



TENNIS MK AGM 2014

Minutes of the Tennis MK AGM held on Wednesday 2 February 2014 at 7.30pm in the Function room, David Lloyd, Newlands, Milton Keynes.

Present: David Marchant (Chair), David Higgs (Treasurer), Bob Poole (Secretary), Peter Tolaini (Vice Chair), Anne Harris (League Sec), Kathy Sumpter (MK), Gail Fulcher (Stony Stratford), Steve Sumpter (MK), Petula Workman (Leighton Buzzard), Kristen Neary (Leighton Buzzard), Angela Redgewell (Gilpin), Wendy Prince (Woburn Sands), David Milligan (Woburn Sands), Avril Tarry, David Tarry (Stony Stratford), John Cavill (Stony Stratford), John Taylor, Jan Taylor (Stony Stratford), Jo Woodward (Wolverton), Pam Miller (Newport Pagnell), Mary Hartley (Newport Pagnell), Sabine Weyler (MK) Steve Morris (David Lloyd), Simon Barter (Olney), Gary Hutchinson (Great Linford) Nigel Willard (Olney/NP).

1. **Apologies for absence:** Andrew Petherick (David Lloyd), Andrew and Sue Soul (Gilpin), Liz Murdoch (Gilpin), Anne and Dave Thomas, (Vagabonds), Tony Johnston (MK), Simon Burn (Stony Stratford), David Massey (Open University).
2. **Presentation of Champion of Champions awards.** Treasurer David Higgs presented winners of the 2013 Champion of Champion tournament with their trophies. Present to receive the awards were Men's Singles winner, Steve Sumpter (MK) and the winners of the Mixed Doubles, Avril and Dave Tarry (Stony Stratford).
3. **Minutes of 2013 AGM:** These had been circulated in advance and were agreed by those in attendance.
4. **Matters arising from the 2013 AGM minutes:** None
5. **League report:** Chairman David Marchant congratulated all the winners of the various competitions noting that there were over 800 matches played per year in adult and junior competitions and that it was a testament to the clubs that the matches are played in the right spirit with few issues arising. David also thanked all the Match Secretaries and Captains for their support in making the

competitions work. David also gave thanks to BBC sports reporter Luke Ashmead for coming to hand out the trophies at our presentation evening and concluded by thanking Anne Harris and Tony Johnston for all their hard work in running the adult competitions.

Anne Harris had kindly provided the following written report which was circulated in advance by email and at the meeting:

Winter 2012/13 followed the same pattern as previous years – captains and match secretaries nobly coping with re-arrangements. By the deadline Milton Keynes A headed Division 1, dropping 1 point. Newport Pagnell A and Stewkley A topped Divisions 2 & 3 with one loss each. Newport Pagnell B were undefeated in Division 4, Olney C dropped 2 points in Division 5 whilst unbeaten Open University headed Division 6.

For the 2013 summer season the usual 48 teams competed in the six Divisions. Milton Keynes A and Stony Stratford B were unbeaten in Divisions 1 and 2. Wolverton B and the Open University dropped points to head Divisions 3, 4 as did Olney B and Winslow C in Divisions 5, 6.

Milton Keynes A and Newport Pagnell A dropped one and two points to win Ladies Divisions 1, 2. Only Great Linford in Division 3 were unbeaten as Stony Stratford E in Division 4 drew one match.

In the Mixed Divisions of nine teams some clubs had difficulty in completing the schedule. However, Milton Keynes A and Olney B in Divisions 1, 3 were unbeaten whilst Olney A in Division 2 dropped one point.

As in the last three years the Knock-Out Cup 1st round matches were in general played to schedule with supportive weather! Despite some problems in the following rounds eight teams competed in the four finals.

In the Men's K.O Cup 1,2,3 Milton Keynes A were too strong for their B team winning 7-1. New finalists Wing B had a good match to beat Milton Keynes C 5-3. David Lloyd Ladies A, last year's losing finalists beat Milton Keynes A 6-2 in 1,2 whilst Olney B in the 3,4 final just held on to beat Woburn Sands by 5 games.

Summer 2014, forty seven Open teams, losing Wolverton E and Great Linford C, gaining Milton Keynes G. Thirty Ladies teams, welcome back Great Brickhill to Division 4. Twenty six Mixed teams in three Divisions losing Woburn Sands B and Wolverton D, adding Great Linford B.

Fixtures and Match Secretaries have been circulated. Knock-Out Cup draw and Captains to follow.

The September Presentation Evening was well attended particularly by Juniors and their 'followers'. It would be nice to see a few more Captains of winning Senior teams!

