

Middlesex AGM – Minutes Sunday 12th May 2024 – Cumberland Club – 4pm

Att: Tim Taylor Chair Finchley Manor, Marcus Yang (Middlesex Junior Chair), Chris Vine Development Consultant, Ivy Dieltiens Junior Development Officer Cumberland, Simon Millman (Cumberland), Clive Johnston (Actonians), Calum Murray (Britannia), Adam Lennox (Brondesbury), Savita Noronho (Charing Cross), Daniella Ellis (Clissold), Uttara Raju (CM Ringers), Georgina Brown (Coolhurst), Chris Bickley (Cumberland), Damien Downes (Finsbury Outplay), Shoab Mirza (Harrow), Emily Peach (Mavericks), Tim Cox (Oakleigh Park), Mitch Hedges (Paddington), Jonathan Andvig (Southbank), Brendon Mounter (Southgate), Nick Ruff (Stormont), Vishaal Shah (Uxbridge), Trevor Peynado (Hillingdon)

There was no representative from Hazelwood, and Westway.

Agenda:

- 1. Reports**
 - a) Chairs Report**
 - b) Junior Chairs Report (see Appendix attached)**
 - c) Treasurers Report (see below)**
 - d) Development Officers Report (Appendix)**
- 2. Elections (as outline in the Chairs Report)**
- 3. Any Other Business**

Apologies for Absence:

Nick Healy, Martin Shippey, John Nicholson, Rick Prior,

Reports:

Middlesex Squash – Chairs Report Tim Taylor

Welcome to all who have attended today – thank you for coming and thank you to those committee members who have supported the counties activities this past year

Welcome also to this report into the activities of Middlesex Squash for the year 2022/23. There are two ongoing key threads from the last few years - Juniors and Participation. The Junior Section is the county's main aim and is the subject of a separate report from the Middlesex Junior Squash committee. The senior committee in partnership with LSERF (London & SE Regional Forum) have focused on getting squash back into the London Youth Games (LYG).

The Winter and Summer leagues have continued with a small increase in participation, and a new Summer League with an increase number of teams is about to get under way. However, we still don't have a Squash 57 (Racketball) league or one-off events and despite another try this year we do not yet have a Veterans league.

England Squash membership is changing and I as chair am heavily involved in trying to manage this in liaison with England squash. A number of Clubs will however have a huge windfall next year and we would like to consider that this could be shared with Middlesex as our income will significantly drop via ES.

We have been very pleased with the success of today's one-day Middlesex League Cup (in lieu of a county closed which we plan to re-establish Feb 2025) and thanks go to Ivy Dieltiens for gaining a magnificent entry of 75 participants in 5 grades. Finchley manor will be running a similar event in July (27th).

I am also pleased to report that Middlesex also had good representation in the Inter-Counties with some notable success (especially the Ladies) – thanks to the captains for their input into selecting and organising teams.

We have identified that there is a huge opportunity for the development of squash in Middlesex and to maintain this we have continued to engage with the London & South-East Regional Forum (LSERF) and its development consultant, Chris Vine, who will also present a separate report.

To support this next phase of Middlesex Squash, and in line with our overall Development strategy, a new and updated website based on SportyHQ will be launched. This will enable all our activities to be managed on one platform and better able to communicate more squash playing opportunities, including a more dynamic and user-friendly portal.

Also, in line with Middlesex's policy of promoting squash events in the county and London Region, the Senior Committee in liaison with LSERF have now successfully re-introduced Squash back into The London Youth Games (LYG) and the run up to the 2024 LYG games is well under way the finals of which are here on Sunday 26th May (Cumberland) with 18 of the 32 London Boroughs represented. Martin Shippey has put together a website - www.lygsquashcoaches.com which will provide a focus and reference point for the games and underpin the overall development of Squash in London. To follow on from LYG it became obvious that we did not have a specific "London Squash" focus, and in liaison with LSERF we are looking to create and form a London Squash brand see LondonSquash.org.uk with the support of ES to promote

major events and look at further opportunities for the nation's capital. To this end we had a presence at both the 2024 Optavia (Wimbledon) and London Classic (Ally Pally) tournaments.

Junior Chairs Report – Marcus Yang – see Appendix.

