

WRFC MEETING OF THE BADMINTON COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting on Wednesday 21st April 2021 at 7.30PM

PRESENT: Ms. H. Nicolson; Ms. K. Herrity; Mr. R. Debidin; Mr. R. Wheeler, Mr. C. Richards; Mr. S. Wardell; Mr. M. Jones (Club Manager); Mr. N. Baldwin (Director); Ms. C. Wu (Wrfc Safeguarding Officer) for items 01/21-03/21 and Mr. G. Chapman (Director) for item 01/21.

APOLOGIES: Mr. W. Fannin and Mr. K. Manro.

01/21 **Club Development Proposals/Future of the club consultation (Geoff Chapman):**

Board member Geoff Chapman presented to the committee an overview of the financial challenges facing the club and of the different options being explored to secure the clubs future, including member loan schemes, grant schemes and the Board development proposals to be presented to the membership for vote at the upcoming 'Future plans' club consultation meeting. It was noted that whilst the impact of the pandemic has hit the club hard and with a significant drop in membership affecting immediate revenue (down from approx. 1200 to 670 members at the time of meeting), the financial and structural decline of the club precedes the pandemic as a long-term concern. Even pre-pandemic, with membership numbers at 1200 the club was just breaking even and unable to deal with mounting problems due to ageing facilities. The Board believes the only long-term viable solution is to look to exploit the freehold of the site, in order to generate sufficient funds needed to update/replace and maintain facilities. Options include selling part of the freehold and using funds acquired to update and improve existing facilities, OR selling entire freehold and look for a replacement site for new facilities. For more in-depth details and background on 'the future of the club' proposals please refer to the membership email dated 14th April.

02/21 **Safeguarding Report (Christine Wu):**

Christine Wu reported that safeguarding standards and compliance have improved, and we are following guidelines for 'best practice'. Badminton England have tightened their safeguarding standards and it is now compulsory for coaches on the BE register to complete approved safeguarding courses. Courses have been arranged for Saturday junior coaches to complete prior to restarting the Saturday junior sessions on the 24th April. In addition, junior registration forms have been updated and new procedures put in place with reception to ensure parents are informed about pick-up procedures and responsibilities for children outside of scheduled session times. **Action M.J:** Post link to form on club website and inform reception team about procedures and to ensure juniors attending Saturday sessions and/or joining club complete the appropriate form. **Action S.W:** Email link to Academy parents for appropriate Academy forms. C.W. noted that a potential issue regarding changing room facilities has been flagged and is awaiting consideration by the Board and management. C.W. is looking to retire from position of safeguarding officer and management has advertised the position to the membership but so far had no applicants.

03/21

Management report/update (Mark Jones):

- a) Facilities: Mark Jones reported on recent issues with 'bubbling' of the badminton court flooring on several courts, likely caused by damp conditions and courts being out of use during months of lockdown. The issue is being addressed and at least temporarily resolved but may need more attention in the long term. Management is working on a maintenance investment plan, carefully considering the lifespan of all new investments for facilities.
- b) Membership numbers: Current active members = 670. Membership numbers are improving slowly but steadily since the reopening of the club.
- c) Court Utilisation: Court utilisation has been good since reopening considering covid restrictions on adult play. School bookings have also helped keep courts busy during off peak hours and are bringing in good additional revenue.
- d) Affiliations: BE membership affiliations have been arranged and completed for all members of the club.
- e) Club opening times: Club opening times to be extended to 10pm from 17th May, including reopening on Mondays and Fridays, with the introduction of step 3 of the BE Roadmap back to play. There are as yet no plans to return to the earlier opening times in the mornings.
- f) Bar: M. J. reported that plans for re-opening of the bar/café is still being considered and options explored by the Board/management but no decision made as yet. The committee noted the importance of bringing back this facility in order to help attract new members in/old members back. M.J. to report back on any decisions made.

04/21

Juniors:

- a) **Saturday Junior Sessions Returning 24th April:** Arrangements were confirmed for the return of the Saturday Junior sessions on April 24th. Numbers signed up with pre-payment for the term are still quite low but expected to rise significantly with most parents paying on the day. H.N. confirmed that the coaching team is ready and organised and courts allocated according to numbers anticipated. C.R. to report back if additional coaches and/or courts needed as the sessions grow. **ACTION C.R.:** To monitor sessions and manage rota of coaches making sure we are keeping costs low while allowing for numbers to grow in these sessions.
- b) **Academy sessions:** Numbers continue to be good and sessions are being paid up front on termly basis. Easter camps were well attended in all groups. S.W reported that as E.T.C. we have now received a further 25 dozen free yonex 40 shuttles from Badminton England for the junior academy. These are in addition to 12 dozen received when re-opening early to help facilitate elite play. H.N. made enquiry about the club sponsorship deal with Yonex and whether we could request new t-shirts for academy players as well as club coaching team. N.B. noted that the club would need to arrange a meeting with Yonex representatives to discuss a renewal of the partnership agreement following club closure due to the pandemic. **Action: N.B. and S.W:** Contact Yonex to discuss.

05/21 **BE Step 3 -from May 17th -Session Planning:**

The committee planned the return of adult club sessions from 17th May in accordance with published BE guidelines for Step 3. It was decided to re-introduce the following sessions: Adult Graded Sessions (winter season format), Thursday Morning Intermediate Session and Sunday Beginners and Improvers session. H.N noted disability sessions would also be returning from 24th April as organised by Lorraine Brydie.

It was decided to run graded sessions on a pay and play basis only, until 21s June when hopefully restrictions on numbers will be lifted, allowing a return to normal session format and the introduction of summer season sessions. It was noted that visitor fees to graded sessions had been reduced to help encourage numbers but that these should return to normal with the lifting of restrictions in stage 4.

Action R.D: Communicate with session representatives of the adult graded sessions and make sure they are updated on guidelines. **Action R.D:** Plan for return of No Strings sessions and report back with proposed starting date. **Action H.N:** Draft a member communication about the reintroduction of adult sessions.

06/21 **Committee Responsibilities & updating of BC constitution:**

The committee discussed a draft update of the committee constitutions submitted by the Board of directors. NB confirmed that the Board had received feedback from the badminton committee but was still waiting for feedback from the squash committee. Once feedback from both committees have been received the Board will consider changes and forward a revised document.

07/21 Confidential matters: None.

08/21 A.O.B: None.