

Highbury Fields Tennis Steering Group

Meeting: Friday 27th April, 7pm, Highbury Barn

Present: Jill McLaughlin, Hitesh Soma, Jon-Paul Mbaka, Manu Ducrocq, Nigel Billen, Sally Kinnes, Simon Moore, Viren Soma, Wendy Proudfoot

Agenda:

- Minutes
- Matters arising – not elsewhere on agenda
- Terms of reference (draft attached)
- Feedback on the new booking system
- Response to the council's position on block booking

Matters arising – not elsewhere on agenda

While the steering group has not had a formal response from ITDG following our email regarding booking arrangements for club team practice etc, it was noted that various individuals (not on the steering group) had received responses to their own emails and letters. Some of these responses had been circulated to members of the group. It was suggested that several aspects of the replies were of potential concern, in particular reference to previous booking arrangements and their implementation by the hut, but it was agreed that the steering group would wait before addressing these until it had a formal response of its own.

Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Response to the council's position on block booking

Sally said he had been in contact with Dan Jarvis who was aware of the delay in replying to us but was awaiting council sign off on replies to all the submissions and would reply in due course. He was also preparing an amended set of minutes of the meeting held with the ITDG which would reflect changes asked for by members of the Steering Group.

The group agreed that it was disappointing that we had not had a response and it was suggested that we report back to the council about progress being made to formalise the Steering Group and at the same time to press for a response.

Terms of reference

Jill presented the draft of terms of reference for the steering group which had been put together by Jill in liaison with Simon and circulated with the agenda for this meeting.

As background we recapped that we hoped that formalising the steering group would allow us to play a part not just in the management of tennis on the fields but also in drawing up the management system that the council eventually adopted.

In general the group was happy with the direction the draft was taking

There was broad discussion of the wording and an amended version taking in some of these suggestions will be presented at the next meeting.

With regard the purpose of the group, while agreeing with the statement as written, it was agreed that the primary purpose was to provide a means of giving a voice to the users of the courts (whether they be coaches, players or organisations). Wendy suggested that part of the purpose should also to be to be seen as the custodian of expertise and best practice. After

discussion, it was felt that this was better expressed as an aim or principle and agreement that schemes like clubmark should be actively supported.

Simon asked that the reference to represented groups followed the list submitted to the council in our last correspondence. It was agreed to do this but also agreed that the list should not be seen as definitive and that as a principle the steering group was there to represent all users of the courts now and in the future.

We agreed that the group should promote itself to other groups – such as the Highbury Fields Association and the Highbury Forum – as a body that should be consulted on any issue which might affect tennis on the fields. Sally, a member of the Forum, was asked to liaise.

We briefly discussed membership and the relationship between a larger body of general members and the Steering Group committee. No firm conclusions were come to but the following is noted:

That the organising committee should have guaranteed representation of key users groups and that it was appropriate that some of these groups could be represented by more than one person. So, for instance, coaches would always be represented and it could be agreed that they should always have two or more representatives. Having a representative from the booking hut was welcomed as an idea, but we wondered if it were possible for employees of Greenspace or other bodies involved in the management of the tennis facilities would be allowed to join the steering group. It was agreed that we should ask Greenspace/ITDG for advice.

The summer tournament (June 24th) organised by Wendy might be a good opportunity to launch the new constitution for the group and perhaps to hold open meeting to publicise the group.

The possibility of a nominal membership fee was discussed though not agreed on.

Jill recapped the proposals for decision making, ensuring quorate meetings, attendance and organising responsibilities. It was stressed that these discussions initially relate to the interim period while the constitution of the steering group was being formulated.

With that proviso in mind, we asked for volunteers for interim chair and interim secretary to cover the next six months. Jill and Nigel were appointed for post of chair and secretary respectively.

New representation on the Steering group

Wendy and Simon made the case for an additional person on the group to represent the women who had written to the council about court bookings. There was useful discussion about whether this was about representation for women who play in the club and whether Wendy already represent these interests with her club and women's team coach hat on, or whether this was representation for a wider group of female players.

Nigel thought that purely gender specific representation wasn't necessary, whereas specific representation for a women's team or a men's team was helpful. Simon explained that the men's group, though playing in matches organised by the club, didn't necessarily see themselves as a club group and the same could be said about the women.

The Steering Group concluded, that though there were overlaps of representation and some lack of clarity about how the club teams and women's and men's training sessions fitted together,

there was clearly a substantial body of female players who were unhappy at changes on the fields. If they didn't feel adequately represented by the current members of the committee we would welcome someone to represent them at future meetings. As Wendy had left the meeting prior to the end of the discussion Simon undertook to brief Wendy and to discuss and agree a process of electing a representative from that group.

The group went on to discuss the need to establish principles for representation on the Steering Group committee as part of the process of drawing up the constitution. Everyone agreed that current representation was not necessarily an indicator of future representation.

Feedback on the new booking system

With no time to discuss details of how the new system was operating it was agreed that we would collate views, comments and suggestions and send them to the council. Jill asked these to be sent to her or Nigel by Friday May 4th 2012

AOB

We continue to search for the most convenient time for a meeting and the next meeting was scheduled for **Monday May 21st, 8pm**