



Dear Clubs,

As our AGM is now less than 2 weeks away, the outgoing Branch wishes to reach out to all our Clubs firstly to thank them for their support and participation in 2023 and most importantly to encourage as many representatives as possible to attend the AGM.

Volunteers and volunteerism are central to achieving our shared ambitions of the continued expansion and improvement of this game we all love. Continuous Branch renewal and reinvigoration is vital to ensure that enthusiasm and commitment is harnessed and maintained and that the Branch continues to adapt to better serve the tennis community in Munster.

Munster Branch has always strived to offer the best opportunities for competition and development across all aspects of the game within the province, to liaise positively with Tennis Ireland initiatives and to give Munster players the best support we can. Sometimes we miss the mark however the intent has always been there, and the Branch always aims high. 2024 looks like an exciting year, with a new Tennis Ireland strategy, continued growth in club memberships and the potential for the return of squads to a provincial level, to name a few things.

In order to meet the challenges of improving competition and offering real opportunities to our junior players the Branch must continuously improve. It must embrace new ideas and new methods and to do this it must continually renew and refresh its pool of volunteers, sponsors and collaborators.

The AGM is a forum for you, our constituent clubs to engage with the Branch and to bring ideas and recommendations to the Branch for debate. The Branch wants to hear from you, and we would urge as many Clubs as possible to take this opportunity to be heard.

To this end, below are just a few suggestions/recommendations that the outgoing Branch is putting forward to consider and discuss at the AGM and for our incoming Committee to implement, if agreed. This is not an exhaustive list, and we would like to give you the opportunity to bring other ideas to the AGM.

- a) Anyone who has served on committees recognises the commitment involved. Recognising that people have busy lives and that can make commitment difficult, it is proposed to reduce Branch Committee meetings from 11 to 8 per year. Committee meetings are already on a set date every month to allow people to plan ahead, but the reduction in meetings will reduce the load.
- b) The Inter Branch Forum that was introduced formally at the last TI AGM is up and running for the last 2 years and is a fantastic forum for dialogue and development between the Branches. The IBF meets quarterly, alternating between provinces. It is proposed that the reduction in Branch Meetings would be planned so that there are no committee meetings in months when there is an Inter Branch Forum which would allow opportunity for people to go to the Inter Branch Forum. The IBF when set up was originally the 3 Branch Officers (Secretary, Treasurer and President) for each Branch, and was intended to coordinate and harmonise Branch matters at a national level. It has evolved since then and has a role in development of policy also. It is proposed that Branch representatives who the best experience or interest in the topic being discussed would attend, accompanied by 1 Branch officer. Therefore, for instance, when Junior matters are being discussed the junior committee could attend. The IBF offers an opportunity to network, meet members from other Branches who you wouldn't otherwise know, to share experience and learn from others.

- c) Set up a register of people who may not be in a position to commit to a full time Branch position but would be interested in assisting at specific events to increase the involvement and participation of our membership in Branch development. This would be ideal for members who are interested in getting court experience if pursuing refereeing or court supervision qualifications.
- c) Similarly, where individuals with specific skill sets are interested in assisting the Branch with short term projects or have a suggested project (Website Renewal, New Directory (see below), Communications projects etc.) it is proposed that a register of interests be developed to increase the involvement and participation of our membership in Branch development.
- d) Last year there was a very popular meeting to review competitions in Cork which offered an opportunity for clubs to express the issues collectively to representatives of the National Competition Committee. While not everything requested could be achieved the dialogue was useful and the enthusiasm fantastic. It is proposed that this forum become an annual event and be extended to the wider Munster area. Organising regional club meetings are also proposed to obtain feedback on specific topics in order that all Munster Clubs can benefit as much as possible from shared learning. Clubs should advise if there are specific topics they wish to include in the program.
- e) A reduction and streamlining of the number of committees in line with changes at national level. The suggested reduced committees and their roles are listed on the attached page.
- f) It is proposed to introduce the following to assist the Junior Committees in their roles:
 - (i) **Parents Sub-Committee** - *The importance of parental input into Junior Committees is recognised. It can however be very difficult to provide this input while also following a busy competition program at junior level. To alleviate this issue, it is proposed that Clubs nominate Parents Committees, made up on a regional basis in line with the Branch regional splits. The Chair of the Parents Committee could then feed into the Branch Junior Committees. This would allow Clubs and parents a greater opportunity to assist in the development of vibrant junior programmes both at the participation and performance level.*
 - (ii) **Coaching Representative** - *Similarly it is proposed that the Munster Coaches be asked to vote on a nominee as a representative to each of the Junior committees. This person would be representing all coaches rather than an individual club.*
- g) It is proposed to set up a specific Club Working Group to discuss how we can optimise availability and participation in Senior Opens in the Munster Area. It is possible that it may need to be two groups, Cork City & County and the rest of Munster or combined. This can be discussed. Clubs to nominate representatives to provide solutions to the issues facing most Opens on Cork and also now in the wider Munster area to be presented to National Competitions Manager. This would allow the Branch to better represent the concerns of clubs at a national level.



