks of each other and it does not work well. Counties are finding it increasingly difficult to field teams, within such a short space of time and also with other masters events being held around the same time.

5. Treasurer's Report

Louisa reported that this is the last year of tapering the England Squash grant. We received £5000 from ES which was similar to previous years, however, going forward these grants are going to start reducing significantly and income will be via the ES membership signup.

Jillian Lillico applied for an ES grant for £1900 plus also arranged sponsorship via her contacts, which has helped boost the accounts.

Expenditure - The Herts Closed covered its costs this year. The biggest expense for the county was for the Men's Senior team plus also having Rui Soares playing. The cost of a county team is running at £500 per team per Inter county weekend. As two teams withdrew from the competition this season, we are approximately £1,000 better off than we normally would have been. Clearly, we would prefer for the teams to compete.

So at the end of the year, we are relatively healthy with £24,000 in the bank but it is artificially notched up because of the ES grant being higher than normal and also not fielding junior and county teams at various points.

There is a healthy input from the County Leagues.

The grant that has been secured needs to be spent on events and activities, otherwise it will be taken back at the end of the financial year.

The accounts were proposed by Katie Winterstein (Tring) and seconded by Andrew Eilfield (Harpenden).

6. Junior Report

Gary Nisbet reported highlights of the season and submitted a full report which is attached to these minutes.

Herts entered teams in all junior age groups except Girls U17. A couple of the teams were runners up at the weekend but unfortunately Herts are in a tough region with Sussex, Surrey and Essex. However, the Boys U15 and GU13 teams both reached the finals.

On an individual level, we had a National champion come through the ranks at u9 level - Cristian Law winning the title with a fantastic 3/2 win. We had further great achievement at a national level with county team members Hugh and Ellie Padayachy both being selected for the Welsh junior squad.

We have held two girls only sessions which were successful and having spoken to various coaches at the Nationals it appears Herts have a higher number of girls playing than other counties.

Herts have a Development squad for players just below county level and a development match has been arranged with either Berks or Bucks to get some of the younger players used to county matches.

Lee Rossiter is coming on board to help with coaching.

Dates for the Junior County closed will be 6th September (U9 & U11) Radlett and 13/14th September.

All in all it has been a good season.

Katie Winterstein reported they had been trying to expand the number of events to give club level junior players more opportunities around the county to complement the tournaments held at Radlett and have called them Grand Prix events, running at different clubs around the county. Feeding into the county programme.

They have used Manage my Match software and have been able to source funding and set up a virtual Herts Junior Squash Club. This has worked well, running results and payments through MMM. The target was for 50 juniors to sign up but they have actually signed up 70. It's a one - point entry system to enter events which also allows them to gather various statistics of participation from the events.

Katie reported that they had managed to build up a fund of £500 from these events.

Jillian received £1990 from ES to run participation events. Spread across five clubs in Herts, these being Harpenden, Radlett, Gosling, Letchworth and Tring. Katie is running some events at Tring. Gosling turned down the invitation and so this has passed to Hertswood School, where Steve Lloyd will be running some coaching sessions.

An open event was held at Radlett, advertised as a 'Rackets Day'. 105 people were booked in for the day with a conversion rate of approximately a third plus some enquiries. They will crunch the numbers to see what it means in terms of membership. Key points were Radlett putting money forward to run this event and also great that they had 105 people interested.

Jillian said that when these junior events are held we will need to send photos and reports to England Squash to show that Herts are using the grant money.

Jillian also expressed the need to clarify what the Junior pathway is in Hertfordshire and for a more strategic approach to squash in Hertfordshire.

7. Herts Closed 2024

The Herts Closed 2024 was held at Nuffield St Albans.

Unfortunately, the worrying trend of falling number of entries continues, compounded by injuries etc. The tournament went well using the new scoring system and tournament software, a few tweaks needed though.

Isobel was supported over the weekend by Lesley Garner and Clive Baker.

Mens A
 Rui Soares bt Nick Rossiter 3-0 11/3 11/5 11/2
 Mens B
 Chris Roper bt Bilal Ahmed 3-1 13/15 15/12 15/11 18/16
 Mens C
 Adam Ben bt Keith Winfield 3-1 8/15 15/9 15/9 15/12
 Mens O35
 Dan Ludlum bt Vig Gunasegaran 3-0 11/7 11/6 11/9
 Mens O45
 Ryan Fitzsimon bt Andy Duckworth 3-0 Walkover
 Mens O55
 Teejay Sogunro bt Tony Stewart 3-0 15/8 15/12 15/8
 Mens O65
 Julian Craxton bt Keith Ragg 3-0 15/11 15/13 15/8
 Ladies
 No Competition
 Ladies O40
 Mhairi Gritz bt Libby Montgomery 3-1 15/12 15/8 11/15 15/8
 Racketball
 No Competition
 Mens Plate
 Winner Grant Kleiner
 Mens Age Group Plate
 Winner Oliver Bush

8. Date for Herts Closed will be 10th – 12th October 2025 – Nuffield St Albans.

Isobel reported that a sub-committee had been set up with Lesley Garner, Vig Gunasegaran, Adam Faber and Clive Baker. Clive will be using his software to run the tournament and also add up to date messaging and QR codes for entering the tournament. New Mens D category has been added plus a Club Participation award.

