

NORTH WEST COUNTIES SQUASH LEAGUE

MINUTES OF THE 56th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT FAIRWAYS LODGE ON THURSDAY 26th JUNE 2014 COMMENCING AT 7.30 PM

Present:

John Hugall	President
Bernie Gill	Chairman
Henry Stone	Honorary Legal Advisor & Treasurer
Dave Goulden	General Secretary
Steve Eccles	Match Secretary
Andrew Beeston	President Merseyside SRA
Alan Batchelor	Vice President Cheshire SRA
Peter Withington	Lancashire Rep to NWCSL
Norman Astbury	Vice President
Roy Lomas	Vice President

Apologies were received from Vice Presidents: Graham Horrex, Bob Ireland, Phil Taylor, John Cunningham, Bill Littlejohn, Ian Hargreaves; Chairman of Merseyside: Roger Kenyon and Committee Member: Rob Allen

1. Introduction

The meeting was opened by the Chairman, who began by asking those present to remember Robin McIntosh, who had passed away during the season. Robin was a Vice President and had been a Divisional Representative for over 25 years.

Following a minute's silence, the Chairman then introduced the personnel on the top table and the Vice Presidents present.

There were 48 clubs represented during the evening.

Alderley Edge, Bollington, Bowdon, Bridgefield, Buxton, Capitol, Cheetham Hill, Cheshire Officers, Chester Rugby, City of Manchester, Crewe Vagrants, Crow Wood, David Lloyd Bolton, Disley, East Lancs, Ellesmere, Fairways Lodge, Fleetwood, Formby, Glossop, Grove Park, Heswall, Knutsford Sports, Lancaster University, Le-Sport, Liverpool CC, Longridge, Lymm, Markland Hill, Monton, Northern Crosby, Penwortham, Prestbury, Preston Grasshoppers, Saints, Sale, Southport & Birkdale, St Peters Burnley, Stockport, Sugden Metro, Tame Valley, The Northern, Warrington, West Heaton, Whitby, Winsford, Woolston & new club Whitefield Squash Club.

The meeting was informed that YMCA Thornton had folded, with the majority of teams/players moving to Fleetwood.

[Attendance is based on the Clubs that signed the attendance sheet, available at the meeting]

2. Apologies for absence – received from a number (19) of clubs.

Alsager, Blackpool CC, Bury, Clitheroe, Club AZ, Delamere Park, Lancs Health & Racquets, Lancon, Marple, Mollington Banastre, Moss Farm, Radbroke Hall, Rochdale, Sandbach, South Shore, Village Bury, Village Hyde, Widnes RUFC, Xaverian

[Apologies are based on the clubs who informed the General Secretary or were given to the General Secretary on their behalf at the meeting]

Clubs Absent: (37)

3-1-5 Squash Club, Barnton CC, Blackburn Northern, Brooklands, Capenhurst, Congleton, Congleton Bear Town, David Lloyd Cheadle, David Lloyd Chorley, David Lloyd Knowsley, David Lloyd Manchester, De Vere (Blackpool), Deeside, Haslingden, HC Exiles, Hyde CC, LA Fitness Chester, Leyland, Liverpool Univ Staff, Macclesfield, Moss Side, Neston, New Brighton, New Mills, St Annes, Tattenhall, Tollgate, Vale of Lune, Village Cheadle, Village Warrington, Village Whiston, Village Wirral, West Kirby, West Lancs, Wigan, Wilmslow, Wrexham Brymbo

From the 'Clubs Absent', the following (11) clubs had already paid their NWCSL Team Fees for the 2014/15 Season: Capenhurst, David Lloyd Chorley, De Vere (Blackpool), Deeside, Hyde CC, Moss Side, Neston, St Annes, Tattenhall, Wigan and Wilmslow, whilst a further two clubs: Vale of Lune & West Kirby; have paid their fees before 1st July deadline.

3. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 25th June 2013, which had been previously circulated to clubs, as well as being available on the website, were taken as read and approved by the meeting.

4. Matters Arising – none

5. Presentation of Accounts

The Honorary Treasurer, Henry Stone, presented the accounts to the meeting, copies had been sent to all club representatives in advance of the meeting, as well as some copies also at the meeting.

Income had shown an increase of approx. £1250 to £14928, excluding the £5000 sponsorship money received from Sports Direct.

Team Fees had shown an increase of just over £1100.

Other income from the advertising income from Courtcare remained the same at £800 for the handbook and website.

Fines were showing an increase of approx. £400 over last season, which is somewhat disappointing and not a trend that is wished for in future seasons.

Expenditure showed an increase of approx. £900 over the previous year, at around £13890, excluding a further reserve of £5000, which had been included for Junior Development and £4328 out of the £5000 sponsorship money. The remaining amount of the sponsorship money was set against the increased cost of producing the handbook and stationery to meet the sponsor's requirements.

Postage, Printing & Stationery fees, including handbooks, had increased by £500, mainly due to the increased cost of producing the handbook to meet the sponsor's requirements.

