

Neston South Wirral Hockey Club AGM, Wednesday 11th May 2016

1. Present: Kenny Gardiner, Jacqui Lord, Sally Bush, Sarah Smith, Jenna Smith, Emma Nokes, Craig Trenholm, Ollie Mills, Anna Schofield, George Falck, Rich Leeman, Colin Leeman, Gary Evans, Justin Cowley, Jason Paul, Simon Speirs, Ste Williams, Dave Goldstraw, Lee Robinson, Matthew Newell, Andy Heath, Kim Sunderland, Tony Bush
2. Apologies; Tony Brooker, Jason Phoenix, Alex Hurst, Will Falck
3. Minutes of the last AGM; the minutes of the last AGM held 20 May 2015 were agreed as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Sally Bush and seconded by Emma Nokes. There were no matters arising
4. Chairman's report: The season has had some challenging moments at times with some tension throughout the club.

My role is to try to find harmony within the various areas to look to gather all together for a common cause which is a happy and successful hockey section. This year we have needed to play games away from Neston Rec., due to school development. Whilst Birkenhead School is not ideal geographically I feel this has been a success and the best possible option we had available. It's always difficult to gain a balance on who plays there and I feel that rotation is good but feel we should continue to exclude M1s and L1s. On occasion we need to use a third pitch and Birkenhead girls' school pitch is available. Thanks go to Mark Strong on the weekly bookings and Liaison when needed.

In previous years the cost to support M1s and L1s has been quite high with travel and on occasion accommodation. We have tried to address this using Neston High Schools minibus when available in exchange for NHS using the pitch for after school games and some practice. I believe this has been a great success and whilst saving us quite a lot of money also helps both teams to arrive fresh and gives a better overall experience in long journeys. This should continue next year and we could look to use the bus for some other teams if they have longer journeys.

Part of the role of Chairman is to represent the section to the wider club council and discuss any relevant issues. The club is in general terms doing ok and making small profits currently. My hope is that in time we can make the general club more successful and this will drip back into the section with more central club financial help. Currently we don't get much financial help from the club with the

exception of the external pitch hire. If we were able to get more help it would reduce the burden of the section to find funds for coaching etc.

Coaching this year has been a major issue and during my time as Chairman we have had players unhappy with content or delivery. I have tried to listen to all parties and attempted to address issues as they have come up. Part of the issues has been personalities but also perhaps a wider problem of what we would like the club to be; a social centre or a performance related environment. For most I think it's social which is fine but I'm not sure you can run your higher teams on that basis if we wish for long term success and continued development.

Andy Aldred has now departed for a new challenge in South Africa so we are currently looking for replacement coaches. I wish Andy success in his new role.

The Men's section now is very large and it's a big logistical job to manage all these teams and provide all with games- sometimes you have too many players and sometimes too few, a hard balancing act. I would like to say that Justin has done a great job as Mens' club captain and has been excellent in this role in his first season.

The Ladies section is going from strength to strength and it's particularly good to see the numbers coming through- especially from the junior ranks. The Ladies 3s team had a special season and I'm sure that we could manage to run 5 teams going forward. Thanks go to Kim who has really put her stamp on the Ladies club Captain role.

Lastly, the junior section has once again excelled this season and we are now seen within hockey circles as one of the stronger junior sections in the North of England. This has been achieved by hard work, and dedication from coaches, managers, helpers, parents etc. In recent years the club has seen the fruits of this labour with many players moving on to the adult section and the contribution from this has been huge. We are also seeing great achievements from teams getting to National finals- with the U12girls and U16 boys this season. Thanks in particular go to the junior coordinator Sally Bush for all her hard work with all the junior sides

Running all these teams is hard work but umpiring and arranging the umpiring is a big task and my thanks go to all the umpires and Jason for Co-ordinating this on a weekly basis.

In conclusion it's been three years that I have been Chairman and I have enjoyed the input I have had. I will be stepping down and would like to take a less active role within the section. I'm happy to help my successor in any way that I can and would like to help with juniors on Sunday mornings and I'm happy to continue to look after the kits aspect.

5. **Treasurers Report;** In apologising for my absence from this meeting I have asked the Chairman to present my report. This in the end has been a successful year largely because of an increase in sponsorship. I say in the end! The returns from the 4th and 6th men's teams have been very inconsistent particularly as I had only received minimal returns from them until just before Christmas, and then not until near the end of the playing season. Most of the outgoings occur before Christmas including affiliation fees for England Hockey, Cheshire H. A. and league entries

It is imperative that subs monies are paid in at least every fortnight to maintain a good cash flow particularly in the first half of the season

The balance sheet shows an increase of 16% which is represented by a bank balance of £3924 and a sinking fund balance of £117,394. The Club did not borrow any money from the sinking fund in 2015

Overall there has been a small increase in income to £55,211

Subs contributions have decreased by £2,000 and correspondingly the £1 pitch contributions have also decreased, although some of this is due to the fact that some forms lack detail and I have had to guess what to allocate!

