

**Minutes of the 35th RTSC Annual General Meeting held at The Clubhouse, 425 Watling St, Radlett, on Wednesday
24th March 2010**

Present – Brian Hardy (BH) – Club President, Lee Dudack (LD) – Chairman, Jackie Underwood (JU) – Hon Secretary, Anne Smith (AS) – Hon Treasurer, Derek Thorpe (DT) – Membership, Ian Taylor (IT) – Squash Chairman, Julie Binns (JB) – Junior Tennis Chair, John Taylor (JT) – Bar/tennis.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Bridget Goodman, Henreece Myers, Claire Booth, Nigel Booth, Jennifer Edney, Shuna Wickham, Catherine Kilhams, and Julian Craxton.
2. Minutes of the last AGM were approved.
3. General Committee Report – LD:

The largest single project in 2009 was the car park extension and the refurbishment of tennis courts 10 & 11. This has made access to the club easier for everyone and means the club now has 2 excellent hard courts which are not only good for coaching, but which also have very low maintenance requirements & costs. On top of this the fencing around the courts was improved, and the fence on the clubhouse side of court 1 was lowered to improve viewing, especially during tournaments and exhibitions. RTSC is now on the verge of achieving LTA Clubmark status, and thanks go to Julie Binns, Shuna Wickham, and Jackie Underwood for their work in achieving this award, and to Jeanette for her office support. In the squash area a second court booking terminal was installed, in response to members' requests. The squash court lighting was also improved, and a new water dispenser is due to be installed very soon. The club purchased a table tennis table for the use of members, which has proved very popular. Future improvements are planned, including the club's new website, which will shortly go live. This should enhance communication with both existing and future members, and make more information available on demand. Work is also due to start on tennis courts 7,8 and 9, with improvements to the surface and painting of lines planned, which will make them better for juniors and mini tennis activities. The club has invested in additional hardware & software to control the tennis & squash lighting, meaning the ancient and unreliable token machines in the foyer can be disposed of. This should be another step forward for RTSC.

The general committee (GC) meets regularly and is constantly reviewing priorities for the future, which of course include improvements to the existing internal & external facilities, and also the provision of extra facilities where possible. RTSC continues to flourish, with a consistently high number of members, even though there have been some effects felt of the current economic situation. Membership of RTSC continues to offer very good value for money. LD thanked all the members of the GC for their contribution and also thanked Jeanette for the sterling job she does in the office.

LD then thanked John Apthorp for his financial and mentoring support during LD's 5 years as vice-chairman and then as chairman, and announced that although he has stood for re-election this year, he intends to stand down during 2010. LD would be interested in hearing from anyone who might be interested in taking on the role of chairman.

LD concluded by saying that Radlett is very fortunate to have a club like RTSC, and long may it continue. There were no questions.

4. Hon. Treasurer's report - AS:

AS reported that the accounts are prepared in a format prescribed by the Charity Commission. The statement of financial activities splits the club's income & expenditure between charitable activities e.g. tennis & squash, and other activities aimed at raising club funds such as donations, bar takings, and deposit interest. Net incoming resources show that the club generated a surplus of £46k, after a depreciation charge of £41.5k. The club did well in a tough economic climate with increasing overheads. RTSC was very grateful to receive a donation of £30k from John Apthorp, which went towards the car park extension and the resurfacing of tennis courts 10 & 11. Turnover for the year was £296k, an increase of 5% on the year before. Our costs for the year were £250k, an increase of 18%. Costs have increased across the board, but the increase in coaching & staff overheads should be explained. The increase in coaching costs by 32% is mainly due to the club's pursuit of Clubmark status, which has meant the implementation of a number of

procedures and extra events. The club has had to adhere to strict coach:child ratios and coaching qualification requirements. Although this can be costly, the Clubmark award will demonstrate that RLTS adheres to best practice, and will also be necessary to apply for LTA funding in the future. Staff costs have also increased because AS now does some paid work in the office, in addition to her duties as Hon Treasurer. There have been some additional costs due to payments on an ad hoc basis related to data collection required by Clubmark. In addition to this, payments to Tim Wadeson and also the groundsman have been reclassified from grounds & maintenance to staff costs, contributing to the increased figure this year. The committee reviews costs at each meeting and is determined not to let them grow further, as well as constantly looking at ways to reduce costs, such as currently reviewing rates of pay for junior coaching assistants. The club had £110k in the bank at the end of 2009 and is in a sound financial position, with sufficient funds to run effectively and also to invest in future improvements.

