



**Minutes of the Tennis Annual Meeting
held on Monday 28th October 2024**

Present:

Andrew Wakely (Committee Chair)
Howard Spence
Nick Yates
Andy Gilbert
Arien Grey
Nick Bartman
Nick Baybutt
Penny Egan
Michael Hill (Liaison Director)
Robert Leck
Emily Monson
Andrew Monson
Sunil Bhasin
Lorna Bhasin
Agnes Duplessis
Mark Young
John Sinik (online) (Men's Captain)

In Attendance:

Marc Newey (Chief Executive)
Dan Lott (Racquets Director)
Nik Snapes (Tennis Manager)
Paul Lindsay (Racquets Manager)

Apologies:

Peter Bradburn, Oli Golding, Lily Brown,

1. Committee Chair Report – Andrew Wakely.

Good evening. Thank you for attending.

This year we have a different elite member to be proud of. Henry Patten of our first team managed to win the Wimbledon Championships Men's Doubles event with his Finnish partner Harri Heliövaara. Congratulations to him on a fantastic achievement.

Dan will be covering team news and results in his report, which is next up, so I will leave related topics to him. I would, however, like to thank outgoing team captains Katarina and Fred for their hard work and to welcome our new ones Lily Brown and John Sinik. Also, the Tennis Committee has a change in personnel - we thank Victoria Stephens and Lily Brown (changing roles) for their efforts over the last 3 years. Our new members are Emily Monson and Ollie Golding. We are looking forward to working with them in trying to balance the various needs and wishes of a vibrant and evolving section.

The Committee was approached by our Pickleball Maestro Louis Laville if we could host The Premier Pickleball League at Roehampton for the weekend of 4th and 5th of January 2025. This would involve the ITC being out of circulation for tennis members from Friday 3rd evening until late Sunday. After careful deliberation the Committee has agreed. In addition to being a prestigious televised event Louis has assured us that there will be opportunities for Roehampton Picklers to get involved and play with stars of the Pickleball world in a series of beginners and improver clinics over the weekend. We will still have 7 indoor courts available for Members on a traditionally quiet weekend now the two Airhalls are back up.

We are still working on the conundrum of how to squeeze more Padel and Pickle courts into our limited space. This is being done through the Padel and Pickleball Hub Working Group. All the minutes are available on the Club website. Currently we are looking at the possibility of getting a seasonal bubble over courts 4-6. If we manage this, we will see about putting 5 or 6 Padel courts on poraflex courts 12-14. As this is not overlooked by anyone, we hope that we may be granted permission to put some roofing on some of them. If this is possible the tennis section would be 3 courts down which is not workable so some grass courts would have to be sacrificed. If we took courts 26-28 for tennis and pickleball it might be possible to get flood lights as they are next to a red route and are also next to Rosslyn Park's extensive lighting system. If we chose 19-22 it is very unlikely, we would get permission for lighting as it would be a nuisance to the residents of Woking Close overlooking the courts. Lack of lights would make this a less preferable option. If we chose courts 25-28, we would be able to give about 12 metres of land to the health club for their sunbathing area extension, put in 3 tennis courts and 4 uncovered Pickleball Courts. We would try to make the courts green in colour so that the view from the Health Club is not changed too much. We would also turn the 4th croquet lawn by Fairacres into a grass tennis court, so we'd only lose 3 grass courts. There are a lot of ifs and buts and bridges to cross as we have been told we will need planning permission to change the surfaces due to the square meterage and the need for floodlights.

As I say, none of this is final and we are still very much open to listening to alternative plans. Our new Tennis Committee member Emily has put forward some ideas which will be looked at. In the meantime, we are still very tight on court time for padel. Paul Lindsay has many groups asking for more consideration. Social groups, coaching, matches, competitions and general play. He is trying his hardest to balance everything, but it is not easy. He is going to come up with some new ideas which he will present to the tennis committee. Please try and have in mind this dilemma when putting forward your own thoughts.

Last year we had a survey about the tennis dress code, and it was the majority view that we should maintain the current white shirt and socks. Unfortunately, every time I visit the club, I see people in contravention of this member led policy which is frustrating. The members I am playing with expect me to deal with these situations and I often do but I am bored of being the Nitpicking Grinch. It's awkward. Can I remind every member to familiarise themselves with the requirements and make sure that they and their guests adhere to our code.