Treasurers Report – John Nicholson:

The Main MSRA bank account, after adjustments, stands at £16,800 as of 30th April 2024. This includes development funds and goodwill deposits that do not form part of our general funds. These total £9,260. The development funds are the London & South East Regional Fund, the England Squash Action Plan for London, and a Middlesex Development Programme. At this point, our general funds will, therefore, amount to £7,540. In addition, MSRA will receive affiliation rebates for 2023/24 from England Squash. These totalled £9,701 in 2022/23. I believe that we shall receive a similar amount in respect of 2023/24 but not payable until June/July 2024. It will boost our general funds to around £17,000.

Additionally, we hold £13,985 on deposit account to cover unexpected expenditure and specific future.

The MSRA Juniors bank account, after adjustments, stands at £14,846 as of 30th April 2024. The England Junior Squash Championships were held by Middlesex in 2024. The finalisation of the income and expenditure has not been completed with England Squash, but the whole event will be close to break-even for Middlesex. As a footnote, we have collected £200 from clubs for the non-attendance at the 2023 AGM!

Development Officers Report – see Appendix:

Elections:

Elections - proposed/re-standing

Chair Tim Taylor

Junior Chair - Marcus Yang

Junior Development Officer - Ivy Dieltiens

League Secretary - Ivy Dieltiens

Treasurer - John Nicholson

Safeguarding Officer - Ivy Dieltiens

Ladies Coach Team Captain/Teams coordinator - Ivy Dieltiens

Committee Members: Rick Prior, Tony Morrison, Andrew Long

Proposed – Trevor Peynado (Hillingdon)

Seconded Vishaal Shah (Hillingdon)

All Committee members were duly elected by a majority.

Any Other Business: None Raised

Post AGM Discussion (open Forum)

A series of brief discussions then ensued around the following topics:

- The ES right ball campaign – to promote use of the right ball commensurate with the level of the player. Large ball for lower-level better bounce etc – all agreed
- ES Affiliation – as alluded to by Tim T in the Chairs report – for further discussion at the next AGM and committee meetings. A proposed increase for league team fees was floated (up to £75)- see note below:

This year all clubs will pay a reduced amount to England Squash in their Affiliation fee. Many clubs by a very significant amount.

As a county we will get a much reduced rebate from ES. The proposed increased team costs to clubs will be more than covered by the ES reduced affiliation cost to clubs.

Some clubs will still be better off by Thousands of pounds, others will still see only a modest reduction in overall cost. The only clubs that may have been adversely affected are single team (zero courts) player clubs operating out of Leisure centres - So clubs/teams without courts will pay a reduced League Team fee.

The proposed increase is £75 (£25 for Zero court clubs/teams) Any club with currently 20-30 members will still see an overall reduction in cost.

The financial position of Middlesex will remain neutral. It should be noted that the subsequent years rebate from England Squash is very indeterminate depending on the take up of their new membership scheme.

Meeting Closed at 4.40pm

Appendix:

Junior Chairs Report – Marcus Yang and Ivy Dieltiens:

Middlesex junior squash has 98 members this season. As part of their membership to Middlesex, they receive 6 training sessions with guest coaches (including this year Ben Coleman, Dave Webster, and Joe Lee) as well as 6 box leagues where they have the opportunity to play each other, the results of which are recorded in squash levels.

Each of the main clubs in Middlesex (Finchley Manor, Coolhurst, Cumberland, Southgate, and Oakleigh Park) have hosted one training session and one league throughout the season, as well as having hosted an ES bronze tournament for the players. In addition, all the clubs were involved in the English Junior Championships in February which was a platinum event.

We also provide weekly sessions at various locations, including Cumberland every Friday and Saturday (additional 86 kids). This includes squash stars every Saturday morning, followed by a girl's session, then 4 sessions leading up to the advanced players at 5pm. Ivy Dieltiens, Judy Williams, Steve Thompson, and Matt Lyons run these sessions. Other weekly sessions include Barnes club with Juan Ramlill (15 kids) on Tuesdays and Thursdays and Lords cricket ground with Zeki Muneeb on Saturdays (18 kids) which includes a high-performance session with our top juniors.

We also arrange intercounty for the juniors, two teams of which made the national finals (GU13 and BU13), with the BU11 reaching the plate final. Alexander Koa-Wing is top 3 BU13 in the country and has been selected to represent England in his age group.

