

Shefford & Sandy Hockey Club
Minutes of Annual General Meeting
5th April 2009
Sandy Upper School - Classroom of the Future – 1.00pm

Present: Hannah Bartram (Chair), Tony Payne (Treasurer), Siobhan Stevens (Club Secretary), Mike Tipper (Fixtures / Umpires Secretary), Cheryll Whaley (Social Secretary), Tessa Chiswell (Membership Secretary), Liz Infield, Sarah Cullip, Denise Alexander, Jacqui Burke, Rob Glover, Dianne Tipper, Kevin Wilson, Andy Cusack, Gully, Martin Byers, Kath Wilson, Julie Barnes (Ladies Club Captain), Liz Orbell, Ian Cooper, Jodie ?, Natalie Nunn, Jaymee Nunn, Simon Preston, Nina Taylor, Nicola Hart, Jo Hare, Louise Pillar, Doug Dawson, Matt Wilson.

Apologies: Karen Hall

1. Welcome by the Chair

Hannah welcomed those present and confirmed that the attendance was the highest for a couple of years and thanked everyone for their efforts to attend.

2. Chair's report

The past year

The 2008/09 season found S&S once again fielding 5 men's and 4 ladies teams. And as usual, it was a season of mixed fortunes for both sides of the Club!

After two years of relegation, and fielding probably the youngest side in the league, the Men's 4s had a fantastic season finishing second and gaining promotion. The Men's 3s are safe whilst Men's 2s sadly are relegated, having been promoted last season. Men's 1s won't know if they are safe until May, pending the outcome of the National League play-offs. The Vets once again put in a rock solid performance to come second in their league.

In the ladies section, Ladies 3s did brilliantly to win their league – by just 2 points – and are thereby promoted. Ladies 1s also did very well as runners up in their league, and getting to the quarter finals of the National Vase competition. Ladies 2s and 4s had rather more turbulent seasons, but have avoided relegation which is good news.

Some highlights

Juniors:– the junior section has grown from strength to strength, with 30-40 youngsters turning up every week and a number coming into the senior teams. The Club ran three very successful junior competitions earlier this year for U11s, U13s and U15s, with 19 teams from 5 Clubs taking part. In particular, our U11s squad is showing great potential and has taken part in other Club competitions. Trevor Bridger has done a great job managing the squad. Also want to thank Dougie, Stuart, Steve, Elli and Eleanor Stones for all their coaching efforts.

Get back into hockey:- With Team Beds & Luton funding we ran a 4 week refresher course for people to get back into hockey last Sept. Whilst numbers were low, enthusiasm was high and at least two of the group subsequently joined the Club.

Umpiring Day:- Tipper organised a coaching day for the Club with the regional county umpiring association. This meant two of our learner umpires got some

coaching, there was a presentation on the finer points of umpiring, the head coach led a group discussion around the Men's 1s game, and two Club umpires were assessed for their Level 1 certificate. The Umpire Association were impressed, and want to do the same thing again with other clubs.

New Club kit:- As you might have seen, we are switching to an online kit supplier, and changing the style and fabric used. We've got some samples to show you today – more on this later.

Clubs First:- The Clubs First file is complete, and will be submitted for assessment in the next couple of weeks. Amongst other things we have had to write a 5-year Development Strategy for the Club. We will have a practical assessment too, and we are looking at arranging a one-off junior training session. Sarah Cullip has done a great job in ensuring all those Club members who deal with juniors are now CRB-checked through England Hockey, which is a requirement of Clubs First.

Future challenges

Volunteers

A key challenge for the forthcoming season is recruiting new Committee members and other volunteers to help the Club run smoothly. As you will be aware, there are several vacancies on the Committee. The more people that help out, the less onerous each task becomes!

I'd like to thank Siobhan Stevens, who is stepping down as Minutes Secretary, and to Mike and Di Tipper who have been the Umpires Secretaries for longer than anyone can remember. It's a thankless task but completely essential. Similarly, thanks go to Cheryll Whaley, Adam Nott and those captains that are stepping down.