As usual thanks to Peter Bradburn and Chris Hughes with their team for maintaining all our courts to such an exemplary standard.

Also, to Dan Lott, Nik Snapes, Paul Lindsay and Louis Laville for their enthusiasm and professionalism in helping to keep The Roehampton Club as the number 1 sports club in the UK.

Thank you.

Grounds Report – Peter Bradburn (MN read this out in PB's absence)

Numerically across the courts

Courts No 1 – 3 Indoor Tennis Centre

Courts performed fine this year. They were painted last year along with the surrounds. They will require some minor painting in several areas.

Courts No 4 – 6 Advantage Red

Court resurfaced in August of this year and are bedding in okay. The sand has now settled and bedded in. CH to install a barrier membrane between the blocks to prevent the sand migrating across the courts.

Courts 7 – 10 Proflex Surface

Court surface repainted on court No10 as a trial to see if the surfaces would improve by removing the top layer coatings and applying deeper a bonding sealant before repainting the top playing surface layer. This action has not met with universal favour, with members reaction to the surface still feeling that there are dead zones where there is an erratic bounce on the court. Trevour May has agreed to replace the surface in August 2025 with a Plexipave material which the company has indicated will give a more consistent bounce.

BO – Questioned if we should be looking at another surface as it creates puddles when wet. MN explained that these courts have a fall on them and the only way to get the water off when wet is to squeegee them. DL added that there are not many options for outdoor courts that can go under a bubble as the smash courts are great in the wet conditions but you can't put an airhall over sand based courts so an acrylic is the best option here.

Court 11 – Practice Court

The experience of winter 2023/24, which was one of the wettest on record, has highlighted that drainage and water movement needs to be addressed in several areas around the Club. The Grounds Team will look at improving drainage around the perimeter of the practice court and jet

washing the surface to improve the percolation rate of rainwater movement through the profile.

Courts 12 to 14 Poroflex Surface.

Some of the seams need attention which shall be done when the Airhall goes up.

Courts 15 to 18 Advantage Red

These have been resurfaced at the end of last year. Draining well and give a more improved surface compared to the previous.

AirHalls

Chris Hughes has taken more of the work of the inflation and deflation element in-house rather than relying on a contractor. This year the inflation should be on the 21st of October, weather permitting. The heater elements have been serviced and trialled and working as required. We are hoping that this will be a trouble-free year, unlike the previous which had been more problematic due to outages on the air delivery system.

Courts 19 to 24 Grass Courts

The season began with a showery initial period which hampered usage of the courts, but the weather improved through June and by the middle of July, good weather gave a very consistent period of fine weather. The courts performed well overall and rest of the season. This autumn the whole of the block has been renovated and we have utilized the services of a contractor to Koro-off the surface and re-level the entire block. This has been the first major levelling exercise for a decade and the rational for the process is to prevent the levels from the back of the court to baseline to the middle of the court being out of true level.

The entire court surface has been reseeded and will grow-back in through the winter. Currently the cover is still on the court, as the driving rain over the last few weeks has arrested the development of the germinating grass.

Court 25 to 28 Grass Courts

Received a more traditional renovation programme of works: aeration, scarification, overseeding and top dressing. The seed is currently germinating but like the previous block, it is slow compared to previous years when we had ideal conditions. The rain in the latter part of September has slowed germination.

Racquets Director Report - Dan Lott

It's been a great 12 months for Roehampton's racquets sports. We continue to be one of the best performing racquets clubs in the country. Our facility developments over the last 12 months have included the resurfacing of courts 4 to 6, they have been updated to the newest version of 'advantage red' to match courts 15-18. We have had some issues with courts 7 – 10. After they initially performed well, the performance went downhill when dead spots appeared, and large puddles formed after rainfall. As a result, the contactors trialled ways in which to improve this, however it wasn't satisfactory, and the courts will be completely re-laid next summer. The airhalls continue to give us 10 indoor courts through the winter months.

