

Minutes of AGM held 22nd July 2015 at Markland Hill Bolton.

Those in attendance: Bernie Gill, Cindy Gill, Susan Meadows, John Gibson, Mike Farrington, Tony Parker, Bob Houldsworth, Barry King, Glen Ragou, Gary Wood, Chris Fell, Paul Lane & Liz Edge.

Apologies from: Graham Horrex, Julian Wilson, Shelly Walsh, Angela Cwaczko, Paul Hulme, Tori Peter, Colin Goodwin, Steve Jones, Snowy Green, Ian Bradburn, Mandy Warren. Sarah Taylor, Ron Darlington, Peter Withington, Dave Scurlock, Steve Kaye & Stuart Featon.

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes which had been circulated in draft immediately after the last AGM, amended & displayed on the County website for the last 12 months.

The Chairman then introduced Susan Meadows Women's O.50 team manager & ESR non-executive Board member who had also acted as interim ESR CEO following the departure of Nick Rider early last year.

Susan reported on the sweeping changes to the organisation that had been made in order to secure continued funding from Sport England. As a result the staff levels had been drastically reduced & more emphasis had been put on working with partners to deliver increased participation levels. She announced that a 3year Elite programme had been approved but the Participation programme had only been given funding for 1 year. This meant that counties had to work more closely with ESR & clubs including Local Authority Leisure Centres & commercial operators in order to demonstrate an increase in participation. She announced that £400K had been allocated to fund a new technology platform, which would assist the new Marketing director, Darren Bernstein, to deliver better communications to all members. Another £100K had been allocated to an Insight programme which would help identify areas needing assistance. Susan then asked for feedback from the audience so that she could report to the next Board meeting in August. The general consensus was that better communications were needed between ESR and individuals, as most members were unaware that they needed to activate their membership before they could access the benefits of membership.

The chairman thanked Susan for the report & said that further feedback could be given after the conclusion of the meeting. He then went on to report on a mixed season for the County Seniors apart from individual performances from Shelly Walsh, Mandy Warren & Kay Fallows who were all selected & played in the Home Internationals. They also represented the County in the Open age & over 40's, whilst Shelley completed a hat-trick by leading the over 50's to the finals.

The Junior & Senior County Closed squash events were held at Fairways Lodge, the Junior event sponsored by Xpressive Interiors. The Men's event was won by Julian Tomlinson who proved too strong for Ryan Atherton of Wigan. Steve Withington retained the over 35's title by beating Darren Vescovi of Preston Grasshoppers. In the over 45's, Steve Cummings regained his title by overcoming last year's winner Steve Hollinrake. In the over 50's, Stuart Wardle had too much guile for Andy Heller. There

were only 2 entries in the over 55's, Ian Bradburn returning from ankle surgery was too strong for debutante Steve Taylor. Bob Houldsworth still couldn't find a way to beat his Markland Hill club mate Phil Shacklady in the over 60's. With only 3 entries in the over 65's, Dave Scurlock was too fit for Arnie Wilkinson & Alistair Swift.

The Men's Racketball was held on a freezing weekend in January at Virgin Active Manchester. Steve Hollinrake from 3-1-5 club in Lancaster won both the open & over 40's events, while his club mate Ian Donnellan won both the over 50's & over 60's events.

The Women's events were cancelled once again due to lack of entries, a sad state of affairs considering the recent successes of the teams in the Inter Counties.

The Chairman then went on to report that the Grassroots Development Fund programme had been successfully completed at the 4 venues identified in the bid, Haslingden Leisure Centre, Little Lever High School Leisure Centre, Penwortham Leisure Centre & St Annes S.C. In total over 1000 young people were introduced to the sport. The best result was achieved by Julian Wilson at St Annes who succeeded in introducing 25 new members to the club. Congratulations to Julian on his efforts. In addition, over 100 primary school pupils had their first taste of Mini Squash at Greenfield Primary School & were introduced to Tame Valley S.C. This was achieved at a total cost of £4500 in equipment & coaching. Agreement has been reached with ESR to utilise the balance of £1500 on the purchase of 2 inflatable nets, similar in principle to the Rebound nets but easier to assemble, to be loaned to ESR Licensed coaches for use in facilities without squash courts. ESR has also agreed to our proposal to hold coaching seminars with Paul Carter the ESR Head of Coach Development. Bob Houldsworth commented on the fact that only one Level 1 coaching course had been held in the NW in the last 12 months & Glen Ragou said that was fully booked. The chairman stated that he would discuss the matter with ESR & felt certain that if 10 or 12 people wished to attend, ESR would not object to holding a course locally.

