



Essex Squash & Racketball Association



Draft Minutes of the Essex Squash & Racketball Association AGM Held via Zoom Thursday 22nd July 2021

Present (committee): Geoff Went, Barbara Sanderson, Elaine Oddie, Chris Vine, Sue Woodhouse, Gary Nisbet (Co-opted)

Apologies: Karen Selby, Chris Vine, Alex King

Present (clubs):

Essex Squash and Racketball Association 2020 AGM attendance		
	Club	Representative
1	Bishop Stortford	None
2	Maldon (park Drive)	Geoff Went
3	Clements	Elaine Oddie
4	DW Fitness Brentwood	Barbara Sanderson/Colleen Shelley
5	Epping	Carey Adams
6	Frinton	None
7	Kingswood	Kerry Munn
8	Ongar	None
9	Old Brentwood	None
10	David Lloyd(Gidea Park)	None
11	Redbridge	None
12	Thurrock	Jan Lilley
13	Walthamstow	Vicky Ashworth Te Velde
14	Woodford Wells	Sue Woodhouse
15	Hamptons(Marconi)	Dawn Robinson
16	Connaught	Francis Frasdilla
17	Lexden	Steve Snelling
Clubs attending (11 of 21 Essex affiliated clubs)		

League clubs non attending:

Two Non-league clubs did not attend: Essex University, Saffron Waldon, - No apologies received

Matters Arising - There were no matters arising from 2020 minutes, **other than the teams shirts issue was still the plan to implement.** No further discussions were needed.

Adoption of Previous Minutes - There were no comments, The meeting was asked to approve the 2020 minutes:

Proposed – Elaine Oddie (Clements),

Seconder – Barbara Sanderson (DW Fitness)

Adoption of the minutes was carried unanimously.

Chairman's Report – Dave Neller

2020 was very strange and difficult year for all those that love Squash and Squash57, adults and juniors alike. Not only did it deprive us of the sport we love, but also kept us away from so many of the friends we have met through playing the game. On the positive side it made us find new ways of communicating (thanks to social media platforms), and create new and innovative ways to practice and stay fit.

ESRA was formed in 1938, and at one point in the 90's had over 70 squash facilities of which around half played in the county leagues. Ladies squash became popular in the 60's, a Ladies Committee was formed in 1966 with the help of Barbara Sanderson, and the two committees became one in 1992. I believe the decline in squash is mainly due to the refocusing of sports providers with the onset of Aerobics becoming fashionable and affordable, meaning you could fit 10 times as many paying customers in the same space that occupied two.

We now have around 25 facilities offering squash courts and we do not yet know the extent of damage that Covid19 has had on the playing community and hence demand. During 2020/21 we have tried to stay engaged and adapt to be ready for things returning to some normality. Chris Vine in particular set up regular



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coach engagement forums, and I would like to thank him for this. We also relaunched our website to make it more up to date, and kicked off several social media streams, like Instagram, Twitter etc.

The committee stayed active throughout the various lockdowns trying to keep up with the changing direction and advice from England Squash, and endeavouring to keep our sporting community up to date with the latest news on the Covid restrictions. Obviously a lot of activity stopped, such as the Inter-Club leagues and junior programs. However, we have been planning a route back and have a calendar of bounce back events planned around the county through 2021. We are always keen to support and publicise any events you may be personally involved with (like World Squash day on 9th October) so please let our media secretary Gary Nisbet know of anything you have planned.

We have also been involved in various exciting new initiatives, e.g. New Schools programmes; Active Squash Walls and Pop-up (porta) courts, all of which have a tremendous potential to showcase our sport and introduce young blood into the game. Some of this has been showcased on TV as a run up to the Commonwealth Games.

Essex is also part of the South East Regional Forum which I presently chair, and includes Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Middlesex. We meet regularly and share initiatives ideas etc. on squash development, and have been very active in supporting our coaching community during the lockdowns. It also affords us a strong presence with England Squash when it comes to future funding opportunities and support of our governing body objectives.

Over the past year we have also had the opportunity to recruit some younger members on to the committee who bring a fresh face to our activities going forward, aligned with the new era of social media, and not so set in old traditions.

On that note I would like to personally thank all our committee members for the time and work they have done voluntarily over the past year, and especially thank Barbara Sanderson who has supported and guided Essex ladies squash for over 55 years, and will be stepping down from the committee at this AGM. Barbara also achieved at least 5 world veterans titles during her years playing squash, she serves as a great example that gender and age has no boundaries, and has been an inspiration to many throughout her time on the committee, making Essex very proud.

To close, going forward we will be focusing on inclusiveness, ensuring all have the opportunity they need to participate in our wonderful sport. I wish you all a safe journey back to playing and hope to see our courts filling with eager healthy people.