The third Champion of Champions at David Lloyd was not supported by the Clubs and needed much coercion by myself and Tony to make it viable. The Ladies singles was cancelled but some good competitive play in the Men's singles and Mixed Doubles saw Steve Sumpter (MK), Avril Soman and Dave Tarry (SS) respective winners. The Veterans mixed social mornings have been well supported and enjoyed.

Finally, I thank the Club Match Secretaries and Captains for their support.

Anne Harris
Adult League Secretary
Tennis MK

- 6. Junior report:** Chairman David Marchant congratulated the winners of the various trophies and thanked the coaches and parents for all their support over the year. He also thanked Pete Tolaini and Nigel Willard for their time and support in running the junior leagues. Peter had kindly provided the following report which was circulated in advance via email and at the meeting:

Winter 2012/13 & summer 2013 Junior Organisers Report

This report starts with the winter 2012/13 winter season, the winners of the leagues can be found attached to this report.

Whilst we managed to organise the leagues the only clubs entering were the usual "suspects", Milton Keynes Stony Stratford & Wolverton with Buckingham and Woburn Sands also entering a team. Stewkley entered a Team in the Mini Tennis Green league. Only one girl's league was formed but only consisted of Wolverton & Olney Girls, both with an A&B team. A big thank you to the junior organisers, parents and players for making the effort.

We fared no better with teams in the summer leagues of 2013. Winners can be found for both the leagues & KO Cups attached to this report.

Due to the lack of interest TMK decided that junior leagues from U12 to U18 would not be run during the winter of 2013/14. Clubs volunteered to run "match plays" through the winter to keep some interest for our juniors. It was agreed that a consultation document/questionnaire would be sent to all clubs who play in the TMK leagues regarding the future of junior tennis as organised by TMK and

whether to run the leagues in 2014. However to date only 2 clubs have returned comments and one of the two have completed the questionnaire. This poses a big problem for the TMK junior leagues as due to this apparent lack of interest it could mean the end of the junior leagues from 12 & under to 18 & under. (Mini Tennis will be dealt with later in this report).

In my opinion it is vital that clubs have a thriving junior section and allows the juniors to compete in organised leagues, after all they are your senior teams of tomorrow. I offer you Milton Keynes Tennis Club as a superb example. I do understand that in many cases junior players want to make their way in singles and the ratings associated with this, this has to be encouraged but not all juniors will make singles players to any great standard and may eventually lose interest in ratings but we still want them to remain tennis players and at our club. Therefore what better way than get them involved as juniors in local leagues, the same leagues they will play as seniors?

Just to put this into a bit of perspective, we have 19 senior teams competing in the senior leagues yet can only generate interest from 7 clubs, maximum for the junior leagues, this is unbelievable!

I understand there are a few clubs who do not have a junior programme but the rest do and as far as I am aware have Clubmark. Part of obtaining and retaining Clubmark is to ensure juniors are competing regularly, this can be offered by TMK. What is it your club wants from us in the way of junior leagues because to date the impression is you don't?

So please make junior participation in the TMK league an agenda item at your committee meetings! I am available for help and advice.

We do however have some success, in our mini tennis leagues, although again it is mainly the clubs named previously, there does seem to be interest and will run through the summer of 2014 as they have through the winter of 2013/14. Maybe this is all that is required from TMK? Finally, a big thank you to Nigel Willard who ably and efficiently runs these mini tennis leagues.

Finally, please consider my plea to save our junior leagues and pass it onto your committees, junior organisers or whoever makes decisions regarding junior participation. I am happy to talk to, listen to, be moaned at, criticised etc, to try to make some headway into this issue.

Peter Tolaini
TMK Junior Organiser.

Winter 2012/13 Junior League Winners

9u	Olney
10u	Olney
12u	Stony Stratford
14u div 1	Milton Keynes
14u div 2	Stony Stratford
16u	Olney
16u girls	Wolverton

Summer 2013 Junior League Winners

9u	Olney
10u	Milton Keynes
12u	Milton Keynes
14u	Milton Keynes
16u	Milton Keynes
16u girls	Olney

Summer 2013 Junior KO Cups

	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Runner up</i>
9u	Stony Stratford	Olney
10u	Milton Keynes	Stony Stratford
12u	Milton Keynes	Olney
14u	Stony Stratford	Milton Keynes
16u	Milton Keynes	Stony Stratford
16u girls	Wolverton	Olney

7. **Treasurer's report:** Chairman David Marchant reminded the room that the current Tennis MK financial strategy was to retain a surplus to cover at least one year's running costs (£3k) and to increase income and reduce some costs. Any surplus beyond the £3k would allow the committee to consider requests for grants, of which a number had been made in 2013. Treasurer David Higgs gave an oral report on the finances and provided a set of accounts which are reproduced below as Appendix A. These accounts had been circulated to the Clubs in advance of the meeting. David Marchant made a number of observations about the accounts and explained that the sponsorship monies gratefully received had been used to offset some of the running costs of Tennis MK. He also noted that sponsorship plus cost reductions on printing, post etc. had allowed us to achieve a small surplus £180 which had turned around the position on recent years (minus £900 in 2012 and minus £1000 in 2011). David Higgs confirmed that the accounts had been audited by Mr. G. McCarthy. The accounts were duly approved.

