

# **Hertfordshire Badminton Association**

## **Acting Chairman's Report 2013-14**

Many clubs continue to struggle with Membership particularly among women and girls. Rhiannon Smith who is our Badminton England Regional Participation Manager covering the London and East Region will be talking at the AGM about new opportunities for clubs and what can be done to help. Development is focussed on getting more people to play badminton on a regular basis and 'No Strings' in Hertfordshire is doing well so we can hope to get some of these players converted to club members.

Badminton England notified county associations of the affiliation and other fees for 2014/15 which are increasing again, some categories by up to 30%. The key figures are Senior Club Member £14, Junior Club Member £4 and Coaches £40. Changes to the funding for National Government Bodies with reducing subsidy and a commitment to maintain support to key areas of activity such as the Inter County Championship (ICC) are the main factors and BE are looking at what it does, what it can continue to do and what it must stop doing.

Badminton England released the Business Plan for 2013-15, available on their website, which is focussed on the next two years to give a clear direction for their activity and are undertaking a consultation through this year culminating in the production of a longer term strategy designed to meet the vision to Consistently Produce Olympic Champions and Get the Nation playing Badminton. Clubs, Performance Centres and Community Badminton Networks (CBNs) are key to the delivery of the plan and success of the sport.

Planning was already approved for the National Badminton Arena in Milton Keynes but progress on the disposal of the existing centre is delayed due to a requirement for additional assessments of the wildlife 'corridor' with a potential to affect the sale value and this might impact on the scale of the new Arena if the expected amount is not realised.

The National Badminton league launches in October with six new franchise teams and a short dynamic match format. Fixtures will be played monthly and televised live by Sky Sports with broadcasts around the world via digital streaming. BE announced the NBL as an exciting and game-changing opportunity aimed at attracting new and regular fans and growing the profile of the sport.

Badminton England have been conducting a review of the ICC and shared their proposals to change the structure for the 2015/16 season during the year. The main points are that there would be just one top division with 12 teams and regionalised competition into leagues of 8 teams with those matches played across 4 weekends. Objectives are to reduce clashes with the NBL and International competition, reduce travel time and commitments for players and enhance the attractiveness for players involved.

The block bookings of Birchwood Leisure Centre, Hatfield, on Sundays will continue for 2014/15 from September 1. Priority is given for Senior and Junior County matches and

tournaments however there will be significant court time available and anyone interested in making a booking can contact Colin Walker.

Finally, you will be aware that Malcolm Fraser stood down as Chairman during the season after a long, dedicated and informed chairmanship which goes back to the 1960's. It is impossible to overstate his positive impact on the Association over the years and contribution to the sport as a whole and we are extremely grateful to him for all his efforts.

On behalf of the HBA committee I would also 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 working together we can continue to develop and grow.

Paul Kempster  
Acting Chairman