Referees' fees showed a net increase of £325 over last year.

Promotional expenses, including the website, had remained the same to the previous year.

Cost of Trophies should a slight decrease of £80 from last year at £420.

Play-Off Finals (net contributions) had remained the same at just over £300.

County grants had remained the same at £8000.

Secretarial Honorariums had remained the same at £1000, which are shared between the General & Match Secretaries.

Miscellaneous expenditure of £260 was a result of £200 individual sponsorship and the cost of a presentation to the retiring 1st Division Representative, John Cunningham, at last years AGM.

This all resulted in a deficit of approx. £3300 for the year, as a result of the further £5000 reserve for Junior Development.

The General Accumulated Fund decreased from just over £34,000 to just over £30,700.

A question over cheques drawn but not presented of £6200 was answered by the Treasurer. It was made up of £3000 each for Junior Development to Lancashire & Merseyside Counties and £200 sponsorship to an individual to help against the costs of representing England in matches earlier this year.

The Treasurer thanked the auditor, Simon Westhead for auditing the accounts on our behalf.

Following the Treasurer's explanation of the Income & Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2011, acceptance of the Treasurer's report and figures were proposed, seconded and duly approved by the meeting.

The re-election of the Auditor, Simon Westhead, was also approved by the meeting.

6. Re-application from associate members

There were three existing Associate Members seeking re-application, Buxton, Saints & Le-Sport, which were voted on separately by the meeting and all approved. Buxton – unanimous; Saints 19 For & 2 Against; Le-Sport 19 For & 2 Against.

7. Application from new clubs and additional teams

There had been one application from a new clubs, Whitehead Squash Club, who would be playing out of Total Fitness Whitefield (Manchester).

Three clubs, Blackpool CC, De Vere & Winsford, had already indicated that they would be entering an additional team, whilst Fleetwood would be increasing by three teams with YMCA Thornton folding.

There may be other, but it was unknown at this stage, and there were also indications that a number of clubs would be reducing their teams by one.

8. Constitution and Rule Alterations

There were two Rule amendments proposed by the Treasurer, Henry Stone, on behalf of the Committee, who explained the reasons behind the amendments.

Amendment to Rule 4.4 – amend the last sentence of rule 4.4 so as to read:

“The Committee will decide on the allocation **and/or deduction** of points, any fines that may be imposed, and also any penalty that may be applied to the lower teams of the offending club.”

[The amendment is shown in red]

Passed – unanimously

Amendment to Rule 6.5

Delete the existing rule 6.5 and substitute:

“Where any team concedes a walk-over, apart from a club’s lowest team, the Committee will also decide on any penalty it considers appropriate.”

Passed - unanimously

9. Presentation of Shields/Trophies

At the Play-Off Finals for Division 2 to 5, only the Division Shields and individual player trophies had been presented.

All the Division section winners were presented at the meeting, including the Division One Shield and individual player trophies:

Div 5C Lymm1	Div 5CS	Liverpool CC 5	Div 5N YMCA Thornton 4
Div 5S Buxton 1	Div 5SE	New Mills 1	Div 5SW Winsford 2
Overall Winners of Division 5 - Div 5NE East Lincs 4			

Div 4C Brooklands 3	Div 4E	Rochdale 3	Div 4N 3-1-5 Squash Club 5
Div 4NE Crow Wood 1	Div 4NW	David Lloyd Knowsley 1	Div 4SE Wilmslow 1
Div 4SW Delamere Park 1	Div 4W	Neston 3	
Overall Winners of Division 4 - Division 4S – Macclesfield 1			

Div 3CN St Annes 1	Div 3CS	Grove Park 3	Div 3NE Rochdale 2
Div 3NW Xaverian 2	Div 3SW	Heswall 2	
Overall Winners of Division 3 - Division 3SE – Northern 3			

Div 2C 3-1-5 Squash Club 1	Div 2W Wrexham Brymbo 1
Overall Winners of Division 2E – Crewe Vagrants 1	

Division One Champions - Bowdon

Division section shields were presented by the President, John Hugall, to each of the Clubs or collected by a representative from one of the other clubs present.

The President made the presentations to the 1st Division Champions, Bowdon, for who, Peter Billson, spoke briefly and thanked the NWCSL Committee for their work in organising and running the league.

Eight clubs, who were section winners, were NOT present at the AGM to collect their trophies and failed to make any arrangements for someone else to collect them on their behalf, which is extremely disappointing:

Outstanding Shields to be collected by clubs from General Secretary:

2 West – Wrexham Brymbo 1	3 Central North – St Annes 1
4 Central – Brooklands 3	4 North West – David Lloyd Knowsley 1
4 South West – Delamere Park 1	4 West – Neston 3
4 South – Macclesfield 1	5 South East – New Mills 1

10. Election of Officers

With there being no other nominations and all the current officers prepared to stand, the following were proposed, seconded and elected unopposed.

