

HERTFORDSHIRE BADMINTON ASSOCIATION (HBA)
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
7th JUNE 2010

Minutes of the meeting held at Birchwood Leisure Centre, Hatfield, commencing at 7.45pm with 24 members present.

Malcolm Fraser (MF), Chairman, welcomed all present. In particular he welcomed Joan Waters who had recently received the National Badminton Award for long exceptional service to the sport.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from:

Alison Alcock; Chris Burton; Tony Clarke; Margaret Cooper; Liz Frost; Angela Glew; Ed Lintott; Megan Lumb; Viv Ofstedahl; Pat Ormes; Byron Perry; Jim Robson; Colin Walker; Heather Warne and Ken Winchester.

2. Minutes of AGM held on 1st June 2009

These were approved unanimously.

3. Matters arising from last AGM

There were no matters arising.

4. Presentation of the Executive Committee Reports

The Chairman reported on behalf of the **Badminton England (BE) Representative, Registration Secretary and Secretary.**

In his report to the AGM last year Malcolm Fraser (MF) warned club representatives of the impending change to the membership system and asked for their patience. This year he said that, while some clubs had experienced no problems, others had their patience tested to the limit. Badminton England (BE) now realised that they had provided a poor service and had adjusted expectations of what could be achieved over the coming season before the Vision system was complete. They now appreciated the problems they had caused and had expressed their apologies. To give club officials more time to settle their membership in the future the due date for affiliation had been put back to 1 November. One serious shortcoming of the new system was that HBA had not known accurate membership figures for the season, and had only recently been given membership details to enable the Newsletter to go out.

The committee was aware that some clubs had folded, and that some were in difficulties, and he requested that club officials keep him informed of any difficulties so that publicity can be given to stimulate membership. Badminton activities continued to thrive within the county and this should feed more members into clubs. Nationally, BE had launched its 'No Strings' membership in an effort to make contact with casual players at sports centres, as a first step to bringing them into club and competitive membership. Presentations later in the AGM would show other initiatives instigated by BE, especially in schools. This put pressure on the willing volunteers who run HBA and HSBA to convert these young players to the club members of the future. More help with this task would be appreciated as both committees need further recruits. In particular coaches who could help at school closing time were particularly in demand. He wished to thank all the club officials who gave their time to run clubs and helped to keep badminton in Hertfordshire so vigorous.

Veterans

Jeff Armstrong, captain of the over 50's team, said that a full report on the Vets season had been included in the Newsletter. In summary, both over 40s and over 50s teams had a successful season, and next year an over 45s team was planned.

MF expressed his thanks to Jeff, and to Elaine Meagher, captain of the over 40s..

Herts. Schools Badminton Association (HSBA)

Angela Blowers (AB) reported that HSBA Chairman, Ken Winchester (KW) was recovering well from heart surgery, but was unable to attend. She reported on another successful and busy year for the juniors. She listed some of the successes achieved by the different squads and expressed thanks to all the hardworking volunteers who contributed to these results. In particular she wished to thank two longstanding volunteers who were standing down this year:- Tony Clarke who had worked with the Under 17s for over 25 years, and Joan Waters who had been a tireless worker for badminton and taken on almost every role during her long association with badminton. She added her congratulations to Joan on her recent badminton award. MF expressed his thanks to KW, AB, and all the other HSBA volunteers, for the tremendous job they do, for which HBA reap the benefit. KW was wished a speedy recovery.

Development Co-ordinator

Dave Bartlett (DB) presented his report for the past season. Development continued to be driven through the Badminton Herts Development Committee (BHDC) comprising of members not only of HBA and HSBA but other county-wide partners, who he wished to thank. The BHDC targets for the year were broadly centred around:- establishing Community Badminton Networks (CBNs); increased participation especially within schools and colleges; more coaches; finding funding to reduce coaching course costs, and more clubs. Our Regional Officer's report would show excellent performance against most of these targets. He also reported on the development of facilities in Herts. In September, following some 5 years of our supporting the school's plans, Gail Emms opened the John F Kennedy School Sports Centre dedicated to badminton. 2 clubs are now enjoying the facilities there. He thanked Brian Jackson (BJ) for his work as Coaching Co-ordinator.

MF thanked DB for his considerable effort in achieving such good results. The new JFK Hall was an asset to badminton, and the prominence of badminton there was down to the enthusiasm and expertise shown by DB during the many hours of attendance at meetings. He also said that if anyone had any contact with Presdales School they should inform either MF or DB as their new school hall could be a useful venue for badminton.

