

## Hertfordshire Badminton Association

### Annual General Meeting

3 June 2019

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Hertfordshire Badminton Association (HBA) held at Birchwood Leisure Centre at 7.30 pm on 3 June 2019 with 23 attending, including representatives from 15 affiliated clubs.

#### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Committee	Vice Presidents	Clubs
Colin Walker	Liz Frost	Abbey
Paul Widdicombe	Pam Newman	Harpenden Racquetees
	Pat Walker	Hertford
		Redhoods

#### 2. Minutes of the AGM held on 4 June 2018 and matters arising

The minutes of the previous AGM on 4 June 2018 were approved.

There were no matters arising.

#### 3. Update from Aleisha Challands, Badminton England Relationship Manager

Aleisha Challands (AC) covered the following issues:

a) *BE staff*

There were no changes to report. AC's responsibility remained Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire and she reported to Lee Ward, Senior Relationship Manager.

b) *Discover Badminton Strategy*

The Strategy was now in its second year and the focus remained on winning medals, increasing participation and providing financial resilience. Sport England funding was on a four year cycle and it was presently in Year 3. Finance undoubtedly impacted on performance and external funding was crucial. Much of the income from membership fees was reinvested in the sport and BE was constantly looking at the membership offer.

c) *Membership changes*

The main changes in relation to Membership Fees were:

- The membership season would now run from 1 November to 31 October.
- A new social membership was being introduced, aimed at those participating in No Strings.

- Compete membership would now incorporate Play membership, thereby necessitating only one payment.
- The club affiliation thresholds had been revised.
- BE would no longer accept cheques. Payments would have to be made online or through BACS.

A number of issues were raised by those at the meeting which, in summary, were:

- (i) It would be helpful for BE to publish, and make readily-available, a clear definition of the difference between Compete and Play membership as, at present, the definition was not easy to find on the BE web site. In addition, BE might be advised to consider using a term other than Compete as some players assumed that it applied to all competitive events.
- (ii) BE could usefully consider the reintroduction of membership cards. In addition to helping establishing a player's entitlement to enter, for example, tournaments, there was a safeguarding and insurance issue in being satisfied that a team's opponents were covered by insurance.

AC undertook to take those two issues back to BE.

- (iii) AC was asked why the fee for coaches was higher than for Play/Compete members as it could be seen as a disincentive for younger coaches. AC explained that it included a higher degree of insurance cover and that coaches did not pay for club membership. Dave Bartlett (DB) added that the issue had been discussed at the BE Council and that coaches' membership included access to an improved online coaching resource.

d) *Discover Badminton Strategy in Herts*

AC explained that the objectives remained:

- More players of all ages joining clubs
- More people of all ages playing the sport regularly
- More players competing
- More active coaches

AC emphasised that funding was available to clubs and that she was able to offer support.

AC explained that, as part of the initiative to increase participation, two social competitions had been run within Herts. In Hatfield, the entry was 38, with an average age of 39, and 74% of those entering were new to competitions. In Hemel Hempstead, the entry was 49, with an average age of 36, and 90% were new to competitions. Those events offered some encouragement although, were they to be repeated elsewhere, the entry criteria might need to be looked at because some of the entrants were league players. A comment was made that local leagues used to run tournaments so that was an option that should perhaps be reactivated.

The current headline figures for Herts, compared with the figures given at the last AGM, showed an optimistic trend. The total investment was £14570.00; funding had been provided to 10 clubs, two new junior clubs and an existing club with a new junior section. An Essentials course had also been funded. 24 Primary schools were now delivering badminton after school and during curriculum time.

Four Secondary schools had set up extra-curricular badminton clubs. Welwyn Hatfield CBN was the first hub in Hertfordshire and the Broxbourne and A10 corridor soon followed. East Herts CBN received funding to support junior growth.

e) *The future*

AC reiterated that BE was in year 3 of a four year funding cycle and that, within Herts, all applications for funding had been accepted. A comment was made that it had been disappointing to see so many empty seats at the All England finals, particularly in view of the significant proportion of its income that BE received from that event. It indicated a missed opportunity to increase income.

AC also mentioned the strategy to move to planning at a regional rather than county level. That was being trialled in the North West and London & South East. Part of that initiative was to ask counties to commit to providing a minimum level of services and facilities.