Sponsorship has increased over 50% and thanks for this must to Kenny Gardiner, Bern Thorne, and Tony Bush. It is important that this level of sponsorship is maintained, as it is this that helps pay for our coaches

On the expenses side coaching costs have been reduced by £1,000 as we had one coach less this season.

Catering costs have decreased a little as explained in the accounting notes.

Sundry items include payments for the container

On a personal note I have indicated that I am prepared to continue managing the accounts for another season, unless there are any takers for the position!!

I trust that these are an accurate assessment of the finances of the hockey section at this time and that these accounts can be approved.

The financial report was accepted by the members and countersigned by Chairman Kenny Gardiner and Secretary Jacqui Lord.

6. **Secretary's report;** Jacqui Lord reported that this season started slightly less frantically than last season due to England hockey delaying the deadline for affiliation by one month. However there were still issues chasing information from some captains with regard to ages of players and finding relevant information about total numbers of umpires, coaches, volunteers etc. Hopefully with the mens database this will become easier to administer and I hope next year to expand on this to include greater information about adult female players. In this way we can ensure that the demographic information given to England hockey is accurate and relevant.

The year passed smoothly with no major hiccoughs

I am planning to try to make our committee meetings paper-free and with this in mind I am giving the membership warning that next year's AGM will be paper-free with the

minutes, agenda, and financial spreadsheets emailed out to members and available as a link on the website. I hope this meets with club approval to minimise wastage and reduce costs.

I am happy to continue in this role if the members wish me to do so?

7. **Social Secretary Report;** George Falck reported that the social side of the club remained strong with a small dedicated group of members attending most functions. £400 was raised from social functions in addition to the end of year dinner. He found it was impossible to get each of twelve teams to organise a social event. He suggested that there should be a committee of volunteers to run social events. Hopefully the new events manager at the club will aid with this.
8. **Ladies club captain;** Kim Sunderland reported TO BE INSERTED
9. **Men's club Captain;** Justin Cowley Reported; TO BE INSERTED
10. **Coaching Report;** There was no report received from Andy Aldred and no reason given for this.
11. **Umpire coordinator Report;** Jason Phoenix reported; My first season following on from Derek has been a difficult one - BUT without the support of the senior / seasoned Umpires, I would have failed miserably.

Overall view: Regardless of the frequent 'Friday night 23:30pm change request e-mails' >> **WE At Neston** actually managed to supply umpires to all Men's, Ladies, junior & cup games throughout the entire season. (Even managing to cover a few non-Neston games in the process) - This was a change to last season.

This was down to the excellent dedication, superb support & my bribery skills in the bar (not really) from all the Neston Umpires (senior, junior & new) of whom many doubled up over the season. (Superb effort)

In addition, with the number of umpires we require each week we had to rely heavily on reciprocal agreements with other clubs to supply 2 umpires for home games. I appreciate that this was not always popular with some of the captains but we have always seen eye to eye & agreed a way forward.

I would like to thank those captains & players who showed their appreciation to the umpires by making sure their teams respect the umpire's decisions on the pitch and remembered to offer them a drink afterwards.

Generally, I think the behaviour on the pitch of players with regard to respecting umpires decisions is very good, but there were still several occasions, when umpires have complained to me about unacceptable attitudes by players to decisions they did not agree with.

Unintentional mistakes are just part of the game! Thank you to the majority who just put up with the "mistakes" and get on with it. All umpires are willing to discuss and explain their decisions if need be, but not in the middle of a game PLEASE.

I would like to pay my personnel thanks to the following;

Colin Leeman, Andy Crick, Brian Clark, Tony Lydiate, Jacqui Lord, Derek Hollingsbee, Bern Thorne, Liz Tappin, Sally Bush, Kev Smith and Dave Goldstraw. I have fully appreciated their support and the huge versatility they have brought throughout the season.

My thanks also extend to the few player / umpires who also have displayed a superb mind-set allowing me to be as versatile as possible with selection - paying particular thanks to the following people;

Craig Trenholm (Fav Umpire of the Ladies 3's), Rich Leeman, George Palin, Lee Robinson & Simon Speirs - excellent support & my thanks.

In addition, we created a few NEW Umpires to the Neston fold; qualified at Level 1

Myself (needing more experience - to be sure), Jason Paul, Justin Cowley, Hettie Dunlap, Anna McBurney, Harrison Phoenix, Maddie Canning, Steve Harrop & Keren Flockhart.

My thanks also extend to the following newbies for 'sticking their neck out' in times of 'jason crisis';

Justin Cowley, Steve Harrop & Harrison Phoenix.

We have also managed to train & elevate a number of senior Umpires to be our club 'umpire developers'

Jacqui Lord, Colin Leeman, Andy Crick, Kev Smith & Liz Tappin.

This 'development' team is dedicated to ensuring all umpires at Neston are consistent, professional & compliant with the application of the rules of Hockey.

Thanks to them all for the extra time & dedication, they have brought to the club.