On behalf of the Treasurer, Graham Horrex, the Chairman presented the accounts to the meeting. Income had fallen compared to last year when it was inflated due to the GDF & NWCSL grants of £3000 each. The County Closed income had increased due to the separating the Squash from the Racketball, but a small loss was still incurred due to more expensive Performance shirts being provided with the entry fee. The chairman asked would the meeting prefer a cheaper cotton tee shirt or increase the entry fee to cover the cost of the Performance shirt. Bob Houldsworth commented that most players had enough shirts & he felt that keeping the entry fee the same & dropping the shirt would be preferable. John Gibson asked where the £6000 allocated to Junior Development had been spent. The chairman pointed out that he had already covered that point in his report & the amount spent in the current year was £1221. A lively debate followed on why the money was not given to the Junior committee to spend. It was explained that the Junior committee had been set up without the knowledge or ratification of the Management committee. Susan Meadows asked who sat on the Management committee & the chairman listed its members. The secretary pointed out that under the constitution only one Junior Development post existed. Susan Meadows commented that ESR had recently looked at constitutions in the light of modern technology. The secretary advised that the Lancashire constitution had been

amended at the last AGM to bring it up to date & had been passed by the meeting. Bob Houldsworth suggested that a meeting should be arranged between the Junior & Senior committees to formalise the arrangements.

The chairman then advised the meeting that due to the ESR reorganisation, a NW Regional Forum had been set up consisting of the 4 counties Cheshire, Cumbria, Lancashire & Merseyside. In an email received earlier today, ESR had advised that different grants would be made to counties depending on the level of matched funding made by the counties. Pressure would be exerted on the NWCSL to release more of the Junior Development sponsorship money it was holding in reserve.

In the absence of Peter Withington & Dave Scurlock, the Chairman, reported that the Girls U13 team did well getting to finals day & coming 5th overall. The Boys U.13 got through to the 2nd round where they were beaten by the eventual winners. The Boys U.15 also got through to the 2nd round. Boys U17 did very well, getting into the Semi-final & could have done even better without injuries to key players. Thanks to team captains Richard Rawcliffe, Peter Withington & Dave Scurlock.

Highlights of the season were Oscar Beach playing for England & hopefully reaching No.1 in the rankings. Isaac Rawcliffe had a terrific year playing for David Lloyd Chorley in their 1st Division team, losing only twice all season. The chairman pointed out that Charlie Cowie had also played for the team & had played 3 times for the County 1st team, winning all his matches. Finnlay Withington had a really good year & became U11 No.1 nationally. Well done to all.

Countywide there are now 5 Hub clubs & each is a satellite club running successful junior coaching & internal leagues.

Each month Fairways holds a Lancashire Academy training day that attracts around 20/30 of the youngsters in the county & is expected to grow this coming year. This training session is self- sustaining.

The Junior Closed was a great success with over 80 youngsters taking part. The event was sponsored by Xpressive Interiors who will sponsor the event again this season. The Northern Cup was held at Fairways for players who had not played for the county. This was between teams from Cheshire, Lancashire, Merseyside & Yorkshire, a very successful day with 72 taking part & really well supported by parents & friends. We will be expanding the number of inter-county matches for this group of players in the coming year.

In the absence of some team captains, & reports from those that had not replied to his request for reports, the chairman advised that the Women's 1st team had been relegated. The highlight of the weekend was the performance of Pat High-Comer who had brought her daughter Amie to play for the Seniors for the first time, winning 3 out of 3 matches. The Women's over 40's lost their title but still reached the finals as did the over 50's, losing in the Semi-finals to the eventual winners.

The Men's first team did well in the first half and were in a promotion group in Nottingham with only the winners being promoted. Once again they fell at the final hurdle. No report was received for the over 35's. Gary Wood reported that the over 45's retained their Premier Division place. The over 50's were relegated from the Premier Division.

Bob Houldsworth reported that the over 60's retained their Premier Division status winning 3 out of 3 matches. Barry King reported that the over 65's won both their matches against Cheshire & Merseyside despite only having their No.1 Dave Scurlock

for the second match. With 10 players to choose from a second team will be entered in next season's competition.

No members of the Committee had resigned or retired so all were confirmed again.

The LANSKA AGM will take place week commencing 17th August, date time & venue to be advised.

A brief discussion took place on whether to enter a Women's team in the open age group. As the team had been relegated & there were no other opportunities for the Junior girls to play in the Inter-counties, it was decided to enter a team.

The Junior County Closed will take place on 26/27th September, the Senior Men & Women Squash events will take place at Rochdale on 3rd –5th October & the Racketball will take place on 29th –31st January 2016. Venue T.B.A.

The 32nd Andy Gill Memorial event will take place at Rochdale commencing 22nd August with the finals on Sunday 30th August. The chairman encouraged those young enough to enter & promised an entertaining week of squash for the spectators.

The first racketball team event will take place this coming Sunday at Rochdale with teams from 3-1-5 club, Tame Valley, Cheetham Hill & Rochdale competing.

The chairman then introduced a new product designed to encourage infants from the age of 2 to develop hand eye coordination called Ezee Sport.

He also mentioned 2 new websites SportyHQ, a League Management System & SportW3 a new interactive site for clubs, coaches, events & fitness classes. Susan Meadows commented that she was impressed by the site & recommended people to visit it.

Bob Houldsworth reminded the chairman that he had promised to check with the ESR coaching team about putting on a further Level 1 course for the NW.

There being no other business, the chairman thanked everyone for attending & contributing to the meeting & wished them a safe journey home.