Paul Kempster (PK) thanked AC for her contribution.

#### **4. Presentation of Executive Committee Reports**

Copies of the reports were made available at the meeting and had been placed on the web site. Only the main points are summarised in these minutes.

##### ***Chairman***

PK reported that it had been another busy and successful year for the County, which continued to benefit from the work of a strong team of volunteers who contributed to all aspects of the sport.

He acknowledged that changes to the BE membership system had created difficulties for club administrators and the Committee continued to feedback its views through the regular BE meetings and to the Relationship Manager. It was helpful that the renewal date was being moved to 1 November.

BE had communicated the creation of a National Team League competition that was expected to launch for the 2020-21 season.

It was disappointing that Hatfield Town Council was not prepared to extend the contract between HBA and Birchwood Leisure Centre. That would have a significant impact on a number of badminton activities and the Committee was investigating alternative venues.

PK thanked all the Committee members for their continuing support and all those who ran clubs for the part they played in making HBA so successful.

##### ***Membership Secretary***

Colin Walker (CW) submitted a written report.

Last season had seen a continuation in the gradual decline in both the number of Herts active affiliated clubs and individual members. The number of affiliated clubs has gone down from 68 to 63, with a bigger fall in the number of junior clubs. Across the county there were now only 11 junior clubs. In 2016 there were 16 junior clubs and 55 senior clubs giving a combined total of 71 affiliated clubs.

The decline in the number of Herts registered members was even more marked with an overall reduction of 8% since a year ago, down from 1,469 to 1,345, with a similar fall in both junior and senior members. Over a period of 3 years the number of active affiliated members had fallen by 13%.

Last year the Herts county fee remained one of the lowest across all counties at just £3 for seniors and nil for juniors.

Those present at the meeting made a number of observations. It appeared that some clubs were no longer covering all age groups, with older members no longer joining. Although No Strings sessions were taking place, participants were not going on to join clubs and perhaps more should be done to encourage them to do so. Local leagues could possibly advertise themselves at tournaments such as the Social Competitions described by AC.

### ***Senior County Coordinator***

Andy Walden (AW) provided a written report.

The Senior County teams had again enjoyed a very successful season, including the additional fourth team.

He expressed his thanks to Liz Austin for her invaluable contribution to the Senior County teams.

His only disappointment was the low attendance at county training sessions.

### ***Masters Coordinator***

Steve Willis (SW) provided a written report.

The County had run five teams with a total of 71 players taking part. He thanked the respective age group captains for the work they had done during the season.

He hoped to run seven teams next season, with an additional over 50 team and a new over 70 team. He had undertaken a mail shot of potential players and had received some expressions of interest.

### ***Tournament Secretary***

Eddie Lintott (EL) reported that the Open and Restricted Tournaments had been successful, with the latter attracting many junior players. He was making plans for the forthcoming season although there might need to be an increase in the entry fees.

There were detailed reports on both Tournaments on the web site.

### ***County League Secretary***

Graham Cobb (GC) reported that the season had gone smoothly despite a number of rearranged matches. He intended to finalise the arrangements for next season earlier than usual and the Fixture Meeting was scheduled for 2 September.

The winners of each division were as follows:

Mixed Doubles 1	Ware 1
Mixed Doubles 2	Ware 2
Mixed Doubles 3	Harpenden 1

Mens Doubles 1	Ware 1
Mens Doubles 2	Comets 1
Mens Doubles 3	The DK Way
Ladies Doubles 1	Ware 1
Ladies Doubles 2	Harpenden

### ***Hertford Area Badminton League***

Wendy Train reported that the League was in a healthy position with 22 clubs running 50 teams. Three additional Ladies teams had entered last season.

### ***South West Herts Badminton League***

No report.

### ***North Herts***

Bob Green (BG) submitted a written report. The CBN and Leagues had enjoyed successful seasons with high levels of participation across all events.

### ***Social Media/Publicity***

PK noted the continuing use of the Facebook and Twitter accounts.

### ***Development Coordinator***

Dave Bartlett (DB) explained that development activity since the AGM 2018 was covered in detail in his written report. He noted that AC had been very supportive of initiatives in East and North Herts. He also explained that the position at Gosling was still a live issue with the Police having taken over the site during the day. WHCBN continued to be involved.

### ***Coaching Coordinator***

Brian Jackson (BJ) submitted a written report. He explained that the BE search facility was being used to a greater degree and that he was disappointed that there were insufficient candidates to run a Young Leaders Award course.

### ***HJBA***

Mike Newlove (MN) had submitted a written report. The new HJBA name was now in place and changes had been made to the constitution to ensure more inclusive and effective management.

### ***Web Site***

SG reported that the new site had been operational for about nine months and had generated a reasonable level of interest. He reminded the meeting that he was willing to publish news items relating to any aspect of Herts badminton. He also stated that there appeared to be a significant number of external visitors to the site looking at, for example, the Where to Play pages. Clubs might want to consider contributing to those pages to enhance membership.

## 5. Presentation of Accounts

The draft accounts were made available at the meeting. PK gave CW's report, the main points of which were as follows:

At the last AGM it was reported the fees from the regular training sessions had gone missing and the amount of £2,455 was shown in the accounts as a provision for bad and doubtful debts. CW was pleased to be able to report that all this money was recovered by a number of donations from family and friends of Bob Welsh, the former HBA President. The amount was an extraordinary item in the Accounts.

As a result of that incident CW reviewed the controls for handling cash and introduced a more rigorous process to ensure that fees collected were banked within 1-2 weeks.

HBA remained in a healthy financial position with funds amounting to £19,548. However, excluding the extraordinary credit, there was a substantial loss of £1,634 from normal activities. The two main reasons for such a loss was a combination of lower affiliation fees and higher expenses on running the Senior County teams offset by other savings.

- (a) Affiliation fees were down £1,210. This was a direct result of Badminton England's decision to stop paying the county a club fee of £5 per affiliated club and, also, to stop paying the county for affiliated coaches, direct members and compete upgrade members (again all at £5 each). Based on this year's number of clubs/coaches/direct/compete members, HBA had lost around £1,300 of income.
- (b) At the same time the cost of running the senior county teams had increased by some £1,250 – see note 9 in the accounts for details. That was due to:
  - (i) Having a team in the premierships and running an extra 4<sup>th</sup> team – The BE fee for entering 4 teams was £2,650, an increase of £700 over the previous year.
  - (ii) Accommodation and travel expenses (mainly for the 1st team) amounted to £768, up by over £600.
  - (iii) Purchase of county shirts for the 1st team which cost £884 less £250 from sales; giving an additional expense of £634. (There was a BE regulation that players in the premierships must wear team kit).

So the combined effect of the loss of BE income and higher costs of running the senior county teams was that HBA was some £2,500 worse off than last year. There had been some offset to this amount due to lower court costs and lower donations to the Community Badminton Networks and Ray Learney Fund awards compared to the previous year.

HBA and HSBA (now called HJBA) continued to benefit from using the courts at Birchwood on Sundays. Moving the regular senior county training sessions to Birchwood resulted in a higher usage of courts with the cost per court hour during the year working out at just over £5. Unfortunately Birchwood had told HBA that they will not be renewing the agreement next season. In conjunction with HJBA, HBA was looking into alternative venues for matches, training and tournaments. As a result, court costs were likely to rise significantly next season.

HBA has been looking at ways to address the existing loss and potentially higher court costs. For next season, HBA would need to raise the county affiliation fee and match fees to increase revenues.

The Accounts were approved.

**6. Subscriptions for Season 2018-19**

It was agreed that the County Senior fee should increase to £3.50 and that the Junior fee should remain at nil.

**7. Election of President and Vice Presidents**

Paul Widdicombe was re-elected as President and the existing 21 Vice Presidents were also re-elected.

It was proposed that Liz Austin should be elected as a Vice President.

**8. Election of Executive Committee and BE Representative**

The existing members of the Executive Committee were re-elected to serve another season.

PK and Paul Widdicombe were re-elected as BE Representatives.

DB was re-elected as the HBA representative to the HJBA Committee.

**9. Appointment of Auditor**

PK understood from CW that Ralph Paddock was prepared to continue as Auditor and he was duly reappointed.

**10. Any other business**

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm.

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