

Hertfordshire Badminton Association

Minutes of the committee meeting held on 19 May 2025 on Zoom

Present:

Paul Kempster	PK
Dave Bartlett	DB
Natalie Barton	NB
Nick Goode	NG
Simon Gouldstone	SG
Bob Green	BG
Brian Jackson	BJ
Jim Robson	JR
Colin Walker	CW
Steve Willis	SW

1. Apologies for absence

Eddie Lintott	EL
Mike Newlove	MN

2. Matters arising from the Committee Meeting on 10 February 2025

- a) The BE Transgender Policy would be discussed later in the meeting.
- b) DB had been able to secure a room at UoH for the AGM

3. Chairman

PK had been unable to attend the last General Meeting but the main points were recorded in DB's Development Report.

4. Secretary

SG reported as follows:

- a) HBA had received 10 complimentary tickets for the All England but only four had been used, despite circulating all the clubs that played in the County and Herts Area Leagues. SG suggested reducing the allocation next year although some at the meeting thought that that would not be possible.
- b) A trophy had been purchased for Matthew Widdicombe on reaching 100 Senior County appearances. It had been presented to him at the Ware BC AGM.
- c) Paul Widdicombe's first three-year term as a BE Vice President would come to an end at the forthcoming BE AGM. He was willing to stand again and the committee agreed that HBA would support his reappointment.

5. Membership Secretary and Treasurer

CW reported as follows:

- a) There were currently 51 affiliated clubs, an increase of one from the figure given at the last meeting but a decrease of two compared with a year ago. Smashit had not affiliated.

Action: PK undertook to contact Smashit

Of the 51 affiliated clubs, 10 were Junior clubs. Abbey BC had 313 active junior members following the merger with Gadebridge Junior BC which represented just over 60% of all Herts junior members. However, two BE reports gave widely differing figures for the number of Abbey members and CW intended contacting Keith Burns to clarify the position.

Action: CW to contact Abbey BC and Badminton England

DB said that he hoped unaffiliated clubs fully understood the insurance position as any claim might have to be met by a club's officers which could be prohibitively costly. NB suggested that she thought she was covered by her coach insurance but it was pointed out that that might not cover public liability. BJ explained that his club, which was not affiliated to Badminton England, had secured equivalent insurance at a much lower cost and JR endorsed the point that alternatives were available. JR also explained that the BE documentation was lengthy and unclear.

- b) The draft accounts had been circulated. The final profit for the year £312, a little higher than last year, but lower than CW's previous estimate for the following reasons:

- (i) An additional 10 tubes of shuttles were used for Masters matches/training.
- (ii) £202 had been spent on shuttles for Senior County training.
- (iii) £139 had been donated to East Herts CBN to cover its overspend on the Live Longer Better with Badminton project.

Total funds stood at £18,469.

£5000 had been transferred to the savings account to earn more interest. The balance on that account was £13,273.

Creditors were high at £1,480 because:

- (i) £678 was owed to BE for the Masters Challenge.
- (ii) £285 was owed to Presdales School for February and March court costs.
- (iii) £380 was owed for three Ray Learney Fund awards as confirmation was awaited that the three candidates had passed.

There were no issues raised in relation to the draft accounts although NB commented that Herts was the only county that charged a Senior County match fee. In response, it was suggested that other counties could only afford to finance Senior County matches by imposing much higher affiliation fees. Herts remained one of the lowest. JR asked if HBA received the entire affiliation fee paid to BE. CW replied that it did not as BE deducted an administration fee which appeared to vary with each transaction.

6. Senior County

NB reported that the programme of fixtures had now been completed and that the three teams would remain in their current divisions. The position of each team was as follows:

First team (Premiership)
Won 4 Lost 5
Seventh out of 10 teams

Second team (Division 1 South)
Won 3 Lost 4
Fifth out of eight

Third team (Division 2 South East)
Won 4 Lost 3
Fifth out of eight

The end-of-season awards had been made and the details would be put on the web site.

NB was grateful for HBA providing the shuttles for the training sessions.

Two issues were raised:

- a) PK explained that a suggestion had been made, on a previous occasion, that a 4th team should be entered to allow younger players to gain experience. Both NB and NG were of the view that, although a good idea in principle, they doubted if younger players were able to commit themselves to the extent needed. NB also explained that, although younger players needed exposure to the higher levels, the selectors still had to field the strongest teams.
- b) It was also suggested that the current training sessions should be put on a more permanent basis. Ideally, two courts should be available, perhaps once a month or every six weeks, and a wider pool of players invited including younger/junior players. CW recommended that all juniors leaving the junior squad should be invited to some of the training sessions before the start of next season. It was accepted that hiring a venue might be problematic.

Action: NB and PK to discuss with Ben Vranjkovic and Kelly Matthews.

7. County League

PK reported that the League was now completed with no contentious issues. The amended rules, introduced at the start of the season, appeared to have worked satisfactorily.

8. Hertford Area League

JR reported that the League had been completed and the AGM had been held. The League would again be holding an in-person fixture meeting.

