

BIDDENDEN SQUASH CLUB AGM
WEDNESDAY 14TH MAY 2025 19:30

Attendees: Tom White, Tom Swain, Lisa West, Tony Scott, Paula Jirgena, Aimee Butler, Harry Goldsmith, Rupert Dodd, Jessica West, Chris Gorman, Dan Goldsmith, Tanya Goldsmith, Polly Coxeter, Guy Pullen, James Ross, Alison Graham, Mark Crichton, Victoria Tomkins, David Robson, Stuart Welch, Dale Earle, Francis Elliot, Ben Davies, Shelley Kerr, Sarah Boxall, Neil Bolton, Karen.

Apologies: John Marshall, Jo Davies, Tim Davies, Charlie Stow.

AGENDA

1. Written Reports (see below).
2. Approval of last year's accounts (sent prior).

Approved By: Tom White.

3. Membership Fee 2025/26 Proposal.

Proposed: Tom White, unanimous acceptance of new fees.

4. Election of Officers to the Club 2025/26.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS
For the 2025/26 year

Chairman - Tom White

Nominated: Harry Goldsmith
Seconded: Tania Goldsmith

Bar Manager - Paula Jirgena

Nominated: Dan Goldsmith
Seconded: Lisa West

Membership Secretary - Tony Scott

Nominated: Lisa West
Seconded: Sarah Boxall

Ladies Representative – Aimee Butler

Nominated: Polly Coxeter
Seconded: Tanya Goldsmith

Club / Social Secretary – Jo Davies

Nominated: Sarah Boxall
Seconded: Tom White

Committee Member – Charlie Stow

Nominated: Tania Goldsmith
Seconded: Paula Jirgena

Treasurer – Lisa West

Nominated: Paula Jirgena
Seconded: Tom White

Young Adult Representative – Tom Swain

Nominated: Tom White
Seconded: Stuart Welch

Director of Squash - Tom Swain

Nominated: Tom White
Seconded: Harry Goldsmith

5. Any Other Business.

Website now live!

Feedback/Suggestion forms soon – for large and smaller reps and maintenance jobs etc.

MEETING CLOSED AT: 08.00

WRITTEN REPORTS COMMITTEE 2024/2025

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I recently met some squash players from a club in Sheffield. Their club has six very nice courts and is located in the city centre, with a population of around 500,000 on the doorstep. However, they told me that their club has 180 members. "Is that all?", I scoffed (we have 280 from a population in the immediate vicinity of around 2,500). I asked about ladies squash – pretty well non-existent. Likewise juniors. They had never even heard of MATS. The conversation made me feel incredibly proud and fortunate to be part of Biddenden Squash Club. That was so even after they told me that their top player's Squash Levels score is 42,000...

As our little club enters its 50th year, it continues to be a thriving hub of activity and community in our corner of the Weald. As you will see from the reports below, court usage is up, the many and varied tournaments and competitions we run or participate in are consistently well-attended, the club's finances are solid and the club remains as popular as ever. We should all share in that feeling of pride and good fortune I mention above.

It is not all plain sailing though. The club's infrastructure is ageing and in need of investment. We had some major issues with the heating this year. Those are hopefully now resolved (thank you to those who were involved in getting the work done, and to all members for your patience) – at least for the time being – but we have work to do to keep the club fit for purpose. The Committee is focused on identifying and addressing the priorities, while also ensuring that we do not over-extend ourselves financially.

We are also in the early stages of renegotiating the lease of the club premises with the parish council. All being well, that should lead to greater autonomy for the club. It is likely to be fairly hard work to get the deal done, but we will persevere.

This is a big year for Biddenden Squash Club – for it to continue to be so popular and to generate such terrific community spirit after as long as 50 years is nothing short of remarkable. We should all celebrate that, and I encourage as many members as possible to join us at the party in June. It promises to be a great event.

But first – bring on the MATS! And remember: squash is fun!