9. Ladies League

This season, there were only seven teams in the league.

It was close at the top but in the end Nuffield 1 ladies came out on top, with Tring coming a close second. The player of the season was Keely Peacock (Bishops Stortford).

10. Mens League

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

Summer League 2024 30 teams over four divisions

Division 1	Radlett 1
Division 2	Berkhamsted
Division 3	Biggleswade
Division 4	Nuffield 4

This summer 2025 numbers are down and we only have 3 divisions. Have lost division 1 but hopefully will have more interest next year.

Mens Winter League 2024/25

Four divisions

Division 1	Bishops Stortford 1	Rory Pennell Bishops Stortford
Division 2	Nuffield 2	Callum Egan Tring
Division 3	Radlett 2	Jason Gollaglee Biggleswade
Division 4	Radlett 3	Jonathan Smith Squire Nuffield
Junior Cup	Radlett 2 bt Nuffield 2 3-2	
Senior Cup	Radlett 1 bt Stortford 1 4-1	

Eamonn asked about ES funding going forward and that Herts may need to think about increasing entry fee for leagues. Entry fees are currently £30 for summer league and for Winter it is £40 if you attend AGM, if not it is £60.

Peter Walker from Berkhamsted said it does seem cheap, but if we increased would it put clubs off. Laura Taylor from Nuffield also said it would be expensive as Nuffield do not pay the league fees for their teams. This needs to be looked at going forward. However, Eamonn reported that Herts sign up rate for ES membership is fairly good.

There has been a request to start a Men's vintage league. Mike has asked for interest around the county but has not had a great response. Nuffield have two teams and there is a possibility of two others but we need six teams to have a league. Mike will make further enquiries. Peter Walker from Berkhamsted said he would report back as to whether there was interest at the club. Teams need to be matched up so players get a good game.

11. Chairman's Report

Eamonn reported that in terms of running and organising events, Herts had run Junior and Senior County Closed, County league and the Cup Finals.

There had been a lot of activity involving the juniors with the Inter County teams, county training, Charity Graded events, Grand Prix events and inter club matches and Herts are looking to build on this next season.

Berkhamsted hosted second Racketball Inter Counties which went well with 20 teams taking part.

In terms of top end of the squash spectrum our Herts professionals are still doing well. Adrian Waller is currently ranked W31, although has been injured, Rui Soares at W65 and Grace Gear W41 and Katie Maliff who plays Herts Leagues W25.

Home Internationals Players: Ali Coker (O45) Captain for England, Andrew Eilfield in (O55) Captain for England, Eamonn Price O60. Louisa Dalwood, Libby Montgomery, Mhairi Gritz (representing Scotland)

Three of the players had been asked to play in the Trans-Atlantic Masters Series held in Dublin: Louisa Dalwood, Libby Montgomery and Eamonn Price, playing teams from USA, Canada and Ireland.

Herts Cup held at Radlett again this year.

Masters British Open: Again a good number of Herts representatives with the highlights being Jillian Lilico winning the O55 and James Ockwell winning the O60 events. Louisa Dalwood and Andrew Eilfield reached the semi finals.

Wilkinson's Sword

Yet to be decided.

Eamonn concluded by saying that all ideas and suggestions and volunteers are very welcome!

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. We had a pretty good 24/25 season from juniors up to masters and there was good reason to be optimistic for next season.

12. Nomination of Officers

Nominations were;

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

Committee Members	Mhairi Gritz
	Andy Eilfield
	Jillian Lilico
	Julian Craxton
	Katie Winterstein

The committee were nominated en bloc unanimously.

10. Any Other Business

Gary posted the Junior report for everyone to see.

Berkhamsted are hosting the Southern Regional Masters on 19/21st September and so asked for people to advertise the event.

Middlesex are running a Young Leaders award on 6th July it's a free event and open to anyone 14 years plus. Ideal for those who are too young to do a Level 1 course.

Isobel also mentioned that we were looking at running a Calling the Shots workshop at Nuffield. Isobel to contact ES to sort out a date, looking to September or October.

Eamonn mentioned a four-man summer team as an idea. Eamonn put forward that 4 person team works better than 3. Firstly, it gives more people opportunities to play plus 2 matches 2 courts work out better. Perhaps during the course of winter league gauge players thoughts. Mike has received feedback, that 3 person team seems o.k. but teams are struggling to get three players out each week during the summer.

The meeting finished at 8.00 p.m.