Malcolm Jellows then presented his report as Regional Officer. The Eastern Region was still without a Regional Manager after Tim Fitches left BE earlier in the year. It was hoped to fill this post shortly. Funding countrywide from Sport England totalling almost £21m had enabled a 4 year strategy to be introduced last September covering the period up to the end of March 2013. This new plan had led to several changes, for example BDO to Regional Officer, and the development of new BE roles such as Managers of Facilities Investment; Disability; HR, and the No Strings Project. CBNs had been introduced as the mechanism for driving the 3 key aims of Grow, Sustain and Excel. Herts currently had three CBNs:- Welwyn Hatfield, Dacorum/St Albans and North Herts. Each CBN had achieved considerable success in introducing badminton into schools and encouraging lapsed players back into the sport. An Active People Survey carried out by Sport England had shown that badminton was a popular sport within the community.

In response to a question as to whether areas not covered by a CBN were disadvantaged MJ said that more CBNs were planned and that he could always be contacted if help was required.

MF thanked MJ for his report and explained that all the work being done by CBNs, particularly in schools, should eventually result in more club members. Further areas of work involved the 16-19 age group to prevent drop off, and the establishment of Development Clubs to enable inexperienced players to develop to a standard whereby they could join existing clubs.

Coaching Co-ordinator

Brian Jackson (BJ) reported that all coaching courses were now run by BE and administered from Milton Keynes (MK) and through the Regional Officers. From the courses run in the past year there are now 12 new Level 1 and 4 new Level 2 coaches. However, only 3 Level 1 and 1 Level 2 coaches have joined the coaching register. This needed to be addressed as the county only used registered coaches. Coaches had been supplied on almost all requested occasions. The Herts Coaching Conference had been a great success and the various sessions had proved of value. Herts Sports Partnership (HSP) had continued to provide courses for the personal development of the county's coaches. BJ was planning a trip to MK for coaches to see top junior and/or senior players being coached and also to see the facilities there. This would take place sometime in the Autumn and anyone interested in going should contact BJ. He concluded by thanking DB and MJ for all their support throughout the year and he, in turn, was thanked by MF for his report and the work that he put in.

League Secretary

Robert Hueting (RH) reported on an enjoyable season with increased entries in the league. There had been 12 teams in the Ladies; 19 in the Mens; 16 in the Mixed and 3 in the Medley. Comets had provided the winning teams in the Ladies and Mixed, Northwood in the Mens and Wizard in the Medley. The weather had caused problems with the fixtures but these had been mainly resolved. He announced that he would be stepping down as League Secretary, but that his principle objective, of seeing the league through the transitional period of recording results on line, had been achieved. He was willing to assist his successor at the start of the next season. The Fixtures Meeting would be held on 1st September, when the trophies would be presented. MF thanked RH for his assistance with the County League.

Tournament Secretary

Lynne Parker (LP) said that over the past 10 years that she had been involved with the Herts. Open tournament it had grown considerably, and was now the tournament that all keen players wanted, and were encouraged, to play in. It was the first one to be held in each new season so was a prime slot. The one held last September had attracted a record number of over 100 entries in the Mens Singles. She had run a qualifier and also a plate competition to ensure that all players got a reasonable number of games. There had been 37 entries in the Ladies Singles; 40 pairs in the Mens Doubles; 24 in the Ladies Doubles and 40 in the Mixed Doubles. She expressed her thanks for the help given by John Herdman, Match Umpire for all of her period as Tournament Secretary; Margaret Cooper; Doug Furze, and husband, Mike, for their help over the years. She wishes Ed Lintott every success in taking over the role of Tournament Secretary and hoped that he had as much fun as she had. The Herts Restricted held last autumn had a disappointing entry particularly in the Ladies Singles with only 2 entries, the lowest ever. One encouraging factor was that the tournament had been well supported by juniors. This tournament would be run by Paul Widdicombe (PW) next season and would be at a new venue and run to a new timetable. She wished him every success.

She expressed her appreciation of the gifts presented to her and her husband by the committee. MF thanked Lynne for all she has done over the past years in making the tournaments, particularly the Herts Open, such a success, and also for the financial contribution made by the Open Tournament to HBA funds.

Chairman of Selectors

PW presented his report on the 2009/10 season which had been printed in the Newsletter. He was pleased to report that the County 1st team had come second to Yorkshire in Premier A. However the 2nd, 3rd and 4th teams all had a hard season and faced relegation. The team managers had experienced difficulty in fielding teams and they were to be thanked for their considerable work during the season. The 17-21 age group had shown little interest in friendly fixtures despite a lot of effort being made to organise them by a new team co-ordinator. PW was arranging a weekend of coaching with Lee Jae Bok on 10/11 July and he advised that any county or aspiring county player should not miss this opportunity.