- h) It is proposed to restart the Regional Representative initiative that worked well in the past. Local representative and a Branch Officer attend committee meeting in clubs so that they can have a direct link to the Branch both to share concerns and successes and to understand the various services that the Branch can offer. If there is a sufficient level of interest, the Branch can organise smaller regional update meetings also.

- i) Restart the Branch Newsletter to be issued once a quarter to ensure our Clubs are kept up to date with all relevant issues.

The Branch would welcome discussion and comment on above at the AGM as well as any other positive ideas to ensure that Munster continues to be a vibrant, competitive and active tennis hub. Should your club wish to add any initiative for discussion at the AGM please contact the Branch at admin@munstertennis.ie before noon on Friday 12th April and it will be added to the agenda.

We understand that your time and commitment are valuable, but we assure you that the rewards of being part of the Munster Branch Council are immeasurable. Your participation will help create a thriving tennis community that brings joy and fulfilment to all involved. Together, let's serve up a bright future for tennis in Munster!

Munster Branch Committee 2023/2024



Proposed Munster Branch Sub Committees

- I. **Junior Development & Competitions** - responsible for all junior leagues and competitions including schools etc. Focus on participation and increased opportunity. Maybe also include ROGY events. - this should be the busiest committee
- II. **Junior Performance** - responsible for squads when they come back in Sept (assuming this happens), and selection for teams or representatives (Interpros and any other performance related competitions). This includes the development and timely publishing of selection criteria so that Juniors are clear on requirements in good time. The development of rules and codes of conduct in line with national policy. The selection of suitable non-playing captains. The co-ordination of any appropriate team training, including interprovincial training. Ensuring a link to national programs is essential. Also responsible for running Interpros when in Munster.
- III. **Masters Committee** – responsible for selection for teams or representatives (Interpros and any other appropriate competitions). This includes the development and timely publishing of selection criteria so that players are clear on requirements in good time. The development of rules and codes of conduct in line with national policy. The selection of suitable non-playing captains. The co-ordination of any appropriate team training, including interprovincial training. Also responsible for running Interpros when in Munster.
- IV. **Seniors Committee** - responsible for selection for teams or representatives (Interpros and any other appropriate competitions). This includes the development and timely publishing of selection criteria so that players are clear on requirements in good time. The development of rules and codes of conduct in line with national policy. The selection of suitable non-playing captains. The co-ordination of appropriate team training, including and interprovincial training. Also responsible for running Interpros when in Munster.
- V. **Commercial & Infrastructure** - return to a single committee but may have sub-committees to deal specifically with Projects. Otherwise, the main role of this committee is sponsorship of Munster Branch events and services and the identification and alignment of partnership arrangements. Any sponsorship agreements will be aligned to National Strategies where appropriate.
- VI. **Directory** – The maintenance of the Directory is highly manual and requires significant time for the Branch Administrator in addition to a full committee. There is also a significant administration cost due to the time demands. It is proposed to move to a Tournament Software and PINS system, and in future an alignment with WTN. This would reduce the committee load to review of requests for change only and the manual input to new entrants only. To this end we are asking any Club members with IT skills if they would be interested and willing to come on board as a sub- Committee to be nominated. The Munster Directory is a huge success and it deserves to be automated.