

**YORKSHIRE LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION (YLTA)
Annual General Meeting on Monday 5 December 2022**

Minutes of the 129th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Yorkshire Lawn Tennis Association, held at Thorpe Park Hotel, Leeds and via Teams on 5 December 2022, commencing at 7.00pm

Present:

President	Geoff Newton
Chairman	John Crowther
Treasurer	Ian Hargreaves

Councillors	Angela Crossley, Nicola Mooney, Zsuzsi Puskas, Jess Redfearn, Sue Stent, Peter Vann, Adrian Waite	
Staff	Alison Steel (County Administrator), Jess Redfearn (Project Administrator), Ann Rushworth (Initiative Administrator)	
Trustees	Stephen Freegard, John Ramsbottom, Peter Wilkes BEM	
Vice Presidents	Christine Dalton, Chris Day, Wendy Hurworth, Robert Lamb BEM, Karen Mitchell, Steve McLoughlin, Liz Wilson	
Patrons and Life Patrons		
Other Attendees	Lorraine Crowther, Sam Foakes, Rod Macaulay, Valerie Newton, Dot Ramsbottom, Paul Sheard, Gavin Sutcliffe	
Representatives from Registered Venues	Barbara Macaulay	Almscliffe TC
	Antony Eastes	Beckfoot and Bingley TC
	Pete Smith	Boston Spa TC
	Shaun Pinchbeck	Bubwith TC
	Trevor Stent*	Chapel Allerton LTC
	Stuart Hurworth	Eskdale School TC
	Gordon Milne	Harrogate Racquets Club
	Nigel Bentley	Harrogate Spa TC
	Don Stewart*	Heaton T&SC
	Ian Hargreaves**	Knaresborough King James TC
	Brian Smith*	Linton TC
	Jean Lamb	Mexborough TC
	Tawona Mayo	Mirfield TC
	Chris French*	Pocklington TC
	Sally Bickerton	Rawdon LTC
	Lauren Whitaker	Roundhay TC
	Martina Daly	Rustlings LTC
	Patrick Bywater	Sandal LTC
	Sue Jones	Shadwell TC
	Dee Nolan & Gary Saunders	Starbeck TC
	Claire Wood	Stocksbridge TC
	Anita Hyde	Thornhill TC
	Adrian Waite*	Wakefield TC
	Ann Rushworth	Wellholme TC
	Steve Jones	Wetherby Castlegarth TC
	Caroline Harding & Paul Hardy	Whitkirk TC

Yorkshire representatives with additional roles

* Also Vice Presidents or YLTA Councillors

**** Also Vice President and YLTA Councillor**

Mr Geoff Newton welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the 129th YLTA AGM including the online guests. Mr Newton highlighted the significance of this meeting which sees the Yorkshire Lawn Tennis Association (YLTA) transition to Yorkshire Tennis Ltd. The YLTA was established in 1884 and is 138 years old and has a fantastic history and many achievements including being crowned this year as County Cup Champions for the first time ever!

1. Apologies for Absence:

Councillors	Jan Hornby, Carolyn Rothwell
Trustees	
Vice Presidents	Philip Brook, Joyce Howden Mike Hann, Simon Ickringill, Pauline Longbottom, Sue Mappin, Ken Sainty, Colin Tuffs
Registered Venues	Megan Hutchinson Batley TC Laura Molloy Holmfirth Parish Church TC Margaret Fenwick Northallerton TC Sylvia Cooke Pudsey TC Diane Hutchinson Ripon TC Shirley Jones Slazenger Sports & Social Club Angela Horsfall Thongsbridge TC Suzanne Oulton Todmorden LTC Phil Leahy Westfields TC
Patrons and Life Patrons	David Armitage OBE, Jo Smedley
Other Apologies	Roger Howden

2. Minutes of the 128th AGM, held on 6 December 2021

The Minutes of the 128th Annual General Meeting were accepted as an accurate record.

Mr Chris Day proposed the approval of the minutes which was seconded by Ms Angela Crossley.

There were no abstentions or objections and the minutes were accepted on a show of hands.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Address

Mr John Crowther started by thanking everyone for attending the YLTA 2022 AGM and confirmed that this would be the last meeting of the Association.