Proposed committee for 2025/2026

Chairman: Tom White
Director of Squash: Tom Swain
Treasurer: Lisa West
Membership Secretary: Tony Scott
Ladies Rep: Aimee Butler
Bar Manager: Paula Jirgena
Club / Social Secretary: Jo Davies
Committee Member: Charlie Stow

Tom White, Chairman
tomwhite@biddendensquash.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY REPORT

Over the past year, our club has experienced a slight decline in membership, with the total now standing at 280 members. This reduction is partly due to the re-opening of the Red Lion and a resulting drop in social memberships.

Additionally, there are a number of "active members" who may have paid their fees at the bar but were subsequently deactivated in the system, as the payments could not be matched to specific individuals. These members have not come forward to query the issue.

Going forward, if you choose to pay your membership fees at the bar, please ensure you inform the bar staff of your name at the time of payment. Alternatively, you can email me with the date and time of your payment so that I can correctly allocate it to your account.

Looking ahead to the forthcoming membership year (July 2025-June 2026) the committee are proposing to increase membership fees. This proposal has not been taken lightly and has been the subject of careful consideration. With rising operational and maintenance costs, it is necessary for membership to adequately contribute to the continued running and development of the club.

This would be the first direct increase in membership fees for some time, and every effort has been made to keep it as modest as possible.

The proposal is also to restructure the current Family Membership into a more flexible Household Membership, based on a percentage scale. The first member would pay the full fee, and subsequent household members would receive a reduced rate. Full details of this will be proposed by the Treasurer at the AGM. Any questions can be discussed with either myself or Lisa.

The new membership rates are proposed as follows:

Adult Playing Member: £145

Young Adult (18-25): £75

Junior (under 18): £30

Social Member: £20

Household Membership: Structured on a percentage scale (details to follow)

Tony Scott, Membership Secretary

membership@biddendensquash.co.uk

TREASURER'S REPORT

Hopefully you have had a chance to look at the accounts that were emailed out a few weeks ago, to all members of the club, as well as being displayed in the bar.

In summary, the club has broken even this year but remains in a healthy financial position.

We have seen a drop in bar sales this year, mainly due to the re-opening of the local village pub. Membership income has increased due to the continuing influx of new members, despite the drop in social members, and in-line the light income has increased at an almost identical level. Total income for the year amounted to £79k, compared to £88k last year.

Despite the continued increase in bar prices, the bar costs have fallen during the year, in-line with the drop in bar sales due to the re-opening of the pub.

The gross profit was £47k for the year, being very similar to the last couple of years.

Some other costs include:

- Computer Expenses – £890 has been invested into our new website ... coming very soon! This will include new online features such as; membership renewals/applications, merchandise purchases, bookings and direct enquiries, plus lots more information about our wonderful club and it's past and future events and successes.
- Repairs & Maintenance - We have had some unplanned maintenance work to tackle this year, as well as some larger maintenance costs that we had decided to carryout, all totalling £5.3k. The unplanned work was on the court fans and boiler, with planned improvements mainly to the electrics and radiators.
- Wages & Pensions – Rises in the National Living Wage and Auto Enrolment requirements for pensions, have impacted these costs, totalling £23k during the year.
- Bar Furniture - We have funded the replacement of the new, and more modern, furniture in the bar area at a cost of £5.2k.
- In General - The costs of pretty much everything, from the bar stock, heating and wages, have continued to go up considerably again this year, following similar increases last year.

Despite the above, the Balance Sheet remains in a healthy position, with reserves of over £21k at 31 March 2025, being similar to last year. The bank balances total £22.5k on 31 March 2025.

Last year the decision was to maintain the membership prices and for the light fees to remain the same. There was an unavoidable increase in bar prices, because of an increase in direct costs to the club.