It's equally important to thank the remaining Committee members and others that help keep the Club going. A lot of work goes on unnoticed behind the scenes, and often unappreciated, so can I take this opportunity on behalf of the Club to thank all those that contribute.

Juniors

Continuing to build on the success of the junior section will be a focus for next season. We will continue to encourage and develop these players, so that they gain confidence and the ability to move into the senior squads when appropriate. We intend to organise more junior competitions, and encourage juniors to compete in other Clubs' events. We will buy a set of junior match shirts and socks, and other equipment such as goalkeeping gear, as and when appropriate using a generous donation from one of the junior's parents.

Seniors

- If we can get the funding, the intention is to organise another 'Get back into hockey' initiative during the early part of next season.
- A continual issue is securing umpires and coaches. The Club is happy to subsidise people through the Level 1 umpiring courses as long as they commit to umpiring in the future.
- We have benefited on several occasions from sponsorship, and we are keen to retain and expand this where possible. This year we received over £1,500 in sponsorship.

- The website and e-mail are now the main tools we are using for communicating with members. This significantly reduces our costs and time. However, it is essential we have the correct e-mail addresses for it to be really effective.
- We'd also like to do a Club questionnaire, to find out what players / members / parents think of how the Club is run, how it could be improved, and how you could help the Committee.

That's just a snapshot of some of the things the Club has been doing this past season, and plans to do next season. Will now hand over to Tony to take you through the Club's accounts.

3. Treasurer's report

2008/09 Highlights

Accounts will not be finalised until May at the earliest, so the following summary is estimated based on figures to date.

Overall

- 07/08 ended up better than expected, partly due to income from social events and late billing by the Sports Centre, leaving 07/08 with a deficit of only £10 and an account balance of £3750. This allowed us to leave membership and match fees unchanged.
- Superficially this year's accounts look very good, and I'm anticipating a deficit of just under £100 for the year. We had budgeted for a £1000 deficit. However we've been helped by some one off income, and there are worrying signs in terms of membership.

Expenditure

Expenditure is expected to be close to £1500 over budget

- We ran a "Get back into sports" event at the start of the season and a junior tournament, Both were largely self-financing but as a result we spent more on kit, coaches and pitch hire
- Teas have gone up from £40 to £43
- We spent considerably more on coaches, as we had consistent and increased access to paid coaches. With increased the duration of ladies training
- The cold weather reduced costs for training w otherwise expenditure would have been some £600 higher
- We managed to negotiate reduced pitch hire rates for the men's 4s which is a heavily junior based team.

Income

Income is expected to be over £1550 above budget.

- Thanks must go to SSLA for and to Peter Bean for donations. Peter's money will go towards sponsoring a kit for our youngest juniors and for training equipment. These will be purchased for the start of next season
- We also received a grant from Active Luton to run the Get Back into Sports and junior events.
- Sponsorship and Grants totalled just over £2000 and we can't expect a repeat of this.
- Subscriptions may be £700 below budget. The men's section appears to be showing a loss of senior members with increases in the number of juniors.
- Match fees will be up, partly due to carry over from last season

- We had solid income from kit sales (socks shirts shorts).

2009/10 Budget

2009/10 worries me. Based on my early estimates we will have to increase costs especially if the membership trend continues, so I don't really want to make a commitment until this year's accounts are fully finalised – things may be better or worse. However, I expect we will run a deficit next year and we can absorb about £1000 and leave us with a healthy balance of £2500 that is the minimum we need to cover cash flow at the start of the season when we get some big bills.

Expenditure

- Pitch hire hourly rates will go about by about 2%.
- If we wish to continue the ladies training running two hour sessions then training costs will increase – about £600 for the season.
- No significant amounts will be spent on additional website developments or courses.
- We will have net spend on kit, including the junior strip to be bought out of sponsorship.
- Our existing shirt manufacturer has gone bust so new shirts will be different in terms of style and material, we are also out of stock so are taking the opportunity to move to a web-shop for kit. Although there are no setup or admin costs we do have to pay for any bespoke kit – green and black – that we've ordered and have not been sold by April. Minimum order levels have also increased over the last 12 months, but net spend on this will be hard to estimate.