Mr Crowther confirmed that he will be stepping down after this meeting as he has reached his maximum term of office as laid down in the YLTA Rules.

Mr Crowther acknowledged the sad passing of a number of individuals who had contributed greatly to Yorkshire Tennis in past years and confirmed the Annual Report details the careers of Barry Harpin, Mike Rogers, John Forster, Audrey Mitchell and Evelyn Hustwith all of who will be remembered for their selfless devotion to the Association.

Mr Crowther left his role as LTA Chief Executive in 2006 and had established a number of friendships in Yorkshire Tennis and in 2014 Mr John Ramsbottom invited

Mr Crowther to help the YLTA. Mr Crowther joined the Management Committee in April 2014 and was elected as Chairman in January 2015 and acknowledged that he has been supported by a great team which has seen a settled Management Committee over the past six years.

Mr Crowther acknowledged that he has served alongside three great Presidents Mr Bob Lamb, Mr Chris Day and Mr Geoff Newton and has enjoyed constructive and cordial relationships which he is sure will continue under the new Chair of Yorkshire Tennis Limited (YTL).

Mr Crowther highlighted that Corporate Governance change process which has been ongoing since 2019 driven by the LTA. In the first instance the Association experienced changes to the way in which Wimbledon tickets were allocated and distributed both at county and club level. Due to the Pandemic, this year was the first time the new ticketing system was tested and unfortunately there were some pretty major problems however it is hoped the logistic issues will be resolved for 2023. The LTA embarked on a review of its own Governance and that of the County Associations over a year ago. The review was driven by a desire to attract £20m of public funding to update parks tennis court provision. Sport England requires all National Governing Bodies to have minimum standards and what that meant was that the LTA Council ceased to be the ultimate decision making body and has been replaced by the LTA Board. The LTA established the Development Tennis Advisory Group (DTAG) who developed a framework for County Association's to align. Mr Crowther confirmed that in addition, County Associations were asked to review their legal status and the LTA suggested some form of legal identity through incorporation. Mr Crowther confirmed that Mr Don Stewart and Mr Ian Hargreaves worked alongside him and after taking tax and legal advice, the Management Committee were advised to adopt a 'company limited by guarantee status' which was agreed. Yorkshire Tennis Limited has been set up and is ready to start operating once the YLTA has been dissolved and the LTA membership has changed over. Once this process is complete YTL will be compliant with the new Governance Framework. Mr Crowther confirmed that Yorkshire Tennis no longer has a Council but does have a Board who will be the ultimate decision making body, however it is recognised that member clubs and venues must be kept in the picture and be able to contribute to consultations and policy decisions.

A further requirement is that no person can sit on the Management Committee or Board longer than nine years and this will result in the loss of experience and knowledge not only in Yorkshire, but right across the country.

Mr Crowther made those present aware that the LTA have reviewed how funding is allocated to the counties through DTAG. The new system is based on the size of the county and the number of registered clubs and this has resulted in Yorkshire being offered £90,000 a year over three years which compares to the £78,000 received previously from Yorkshire venues in addition to £5,000 for county training.

The LTA had asked the YLTA to sign the new Funding Agreement by a date in November, but given the YLTA was scheduled to be dissolved this wasn't appropriate and it should be a Yorkshire Tennis Ltd decision.

In conclusion Mr Crowther confirmed that there are significant changes ahead and given there will no longer be a Yorkshire Tennis Council in place how we communicate with our members clubs and support them in the future is a matter for the new Board.

Yorkshire Tennis advertised for a new Chair in the summer and Mr Crowther was very pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Steve Jones the outgoing Chair of Wetherby LTC. Mr Jones is already actively involved and Mr Crowther feels confident that he will do a fantastic job.

Mr Day through the Initiative Committee introduced the new LTA mandated partners scheme with great success. This year saw sponsorship fees amounting to approximately £129,000.

Thanks were recorded to Mr Day who stepped in and took over the YLTA Chair role in September following Mr Crowther's bout of ill health. Mr Crowther confirmed that

along with his other Yorkshire responsibilities Mr Day has had a huge workload and has been extremely busy and his selfless help has been very much appreciated. Mr Crowther made the meeting aware that after nine years Mr Hargreaves our Treasurer is standing down. Mr Stewart and Ms Carolyn Rothwell have also decided to stand down and Yorkshire Tennis is indebted to each one of them.