Problems with frost protection systems have now been fixed and both airhalls are set to be in play by the middle of this week. Many thanks to Chris Hughes and his team for making this happen. Indoor courts will continue to be very popular at peak times, therefore, I would recommend any playing groups who can play at off peak times in the afternoon to do so as this will greatly enhance your chances of indoor provision. The number of indoor courts has allowed us to greatly enhance the coaching programme with most junior, adult, and social sessions having indoor access meaning sessions can go ahead as planned most of the time.

Padel

The padel section remains popular with court bookings operating at more than 80% usage. It's clear that we need to build more courts to cater for the demand of this fast-growing sport. Paul is currently managing the balance between coaching, social and competitive provision for members. This is a difficult task with only 2 courts so we ask that members are understanding until we can build more courts and increase the provision in all these areas. Currently we are restricting the coaching programme to 25% court usage and leave the evening peak time courts free to give more members a chance to play socially.

The court surface on both padel courts have now been resurfaced with the leigh spinners surface. The surface has performed well in the summer months, and we will ensure there is regular brushing of the courts to maintain them over the winter months. The TC tasked Nick Yates and Astrid Drayson to explore the best surface to use so I'd like to thank them both for their efforts researching and making the decision on this.

We've enrolled teams in the iPadel leagues and this winter all the matches in the surrey league will be run over one weekend in December at the new indoor padel hub in epsom. This would give us an opportunity it to enter another team as it won't impact our court usage.

We organized two external padel events that took place over the summer: the HOP Padel event on June 15th and an LTA-sanctioned tournament on July 13th. These events provided members with opportunities for external competition while highlighting Roehampton as a premier padel venue.

In the padel National Club League finals, the men's first team came third and ladies came fourth. The Men's Second Team finished fifth which means they will stay in the top division next year. Paul Lindsay continues to head up the section and has done another great job this year maintaining a programme that gives all member demographics chances to experience the game.

These sessions include:

- Ladies Morning
- Club Night
- Padel Club Morning
- Club Afternoon
- Junior coaching groups
- Team training sessions

The Padel Leagues remain popular with over 60 teams playing.

This was the fourth year of our Padel Club Championships. Play took place from August with finals day on Saturday 28th September. Finals day saw lots of members coming to watch the high level of padel that we are lucky to have at Roehampton since the inclusion of the sport.

Tennis

The tennis section has continued to be the busiest Racket section with a wide range of social, coaching, and competitive opportunities for both adult and juniors.

At present we continue to run various social sessions running through the week that are free of charge for members.

We also continue to run pay and play and LiveBall sessions throughout the week. We now run five LiveBall sessions during the week, that are fully booked. These sessions give new and existing members a chance to get involved in a weekly session where there is a different group of players every week.

We use the slinger ball machines that are free of charge for members to use on courts 1, 6 and 11. As well as the REBO hitting wall at the back of court 11.

Pickleball

All current pickleball social sessions continue to be very busy with both ladies' morning, club night, and roll up sessions full most weeks.

Louis remains the driving force for participation with his organised sessions. Last month he started a paid coaching session with 8 players in each week that's also hugely popular.

It's clear that the pickleball players are keen to play more often, and the club would benefit by having some permanent pickleball courts so members could play more regularly. Again, this is something that the working group is looking at but must ensure that all sports can sit together in a viable way. Many thanks to Louis who has done an amazing job in growing this sport at Roehampton and congratulations to him on his continued success competing in the sport.

Racquets Team

The Racquets team remains unchanged with Nik Snapes supporting me as the Tennis Manager and Paul Lindsay overseeing padel and squash as the Racquet's Manager. Nik continues to run the junior programme and manages the club competitions and adult team sessions. He also captains the men's first team in all major competitions. Danielle continues her role as the mini racquets co-ordinator. We now have 3 parent and child sessions running through the week alongside many sessions catering for the 4-6-year-olds. These age groups are proving very popular and shows that there is a clear demand for organised coaching for this age group.

The coaching team has remained the same over the last 12 months with 17 coaches working at the club who are doing a great job delivering the coaching programme and satisfying the huge demand we have for coaching. We continue to use an online booking system for all lessons making it transparent and easy for members to search and book lessons.