8. **Chairman's report:** David Marchant provided an oral report to the AGM supported by a Powerpoint presentation. David began by thanking David Lloyd MK for its support in hosting both the AGM and Champion of Champions tournament. He also thanked Stony Stratford for hosting the finals day once again.

David explained that Tennis MK had sought to extend opportunities for play and competition over the past two years for adults, juniors, vets and singles. He noted that the spirit in which the matches had been played meant that there had been no formal complaints and no use of the disciplinary procedure since the last AGM. This did not mean however that no lessons had been learned and there were two points of particular note. Firstly, concerning weather rearrangements. While it is acceptable to rearrange if the weather does not allow play, there has been feedback that too often these rearrangements are being sought well in advance which gives rise to the suspicion that the rearrangement is more to do with being able to put out the strongest possible team, rather than the weather. Tennis MK's expectation is that matches will be played when scheduled, unless the weather on the day precludes this. Where matches are rearranged, the new date must be entered on the online scoring system right away as this can be very important for checking player eligibility. Secondly, there is no reason to have 'missing players' on the scoring system as guidance on how to enter players is provided and if necessary, names can be recorded in the comments section and added by Tennis MK. It was noted in response to a question from the floor that the home side (who should do it) can enter the results, but the away side can also do it if they do not see the result appear in 48 hours.

David explained that Tennis MK had been required to focus on its key purpose (to run the leagues) as it does not have sufficient resources (people) to get involved with all the activities it might like to. It was committed to providing

tennis competition, improving communication with clubs and captains (email and website) and to promoting the tennis clubs who support it. It had managed to keep costs low but some increases to fees might be required in the future to allow it to maintain the £3k 'war chest', particularly if not everything can be done by volunteers and has to be paid for at any time.

David noted that the partnership with Local Singles League was working well and providing a different form of playing opportunity and potential source of new members. It was also noted that the sponsorship from NHBC would continue through the 2014 season. It was also noted that Tennis MK had been pleased to provide grants totaling £575 to four clubs who chose to make applications. The money allocated had supported both tennis programs and purchase of equipment.

Turning to the future, David explained that work commitments did not allow him to continue his role with Tennis MK and that it would be great if the participating clubs could provide volunteers to join it.

6. **Proposals to AGM**

There had been no formal proposals to put to the AGM, however, the Committee felt that it would like to take the opportunity to informally consult on two matters, the format of the summer KO cups for men and on junior competition generally.

KO Cups:

An advisory vote at the 2013 AGM had supported changing the men's KO cups into three sections rather than the current two. The positive aspects of changing format were deemed to be that a mismatch in standard was less likely and that there would be more time to complete each round. The potential negatives were that there was a higher probability of meeting the same teams in your league, one less game (for the finalists) and that it would extend the finals day by one match. Feedback had been received that currently players from two divisions below their opponents did not enjoy turning up to 'get a thumping'. A move to three sections would mean 3 x 16 teams and no byes given in the first round.

After some discussion, including the possibility of doing an 'FA Cup' style draw at the next AGM, it was agreed that the format would go to three sections in 2014 and that this change can then be reviewed at the next AGM.

Junior competitions:

David noted the seriousness of the situation concerning juniors and the very real prospect that Tennis MK would have no yellow ball junior competitions in the future unless the situation changed. David led a discussion noting that the role of Tennis MK had been to provide opportunities for juniors but recently only three or four clubs had been able to field junior teams. The key questions were 'How do we deal with the dramatic fall off in junior participation in our leagues and is there a place for inter-club competitions organized by Tennis MK?'

The issues identified through consultation with clubs included:

- Highly variable standard
- Clubs rely on volunteer time, often from parents
- Critical mass in smaller clubs
- Availability of LTA sanctioned tournaments for 'serious' players
- Club culture and facilities – fun / hang around factor
- LTA approach and Clubmark requirements

Club feedback:

- Clearly define level of play through rating then you can consolidate some age bands.
- Small team format to help smaller clubs field teams
- Match play events will allow single entries
- Ratings put some off. Run some match plays as social / participation events.
- Coaches link playing in the league to the development of the player.
- Charter / commitment from clubs and penalties for rearranging / cancelling matches.
- Lack of girls make specific leagues for them almost impossible to run.
- Why not ask schools to enter the leagues?