Questions: Derek Thorpe asked why visitors' fees appeared in both income & expenditure. AS replied that both the income, and any costs associated with the collection of visitors' fees have to be shown.

The accounts for 2009 were approved & adopted.

5. Sub-committee reports:

a) Junior tennis report – JB:

JB reported that the junior section of RLTS is still very strong, with 301 members in total, of which approx 50% are mini tennis members (under 10s), and 50% are older juniors. Many of these regularly participate in private and/or group lessons. There is a full programme of tennis lessons available for juniors, ranging from mini tennis up to performance level. Details of lessons and coaching are displayed on the notice board, and a junior newsletter is sent out every term. Junior successes this year include Ben Davies, who won the SE region of the Grand Prix series during the winter, and is now ranked among the top 4 u-18s in the country. Ben is also ranked in the top 250 u-18s in the world, and would have been higher but for injury. Zach Everdeen is playing full-time professional tennis and is ranked no 2 in Middx u-18s, behind Oliver Golding, the GB no1. Lucy Booth has qualified for a number of regional u-12 events in the last year and achieved a 5th place in one. She has won some county tournaments and is ranked no4 in Herts, which is a very strong tennis county. She is ranked in the top 75 of her age group nationally. Josh Ben has been identified in the region as talented, and attends regional training days. He has represented the county at u-8 level. A mention also goes to other youngsters such as Sam Merryman and Jamie Gall, who have had some success in junior tournaments. RLTS wishes all the juniors success in the future. Many junior members have completed the LTA tennis leaders' course, and it will in future be a requirement for those wishing to work as tennis assistants that they hold this qualification. Last year's juniors' finals day took place on 11th July. Entry levels were varied, with less interest from the older girls. Thanks go to Chris James, who helped to organise the day. A group of volunteers has been spending a lot of time preparing the club's LTA Clubmark application, and once awarded this will show that the club is committed to the development of its junior members and adheres to best practice in all areas of running the club and its activities. Undertaking the application has focussed our attention on the services we provide for our juniors and we hope to continue to improve them. Friday night social has continued to grow in popularity and is regularly attended by 80-100 children. Hot food and snacks are provided, and the bar continues to benefit from parents staying for a drink while the children play tennis. Finally a big thank you goes to our head coach, G Chhina, and all the other coaches for their enthusiasm and commitment to the junior membership. Thanks also go to the parents who help with running junior teams and who help out on a Friday night, and to the members of the junior committee. A special thank you goes to Nichola Stanley, who is going to help me in a joint role as junior chair this year, which should be a very effective way forward for the junior committee.

b) Membership report – DT

DT had looked back at figures for 2004, when the club lost 80 members during the year, and which indicated a very negative trend in membership numbers. Now the club has 892 members across all categories, which shows a much more positive outlook. The club did lose 21 adult full members and 5 adult squash members for various reasons. The churn of members was 14% - 126 lost & gained, which is lower than comparable clubs. RLTSC is a centre of excellence for both junior & senior squash with very high court usage, while there is more free court time on the tennis side. DT suggested that ideally the club needed more tennis players or else more squash courts.

c) Squash report – IT

Squash court usage has increased, particularly in the evenings, which reflects the success of the club in attracting squash players. Club socials on Sundays & Mondays are well-attended, and thanks go to Dermot Wickham & Bruce Snell for their work on these sessions. There are 21 box leagues each with 5 players, which are now run by Jim Murphy, following on from the years of work by Spencer Dryer. RLTSC has excellent court facilities compared to other clubs both for playing and also viewing, and is staging the Herts County Cup Final on 26 March this year. There are 60+ entries for the internal club tournament, and as in previous years there will be semi finals and finals nights advertised, with the bar open. The 1st team has not had a good year but the 2nd team is in Herts division 3, and the vets play in the Middlesex league. The club is trying to introduce more players to playing in teams. Jago Nardelli, James Ockwell and Phil Collins have all been selected for England Vets team this year. Junior squash continues to go from strength to strength, thanks to the work done by Julian Craxton, and this is to be applauded. RLTSC junior squash raises the club profile and brings large numbers of children, sometimes over 60, to the club for Sunday afternoon sessions, and also for regular graded tournaments, which have so far raised over £3000 for charity. There have been notable successes at county level, and RLTSC are county champions at U11 & U15 level.

d) Tennis report – JT

The club's agreement with head tennis coach G Chhina continues to work well, particularly in certain areas:

Competition

The men's I & III teams in the Herts league achieved promotion, and the men's I team is now in the top division, alongside the Ladies I team who have been up there for several years. The ladies I team finished 3rd in the top division this year, and the Ladies II came second in theirs. It is planned to advertise when the men's I and/or Ladies I teams is playing at home, so that members can come and watch the excellent tennis. In the Watford & District midweek league the men's A team won the championship for the second time and the ladies A came 3rd in the top division. The mixed A also won the championship. The club also entered teams into the NCL. Everyone who plays in a club team is a fully paid up member, including the coaches.