This year I've delivered coach education days for all the team with external tutors coming to work with them as part of their continual professional development. This allows us to focus our learning on areas in relation to the coaching we deliver at Roehampton club as well as keep our knowledge current. It also ensures all coaches have the crucial license points they need to stay accredited with the LTA.

Junior Coaching

Our junior programme is close to full capacity. We have revamped the junior programme this term. We have decreased the size of the groups to add more value and created more playing level streams to cater for all junior members. We have also put together some termly goals that

the juniors will be covering throughout the next two terms to give parents a clear idea of what they will be covering in the groups and give the coaches a clear plan of content that should be delivered in the sessions.

We have also put together some junior socials that will be open to all junior members. The first one was held on Sunday 12th October and was a fun social doubles tournament led by the coaches. We have various social planned throughout the year and will deliver one each half term.

This year we continued to work hard with the other sports to ensure that tennis, squash and padel can all be timetable effectively without conflicts with other sports such as golf and swimming. I would like to thank Ricky Pharo and Ana Leal for their continued support and co-operation in this area.

Throughout the year Nik organised some external LTA graded junior tournaments that were held at Roehampton. These are external events that will give our juniors a chance to compete with juniors at their home club.

Club Championships

The Tennis Club Championships took place over the summer, we continued to use the same format as in previous years with the final's day being on Saturday and hosting an afterparty in the evening. Thanks to both Nik and Paul for their help throughout the year. I would also like to thank Peter Bradburn and his team for providing an excellent summer on the grass courts.

Club Competitions

We continued to run the summer/winter surrey leagues and junior competitions. Many Roehampton Club teams managed to win their summer divisions and will be promoted for next year.

The men's first team won the national championships again for the third successive year. They also won the National premier league in august for the second successive year. The ladies qualified for the national finals for yet another year. This is a great achievement that puts Roehampton Club on the elite stage, so congratulations to Nik and the teams. I would also like to thank Fred and kat the men's and ladies' captains for all their support throughout the year. The upcoming winter team tennis season promises to be busy with Surrey leagues, National Club leagues, and junior teams all gearing up for action. This surge in activity will inevitably lead to high court occupancy on weekends, prompting us to strategize ways to allocate matches into off-peak times, though this may not always be feasible.

The Club's tennis leagues continue to be a very popular way for members to compete within the club. As well as the singles leagues, we are currently running men's and ladies' doubles, mixed doubles, and off-peak singles leagues.

Roehampton also took part in a Quadrangular friendly at the AELTC involving Queens and Hurlingham.

Overall, it's been a great year for racquets sports at Roehampton club on and off court with major competitions won, new developments carried out and lots of member engagement. I look forward to another successful year in 2025.

Dan Lott

Racquets Director

October 2024

Padel and Pickleball Update – Marc Newey

MN presented an update of the Padel/Pickleball Hub plans and ideas that the working group have been discussing and displayed the plans in the meeting. (attached)

HS asked if pickleball is as popular as padel. DL stated it was difficult to know as we don't have permanent courts, so they have a very limited window to play, however there seems to be a great demand from the current players to play more often. With 200 players currently just on a day and a half indoors there is a substantial interest. MN added that in US there are pickleball clubs with 40 courts that are popular so it will only be a matter of time before it takes off in the UK.

AD asked why there needs to be so much space between the padel courts (talking about the 3m gap on the drawings in-between the courts on the 5 padel court layout plan. NY explained that players can go outside of the court and retrieve the ball and the requirement for this is three metres. It will also allow us to host high level tournaments etc. Having only 5 more courts will also allow us to have more space around other surrounding areas that will be easier to run social events and more viewing for spectators etc.

EM asked if we could look at the area adjacent to the ITC to take in the path that runs alongside and the area including the hedge opposite, for the padel courts instead of impacting the tennis grass courts.

MN explained that to date this is not possible, and planners have advised against us using that area for development. Its currently used by the machine washdown areas and gas cylinder pipeline for the ITC.

RL asked if we don't get the planning for the airhall on courts 4-6 would padel courts still be built on courts 12-14? MN stated tennis cannot operate without the current number of indoor and outside courts so if airhall permission is not granted on courts 4-6 then other areas of the club will have to be looked at again for the padel courts.

No AOB was put forward

The meeting ended at 8:35pm