Options to consider:

- Continue with U8, U9, U10 as is – clearly defined rating standard.
- Older age groups clearly defined standard (8.1 or 9.1?) between premier and participation leagues. Single or Mixed gender.
- U12, U14, U16, U18 Premier and Participation leagues.
- Possible option to merge U16 and 18 and leave clubs to gauge when it is in the interests of the player to transition them into adult tennis.
- Represent your club match plays at U12, U14, U18 banded by rating. Will require club support and entry fee.
- For any category of league, TMK would reserve the right not to run the league should there be less than 4 teams and if so may consult with clubs to merge age groups.

There was a lengthy discussion about the issues negatively affecting junior involvement including frustration caused by matches being cancelled, lack of

ownership at club level and the tail-off in girls participating. It was commented that clubs get grumbled at if they field a team which is either too strong or too weak for the opponents, so nobody is left satisfied. It was also noted that matchplay days had been provided for clubs who could not find two players for a team and that juniors tended to prefer playing in the adult leagues where the level was more consistent. Peter Tolaini noted that ten years ago there was no problem and there were 4 leagues. It was felt that internal competition at club level had reduced participation at inter-club level, possibly due to LTA requirements for regularly competing juniors. Peter Tolaini also noted that mini tennis is working well, the problem lies at 12u, 14u, 16u, 18u level. Nigel Williard suggested involving juniors from outside the Tennis MK area such as Haddenham, Riverside and Aylesbury which he suggested might work at a premier league level. An event due to be run by John Cavill at Stony Stratford on 23 March 2014 was discussed as a way of bringing in more junior players. It was also questioned whether the issue was to do with lack of volunteers to run the junior teams. The issue of mixed sex teams and ratings was also discussed.

It was agreed that Tennis MK would continue to provide junior competition in the summer of 2014 and that it was down to the clubs to support this or risk the possibility of having no inter-club competition for juniors.

10. Election of Officers:

The following were re-elected en-bloc:

Chair (Vacant)

Peter Tolaini as Vice-chair

Bob Poole as Secretary

David Higgs as Treasurer

11. Election of Management Committee members :

The following were re-elected en-bloc:

Anne Harris, Kathy Sumpter, Tony Johnston and Gail Fulcher.

Further support from participating Clubs would be welcome.

12. AOB:

The floor was asked if the Champion of Champions event should be moved back to be an end-of-year one day tournament in December as it comes very soon after club closed competitions. This idea received general support.

John Cavill asked attendees to note and promote the junior tennis festival at Stony Stratford on 23 March 2014 as it was designed to encourage participation and was open to all juniors from the area.

Outgoing Chairman, David Marchant, gave his personal thanks to all the Officers and Committee Members for their support over the year.

Meeting closed at approximately 9.20pm.

Appendix A

TENNIS MK

Income and Expenditure Account	Year Ending 31st December 2013	2013
Income	2012	2013
Summer League fees, Senior	£1,206.00	£1,406.00
Summer League fees, Junior	£0.00	£112.00
Winter League fees Junior	£0.00	£0.00
Junior Tournaments	£0.00	£0.00
Winter League 'Senior	£365.00	£500.00
Wimbleton Tickets	£304.00	£654.00
Hall Refund	£50.00	£12.00
Sponser		£500.00
Bank Interest	£0.00	£0.00
Total	£1,925.00	£3,184.00
Expenditure		
League Secretary Admin (2012&2011)	£170.46	£52.53
Bucks LTA Fees	£30.00	£0.00
Ball Purchases	£54.00	£86.28
Trophies & Engraving	£583.27	£418.29
Wimbledon Tickets	£304.00	£654.00
Finals Expenses	£112.64	£75.61
Court Hire (Stony Stratford)	£50.00	£50.00
Drinks Bar AGM	£123.73	£0.00
Sports Council (MK)	£25.00	£25.00
Auditor	£0.00	£0.00
Presentation Drinks Etc.*	£184.99	£152.73
Tennis MK Grants	£15.07	£575.00
Website Tennis MK	£269.26	£252.59
Website On Line Scoring	£642.67	£556.99
Hall Presentation	£100.00	£100.00
Website late payment	£0.00	£0.00
Refund	£0.00	£4.00
Committee Meetings (2011)	£140.02	£0.00
Total	£2,805.11	£3,003.02
Surplus/Deficit at 31st Dec	-£880.11	180.98
Bank Balance at 31st Dec	£3,621.32	£3,955.04

Prepared by
D Higgs Treasurer

Audited and found correct