It will be the proposal of the committee to again freeze the light fees. We will be reviewing the bar prices as and when these need revising, as a direct result of any external price rises. The membership prices and structures have been reviewed and consequently the committee will propose an increase (for the first time, in many years) annually from 1 July 2025, with changes

to the structure of the "Family" membership to a new "Household" membership, providing a more flexible and fair structure. More details of which will be shared at the AGM itself.

Looking forward, we plan to further invest in our club and to make improvements in a number of much needed areas. In order to be able to do this, we need the increased financial support, as well as the expertise and resources of our members.

I would personally like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to my fellow committee, past and present, who volunteer their time and for their constant hard work to benefit our club and our members. A big thank you to the staff for running the bar and to all the people that also volunteer their time to get involved in running the events etc at the club, both at one-off events and those that are run on a regular basis. Lastly, a big thanks to everyone for making the club such a fantastic and welcoming place to be a part of. I thank you all.

Lisa West, Treasurer

lisa@biddendensquash.co.uk

CLUB / SOCIAL SECRETARY REPORT

At the end of last year, the committee sadly said goodbye to Caroline who decided to step away from her role as secretary. Caroline had been involved with the committee for 10 years as social secretary, bar manager and then club secretary as well as overseeing other roles such as maintenance, social events etc. The decision for Caroline to leave the committee was not an easy one but she wanted to prioritise more time with her family and her growing music business. Thank you Caroline for everything you have done over the past 10 years and keeping us organised, we wish you well for the future.

We welcomed Charlie Stow to the committee who has been instrumental in overseeing various maintenance jobs around the club including a major headache – the boiler / heating. Also, thank you Charlie for all the research into new bar furniture and for organising the purchase / delivery. Aside from maintenance Charlie is responsible for liaising and running all the team events with other clubs so, again thank you for all of the effort you put in to make this a success.

Aimee Butler also joined the committee initially as the Young Adult Representative but has now taken on the role of Ladies Rep whilst I am covering the club secretary position. Aimee is a great role model for the club, getting involved with lots of events as well as taking a Monday night ladies session and also coaching some of our juniors during the week.

First Aid and Safeguarding

In August 2024 Tom Swain, Caroline Swain, Lisa West, Jo Davies, Rachel Oatway and Ben Davies completed Emergency First Aid at Work and Safeguarding Courses.

Social Events

Many thanks, as always, to everyone that volunteers to organise and run social events throughout the year. Last year we had the Family Party with games, squash, bouncy castle, BBQ, awards & disco, a Back to Squash event, Shelley's Bingo (great prizes!), 70's disco and the Christmas Party.

Going forward we have our Big Summer Bash on the 28th June to celebrate our club being open for 50 years, what an achievement! We are looking forward to seeing as many past and present members as possible.

The club also has various tournaments coming up including MATS which is always well attended and great fun, as well as the club handicap. Again, please either sign up to play or come to the club and support.

If you would like to organise / run a social event please email info@biddendensquash.co.uk for the calendar availability, or speak to any of the committee at the club.

Website

Thank you to Dan and Tanya Goldsmith who have been working extremely hard on updating the Biddenden Squash Club website. It looks amazing and has all the information you need, including details on membership, coaching, tournaments / events etc as well as photo galleries of past events.

Lastly, I would like to say thank you to the committee, bar staff and all the members for making this such a fantastic club.

Jo Davies, Club / Social Secretary (outgoing Caroline Swain)

info@biddendensquash.co.uk

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DIRECTOR OF SQUASH REPORT

Court usage for Individual member bookings has steadily increased over the last year with an increase of just under 1.6% following a 3% increase the year before.

1.9% increase across all time slots (0840-2120) across a 7 day week – (increase 4 years running).

2% increase in the peak time slots (1720-2040 on week nights).

In the peak slots there has been an increase in individual members bookings where as team/events/club coaching has a small decrease.

