



WOLVERHAMPTON LAWN TENNIS AND SQUASH CLUB LIMITED
MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY 22ND JANUARY 2025 at 20:15

1. Opening & Apologies

Steve Chilvers opened the meeting and welcomed the members.

Apologies have been received from 9 people: Ron Stevenson, Helen Tottey, Erica & Andrew Claxton, Steve Russell, Jon Dews, Roger Malpas & Jag Samra.

2. Resolution for the Proposal (Steve Chilvers)

“The Board of Directors of Wolverhampton Lawn Tennis & Squash Club Limited seek the approval from the members to continue with the installation of three padel courts subject to obtaining planning approval and the necessary financial arrangements up to a value of £240,000.”

3. Summary of the Process (Steve Chilvers)

In 2022, WLTSC started to look into installing padel courts and first visited East Gloucester. Utilisation is now 65% and it has been so successful, they are seeking to build 3 covered courts. Feedback from other clubs has been very positive:

- Membership at Solihull Arden has now increased by 46% which was their prime driver for installing the courts. They too are planning to install more courts.
- Barnet Green Sport Club, south of Birmingham, installed 3 padel courts in June and utilisation has exceeded all expectations and generated £84K in revenue.

On 17th October, a meeting was held WLTSC to provide information on Padel to the members and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. In November, a Quick Access Loan (QAL) application was submitted to the LTA but was rejected as it was too member bias. A follow up TEAMs meeting was held with the LTA who identified their requirements in order to grow greater participation.

The QAL was resubmitted based on 2/3 member + 1/3 Pay & Play Visitors with 50-60% utilisation. This is considered to be conservative.

SC stressed that

- Members get priority booking 2 weeks in advance.
- Visitors will only be able to book 1-week in advance.
- One member can invite 3 non-members which will increase revenue.
- Membership numbers may need to be capped.

An analysis of utilisation shows that even in peak times there is a lot of underuse of our courts:

- Tennis courts in the summer 25%.
- Squash courts in the winter 27%

The intention is to get Pay & Play visitors booking Padel courts during the times that the courts are not used by members

Allowing Pay & Play provides significant potential for generation of revenue. Using the cost model of members £4/hr and Pay & Play visitors £24/hr, Padel can potentially generate a profit of £250K over 6 years.

The club has submitted the planning application with an Acoustic Survey and are working with MyCourts, and door access system (Doorflow), on how to implement the Pay & Play process.

The preferred funding option is with the interest free £144K LTA loan with £96K debenture scheme from members. On 27th January, the QAL will be put to the investment panel then the LTA foundation trustees.

SC stressed that the project cost will not exceed £240K. The club will not borrow more. Debt from other loans (CBIL etc) will be paid off in 2 years.

The planning application includes the installation of covers but this would be a retrofit.

The sign up process via MyCourts, will necessitate P & P visitors to register so we collect their details for marketing. The option to hire racquets and balls will be provided. P & P visitors will be given a code which will allow access the court and building (changing rooms and bar & restaurant).

Generation of additional revenue is essential for WLTSC due to increased business costs and maintenance of the facility. It is recognised that the fixtures and fittings are looking shabby and tatty. The Club is very expensive to run as it is an old building.

This year, the board has committed to replace the indoor court surfaces, which has been put off for 10 years, at a cost of £75K.

Padel is seen as a greater opportunity and the start of a boom like squash was in the 1970s.

4. Questions and Answers (Steve Chilvers / Graham Loader)

Diane Rawstorne – Membership & access.

Access - SC confirmed visitors coming to play padel will not have full access. Only the padel court, changing rooms and building (bar & restaurant). Not the gym, tennis or squash courts. This will be controlled with an increase in keypad access. Access will only be possible 0.5hr either side of the booking time.

Amelia Kakol – Access & Parking

Access – As the club has previously not allowed tennis, gym and squash only membership why is access to the club now being allowed for Padel on a pay & play basis? How will access to the club be controlled? MH explained we would have gated access.

Parking – tonight is an example where the carpark is very full. SC stated the goal is not to substantially increase membership but to generate revenue from pay and play booking during off-peak / less popular times. The board is aware they only have 84 car park places + the neighbouring school. 75% of the times the club is empty.

Tracy Hook – Cleaning

The general level of cleanliness at the club is poor therefore who is going to clean the glass panels? MH explained that the courts will have good drainage and at Barnt Green each court has a squidgy to wipe down the side walls (similar to sweeping the clay courts after use). Cleaning has not been raised as an issue at other clubs.

Mike Satterthwaite – Potential Numbers

Are there enough people in this area who want to play? SC stated that the Board believe that there are and all the statistics point to that.

Simon Booth – Financial impact

Asked for clarification of the potential revenue. SC confirmed £6K/year saving from grass court maintenance and £50K/year profit potential from padel.

Tony Pinson - Comment

What will happen if we don't go ahead? If we don't go ahead someone else will soon.

We have scrutinised the business models thoroughly and feel we don't have an alternative.

Commercial operators will take advantage of the business case.

John Hollingsworth – Covered courts

Confirmed he is in favour but in view of the British inclement weather thinks we should put a canopy on the courts. Could we have 2 courts with a canopy rather than 3 open courts?

David Rawstorne – Lingering non-members

Visitors to the bar / how to get them out? SC confirmed we want them spending money in the bar at full rates where members get discounts. We will continue to manage our bar effectively.

Darren McHugh – length of stay & access to other areas

Raised concern with dumbbells used to prop open the gym and pit doors. Once accessed the changing rooms, they can sit in the sauna for 2 hours. SC confirmed that access needs to be and will be policed.

5. Vote and Closure of Meeting (Steve Chilvers)

For: Overwhelmingly in favour (>100)

Against: None

Abstentions: 1

Steve Chilvers presented Marc Hughes with a Padel bat as thanks for his contribution during his time as General Manager.

The meeting closed at 21:10