Income

- We did well this year for grants and sponsorship and will keep looking for more opportunities, however we can't budget on getting anything as this is traditionally an erratic income stream.
- Our policy is that subscriptions should cover the running of the club, covering training, affiliations, insurance etc. I am worried that the recession will bite and we will lose members. Membership income is already down this year. Each team only costs us about £400 in terms of affiliations, so if the club shrinks in size running cost per member increases. I expect we will have to increase membership by £10 for adults, keepers and juniors. There is probably grounds for argument that being a team captain or committee member has got much harder over the last few seasons and I think we should consider leaving their costs the same.
 - Subscription rates rise to £100 for adults, £60 for committee members and captains, £50 for juniors/members in full-time education and £20 for goalkeepers with full kit. £20 increase for payment after October 2009.
- If we plan to keep or expand the extended training then this will cost us about £600 for the season.. We will have to consider if we can afford this and how it might be funded – training fees are something I personally don't think help in encouraging attendance, but we may have to look at re-introducing this.
- The only other mechanism we have for increasing income is match fees. A £1 increase will bring in about £1500. This is not something I would like to do if we have to increase membership.
- I do not want to make a final decision until all the accounts are finalised, and have taken a pessimistic view of things however, it appears very likely that we

will have to increase Membership Subscriptions or Match Fees, and would like to have the authority to increase one of these.

- We have to consider the expansion of training. Given the reduction in membership income this year is this something we should continue with, and should we think about £1 per week to cover training costs.
- If things end up worse than I expect there may be a need to increase both membership and match fees are you happy for the decision to be made by the committee? Full accounts will be published to the website.

4. Club captains reports

No reports were submitted from the club captains.

5. Presentation of subscription proposals

Subscriptions would probably increase however all present agreed that the committee can make this decision once the 2009/10 season commences.

6. Election of Officers

None of the remaining officials were challenged for their positions so there was no voting. There were no volunteers for the vacant positions.

- Chair: Vacant - to be filled by next season
- Treasurer: Tony Payne to remain
- Minutes Secretary: Kirsten Rayner
- Membership Secretary: Tessa Chiswell to remain
- Ladies Fixtures Secretary: Di Tipper to remain
- Men's Fixtures Secretary : Mike Tipper to remain
- Ladies & Men's Umpires Secretary: Vacant – Must be filled before next season
- Ladies Club Captain: Julie Barnes to remain
- Men's Club Captain: Vacant to be filled by next season
- Junior Hockey Co-ordinator: Hannah Bartram
- Social Secretary: Cheryll Whaley / Denise Alexander
- Child Welfare Officer: Vacant to be filled by next season

7. Any Other Business

Training

Training will commence again on Tuesday 8th September 2009 for both juniors and seniors. The club took the decision to split the ladies training session from January 2009 until the end of the season. Feedback from those attending is that this worked very well. A decision whether to continue with this approach will be taken during the summer.

Summer BBQ

Will be held at the Tippers in September once the season gets underway.

Pitch status

Rachel Dawson–Adderson commented that the pitch is not up to standard and can we not negotiate reduced pitch rates next season. We continue to have on-going problems with the painted lines in the 'D'. Denise Winsland commented on how the bins were never emptied and the first game of the day (usually Ladies 4s) almost always have to move the goals into position. The poor / erratic quality of the teas was also mentioned.

Mike Tipper accepted this and suggested that the Sandy Sports & Leisure Association (SSLA) is an open body, anyone from SSHC can join this committee and further help our cause. Hannah agreed to talk to Stevenage Leisure about the teas, bins, goals etc.

New Kit

Tony introduced the new kit (in terms of style, fabric etc) and there were a number of samples for people to look at.

The meeting was closed at 2pm.