The club supports a number of sessions across a weekly basis and this feeds into the healthy situation the club is currently in. The table below has a breakdown of these sessions

Type of Session	Number of Sessions per week	Number of Participants
Racket Tots – parent and toddler sessions – 2-4 year olds	4	34 different children have done racket tots at the club for at least one term this year
Rapid Rackets – beginners squash sessions	3	39 children in the last year have completed at least one term
Junior Squash – Year 3 upwards – this includes the Young adult session for 17-24 year olds	7 (1 extra session)	50+ this number has remained steady compared to last year due to limited spaces
Monday Night Ladies and Thursdays	5 (4 sessions on a Monday & 1 on a Thursday)	Over 30 ladies, have attended sessions since September, a number of new players as a result of coming to Racket Tots/ children attending junior sessions
Saturday Morning Training	2	Over 30 different players have attended, with a limit of 16 per week for the squash sessions (8 per session)
Squaffee Morning	1 session on a Friday	Has a number of regular attendees and some less frequent drop ins, a number of new faces have joined in as well
Greenfields School	1 sessions per week for 2 terms	Children from Greenfields school have attended the sessions as part of their PE curriculum. 7 new children on court playing
Mount Lodge Care Farm	1 coaching session and 2/3 playing sessions per week	Mount Lodge have been coming in and participating in sessions, once a week with TS subsidised by England Squash, other sessions led by B.Davies. 20 young people and adults with a range of additional needs on court playing

Wednesday Night MATS (May-July 2024) and Team Squash and Events

The take up for MATS has been popular with players registering to play, a number of new faces to the format again in addition to our regular supporters of the events.

Thank you to Charlie Stow for running the teams in the winter and for some MATS matches against other clubs as well. We have also had a return to the Kent Junior Squash Leagues, being able to get 3 teams out across division 3 & 4 with all players performing well. Thanks to parents and Aimee for supporting and running these teams.

Box Leagues

Currently over 60 (consistently 60-70 across the year) players in the leagues across the club leagues with completion of matches consistently being 70%+. To compare, a 5 court club in a city I recently visited only had 9 leagues with 45 players involved, and they were pleased with their numbers!

We now have the monthly Junior Box Leagues Super 7s which has 16+ players each month, thank you to Karl and Amanda Jacobs for running this on Saturday afternoons and the team of parents that support, plus Paula and Flick for having the bar area open for any refreshments.

Club Tournaments

We have been able to complete another full season of tournaments meaning we will be adding some new names and some familiar ones to the club honours boards. The recent Club Closed competitions were well supported by players and spectators with an awesome afternoon of finals. We also resurrected the Under 13 competition for the first time in a number of years, due to an increase in interest.

<u>Tournament</u>	<u>Winner</u>
Mens Closed	Chris Gorman
Ladies Closed	Polly Coxeter
Junior Closed U18	Jack Hammond
Junior Closed U13	Zachary West
Mens Plate	Tom White
Ladies Plate	Paula Jirgena
Junior Plate U18	Michael Sargent
Junior Plate U13	Baxter Corkan
Club Handicap	Polly Coxeter
Club Handicap Plate	Andy Avison
Ladies Handicap	Polly Coxeter
Ladies Handicap Plate	Chloe Brockman
Veterans Handicap	Mark Crichton
Veterans Handicap Plate	Paul Chadder
Junior Handicap U18	Earle Pullen
Junior Handicap U13	Zachary West
Junior Handicap Plate U18	Alfie Swain
Junior Handicap Plate U13	Vladimir Maiolanyk

Tom Swain, Director of Squash

tom@biddendensquash.co.uk

BAR MANAGER'S REPORT

2024/2025 season for the bar has been another busy one. The year just gone has been a clearer reflection on the bar in terms of our regular members as the local pub reopened meaning we lost some social members. This meant the bar did not do as well as it did the previous year, but across the recent years we still performed very strong. Some of our busiest days included the Club Closed Tournament finals, SRC 24hr Sportathon in partnership with Friends of John Mayne, the Summer BBQ and our 70s Disco party. Thank you to all who put in their time and efforts to contribute towards these events.