Thanks also to Nick Fearnley, Bern Thorn, Jacqui Lord & Liz Tappin who helped out with match delegate duties on many occasions.

A few more points to make;

For the 2nd season running 'Neston HC' has managed to secure the Cheshire Hockey Association, John Robinson Young Umpire Award for 2016.

Massive congratulations to Harrison Phoenix for achieving this award. (This is the reason why I am not in Neston tonight as I am away at Bowden HC to see Harrison receive the award & represent the club at the Cheshire Hockey AGM)

So I am now throwing out the challenge to the NEW junior umpires to make it 3 seasons in a row

For all new umpires who 'umpire' 3 x games for the club, we have agreed to reimburse the £50 subscription fees paid to EH for the level 1 course.

Umpire of the year award - was given to Jacqui Lord (not sure if she will read all this out - but I am saying it for the record)

Well done to an Umpire who has shown excellence throughout the season - completely well deserved - Jacqui has been an excellent umpire >> taking every appointment I

dished out, stepping up to more senior games when asked & being a superb sounding board when I was at my most vulnerable.

June 26th (Sunday) I will be hosting an EH umpire 'taster' training session at the club - aimed at none players, parents & none umpires. More details out soon

The Ladies & Men's 1's teams I think have a duty to pay back into the club to junior ranks their experience & dedication - would love to see a few of the hockey elite umpire lower games next season.

I hope next season will be as successful as the last

12. Junior coordinator; Sally bush reported. It has been a busy and very successful year for the junior section!

Sunday mornings training sessions for U8,U10 and U12 boys and girls have been very well attended and with the help of many volunteer coaches(mainly parents and young leaders), we have delivered sessions on Sunday mornings from September through to March(no cancellations due to frost). Sunday mornings can see approx 130 children training over a three hour period. This includes Beavers who also train on Sundays.

The volunteer helpers have shown great commitment and enthusiasm and there has been a good atmosphere. Their help has been invaluable in ensuring successful sessions. We are always looking at ways to improve, and dealing with increased numbers is a constant challenge. Dave Goldstraw organised some 7-a-side tournaments for U10s and U12s over the season which gave them all the opportunity to play in matches. The Cheshire Championships were held at Chester and we entered 2xU12 girls, 2xU12 boys, 1xU10 girls and 2xU10 boys. Girls U10 and U12 both came second and got through to the North finals!

We had a successful fun Christmas party for the Sunday morning children with a visit from Father Christmas and food for the children. This was held just after Sunday training and it was great to have many parents and siblings in the Tea Room. Successful end of season presentation event for U8s and U10s on a Sunday before Easter, with the rest of the age groups in The Cranston in April. Both events were a celebration of junior hockey at Neston.

We have fielded a Beavers and Badgers team throughout the season. Both squads had a wealth of players to choose from and it was a great opportunity for so many players to have regular games on Saturday afternoons.

There were a number of U14 girls friendly matches and early on in the season we did look at running a Vixens side (girls U12/13/14) but it was not easy to get anyone to run it on a regular basis. If we don't manage to get a 5th Ladies team in the league next season we must try to get a Vixens side going as we will have lots of young girls keen to play and unable to get a game in the Ladies gamers due to numbers.

England hockey competitions

U10 girls reached north finals (7 a side)

U12 girls reached National finals (7 a side)

U14 girls reached tier 2 North finals (4th place)

U14 boys reached tier 2 north finals (2nd place)

U16 boys reached National finals (3rd in group, 6th overall)

U18 girls reached semi-final of plate comp

U18 boys reached quarter finals of Plate comp

Great results and great depth. A lot of hard work by all coaches, players and parents involved. U12 girls are still to play the National Finals, so we wish them good luck!

Thanks to all the helpers, coaches, managers involved in all the friendlies and EH competitions- so many over all the age groups. We are fortunate as a club to have such a great band of volunteers.

England hockey single system

We have had great success with many girls and boys at all ages getting through to JAC and success for James Gardiner, Tom Russell, Owen Harrop, Tom Thorne and Annie Mills getting to JRPC9 North). Tom Russell was also selected to play for England U16 ,with Nathan Castle, Will Faragher, Mike wood, and Izzie howell playing for Wales U16 and U18. Great achievements by all

As well as all the notable achievements mentioned above, we also have a large number of junior players who play regularly in a wide range of senior teams. This shows the opportunities available for them to participate and also reminds us how important every player is. Players develop at different rates and it is always important to keep an eye on all junior players to encourage their development

Umpiring

A number of juniors attended an umpiring course and are now qualified umpires. Particular congratulations to Harrison Phoenix who was awarded the Young Umpire of the Year by Cheshire HA

Looking ahead

We have to be able to develop those players who wish to develop, and to give them the opportunity of frequent quality of play.

Let's keep up the good work, encourage coaching courses and encourage new ways of play(e.g.rush hockey, 7 a side games) and continue to bring on all of our juniors

A great season- Thank you.

Election of committee members:

