

Hertfordshire Badminton Association Chairman's Report 2019-20

The AGM usually signifies the end of all activity in the current Badminton calendar, however in these strange and unprecedented times it feels like this season ended much longer ago now. In reality with the onset of covid-19 we entered lockdown about a month before the leagues and competitions would have concluded but no club play or activity has been possible since mid-March.

However, it had been another busy year for clubs and badminton in the county as reflected in the different committee reports summarising the activities. We have seen a slight fall in the number of affiliated clubs and adult members, a trend shared by other counties, but also a successful and encouraging increase in the number of juniors.

The county moved its home ground to a new venue at Queenswood Girls' school having been unable to continue with the agreement at Birchwood but despite this there was no significant impact to either the court availability or overall costs, as detailed in the Senior county, Masters and finance reports.

Since the lockdown in March there have been a series of online meetings with CBAs via Zoom, in the same way that many companies and individuals have been linking up. The primary focus of these has been the anticipated return to play and the impact the covid pandemic will have made to membership numbers and to clubs. Some funds have been established by Sport England to help support sporting organisations that may have suffered losses as a result of the lockdown. At the recent meeting Adrian Christy, CEO, asked that CBAs help to coordinate details and issues for any clubs that are having or expect to have financial problems.

As the Government changes the rules for social distancing so Badminton England are adapting the guidance being sent to coaches, clubs and individuals for what is permissible while adhering to the new restrictions. Competition has been affected, not least we will be unable to run the Hertfordshire Open Silver circuit tournament that was sanctioned for mid August. We will also need to wait to decide on the timing for the start of the county and local leagues and the Senior county and Masters competitions.

Badminton England are continuing with a review of the membership system and how they can promote to individuals the benefits that are available and the models in place for players and clubs. They are also mindful of the impact that the lockdown has had and are gathering feedback from counties, members and coaches for what they can do for the next season affiliation.

I would like to thank the committee members for all the support they have given me and the commitment they have shown in their varying roles to help promote and develop badminton in the county.

Finally, on behalf of the HBA committee, I would like to thank all of you who give up your valuable time to run badminton clubs and help to make Hertfordshire Badminton so successful.

**Paul Kempster
Chairman**