**Minutes of the 15th Annual General Meeting of the Dedanists’ Society**

**Held at the Queen’s Club, Palliser Road, London W14 9EQ**

**at 6.45pm on 30 October 2019**

**Present:** Josh Farrall in the Chair

Carl Snitcher, Secretary

John McVittie, Treasurer

And 25 additional members of the Society

1. **Resolution**

**To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 31 October 2018**

The resolution was proposed by Norman Hyde, seconded by Julian Sheraton-Davis, and carried unanimously.

1. **Resolution**

**To receive and approve the Annual Report, Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet of the Society for the year ending 31st July 2019**

The Chairman reported that the Society is working effectively on all fronts. It recruited more members and won more matches than ever before. It continues to be a major force in elite junior real tennis in the UK. It runs the British Real Tennis Academy, funds the £21,000 pa cost in partnership with the T&RA (Society pays 2/3, T&RA pays 1/3) and sponsors high profile junior tournaments such as the World Junior and the British Under 21/24 championships.

The Society is in a strong financial position. It generated a surplus of £10,000 on the year’s activities. At year end, net assets, predominantly cash, were £32,000, sufficient to fund 11 months’ worth of operations. Subscriptions from 198 members provide us with a secure base of annuity income. John McVittie, treasurer, has established the direct debit GoCardless system as the primary method by which members pay fees. As a result, we receive income payments in a far more timely and hassle-free way than before.

The resolution to approve the report was proposed by Simon Mansfield, seconded by Christine Marian and approved unanimously.

1. **Report by Graham Tomkinson on the British Real Tennis Academy**

**Last Season - 2018/9**  
The British Real Tennis Academy is the UK national coaching programme for the best young players in the country. We run the Academy and are its primary funder. We also sponsor top junior open tournaments, such as the World Under 18, the British Under 21 & 24 and the British Girls Under 15 & 19 championships, in order to provide the best with opportunities to play and showcase junior tennis at its most competitive.   
  
During 2018/9, the Academy delivered 18 group coaching days and a further 90 sessions of individual one-to-one coaching to 30 players. These individual sessions include tennis coaching, physical training, match video analysis and sport psychology. For coaching purposes, we group players into squads of five or so according to handicap and age.  The quality of each squad varies from year to year. This year, the quality of both the top and entry-level squads was particularly high.   
  
At the top end, the following players stood out:  
 - Robert Shenkman: Winner British under 24 singles.  
 - Lea van der Zwalmen: Now ranked number two in ladies world real tennis.  
 - Freddie Bristowe:  Winner World under 18 and British under 21 singles.  
 - Ned Batstone: Ranked number two world junior (under 18) real tennis.  
 - William Flynn: Winner British under 16 singles.  
 - Cesca Sweet: Winner British under 15 & 19 girls’ singles.

At entry level, the following players stood out:  
 - Max Trueman: Winner British under 14 singles.  
 - Henry Henman: Winner British 12 singles.

We launched the Cadet squad this year in order to include even younger players in the Academy (12 to 13-year-olds). This was a great success. Cadet squad players to watch include Henry Henman, James Rossiter (won the British under 20 singles at Prested) and Bertie Vallat.

We work with a team of real tennis coaches who are skilled and experienced in coaching elite young players. This team includes Rob Fahey, Ben Matthews, Bryn Sayers, Chris Bray, Ben Ronaldson and Dan Jones. We work with physical training coaches like Andy Chinneck who know real tennis and with sports psychologists who know top level sport.

We track the progress of Academy players through the season in terms of matchplay performance and coaching reports - and support them in developing their own improvement plans.

We awarded a special bursary to Zack Smart in order to subsidise his internship as a trainee professional at RTC.

**The Future**  
We plan to increase the support that we provide for Academy players with the highest potential and the encouragement that we give to those who wish to become professionals.

We are identifying a small group of high performance players for whom we will provide more one-on-one coaching, designed in accordance with their coaching reports and improvement plans.

Professional training: Three Academy players currently wish to become real tennis professionals, namely William Flynn, Max Trueman and James Medlow.  We encourage them but note that, at this time, no professional training exists. We are also subsidising professional training internships at Cambridge RTC for three gap year students. Watch this space.

**Questions**

Graham concluded his report with a question, answer and discussion session which ranged over a wider range of subjects than just the Academy.

Questions included:

*Academy:* How do we select players? How will we use the £10K grant from the Dedanists’ Foundation?

*Sponsorship:* How will we use sponsorship to develop a world champion?

*Ambassadors:* Do all clubs have a Dedanist ambassador and is the scheme working?

*Cambridge Gap Year Internships*: How well is this programme working?

*Schools*: What success in recruiting private and state schools to real tennis?

**4. To consider and agree the Benevolent Activities of the Society under rule 4 of the Rules and Regulations, especially the Society’s support for Junior real tennis.**

The benevolent activities which the Society supports are predominantly the development of junior real tennis and the funding and running of the British Real Tennis Academy.

A Resolution to continue to support these activities was proposed by Christie Marrian, seconded by Julian Sheraton- Davis and carried unanimously.

**5. To elect the following Committee members:**

A resolution to re-elect Josh Farrall, Carl Snitcher, John McVittie and Guy Egerton-Smith to the Committee to a further term of three years was proposed by Tony Friend, seconded by Paul Cattermull and carried unanimously.

A resolution to elect Simon Roundell as a new member of the Committee for a first term of three years was proposed by John Whiting, seconded by James McDermott and carried unanimously.

**6. Report on the Dedanists’ Foundation**

The Dedanists’ Foundation and The Dedanists’ Society are separate and independent organisations that have members in common, that share the same values and that both raise funds for junior real tennis. The Foundation is a charity. It was founded in 2011. It funds open access programmes at grassroots level to recruit new young players of all backgrounds and abilities into the game. This grassroots approach complements the work of the Society and the Academy that coach the best young players in the country. Real tennis needs a constant flow of new players and new champions. It needs both the Foundation and the Society to flourish.

In 2018/9, the Foundation awarded £24,000 in cash grants to clubs and universities to help them to recruit, coach and motivate young players. It trained club professionals and members in how best to recruit and coach them. It extended this training to include the offering of Duke of Edinburgh Award real tennis as a further means of engaging with schools and pupils. It sponsored inter-club junior tournaments to encourage new young players. Sixteen of the twenty four UK clubs with courts (i.e. 67%) engaged with one or more Foundation programmes

**7. Any Other Business**

*Ladies’ tennis shirts:*  These are now available.

*Thank you, Graham Tomkinson:* Graham was formally thanked for his enormous contribution to the design, delivery and success the British Real Tennis Academy coaching programme.

*Thank you, Tony Friend*: Tony was formally thanked for transforming the Society’s website.

*Christmas lunch*: This will take place on the 12th December at the Lemonia restaurant in Primrose Hill.

**The AGM ended at 7.32pm.**