9. North Herts and Letchworth

BG commented that League Republic was now used by both the Biggleswade and Letchworth Leagues although Stevenage had their own set-up. The Live Longer Better with Badminton project had now finished but at one location it had been extended by four weeks. As it was the end of the season, life was quiet and he had nothing further to report.

10. Masters

SW reported as follows:

- a) It had been a very successful season with both the 40s and 50s reaching the National Finals. The 50s finishing as Runners-Up, losing to Nottinghamshire 9 – 3, and the 40s finishing in third place by beating Devon 7 – 5.
- b) Congratulations were due to the following players for their significant achievements in the All England Masters Championships in April:

Dom Savage	Round of 16.	50s Mens Singles.
Liz Austin & Caroline Hale	Gold	55s Ladies Doubles.
Caroline Hale	Gold	55s Mixed Doubles.
Caroline Hale	Gold	55s Ladies Singles.
Don Burden	Gold	55s Mixed Doubles with Caroline Hale and 60s Mens Doubles with John Bowker.

- c) The practice sessions would start again at the end of August and new players would be very welcome to address availability issues, particularly with the 60s Mens team. There had been instances in the past season of players covering more than one age group. There had been little interest in entering a 75s team. Dave Berry had stepped down as the 65s captain and SW was still looking for a replacement.

11. Tournaments

No report.

12. Development

DB's report is appended to the minutes. He drew the meeting's attention to two proposals which were due to be discussed at the BE AGM. Those are covered further under item 16. The Live Longer Better with Badminton project had been successfully completed and the contributions of those involved had been formally recognised. There had been a number of spin-offs such as several session leaders qualifying as Activators and the Watford sessions providing an important focus on participants with Parkinson's.

13. Coaching

BJ reported as follows:

- a) Since the last meeting a Foundation Course was run at Beaumont School, St Albans. There were 13 candidates, 5 from Hertfordshire and a Level 2 course was in progress with 7 candidates, 4 Hertfordshire-based. The assessment was scheduled for 28 June. He would be asking local clubs for youngsters for the candidates to coach.
- b) There were currently 23 Level 1s, 38 Level 2s and 2 Level 3s on the county register.
- c) He had not been able to find coaches for the Watford area, St Albans, Harpenden and a recent request from Bishop's Stortford. He hoped that the new crop of Level 2s would be able to help fill some of those opportunities.
- d) He was still investigating what appeared to be some 'bogus' Herts coaches on the register.

14. Social Media/Publicity

No report.

15. HJBA

MN provided a written report:

- a) All teams had competed in the Shires League this season. The U19 team had won, U17 finished 8th but the U15 did not make the finals. The U13 team did well and those moving up to U15 should provide a good base for next season.
- b) The new HJBA web site was up and running and there were trials in June using all halls on two dates to avoid the rushed and crowded conditions of recent years.
- c) HJBA had run two successful tournaments this year with a further two planned: U15 in September and U17 in December.

NG added that the future looked very promising. The U12 squad was strong with eight potential first team Senior County players. Overall, from a squad of 100 he felt 25 showed significant potential.

16. BE Issues

DB explained that a paper had been submitted at the last BE General Meeting entitled 'Defining the role, governance and relationship with CBA's' and that that represented the initiation of an 18 month project to redefine the relationship between BE and the CBAs. The paper asked that four questions should be addressed by CBAs to inform a discussion at the BE AGM. The questions were:

- a) What are the key functions of your CBA?
- b) What would you like to do but can't?
- c) How can we work together most effectively over the course of this project?
- d) What initial questions do you have about this project?

In addition, and not part of the project, was a proposal to reintroduce a Regional Committee. DB explained that there had been from 1990 to 2003 been such a body but was unaware of whether the proposal would provide additional finance.

DB would welcome committee members' responses to the questions and to the Regional Committee proposal. The BE AGM was scheduled for 21 June.

Action: Committee members to submit their views to DB

JR suggested that a working group should be set up to review the questions.

17. BE Transgender Policy

SG explained that he had already given an undertaking that this issue would be on the AGM agenda. The decision was simply whether the policy should be adopted for the County League for the forthcoming season. BE's position was that it encouraged counties and local leagues to adopt the policy but could not make it mandatory. There had been no further communication from BE following the recent Supreme Court decision.

Committee Members had read the three BE publications on the issue and felt that they lacked clarity in many respects and left many unanswered questions. However, the Committee's conclusion was that the policy should be adopted, particularly to be consistent with the Restricted and Open Tournaments which now included Open Doubles rather than Mens Doubles.

18. Web Site

NG proposed that HBA should seriously consider updating the web site. The HJBA site had recently been refreshed and had a much more contemporary feel. He had obtained an estimate from the same agency as updated the HJBA site and the initial cost would be £1150 plus additional annual costs for hosting and maintenance.

The Committee reached no immediate conclusion although accepted that it would return to the issue. Its main concern was establishing the best way of communicating with clubs and members. Given that web sites were now only one way of doing this, social media such as X/Twitter and Facebook offering other options, there needed to be further analysis of what HBA wants to communicate and the best way of doing it. Further consideration would need to be given to that, perhaps in the light of any comments made at the AGM.