Essex Development 2020 – 2021 - Chris Vine

As Dave has already observed in his Chairs report, a strange year blighted by the various lockdowns and restrictions which has inevitably affected the scope of development work in the county. This has not meant however, that nothing has happened either.

The following brief report is a summary of the main “highlights”!

- **County program managers Course** – throughout the year starting in August 2020 I attended various webinars and meetings organised by England Squash which facilitated the examination of where we (Essex Squash) are/were as a county and which areas of development would be needed to form a draft strategic plan – this was done through a simple SWOT and Local Landscape priorities and issues document – these are available for view – please email me?
- **Communication** – due to the ease of zoom use etc we have been able to improve this between Essex Coaches, squash captains and clubs reps. There were various meetings throughout the year the highlight of which was the Club Forum on Feb the 24th (16 clubs were represented and action plans discussed)
- **Bounce- Back** - Currently a mixed picture as to how many clubs are “Bouncing back” but examples of good practice can be found at Bishops Stortford, OTW, Ongar, Connaught, Woodford Wells (Essex Squash festival July) and aspirationally Walthamstow, Park Drive Maldon (just confirmed change of ownership), Lexden and Wick Lodge/Frinton – more events are planned.
- **Schools Outreach** has inevitably stalled after a strong start (Jan to March 2020) – there are plans to pick this up again in Sept through the SGO network and OTW have planned a Schools Outreach



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Workshop (How to etc) planned for August 14th designed to fully equip those who are interested. There are subsidised places available for this – please contact me or Karen Selby direct to book.

- **Essex Junior “Squash Stars”** – we have an agreement with Dunlop to provide a package (£30 each including racket, goggles, t-shirt, bag, and ball) of equipment for juniors along with a subsidised 6-week course at clubs who wish to take advantage of this. This is designed to complement schools’ outreach as a follow-on offer taking place at the local club to the schools.
- **Funding** – we have engaged with Richard Twigg of 4grants.co.uk who are assisting us to apply for the various post Covid funds etc – we have secured £1K recently from the FJS Trust to deliver an outreach program in North Essex led by our new Development recruit Vickie Prow (ex- Middlesex Development Officer) who lucky for us has recently moved to Dovercourt near Harwich.
- **Coaches** – according to a recent update (June 21) we have 110 qualified coaches in Essex – 42 of which are currently active in some capacity – although there is a concern that some are not maintaining their ES membership due to Lapsed/Out of date DBS/First Aid or Safeguarding qualifications.
- **Interactive Wall** – we are currently discussing a potential installation of this at the Connaught Club and are liaising currently with Active Essex/4 Grants/London Sport and the company direct. More news on this soon hopefully!
- **Development Officer** costs for the year - £2k (1/2 days per month)

If you would like more information on any of the above or have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me on chriskav@btinternet.com or (m) 07768 067044

Essex Ladies Barbara Sanderson Organisers-

The main county organisers for ladies’ squash were as follows: - Co-ordinator: Barbara Sanderson; League Secretary: Kerry Munn; League sub-committee:- Barbara Sanderson, Carey Adams, Val Bryant, Maureen Duke, Elaine Chubb and Dawn Robinson; County Team Managers: Sarah Neller (senior team), Michelle Higgins (over-40 team) and Jackie Gregory (over-50 team).

However scarcely any organised squash took place in England during the year (due to Covid-19 restrictions).

Essex Ladies’ League-

It was agreed at the League AGM in August 2020 that the unfinished Spring 2020 League would be terminated. No League activity has taken place since then; however we are hopeful of recommencing some league activity in Autumn 2021.

Many thanks to our League Secretary Kerry Munn, who has kept us up-to-date with the situation.

County Teams-

There was no inter-county activity in the 2020-21 season; however we understand that England Squash hopes to recommence inter-county events later in the current (2021-22) season, probably with some modifications in format.

County Closed Championship-

This did not take place in 2020-21 but is being planned for the current season hopefully in September/ October 2021 organised By Niall Engerer to be held at Woodford Wells

Other News-

** We hope to run one or two one-day fun tournaments in August or September – details to follow.

** *Whenever Covid-19 regulations allowed, Maureen Duke has organised weekly group ‘socially distanced’ coaching sessions with Dave Webster, first at Connaught and later at Woodford Wells. Many thanks to Maureen and Dave – these sessions were very much appreciated by the participants.*

** *Kerry Munn has kept in contact with Essex lady players from time to time by email, both with league captains and with the wider Essex ladies’ group.*



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*** To end on a very sad note, Norma Fulling passed away in June. Norma was an active member of the DW Fitness team; she also represented the county at Over-40 and Over-50 level and had some success in European and World Masters' Championships. She will be greatly missed.*

Juniors- Karen Selby

The squash season 2020/21 has been dramatically affected by the Covid-19 restrictions. Unfortunately, Essex Junior Squash could not deliver any of the usual county activities. All Inter-County competitions and all junior tournaments were suspended for the entire season. Clubs were closed for the majority of the time resulting in virtually no squash being played anywhere in the UK.

