

Hertfordshire Badminton Association

Chairman's Report 2016-17

This has been another busy and successful year for clubs and badminton in the county which is reflected in all of the committee reports summarising the activities. We have been able to help support our CBNs, our members and new Coaches, maintain our local leagues and Masters competitions and help to develop our young and aspiring players through the pathway into the Senior County teams.

In October 2016, Julia Strong and Nick Rimmer from Head Office organised and facilitated a meeting in Herts as part of their County Tour to develop the BE strategy for the next seven years. This was extremely well attended by a wide cross-section of our members and the priority areas of focus that emerged are now being addressed.

Within the National Game, we witnessed the euphoria of a stunning Olympic games achievement in Rio being followed by the shocking decision by UK Sport to withdraw all future funding for the next Olympics cycle. Few could also have thought that the appeal against this would fail but the decision was unchanged and the impact on our sport and the new BE strategy is now being assessed. An announcement has already been made that the NBL is not being continued into next season as a result of the anticipated financial pressures and uncertainty.

We must extend a warm welcome to Aleisha Challands who has recently taken over as our new Partnership Manager for the East Region, replacing Mike Piggford. Ever since Mike became involved with our County last year, he has made a huge impact in many different areas with significant support for our coaching and development events and an improved dialogue with Head Office. On behalf of the committee I would like to thank him for all his help and for taking such an active interest in what we are doing.

Mike was also a key person in getting the Yonex Badminton Tour being held at the Hertfordshire Sports Village in December, a hugely successful event that saw Bronze medallist Marcus Ellis host an evening of exhibition badminton mixing it with players of all ages and standards from our county clubs.

As communicated at the last AGM, this year sees the introduction of the new Membership offering and administration system by BE, launching from September. Individual members will have been contacted recently to outline the new structure and full details are available on the BE Play website. The varying levels of membership are Fan, Play, Compete and Coach and there are changes to the way that clubs will affiliate their members. Information and guidance to club secretaries for the new process should be released soon.

HBA, together with HSBA, is continuing with the Birchwood Leisure Centre contract providing us with exclusive use of the 4 court hall from 9am to 6pm every Sunday during the year, with favourable court rates available to the county clubs, players and coaches. We are still in active dialogue with the Town Council Leisure operator regarding the proposals to redevelop the centre at Birchwood and remain committed to being able to help influence the design and specification as the plans emerge.

The Hertfordshire Parabadminton Open Tournament was run on 23 July 2016 at Hertfordshire Sports Village with categories for Standing, Short Stature and Wheelchair. Once more there was a good entry and some excellent badminton on the day with extremely positive feedback received from the players and spectators. While no tournament has yet been planned for this year we continue to hold a small fund that will enable us to hold another event.

Once more 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 and I look forward to the coming season in September.

Paul Kempster
Chairman