Mr Crowther gave thanks to Mrs Alison Steel who is retiring as Administrator early in the New Year when a suitable replacement has been found.

There are also a number of senior volunteers who are retiring, Mr Peter Wilkes who has done 50 years' service with the YLTA along with our other Trustees, Mr Stephen Freegard and Mr John Ramsbottom. Mr Crowther thanked them for all their support. Mrs Liz Wilson has also decided to retire and Mr Crowther said that at one time or another she seems to have coached every talented player in Yorkshire!

Mr Crowther gave thanks to all YLTA Councillors for their many varied contributions and very much hopes they will continue in the new sub committee structure adopted by Yorkshire Tennis Limited.

There are three keys to the success of the YLTA – great people, great people and great people!

Mr Crowther commented that Yorkshire has been very lucky attracting some amazing volunteers who have contributed innovation, focus on improving the quality of everything we do, commitment, time and passion to our cause.

Yorkshire Tennis Limited will need more good people of whatever age and background and Mr Crowther asked those present to please spread the word.

In 2017 Mr Crowther reported that the YLTA spent £75,742 on performance tennis. In 2022 Yorkshire spent £152,00 on performance tennis.

Mr Crowther reminded those present that one of our principal objectives was to be in the top 3 of the County Cup Leaderboard at the year end. The Leaderboard represents aggregate results for eighteen different tournaments starting with the 9&Under age group and includes Winter and Summer County Cups and the Over 35's age group.

The Regional Player Development Centre (RPDC) was established at John Charles Centre for Sport (JCCS) four years ago and this year the coaching management and the RPDC was integrated under one person, Mr Richard Crabtree with support from Mr Elliot Chang and Mr Sam Salt. This now gives a seamless pathway for performance players in the county. This development and a plan to appoint and develop county coaches will be fundamental to securing the future of Yorkshire as one of the top performing counties over the next ten years.

Mr Crowther provided an overview of just how tense and close the County Leaderboard was prior to the Winter County Cup fixtures.

The performance of both teams was outstanding and Mr Crowther said how proud he was of the Captains, Mr Steve McLoughlin and Ms Jo Craven and of course all the players. To win overall, huge credit must be given to Mrs Karen Mitchell, Mr Crabtree and all the team captains and coaches and it is a great note on which to retire.

Mr Crowther believes that in order to achieve our ambition teamwork is the very foundation on which the success is built and Yorkshire must spread its net as wide as possible in attracting coaches and players of all backgrounds.

The County Closed Championships were staged at JCCS and the Seniors competition ran at Huddersfield TC. Mr Crowther gave thanks to Mr Dave Kitchen who has successfully grown the event in both size and stature. Congratulations to all the winners should also be recorded who we hope to see again in future years.

Mr Crowther confirmed there were twelve LTA county award winners listed on page twenty seven of the Annual Report and our congratulations go to the University of Sheffield who were national winners of the University category. Both Mrs Mitchell and Mr Day were presented with their Meritorious Service Award by the LTA President and we should also congratulate them on this outstanding achievement.

Padel is taking off and quite a few clubs now have courts including Ripon, Skipton and Rawdon with projects well under way at six further clubs in Yorkshire.

In preparing this speech Mr Crowther felt he should list Yorkshire's achievements during his time in office, however the list became too long!!

The standouts were the establishment of the RPDC in Leeds which has become a beacon of excellence, an inspirational training facility that underpins the drive for players to reach their full potential. The Yorkshire Advantage scheme was ahead of its time and the Ilkley Trophy is a beacon for top professional tennis in the north. Finally, the partnership with the North Region is exemplar.

Running Tennis at all levels is a people's business be it at club or county level and without volunteers there would be no organised tennis, so Mr Crowther paid thanks to all for giving up their time.

Mr Crowther made one final thank you to his wife Lorraine who has put up with absences and time spent on the phone or behind the computer.

At the end of the day all of us are only temporary guardians of the game hoping we leave it, our clubs, our coaches, our players in the best position possible, for new players to enjoy.

