



# South West Sussex Table Tennis League

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## MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the SOUTH WEST SUSSEX TABLE TENNIS LEAGUE held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

Meeting Commenced at 7.34 pm.

**Apologies for absence:** Martin Webb, Adam Turner, Grzegorz Sosna, Rick West, Donna Hammond.

### 1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

### 2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

### 3. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer reported that the balance in the League Account remains healthy. Sussex County League fees were kept at the same level as the previous season. The balance sheet included two season's worth of costs for trophies.

### 4. DIVISIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Divisional Secretary reported that the first half of the season went well, with only a couple of postponements. However, there were more postponements in the second half of the season, resulting in two double headers being played and one walkover claimed.

The season's League placings and Player Averages were distributed.

The winners of Division One were North Mundham Crusaders, with North Mundham Vipers runners-up.

The winners of Division Two were Bognor Tigers, with Bognor Logheads runners-up.

The Divisional Secretary remarked that it was a shame that we will be losing long-standing League player Martyn Walker who is relocating.

## **5. HANDICAP CUP**

The Chairman reported that the Handicap Final was closely contested between North Mundham Allstars and Bognor Tigers, with North Mundham winning 5-4 due to strong performances from all the team - Dave Young, Rohit Chauhan and David Reeve. Bognor Tigers captain Rick West was singled out for his performance despite being heavily handicapped.

The Chairman said that it had been difficult setting handicaps due to the new League format, but he felt that they seem to have worked well.

## **6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman started by saying that it is good to see that player numbers are picking up again since the Covid pandemic. He noted that the North Mundham practice sessions have been seeing 6-8 new regular attendees and there are positive signs that the League could get back up to at least 10 teams.

Elsewhere in Sussex it is the major population centres that have the healthiest table tennis participation levels (Worthing, Eastbourne, Crawley, Brighton). Brighton, which has been successful in picking up funding for minority groups, have around 2,000 players. While the Crawley League, which has a high playing standard, attracts players from outside the area. In contrast, the East Grinstead League is getting smaller.

The Chairman reported that the sessions on Fridays at North Mundham are getting 18-20 Juniors attending each week. However, it is hard to get them to progress to playing in the League.

The Chairman again posed the recurring issue of possibly moving to two-person teams if the League gets too small.

In conclusion he requested that team entries are submitted as early as possible for the new season.

## **7. COUNTY REPORT**

The Sussex Junior team finished 4<sup>th</sup> in Division 1, which was a surprise as the team only scraped into the top division last season. Furthermore, the team included two Under-13s. One of these, Bly Twomey, has been selected for the Paris 2024 Paralympics, the other beat the top U-13 player.

The Sussex Cadet team won Division 2 and were promoted, so both the Cadet and Junior teams will be playing in the top divisions next season.

The Sussex Senior team finished 3<sup>rd</sup> overall.

The Over-60s category was won by Kent and Middlesex won the VETTs.

South West Sussex TTL's Hasali K Kuruppuarachchi, who plays for North Mundham, represented the Sussex Junior 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> teams during the season.

## 8. AWARDS & PRESENTATION OF TROPHIES

Division One Winners: North Mundham Crusaders  
Division One Runners Up: North Mundham Vipers  
Division Two Winners: Bognor Tigers  
Division Two Runners Up: Bognor Logheads  
Ridgewell-Smith Cup Winners: North Mundham Allstars  
Ridgewell-Smith Cup Runners-up: Bognor Tigers  
Most Improved Player – Hasali Kuruppuarachchi, David Reeve  
Chairman's Award – David Reeve

## 9. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following officers were elected/re-elected:

Chair - Chris Newberry  
Treasurer - Peter Baldwin  
Secretary - Ian Taylor  
Divisional Secretary – Gary Masters  
Membership Secretary – Peter Baldwin  
Committee Member - Alan Brackenbury, David Reeve  
Coaching Officer – Chris Newberry

## 10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### **Two Person Teams.**

Following the mention of considering moving to the two-person team format in the Chairman's Report, discussion was held on the topic to consider the 4 x Singles and 1 Doubles game format. This could potentially lead to shorter evenings and lower costs, if two matches were played per night.

Gary Masters expressed concern that the League could lose players by moving to this format.

Bob Minty asked whether it would lead to more teams or not?

Peter Baldwin suggested establishing a 3rd Division which might suit Juniors and help them integrate into the League.

Chris Newberry commented that this would probably not be necessary if we can raise 10 teams.

It was agreed that it would be useful to canvass ahead to find out who is keen to play next season – maybe through WhatsApp which is proving a good communications platform for the League.

Alan Brackenbury noted that Felpham still couldn't manage two teams even if the two-person format was adopted.

***A motion that a two-person team format should be adopted was rejected on the provision that enough three-person teams were registered for next season.***

## **Subsidising Players**

The question of using League funds to subsidise players as an encouragement to participating in the League was generally dismissed as unlikely to have any effect.

Ian Taylor raised the possibility of subsidising TTE fees for the very infrequent players who help out in making up team numbers during the season.

## **Hard Bat Tournament**

The possibility of holding another hard bat tournament was met with widespread approval. Chris Newberry said it was great fun and a great leveller and suggested that it could be opened up to players from outside the League.

## **Coverage in the Local Press**

Gaining more coverage for table tennis in the local press was debated and it was felt that there was little interest from the local press, while it was also potentially a lot of work for someone to write the reports.

Mike Richardson suggested that maybe just the 'fun' events could be covered – such as hard bat tournaments and the Handicap Cup.

Peter Baldwin suggested we try and get an entry in Sussex Views.

## **Venues**

Dave Reeve noted that he would be getting more keys for North Mundham team captains to open/close the hall.

Alan Brackenbury said that the Felpham venue could accommodate another team on the alternative weeks to the current Felpham team (£33 per home match). Alan noted that venues are very hard to find – he had to approach 15 venues before finding one available. Bob Minty suggested that Rick West (Bognor Tigers) might be interested.

It was noted that Middleton are expected to be able to raise a second team next season.

## **Communications**

With Donna Hammond stepping down as Communications Officer and Development Officer these positions remain vacant.

The website which uses an older version of Word Press could be improved and Mike Richardson asked whether League Funds could be put towards this and improving SEO – if only by improving the landing page.

Rohit Chauhan said he would try to help with this and the Facebook page.

Gary Masters said that he had met people playing table tennis in Petersfield, but living in Chichester, who hadn't even heard of the South West Sussex TTL.

Discussion strayed onto the decline of other leagues – Alan Brackenbury recalled that Grimsby used to have 15 divisions, but now have just 2. Chris Newberry said that SWSTTL is ‘squashed’ by the Portsmouth, Haslemere and Worthing Leagues.

Kerry Applin said we could use Facebook more proactively to spread the word. He also suggested posting laminated sheets at local open air tables, such as West Park, Aldwick and maybe hold tournaments at public table sites.

Alan Brackenbury asked if North Mundham TTC could set up its own WhatsApp group as the South West Sussex group was getting too much North Mundham-specific content. This was agreed by all for it to be done immediately.

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There being no other business the Chairman thanked the 19 attendees present and closed the Meeting at 8.35pm.

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(Chairman)