Other events include rewarding 9 players to tickets to the London Squash Classic to be held at Alexandra Palace on 31st March, and hosting Jesse Engelbrecht for a zoom call with parents regarding mental strategy for the game.

A zoom call with parents was held in June to prepare for the 2023/2024 season, as well as a meeting in conjunction with our first league in September at the Cumberland.

Development Report – Chris Vine

Looking back in 2022 we identified key areas where focus was needed to restore Middlesex Squash as follows: - Clubs, Coaches, Juniors, Events, leagues, Governance, Partners, and Communication. It is fair to say that progress has been made in all the above areas as we now have key personnel with expertise to re-establish Middlesex Squash as a major force in both the London Region and the South-East of the UK.

Without stating the obvious, all of the above areas are linked and rely on enthusiastic clubs, effective (and willing) coaches, regular events with a local, regional and national

focus (this year we have been able to experience all of these including the Alexandar Palace PSA Event in March and various ES Junior events firmly putting us on the map). The Leagues it is fair to say are a work “in progress” as a good deal of groundwork is needed to reduce the effect of the longer-term problems, we know the sport faces (pressure on clubs, ageing player base etc.) plus the challenge of increasing adult participation numbers to reverse trends. Governance is an ongoing focus and steps have been taken since the last AGM to ensure that we are appropriately compliant. In terms of Partners our main focus has been on the creation of beneficial relationships with bodies such as the London Youth Games, the Borough Development Officers Group (of which there are 16) and the exploration of how this all links to the primary and secondary school network across London via the SGO (School Games Officers). We have also been in deeper consultation with the London Youth organisation and potential partners such as the England Squash Foundation and others such as the MCC, Hurlingham and the Queens clubs.

Communication we know is key to raise the profile of the game and its perception amongst the public and efforts have been made to (re)create an effective website (in progress).

At this point, bearing in mind all the above, a specific project financed by funds provided by both England Squash (via the annual £2.5k Development Grant) and Middlesex county development revenue was put together as a “pilot” in the London Borough of Hillingdon managed and developed in liaison with Club Coach Trevor Peynado Borough Development Officer Kim Truelove and local SGO (school Games Officer Becci Cooke. In April (24th and 30th) this year, Trevor and his coaching team delivered taster sessions to over 900 Year 2-4 pupils from local Hillingdon schools. Following this in May (16th - 24th) he will be delivering a week of in curriculum sessions to 14 primary schools with a potential exposure of (mini) squash to a further 1750 pupils. To attract those children who enjoyed the sport to the club he will invite them to a series of follow on “Squash stars” and afternoon festivals at Hillingdon Squash Club. He has also utilised this relationship with the two partners to put together a new Hillingdon London Youth games team to play in the finals weekend in May.

This project can be replicated in all the Middlesex boroughs which is a huge undertaking, but if we as a sport are to dramatically increase our participation numbers from the bottom up it is as they say a “no brainer.”

Finally, as the culmination of a great deal of background work by key Middlesex personnel over the past 12-18 months, and as mentioned by Tim Taylor in his Chairs report we are looking forward to the first London Youth Games Squash Finals day since 2018 at the Cumberland Club (Sunday May 26th). Our target (in liaison with the London and Southeast Regional Forum LSERF) was to attract a minimum of 16 borough teams

and I am pleased to say that 18 (maybe 19) U17 teams consisting of three boys and two girls will take part this year.

In the last 24 months, we have learnt that the only way to increase participation in squash is mass exposure, and in using the LYG finals as the pinnacle, we have a key event to leverage a positive mutually beneficial response from local borough officers and SGO's if they wish to gain points for their teams in future London Youth games Finals, with the obvious positive side-effect of helping squash to be found by a whole new generation of players of mixed culture, gender and ethnicity, not only in Middlesex but across the whole London Region.

I would therefore strongly urge you as a club rep, coach, member of the management team, team captain etc attending this AGM to seriously consider how you can facilitate a project similar to the Hillingdon pilot in your local area (borough, location etc) – Your sport needs you, this is not something that can be done without a significant localised and longer term focused investment of effort.

As a sign-off, if anyone wishes to talk to me, Tim, Martin Shippey, or Ivy Dieltiens we would be delighted to chat about how to help to give your facility a major participation boost.

Chris Vine – Middlesex (senior) Development Consultant – May 2024