In conclusion Mr Crowther said it had been a privilege to be part of Yorkshire Tennis and under Mr Jones' leadership the future is bright.

Mr Newton confirmed that Mrs Mitchell had agreed to propose the adoption of the Annual Report which was seconded by Mr Stewart.

There were no abstentions or objections and the Annual Report was adopted.

Mrs Zsuzsi Puskas asked that a huge thank you be passed to all involved in county tennis on behalf of all the parents.

Mr Newton said that Mr Crowther's report demonstrated just how many people are involved and how they take that responsibility seriously and there is no doubt that Yorkshire Tennis has had an outstanding leader.

5. To receive, consider and adopt the independently examined financial statements of the Association for the previous year, and the Treasurers report as to the financial position of the Association

Mr Hargreaves referenced the financial statement circulated ahead of the meeting which is also available in the Annual Report.

The Financial Statement has been examined and approved by the Independent Examiner, Mr Rod Macaulay.

Mr Hargreaves confirmed that the Financial Statement is for the year ending 30 September 2022 and confirmed that the Yorkshire Lawn Tennis Association will incorporate as Yorkshire Tennis Ltd in December 2022.

A new incorporated company, The Yorkshire Tennis Foundation, has been established to hold funds donated by benefactors of tennis which are not immediately required for the running of Yorkshire Tennis Ltd. These funds will be used for future support of clubs, coaches, and players in the county by Yorkshire Tennis Ltd.

Mr Hargreaves confirmed that the Balance Sheet shows net assets at the end of the financial year of £612,551 and £246,118 of the balance is out on loan to twenty three venues. Consideration of further loan applications was halted at the onset of the pandemic. The loan fund is replenished by the repayment of loan instalments, currently at the rate of about £23,000 every six months.

Mr Hargreaves confirmed that Yorkshire Tennis is holding £17,500 on behalf of the Leeds RPDC.

£359,000 is available to manage the day-to-day business. This represents about 1.3 times this year's annual expenditure and is considered adequate.

On Income and Expenditure, there was an operating surplus of £52,140 over the year. On County, Club, Community and Schools, venue registration fees totalled £78,560 from 160 registered venues, collected by the LTA and transferred to Yorkshire Tennis. There were three new registrations, two clubs re-joined and four clubs resigned.

On Local Projects there were no new loans paid to venues this year. One grant was paid to a club to help with flooding problems. Donations of £60,000 were received from one generous donor and £152,000 was transferred to The Yorkshire Tennis Foundation to fund future projects.

On Competition the County Championships were held successfully again at JCCS but showed a net loss of £18,000.

The Yorkshire League and the LTA's National League and Play your Way to Wimbledon competitions were held successfully.

This year Performance saw a full programme of County Cups at all age groups from 8 to 70 costing £77,000.

The county training programme cost a net of £39,000.

Under Yorkshire Initiative the Wimbledon Championships returned to normal and it was possible to encourage partners to subscribe to the LTA's new Rights Programme, and nearly £129,000 was raised from thirteen sponsors.

The Yorkshire Tennis Patrons system is in abeyance and its future is under consideration.

On Marketing and Communications expenditure was at normal levels.

Under Administration £28,000 was paid in professional fees, largely legal costs incurred in the setting up of Yorkshire Tennis Ltd. The five hourly-paid administrators were paid £18,800.

Under the Leeds Regional Player Development Centre funding for the RPDC comes from the LTA and Yorkshire Tennis Partners and is handled by Yorkshire Tennis. The net effect on Yorkshire Tennis finances is zero.

Mr Hargreaves invited questions. There were no questions.

Mr Newton passed his thanks to Mr Hargreaves for all his hard work over a number of years and congratulated him for the county being in such a healthy position.

Mr Waite proposed the adoption of the Financial Statement which was seconded by Mr Day.

There were no abstentions or objections and the accounts and financial statement were approved.

6. To Note the Resolutions Passed at the EGM on 7th November 2022

Mr Stewart confirmed that two resolutions were passed at the EGM as follows:

- To dissolve the Yorkshire Lawn Tennis Association at midnight on Monday 5 December 2022.
- To transfer all activities and assets of the Yorkshire Lawn Tennis Association to Yorkshire Tennis Limited at 12:01am on Tuesday 6 December 2022.