PW was standing down from the position of County Match Secretary and a volunteer to take on this role was urgently required. He stressed that this was not an onerous job, but if no one took it on there would be chaos with the matches.

Playing for the county on over 100 occasions was a great achievement and he was proud to report that 3 county players had achieved this feat.-Andy Walden; Ed Lintott and Natalie Barton (previously Munt). Natalie's achievement was particularly noteworthy as she had juggled international fixtures with her commitment to the county. HBA President Bob Welsh presented the award to Andy Walden.

MF thanked PW for all his hard work, and that of the team managers, over the past season. Coming second in the country was a great achievement, and even if the other teams were to be relegated he felt sure that they would fight hard for promotion next year. He stressed the importance of the job of Fixtures Match Secretary and hoped that someone would volunteer to take on this role.

Area League Representatives

The progress of the SW Herts League had been well reported in the Newsletter. Colin Jackson had sent in a written report on the Hertford Area League confirming that Simon Carter had been voted in as league secretary. He had advised any clubs experiencing problems with the online system to contact MF. The Herts Area Closed Tournament had been provisionally arranged for 12th September.

Bob Green said that 3 initiatives were going well in the N Herts and Letchworth area. A tournament for non-team players had been held and the 'Get Back Into' sessions had attracted around 15 players.

MF thanked all those volunteers who worked hard to encourage badminton in their area.

5. Presentation of Accounts

Colin Walker had presented a written report which was circulated at the meeting. HBA remained in a healthy financial position recording a profit for the year, before extraordinary items, of £2,435 and cumulative funds of £15,662. The increased profit was due to Regional Support from BE; a reduction in the cost of running the senior county teams; a reduction in Newsletter costs as one edition had to be abandoned, and the increase in BE grant/prize money. This increased profit had been partially offset by the contribution to the cost of the opening ceremony at the JFK Centre; lower senior county fees from the training sessions due to the poor turnout, and reduced interest income.

MF expressed his annoyance that one issue of the Newsletter had to be abandoned. Communication with our members was most important and he also regretted the waste of contributor's time and the inconvenience caused to the Newsletter Editor, Gill Bartlett. He also expressed his thanks and appreciation to Gill for the work she did as Newsletter Editor.

The meeting voted unanimously to adopt the accounts, and CW was thanked by MF for his assiduous work on behalf of the Association.

6. Subscriptions for Season 2009-10 (BE and Herts. Badminton)

The proposed increase of 10p in the Senior fee and 5p in the Junior fee was passed unanimously by the meeting. MF outlined the proposed increase in BE fees to be put before the BE AGM. The proposed Senior fee was £10 and the proposed Junior fee £5. This increase was slightly above that of the RPI to cover the cost of issuing Membership cards.

7. Election of Vice Presidents

The committee proposed that Lynne Parker become a Vice President in recognition of her long and successful period as Tournament Secretary. Lynne and the current Vice Presidents were elected unanimously by the meeting.

8. Election of Executive Committee and BE Representative(s)

With the exceptions of Paul Widdicombe as County Match Secretary; Lynne Parker as Tournament Secretary and Robert Huetting as County League Secretary, the committee were prepared to serve for another year. Ed Lintott was willing to take on the role of Tournament Secretary. The Executive committee, with these amendments, and the BE Representatives, as listed on the Notes to the Agenda, were elected unanimously.

MF said that there were a further 4 vacancies on the committee for members without portfolio, and he would welcome any volunteers. A new role of Young Persons Co-ordinator had been identified by BE and it would be necessary to fill this post in addition. He also noted that further volunteers were needed by HSBA.

9. Election of Auditor

Albert Nicholas was again elected as auditor.

10. Review of BE Agenda

MF outlined the agenda of the BE AGM to be held shortly. Currently, the increase in BE subscription was fixed by the RPI and a proposal was to be put to the BE AGM to release it from this restriction. Following a discussion at the HBA AGM and a unanimous vote MF was instructed to vote against this change, MF said that he should be contacted if anything specific needed to be raised at the meeting.

11. Any Other Business

Steve Willis raised the question of last minute requests for match postponement and said that sometimes it was felt that this was more due to the reduced strength of the team rather than the inability to field one. A discussion followed and it was agreed that this had been a continual problem. BG said that the N. Herts and Letchworth League had agreed that the cost of court fees should be covered by any club responsible for last minute cancellations. RH was against any strict rules. It was agreed that the HBA committee would look into this.

MF expressed his appreciation of the work done by the Secretary in organising the AGM. He thanked all those present for attending, and the meeting closed at 9.50pm.