

Minutes of AGM held 22nd July 2009 at Next Generation Chorley.

Those in attendance: Bernie Gill, Cindy Gill, Susan Easton, Liz Edge, Peter Withington, Steve Withington, Mark McKee, Steve Cadwell, John Gibson, Mike Farrington, Danny Massaro, Val Wallwork.

Apologies from: Julian Wilson, Becky Botwright, Graham Horrex, Ian Bradburn, Henry Stone, Yvonne Taylor, Cath McCoo, Dorothy Quarmby, Linda Kenworthy, Debra Cockburn, Frank Cygler, Steve Johnson, Darren Vescovi, Susan Meadows.

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes, which were accepted as correct.

The Chairman then reported on the best season for a number of years in terms of individual and team performances. Particular mention was made of Laura Lengthorn-Massaro, Matthew Sidaway who has reached Under 15 No.1 and the Over 55's men who beat Yorkshire to become champions.

The County Closed was held at Fairways Lodge sponsored by CX Pro. Peter Billson's experience proved too much for Steve Withington despite the encouragement of the partisan crowd. Amina Helal showed why she should still be playing Inter County squash by disposing of former Over 35 National Champion Jeannine Cowie. Nigel Willis continued his dominance of the Over 35 men by beating Glen Ragou once again. The plate final was contested by juniors, Matthew Walker beating Julian Tomlinson. There were insufficient entries for the other age groups and racketball. The poor number of entries was blamed on short notice and the fact that entries were "on-line" for the first time. The Chairman promised that lessons had been learned. Peter Withington proposed the setting up of a sub-committee to assist with the organisation and running of the event, which was approved by the meeting. Steve Cadwell suggested that consideration should be given to winners of club championships should be automatically entered in the County Closed events.

In the absence of the Treasurer Graham Horrex, the Chairman reported that income had increased marginally overall, NWCSL rebate was up, but England Squash rebate was down due to less players being declared by clubs. Last year's sponsor of the NWCSL, JJB Sports had as expected declined to continue in the current economic climate. The Chairman stressed that in the absence of a sponsor, the only source of revenue was rebates.

Sue Easton gave the Junior report on another successful season.

The County Closed held at Fairways Lodge in September 2008 was sponsored by UK Carline with ninety Juniors taking part. All matches were played to an excellent standard and in great spirit.

The Boys Inter County teams all played well with the U13's team finishing 2nd in stage 2 and U17's were runners up in their Trophy Final. The U13's girls also had an excellent result at Edgbaston Priory coming 2nd to a strong Warwickshire side.

The Northern Cup was better for the boys coming 2nd in the Under 13's, the Under 15's came 3rd & the under 17's came 6th. The U19's came first.

In May 2 teams of Under 11's were entered in a Cheshire run tournament at Bowden to give the little ones their first taste of Inter County Squash.

In the absence of the team captains apart from Liz Edge, the Chairman reported that the Harris Inter County finals weekend resulted in the men retaining their Premier status and the ladies being beaten into 3rd place. Thanks to Mark McKee of JFM Plates who sponsored the kit for both teams. The Over 35's pulled out of the 2nd stage resulting in relegation and a fine despite the efforts of Glen Ragou to raise a team. The Over 45's and Over 50's retained their Premiership status and the Over 55's excelled. The Over 60's struggled to avoid relegation despite starting the season with a glut of players. Better luck next season. The Ladies Over 40's struggled to find a team with Liz Edge, Susan Meadows and Debbie Catlow doubling up with the Over 50's. Debbie also turned out for the second team in which juniors Lauren Tamila and Lauren Bayliss experienced senior squash for the first time. Well done and thanks to all players and managers.

The monthly coaching squads continued, mainly at Fairways Lodge, run by Danny Massaro assisted by Vicky Botwright and Chris Lengthorn. Danny raised the matter of cost, particularly in the present economic climate, feeling that perhaps some parents were feeling the pinch. He felt that free sessions may devalue the squads but accepted that maybe only the "better off" children were benefiting. The Chairman stated that further attempts would be made to obtain funding for juniors in particular those from less wealthy families or where there were more children in the family. Liz Edge asked if children could be sponsored by senior players. There then ensued a discussion on child protection issues and the problems faced by parents of junior players.

Frank Cygler was elected to the Committee to assist in obtaining grants for the County and clubs within the County.

The Chairman reported on the lack of activity on the LANSCA front. Danny Massaro asked for an update on the progress of the Awards for All bid discussed in April. The Chairman advised that the two bids submitted on behalf of LANSCA and the County had been unsuccessful as had a "Small Grants" bid from Sport England, despite assistance from ESR. Hence the need for the expertise of Frank Cygler.

The Lancashire Ladies League staggered on as an "on-line league" on the Lancashire web site run by Paul Kelly. Apparently the site had been beset by "bugs" which made the in-putting of results difficult. The Chairman reported that he had been requested to verify 18 results which was difficult when no cards had been submitted. Paul Kelly had promised to deal with the problems and it was hoped that the next season would be better. Sue Easton remarked that the Lancashire web-site was "static" and she had stopped visiting it. Liz Edge asked if we could have a "Resultzone" web-site which was much better. The Chairman promised to speak to Paul and also reminded the meeting that Resultzone cost money and Paul's on-line shop produced income for the

juniors. Sue Easton remarked that so far the juniors had not received any income but also had not paid for any kit.

In AOB the Chairman invited John Gibson to say a few words on his new role as Membership Benefits Manager for ESR. John stated that he had been having discussions with a number of large companies who despite the recession were interested in sponsoring sport. He would be continuing to speak to people and promised to keep the contacts with the County alive. The Secretary asked if he could find some sponsors for the County as well as for ESR.

The Secretary suggested that a County Handbook should be produced to try to attract sponsors by means of advertising in the handbook. Mark McKee of JFM Plates offered to assist in the production of a handbook and Steve Withington suggested that a small charge could be made to all clubs or individuals wishing to help the County funds.

Mike Farrington raised the subject of club closures and the possible demise of the Preston and District League. The Chairman promised to meet interested parties and would continue in his efforts to prevent further closures, but requested early warning as little could be done when notice of closure had been given.

The Chairman drew the meetings attention to Sport England Funding programme, details of which could be found on the ESR web-site. John Gibson also reminded the meeting that monthly updates could be found on the monthly news letters issued by the North West regional team.

A range of garments including team kit and sweatshirts were shown to the meeting to obtain opinion on colours and placing of logos if sponsorship was forthcoming. The meeting decided that black and white with red lettering and logos would be the County colours.

The meeting closed at 2130, the Chairman thanking all those who attended.