Earlier in the year we needed to increase the bar prices after a long period of them remaining the same. We initially saw an increase in the takings, however, with the continuous rise of supplier costs, increase in overall cost of living and minimum wage going up, we had to make the decision to do a secondary increase. Hopefully I managed to keep increase at a minimum and you have not noticed a major change in the price of your favourite beverage.

This year we also finally had a slight glow up – our new bar furniture. I would personally like to thank Charlie Stow for his efforts in researching best options for the bar. I think you can all agree with me that the bar now looks a lot smarter, and we actually have more than 3 chairs to sit on! We're hoping to do some slight cosmetic touch ups and repairs over the next year, so watch this space!

Following requests, this year saw a new partnership blossom – we started selling the local McCanns Brewery beer, both on tap and available in cans. We have had the Speed Wobble and Opus on offer and will be doing a site visit to the brewery to potentially increase our offering.

This year the committee said goodbye to Caroline Swain, after 10 years of selflessly helping the club improve and become the place it is now. Caroline worked hard to turn the bar around to what it is today which made me joining the committee as a bar manager very easy. So, a big personal thank you to Caroline for all her hard work.

Finally, a big thank you to Flick and Tanya for always being reliable and working hard to make our bar a very special and welcoming place. We are very lucky to have such a lovely space to enjoy a drink or two after squash. Thank you to each and every one of you who take their time to visit the bar as without you we would not be able to keep the place running. So, cheers to another exciting year ahead!

Paula Jirgena, Bar Manager
bar@biddendensquash.co.uk

LADIES REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Firstly, sincere thanks to all who have contributed to the continued success of Biddenden Ladies' Squash. Your support—whether as players, parents, or members—has been instrumental in the growth and strength of this ever-expanding section of our club.

Our women's coaching programme remains strong under the leadership of Tom with help from Lorna and Aimee. These sessions are consistently in high demand, with waiting lists for each group, and provide an inclusive and supportive environment for women to build confidence, develop skills, and enjoy the sport.

Membership among women and girls is at an all-time high, with 81 currently involved in club sessions and activities. Each Monday evening sees approximately 30 women participating across four sessions, with additional numbers attending the Thursday night ladies' sessions. Participation continues into the weekend, with nearly 10 women regularly attending Saturday morning sessions.

Female achievement in club tournaments has also reached new heights. In a historic win, Polly became the first-ever female to claim victory in the Club Handicap Tournament. The 2024 tournaments saw strong female representation and success, with Polly winning both the Club Close and the Ladies' Handicap Final, Rachel winning the Close Plate, and Keira securing the Handicap Plate.

MATS continues to be a key driver of female participation, with 15 out of 44 participants being women last year. This positive trend has continued into the current year, with 17 of the 47 members now female.

Junior girls' participation is also thriving. Many are now actively competing in box leagues, local tournaments, and representing the club in Kent Squash Leagues. Their enthusiasm and dedication are a testament to the strength of our junior development pathway.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support and enthusiasm. The future of Biddenden Ladies' Squash is bright, and we look forward to continuing this positive momentum together.

Aimee Butler, Ladies Representative

aimeebutler13@gmail.com



Biddenden Squash Club

Membership Fee 2025/26 Proposal

Individual Membership Fees

<u>Type</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>New</u>
Honorary	-	-
Social (over 18 years)	15.00	20.00
Junior (under 18 years)	25.00	30.00 *
Young Adult (18-25 years)	65.00	75.00
Adult (over 25 years)	125.00	145.00
Family / Household:	200.00	see ->

Household Membership Fees

	<u>New</u>
2 x Adults	217.50
2 x Adults & Junior	232.50
2 x Adults & 2 Juniors	247.50
2 x Adults & 1 Young Adult	255.00
2 x Adults & 3 x Juniors	262.50
2 x Adults & 2 x Young Adults & Junior	307.50

* **All Junior memberships must be accompanied by at least a Social membership.**
(for Health & Safety requirements)