The Committee has held several Zoom meetings during the year and it is our hope that the new season will allow normal county activities to resume from September.

The Grand Prix Series 2019/20 was halted in March 2020 and the winners awarded their trophies over the following months.

The Grand Prix winners and runners-up from last season attended their free training squad on Saturday 3rd July 2021 with Paul Allen and Daryl Selby.

The Essex Junior Closed has been set for 4th/5th September however we await the event calendar from England Squash, as soon as it is received we will be able to plan the forthcoming programme.

The season 2021/22 is an exciting opportunity for all those involved in squash to raise the profile of the sport in the run up to the Commonwealth Games which start on 28th July 2022. Committee members have been included in initial planning opportunities and we look forward to sharing ideas and initiatives with those involved in squash across the county.

Finally, Essex Junior Squash has said goodbye to 2 great supporters of the sport.

David Harris stepped down as Chairman at the end of last season. David gave up many hours of his time over recent years and in particular he developed the Grand Prix series of beginner tournaments which have become a huge success, We would like to thank him for his hard work and dedication and wish him well for his new life in Lincolnshire.

Also stepping down at the end of this current season is Paul Allen. Paul has been an Essex County Coach for more than 10 years and has worked with players and teams across all the age ranges. He is a great coach and we will miss him but Paul has quite rightly decided to spend his 'spare' time supporting his son's footballing futures. Thank you Paul for all your hard work and expertise.

Referee & Marking - Sue Woodhouse Tel: 07949 623465 email: sueden41@yahoo.co.uk

- No refereeing workshops were run this year due to COVID and not being able to mix in groups
- Club referee award is now an online qualification on ES web site located under "courses" it is an excellent test and includes a practical test video. I would urge all clubs to encourage their members in particular the interclub league players to take this award or at least download the new rules as there are changes which have been posted to ESRA web site.
- The latest version is 2020 edition effective December 2020 VI.
- I am happy to run a workshop if people prefer face to face practical workshop if people prefer this way of learning.

Financial Report - Elaine Oddie

The accounts up until 31st May 2020 were presented on-line via a screen share and that we are still in surplus Income and expense elements were reviewed in detail (the full accounts available on request). The only expense is development funding. As there were no interclub leagues or county activities our expenditure has been very minimal.

Adoption of accounts was proposed by Vicky Ashworth Te Velde (Walthamstow)

Seconded by Carey Adams (Epping)

Adoption of the Accounts was carried unanimously



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Election of Officers - Geoff Went once again confirmed that, he would like to step down as secretary but if no volunteers then he would continue.

This year we have had two resignations for the committee Barbara Sanderson and Alex King.

Proposed 2020/2021 ESRA Committee:

Chairman & ES Council Delegate	David Neller
Treasurer and Deputy Chairman	Elaine Oddie
County Secretary	Geoff Went(volunteers?)
Junior Representative & Junior Committee Chair	Karen Selby
Referee & Marking Coordinator	Sue Woodhouse
County Development Officer & Coaching	Chris Vine
League Secretary	Geoff Went
Ladies Coordinator	Dawn Robinson
Men's Senior Captain	Gary Nisbet(co-opted)
Intercounty Coordinator	Mark Kirkman
Media Secretary	Gary Nisbet
Greg Foxon	Member
Web site	David Neller
Masters Off Peak Secretary	TBD
Racquet Ball Manager	Vacant

Election of ESRA Officers - There was some discussion and requests from the Chair for nominations to fill other vacant positions. Fortunately Gary Nisbet was prepared to take the role of Media and Dawn Robinson as Ladies Coordinator

Proposed by Kerry Munn (Kingswood); seconded by Coleen Shelley (DW Fitness)

The meeting was asked to approve the proposed ESRA committee for the coming year:

Carried unanimously

Any Other Business (AGM) –

Dawn Robinson had proposed that a mixed league would be a good idea. The thought behind this would be to enable more ladies to play. A brief discussion took place

Issues that were highlighted were for such a league:-

- 1] some clubs would not entertain such a league
- 2] there would be more court time used to the detriment of the members at that club.

It was therefore agreed that the Ladies and Men's league secretaries would canvass their captains to see if there was sufficient interest in playing such a league.

Men's League Meeting

The plan is to have a meeting via Zoom in two weeks' time for the Men's league – 9th August 2021

Meeting closed at 8:41