Social

The organised social sessions on Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons continue to be well attended, and are very important for attracting and retaining members, and also for enhancing the welcoming atmosphere at the club, which is often remarked on by visiting players and spectators.

Membership

G was asked as part of his remit to keep the numbers of adult full members up. Although there has been a slight decrease this may be due to economic factors, and will be monitored. One way of keeping adult full members is to provide plenty of opportunities to play, whether socially or as part of a coaching session. RLTSC provides a full range of activities for all tennis players which compares very favourably with similar clubs, and which contributes to the continued success of the club. The box leagues are being maintained by G & Jeanette, and the format has been changed in accordance with tennis Clubmark requirements.

Coaching income

Thanks to the efforts of G and his team of coaches, the club has seen a 20% increase in coaching income. Each full-time coach pays the club £45 per week as a court fee. The club also gets income from adult coaching sessions. The predicted income for this area in 2010 is £7000.

Tournaments

The 2010 closed tournament will be run over 5 weeks in late August/September, to try and reduce the number of walkovers and unplayed matches which often occur. Simon Spalter has kindly agreed to be referee, supported by G & Jeanette. The 2010 open tournament will take place in August, thanks to the kind support & sponsorship of Mr Alan Hawkshaw. This event can only take place because of the dedication of Jeanette and the club volunteers who work so hard both beforehand and during the week. It is intended to improve publicity this year to increase the entry into the men's competition.

All of the above form part of the club's agreement with G, and he has now also agreed to take responsibility for tennis court maintenance. Already in March this year courts 1-6 have had a moss & algae treatment. Courts 1-3 have a maximum of 4 years left before the surface needs replacing, and courts 4-6 will need rejuvenation in early 2012. Courts 7-9 are due to be cleaned, repainted and repaired in March/April this year.

Final point: JT referred back to events several years ago when the then tennis committee and general committee felt that there was no clear line of communication between the head coach and the 2 committees. This led to much bad feeling and acrimony, and the departure of the coach at the time. When G was appointed it was felt that he should be given freedom to achieve the agreed objectives without too much committee interference, and that he should be accessible to all members. In the absence of a tennis chairman, the role of tennis co-ordinator has been to gently steer and manage, rather than to dictate. Major decisions on structure and expenditure would always remain with the general committee. In the future it would be good to formalise consultation with tennis players of all levels at the club. Whilst it would be inadvisable to change the things that work, there is always room for improvement, especially where communication is concerned.

Question from Anthony Sheridan – where are the club's honours boards? JT agreed that they should be on display.

6. Election of Officers

There were no new nominations for officers so all current Trustees were re-elected.

7. Re-appointment of the auditor.

This was approved.

8. A.O.B.

- Could the Trustees consider having a gym at the club? LD replied that it has been discussed and that the committee would need to look at various issues including location, security, access and pricing. The level of support among members would also need to be assessed.
- Is there any interest in furthering relationships with clubs in Radlett's twin towns in France, Germany & Hungary? LD said he did write to the chairman of the tennis club in France, but received no reply. There are also issues to consider with exchange visits, such as child protection. There have been exchange visits in the past with the German town.

- Would the club consider indoor tennis courts or a bubble? LD said that there is planning permission for courts 10 & 11 to be covered, but the cost could be high. If it was a permanent structure the cost could be as much as £1million, and even a bubble could cost £200k, with additional administration costs for members booking and paying to use it. There is a case to be made for the club to have more squash courts rather than tennis courts, due to the much higher court usage.
 - Should the club increase its publicity? LD replied that the club's new website would result in far better communication to current and potential new members.
 - Compliments to G and the coaches for their friendly approach when they welcome new members to the club came from several members, who said that Radlett had been far more welcoming than other clubs they had visited. This was also because of the range of activities available to new members on a 'turn-up-and-play' basis.
 - What happens if someone has paid for tennis floodlights online and then it rains? LD replied that the light bookings are in ½ hour slots, so any unused slots could be cancelled. Detailed instructions will be posted next to the terminal. Bookings can be made 28 days in advance.
9. BH thanked all the members of the general committee for their hard work during the year and declared the meeting closed.