19. Arrangements for the AGM

- a) Committee members saw no reason to change the established format and contents of the agenda.
- b) Henry Prothero, BE Regional Manager, had agreed to attend. SG would liaise.
- c) The Committee fully supported NG's reappointment as President.
- d) SG mentioned that one club might raise the possibility of introducing the new 1.15m serving rule into the County League. The Committee did not support that in view of the difficulty of enforcement without the appropriate technology.
- e) SG to provide refreshments.

20. Any other business

PK explained that at least two clubs had asked if there could be an in-person County League fixture meeting. The meeting agreed with that proposal provided a venue could be secured. Birchwood was suggested and SG agreed to investigate the possibility.

Action: SG to contact Birchwood

21. Future meetings

Next Committee Meeting	Mid-September unless events required an earlier meeting
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Development Report to HBA Committee 19 May 2025

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1 National

.1 BE General Meeting 4 April

Paul W and I attended. Reports I previously circulated include: Agenda, CEO report, Chairs Report, General Meeting Paper CBA Governance, Minimum Standards, a sport that cares

CBA Governance is Important because ‘there will be greater discussion at the Annual General Meeting:

- What are the key functions of your CBA?
- What would you like to do but can’t?
- How can we work together most effectively over the course of this project?
- What initial questions do you have about this project?

Please note that this is an introduction to the project and we welcome any questions at the general meeting. The plan is to have a greater deep-dive into this topic at the Annual General Meeting when we can discuss face-to-face in more detail.’ ‘the project will take 18 months to complete.’

Also: the query and a vote whether we want a Regional Forum.

We had an ‘East Region Badminton Development and Coaching Committee’ from about 1990 – 2003, for Beds, Herts, Essex, Suffolk, & Norfolk, (which mainly I attended for Herts). It mainly discussed intercounty matches and tournaments (junior & senior). We were persuaded by SE to write a development plan in order to get a fulltime development officer with £5k funding (from SE). I helped write and publish 2000 copies of ‘Badminton in the East 1993-7’ – signed off by Andy G. By the time we published SE had dropped the offer (we complained).

I guess if we had a regional committee it would have some money to do things. **What do you think?** On our next Agenda?

.2 Government, SE, BE, and HSP getting behind NHS ‘**Harnessing the benefits of physical activity**’

A 10 year programme to promote physical activity throughout the organisation. As racket sports help people live longer better there is an opportunity to engage and maximise our sport

2 County-wide

.1 Living Longer Better with Badminton Project Completion

Completion of project, thanks to everyone involved, accepted by SE. Publication of HBA project report, April - previously circulated.

Summary Results:

- Hundreds of participants: new sessions in 9 of Herts 10 local authorities
- Several of the sessions have become self sustaining
- Several session leaders qualified as Activators, and at least 2 passed the Herts Foundation course in March (at least one is providing hints and tips)
- the Watford sessions important for focusing on participants with Parkinson's. This also provided upskill opportunity to the badminton coach who has completed the Parkinson's UK 'introduction to exercise for Parkinson's' training.'
- Other spinoffs include: Herts LLB Conference (Sep24, 60 participants, next in September), Badminton for Herts Integrated Care Board (Oct 2024, 60 NHS participants), Herts Carers sessions, and presentations at GP's Patient Participation Groups.
- A good exercise in HBA, CBNS, HSP, and local authorities working together
- BE keen to help us maximise opportunities: 'working collaboratively with our national Adults Manager, Luke Hornsley'.

.2 Natalie Barton and Dave Bartlett received Herts Outstanding Service to Badminton Award

.3 Facilities

Oaklands College Aspirational Master Plan

Apart from a government grant of £1.8M, no further news.

Gosling Sports Park

Minutes of WH BC Sports facilities strategy operations meeting state: 'Unfortunately, after extensive feasibility work, looking at a number of options, there are no options currently considered financially viable. The Council **will not therefore be exploring this further at the present time**. DB campaigning for Gosling weekday release to community: met with MP and Councillors.

WH BC: Strategic Leisure consultation report on the need for sports facilities within the borough due soon.

Welwyn Garden City schools: Monks Walk's 4-court hall building works to start 'in the summer'.. Despite MW PE Teacher Stu Williams advising us to write, and I and Beccy Lewis, BE facilities manager writing, we've had no reply.

3 HBA Media

The website is maintained by Simon Gouldstone and DB; CBN webpages have been maintained with minutes, etc.

4 CBNs Meetings and Reports

All healthy, doing a lot for juniors and adults.

East Herts CBN webpage: www.hertsbadminton.net/east-herts-community-badminton-network/

Meeting 15 April 2025 Minutes will be on HBA EH CBN webpage. Next meeting:.

Herts West Badminton DG webpage: www.hertsbadminton.net/herts-west-community-badminton-network/ Meeting 24 April 2025 Minutes will be on HW BDG webpage. Next meeting:

NH CBN contact Bob Green e: bob@abcegg.co.uk

WH CBN [webpage](#) Meeting being organised for 12 June