President	-	J Hugall
Chairman	-	B Gill
Treasurer & Hon. Legal Advisor	-	H.Stone
General Secretary	-	D Goulden
Match Secretary	-	S Eccles

Vice Presidents: All the current Vice Presidents were re-elected.

County Representative: All County Representatives were re-elected.

Divisional Representatives: All current Divisional Representatives were re-elected, with any new Divisional Representatives to be co-opted.

The General Secretary stated that a number of new Divisional Representative would be required and asked the meeting to make requests to their clubs, if there was no one present wishing to take up the duties.

11. Sponsorship

The Chairman gave a brief up-date on sponsorship and he had been in contact with the Sports Direct, the current sponsor. At this current moment, it was not known whether they would be continuing with the sponsorship, since they were reviewing all their sponsorship deals, across a number of sports. The Chairman believed that even if they did continue with some type of sponsorship, then it would be in a different format to the current deal.

12. Formation of Premier Division & Potential Restructuring

A document covering the formation of a 'Premier' Division and potential restructuring proposals was distributed to the meeting by the Match Secretary. The Match Secretary and General Secretary gave a brief overview of the documents. The Match Secretary stated that the formation of a potential 'Premier' Division arose from two meetings during the past season with representatives from the 1st Division whilst the General Secretary gave an overview of potential restructuring that could take place at the same time. The main purposes behind the potential restructuring were to attempt to improve the competitiveness, particularly in the sections of the higher divisions, whilst at the same time, attempting to broaden the base at the bottom of the league to encourage both new players and juniors, when the first enter the leagues, as well as the long term future of the North West Counties Squash League. It was stated that these proposals were only being considered for the 2015/16 season and there were no plans to introduce them for the coming 2014/15 season.

Since any significant changes to the league's structure would require several rule changes, it is planned that an EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting) would be held before the Team Captain's Meeting on 1st September 2014, hence all clubs would exactly know what they would be playing for during the 2014/15 season.

There followed some discussions and individual views on the potential proposals from the audience. It is difficult to simply summarise all the individual views, since some were made from their own club's short-term perspective, whilst other did take into account the longer term perspectives of the League. The important thing is that all the clubs should discuss the potential proposal, as well as putting forward their own proposals, which will benefit the long-term operation of the NWCSL. Any new or amended proposals from a club will be needed to be submitted to the General Secretary within the time frame that allows them to be forwarded to all the club's representatives at least two weeks in advance of the EGM on 1st September 2014, in accordance with item 4.3 of the League Constitution.

A request that copies of the proposals be emailed to all the club representatives was made and will be supplied.

It was stressed by both the President & Chairman that these were only proposals for the representatives to take away and discuss within their clubs, since it would be the clubs decisions at a future EGM of whether they accepted them or not.

The Match Secretary also covered the other items for discussion or voting on at the EGM, which covered:

For 2014/15 Season

PARS scoring across all Divisions (Division 1 to 3 : PARS to 11 up; Division 4 to 5 : PARS to 15)

Promoted clubs to be mandated to accept promotion

Recommendation from the NWCSL that all juniors wear goggles

Consideration a bonus point incentive for playing juniors

For 2015/16 Season

Premier (or existing 1st) Division to start at 19:00

Premier (or existing 1st) Division to have team shirts

Team sizes to reduce to 4 players

Although reducing the team size to 4 players can be considered controversial, it does give the opportunity in the majority of clubs of potentially increasing the number of teams playing in the league by up to approximately 50, which would certainly benefit the bottom division of the league, as well as addressing issues with late finishes, particularly where a team has only 1 court available.

13. Any Other Business

The Chairman gave a brief update on the situation of England Squash & Racketball, which currently were having to make savings of £30K per month. Funding from Sport England for the next 12 months will be dependent of a review due in August. Since participation is critical to future funding, clubs should be encouraged to declare all their members. The Chairman is also sitting on a Members Working Group, looking at how to encourage new members and increase participation.

Sport England's measure of participation in all sports is through an "Active People Survey" carried out on their behalf by landline telephone calls to judge how many people are participating in sports. If you do receive a phone call, do not ignore it, since it is critical to our sport.

Team Captains Meeting for 2014

The Team Captain's Meeting for 2014/2015 season was confirmed for Monday 1st September 2014 at Alford Sports & Social Club, Warrington, which will be preceded by the EGM commencing at 7.00pm.

League stationery would be handed out at this meeting and clubs should make sure that team captains and/or club representatives do attend or make arrangements for a representative from a local club near them to collect it on their behalf.

Andrew Beeston made reference to the 'Decadents Squash', which is an Over 40, 3 player and social team matches, which usually play on a Tuesday evening. If any clubs are interested, then further information can be got from Andrew at the following email address - wjabeeston93@gmail.com

The meeting was drawn to a close by the Chairman at approx. 9.15pm, thanking the club representatives, who had attended, Fairways Lodge for the use of their premises and the Vice Presidents for attending.

General Secretary
04/07/2014