This concludes the formal business of the Yorkshire Lawn Tennis Association.

Mr Stewart proposed to note the resolutions passed at the EGM and Mr Hargreaves seconded the proposal.

Questions were invited. There were no questions.

Ahead of the closure of the meeting Mr Crowther took the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the Yorkshire Lawn Tennis Association, Yorkshire players and teams over the last 138 years.

This is not the end of tennis in Yorkshire but is the start of a new chapter where new achievements will be made by this great county of ours.

The YLTA was originally called the Yorkshire County Lawn Tennis Club founded on 30 June 1884 in a meeting at the Station Hotel, York some four years before the LTA. There were 18 people present from 14 clubs. Sir George Sitwell at the age of 24 seems to be the prime mover of this initiative and was made the first President. Mr LB Morris from the Vale of Derwent became the first Chairman and a General Committee was formed with 7 members in all. One of the first decisions was to start a tournament

at Scarborough which lasted in one form or another until the late 1950s. The tournament included events for Yorkshire club members only plus an open tournament. Trevor Stent very kindly provided me with copies of the first minutes and also a press report about the tournament that was initially on the Marine Road Cricket ground. Scarborough Council also kindly provided 50 shillings – that is £2.50 towards a prize fund (By the way that is worth £14,600 today). At the first committee meeting the name of the association was changed to The Yorkshire Lawn Tennis Association and County Club. Over the years, the county championships were moved around the county to Harrogate Cricket club, Ilkley, Hull, Sheffield and back to Scarborough many times.

Sir George Sitwell was in fact President from 1885 to 1887 but he reappears again in 1894/95 and then almost bizarrely and after a break of nearly 40 years in 1934. He must have been a character and it is worth a very short diversion to tell you more about him. He was born in London in 1860 and therefore not a true Yorkshireman but his association with the county as he contested the Scarborough constituency seven times losing twice in 1884 but gaining the seat at the General Election in 1885. In 1909 he purchased the Castello di Montegufoni. He remained there until 1942 moving to Locarno in Switzerland and dying there a year later. He was an eccentric. He banned electricity in his household and made his guests use candles. In addition, he lived on an exclusive diet of roasted chicken!

Back to tennis. I imagine the first meeting of what was to become the YLTA was located near York station due to the convenience of travelling by train. Please remember that cars did not really start on British roads until 1895, some 10 years later. So was Scarborough suitably located with a good train service. The North of England Championships was staged there from the mid 1880s. Stars of the early years include Laurence Doherty and Dorothea Douglass, the latter winning Wimbledon 7 times. Over the years, Filey Road Scarborough hosted the Davis Cup 5 times. In 1948, a professional tennis event was staged that included Fred Perry who beat Yvon Petra in the final. Jack Kramer and Pancho Gonzales were later winners. As players preferred European venues and as Slazenger's support waned the tournament died out.

Sitwell was followed by a number of the gentry including the Marquis of Hartington, Lord Hawke, a notable cricketer, the Duchess of Devonshire. The Earl of Londesbrough, Lord Derwent. I could go on – so certainly in the good old days, a title helped to get the Presidency of the YLTA!

Well, from the acorn of 14 clubs we have now expanded to 160 clubs and the game of Padel was added to our responsibilities just two years ago. The original game of tennis was only outdoors and on grass, very often on converted croquet lawns or cricket pitches. Now we have a myriad of choices: clay, artificial clay, hard courts (with a lot of sub-variations), artificial surfaces. We do not seem to have many shale courts left, if any, but I do remember learning on them at Bowdon LTC in the early 1960s. Helped by John Ramsbottom and Trevor Stent, we looked at the playing record since the late 1950s. The best year, until this year, must be 1991 when both the men and women won the County Championships at Eastbourne. You will have heard of many of the names. The men's team was: Gary Henderson, Simon Ickringill, Stephen Heron, Danny Bishop, Ian Blakeman, Paul Robinson, Richard Oades and Paul Ranson. The Ladies' team comprised of Cath Berry, Sarah Longbottom, Karen Mitchell, Alison Moverly, Helen Young, Louise Johnson and Jackie Holden. Otherwise, the Men won 8 times in 1907, 1967, 1988, 1991, 1992, 2001, 2003 and 2006. The Ladies won three times in 1901, 1963 and 1991.

