

**MINUTES OF THE COURTS WORKING GROUP
HELD VIRTUALLY ON TUESDAY 30 APRIL 2024**

PRESENT:

Trottscliffe Parish Council Attendees:

Richard Vallance (RV - Chair), Louise Leyden (LL)

Trottscliffe Tennis Club Attendees:

Tony Piper (TP)

Trottscliffe Primary School

Lucy Henderson (LH)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Louise Goldsmith (Clerk)

01/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

02/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

03/23 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was resolved that RV signs the minutes of the meeting held on the 16 January 2024 as a true and accurate record.

04/24 OPEN SESSION

No members of the public present.

05/24 SCHOOL USE OF THE COURTS

It was noted that LH had previously advised the Tennis Club that the school will only be running the after-school tennis session on a Thursday afternoon this term and not on a Tuesday afternoon. LH has also requested that the school has access to the courts on a Thursday morning from the 6 June to 18 July 2024 from 9:30-11:45am. TP advised that league matches have already been booked for these dates and suggested that the school uses the MUGA for curriculum tennis. TP queried whether the lessons were a PE lesson or an actual tennis lesson and suggested that a full-size net or full-size court was not required for children at this level. LG advised that the school has a historic right to use the courts on Thursday mornings in the summer term and that the league matches should not have been booked in. After much discussion it was agreed that TP will advise the Tennis Club Committee that the sessions booked will need to be rearranged so that the school can access the courts on the required dates. TP suggested that certain members of the Tennis Club will not be happy about the cancelling of the league matches on a Thursday morning and that the Clerk should expect to receive a complaint.

2.17pm LH left the meeting

06/24 TENNIS CLUB

TP advised that the marketing efforts and coaching have been a great success and that the number of members has increased. Memberships are renewed in May each year and currently there are 113 adults and 70 Juniors. The reputation of Frankie Faulkes as the Junior coach has increased the number of Juniors. However, TP advised that the increase in membership has created problems with managing the use of the courts but that the increase in membership fees was needed to acquire the funds for the capital expenditure required to maintain the

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courts. TP suggested that the school use of the courts is not sustainable with the increase in membership.

TP advised that Steve Dakin has resigned as Chair of the Tennis Club Committee but will continue as an operational volunteer. This leaves just two Committee members, John Bennett and Dick Hogbin, meaning the Committee is not quorate. John Bennett has also expressed a desire to step down. TP has organised the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the 20 May 2024 which will be held in the The George commencing at 7pm with cheese and wine. So far just 20 members have confirmed their attendance. It is hoped that some members will offer to join the Committee at the AGM. Meanwhile TP is having to manage the membership renewals, booking of the courts and maintenance which is not sustainable. TP voiced his concerns about the future of the Tennis Club if more Committee members are not found. TP advised that an event is to be held on the 5 October 2024 at Kings Hill Golf Club to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Tennis Club.

07/24 PUBLIC USE OF THE COURTS

TP reported that there were 30 public bookings for the year commencing the 1 May 2023.

08/24 MAINTENANCE OF THE COURTS

TP advised that the membership fees have been increased by 10% this year and if the Tennis Club Committee chooses and is able to maintain the current membership levels the capital expenditure programme should be self-financing. TP advised that approximately £3800.00 is spent annually on routine maintenance which comes out of the operational budget. The Committee is currently arranging inspections of the decking and club house sub structure as there appears to have been some movement.

09/24 PROPOSAL FOR A SUB LEASE

It was noted that at the Parish Council meeting held on the 2 April 2024 it was agreed that RV and the Clerk meet with the landowner, Ann Kemp, to confirm that she would be willing for a new lease to be drawn up for the land which is occupied by the tennis courts enabling the Parish Council to sub-lease the land to the Tennis Club Committee.

RV and the Clerk met with the landowner the day before to discuss the possibility of a new lease allowing the Parish Council to offer a sublease to the tennis club. RV advised that the landowner would be willing to agree a new lease subject to the following conditions:

- The sublease is for the courts only and not to include the car park nor grass area in front of the courts;
- The Parish Council retains the sinking fund of £10,000 to reinstate the area if needed;
- The Parish Council will not charge an annual lease fee to offset the use by the school. Some Parish Councils do charge an annual fee.
- The sublease to specify that the Tennis Club maintain the courts and club house;
- The Tennis Club will be responsible for insuring the courts and club house;
- A Tennis Club Committee must be in place and a Parish Councillor representative must sit on the Committee and the courts working group will cease;
- The Tennis Club Committee must submit a report to the Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting to include a copy of the accounts;
- The school to have free access to the courts for curriculum activities and for the after-school clubs.
- The courts to be used for tennis only.

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RV advised that the Parish Council is due to discuss the conditions at the next meeting due to be held on the 7 May 2024. Further concern was expressed about the stability of the tennis club given the lack of Committee members. TP suggested that a decision to move forward with drafting the new leases is delayed until after the Tennis Club AGM when hopefully more Committee members are appointed. TP suggested that the Tennis Club needs to consider its future status as the current set up is not sustainable unless members are willing to join the Committee. TP advised that the problem of members volunteering to be on the Committee is not uncommon in other clubs/societies in the area. TP suggested that one option would be to reduce the membership which would affect the ability of the Tennis Club to remain self-financing. TP also suggested that alternative management models could be considered such as the formation of a limited company. It was agreed that TP should discuss the conditions overleaf with the Tennis Club Committee but to postpone a decision to move forward with drafting the new leases until after the Tennis Club AGM due to be held on the 20 May 2024.

10/24 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Nothing additional.

11/24 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at 2pm on Tuesday 28 May 2024 in the club house.

There being no further business the meeting closed 3.18pm.

Signed: Date:

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