There has been incredible loyalty by players playing for Yorkshire. Cath Berry and Sue Mappin each played 14 times in the county championships finals. Margaret Cooper, Evelyn Fulton, Sally Holdsworth, Charlotte Lindsay, Sarah Longbottom, Jackie Holden and Karen Mitchell all played 10 times. There is an interesting article

in November's Tramlines that celebrates the legacy of the Fulton, Howden and Charnock families - definitely worth a read.

On the Men's side Stephen Heron has the record of playing 14 times, followed by Gary Henderson and Simon Ickringill, who played 12 times, Rob Armytage, and John Howarth with 11 appearances and let us NOT forget our President Geoff Newton who notched up 10 appearances. A name that just misses the list and should be mentioned is John Clifton who played 9 times.

While we celebrate the wins at the County Cup Championships, being at the top of the LTA County Cup Race Leaderboard merits inclusion as one of the greatest achievements of the YLTA. It evidences strength and depth of our county cup teams from the 9 and under to the over 35s.

Another achievement of Yorkshire is their contribution to the running of the All England Club. Geoff Newton and Mike Hann were on the Committee of Management for many years, each chairing their own sub-committees. Let us not forget Phil Brook, a 7 times county player in his own right, who rose to the heady heights as Chairman of the All England, supported by Gill who still plays for Yorkshire who as a singles player won the 60+ British Open Indoor Seniors Open.

On the administration side, other notable YLTA personnel include Jack Harrison, a Chapel Allerton member and YLTA President in 1957 and was Secretary 1946 until 1960 when he became Chairman. He represented the YLTA on the LTA Council from 1947 to 1966 when he was elected Chairman. After his year of office, he became an Honorary Vice President. In 1957 he became a full member of the AELTC and represented the LTA on the Committee of Management 1966 to 1979.

Turning to performances of Yorkshire players at Wimbledon, we have to go back to 1878 and 1880 when the Reverend John Hartley, the Vicar of Burneston near Bedale won the Men's Championships. From our records, it seems that at least 12 women have qualified/played at Wimbledon and 11 men. This number does not include wild cards for some of our better and younger players such as recently Paul Jubb. Some notable performances include Roger Taylor who reached the semi finals in 1973 having beaten Bjorn Borg in the quarter finals. Michael Hann qualified 6 times and in 1962 beat Chuck McKinley, the number 5 seed. Going further back Colin Gregory qualified 6 times with his best performance reaching the last 8 in 1930.

But we must not forget our champion, Jonny Marray who won the 2012 Men's Doubles Championship with Dane Frederik Nielsen.

And finally, I must mention the performance of our own Chairman, Geoff Newton who qualified in 1973 in the doubles with partner Robin Drysdale only to meet 17 year old Bjorn Borg and his partner Tenny Svenson in the first round. The result was 2, 0 and 1.

Moving away from the top of tennis to the recreational side of tennis in Yorkshire, we should reflect that the leisure market has changed out of all recognition.

The YLTA has had to adapt as well. We have had to innovate; we have broadened the reach of the game. In the last two years Padel has taken the market and Yorkshire in particular by storm.

Who knows where we will be in another 138 years. Will we be able to control the weather? Will dodgy line calls be something of the past. It is already possible to play tennis digitally, will the metaverse enable us to play the great tennis players from the past. Will Padel become more important than tennis? I certainly do not have the answers to these or other future questions. However, I leave one the new Yorkshire Tennis with some advice:

Have ambition

Be bold

Innovate

Be clear and focused.

Set the direction and keep to it as far as possible

Be inclusive and communicate

So, in standing down tonight, I look forward to hearing about the bold plans of the new Board and the direction of travel. I am sure that we all wish them luck and good

fortune and look forward to hearing about new outstanding achievements that are to come.

Let us celebrate the YLTA!

7. A Toast to the YLTA

A toast was made to Yorkshire Tennis past, present and future.

Mr Newton recorded thanks again to Mr Crowther, who is now a Vice President for all his time and effort to put the county where it is today.

Mr Newton thanked everyone again for attending and their continued hard work.

The meeting closed at 20:10hrs.