

## **Chair's report – AGM, April 2011**

Before I started writing this I had a quick look back at what was said last year and the year before – and each time I have started with the phrase “It’s been a mixed season for the Club”. I think that comment still applies.

The ladies section has had a good year. Having won promotion from 5 Counties Women's Hockey League into the East League, the Ladies 1s had a sterling season winning their new league and securing another promotion. This will be the highest placed league they have ever played in, and they rightly deserved their win as Ladies Team of the Year last night. Following a bit of a dodgy start to their season, the Ladies 2s finished 4<sup>th</sup> in their league – thought to be the highest ever (at least in living memory!). Having won promotion, the Ladies 3s had to battle hard this season but avoided relegation by one point ... whilst the Ladies 4s finished a very respectable 5<sup>th</sup>.

The men's teams have had a very tough season – but at least this year they ended with the same number of teams that they started with.....For a variety of reasons, we lost a number of key players which had significant implications for all the squads. Unfortunately, all the men’s teams have been relegated this season. However, many younger players got the opportunity to play up, and there is some genuine good new talent out there which bodes well for the future. The Men’s Vets also struggled - with injuries, availability, age, helping out the other men’s teams all taking their toil – but finished mid-table.

We weren't as successful as last year in the various national Cup and Vase tournaments, but both the Ladies and Men's Vets squads had good runs, reaching the last 16 in both competitions.

### **Some highlights**

#### **1. Juniors**

- The junior section continues to thrive, with 30-40 youngsters turning up to training every week and a number continuing to filter into the senior teams.
- Rachel ran the summer hockey camp again last August, and had up to 20 youngsters turning up on each of the 3 days.
- Through our agreement with Redborne School Sport Partnership, Pete Seward ran 10 one hour coaching sessions in Samuel Whitbread and Robert Bloomfield schools during the autumn – which proved very worthwhile as a number of kids have started coming along to junior training.
- Under the auspices of Bedfordshire Hockey Youth and Schools group, we organised a EH Young Leadership 2-day course during the autumn half term. Over 20 15-17 year olds attended, one of the highest attendance rates ever apparently. The course was run by tutors from Team Beds & Luton, and the kids came from Luton, Bedford, Cambridge – a couple came from Sandy Upper and they are now actually playing hockey for the Club.
- We ran junior competitions for U12s and U14s in January, which once again were very successful. We had 6 clubs participating and 14 teams, representing well over 100 kids.
- Juniors also participated in tournaments at Bedford, Luton and Leighton Buzzard.

- A number of our juniors have also made it into county squads, which is fantastic news.

I would like to thank those that help make the junior section such a success – Jo Thompson, Simon Holloway, Stuart & Steve West, Trevor Bridger, Tessa, Ben Holder, Rachel to name a few.

## **2. Seniors**

- Sponsored by Team Beds & Luton, Steve West ran another Get Back Into Hockey course for the Club last Autumn – once again, participation numbers were low but enthusiasm levels were high which was great.
- Adam organised a Christmas party – which then had to be cancelled at the last minute due to blizzard conditions – but it was great to see the social scene begin to revive.
- A number of players have been through the Level 1 Umpiring course and are now awaiting their practical assessments, which is good news. Thanks must go to Adam Symons for taking on the Club Umpire Secretary role when Dave Eggleton left at Christmas – a thankless task which he has thrown himself into, much to the appreciation of the captains.

## **Future challenges**

### **1. Long-term future of Sandy Sports Centre**

As you know, Sandy Sports Centre was threatened – then at the last minute, saved - from closure, for a year at least. We are in discussions with Sandy Town Council and others about the long-term future of the Sports Centre. As it is, the astro-pitch makes a good profit (almost

entirely from the Club's use of it) so it's unlikely to be closed, plus we have protected access to the toilets and changing facilities. Nonetheless, this is an issue we need to remain involved in.

## **2. Different location for teas**

What will be different next season is that we are almost certainly going to be going to Sandy Village Hall (next to the pitch) for our teas. Tessa, Julie and Tony have been to meet the VH reps, and they are very keen for our business.

## **3. Coaches & players**

For the first time ever, in my memory at least, we appear to have sorted our coaches for next season already. As the ladies will know, latterly we have had a rotation of coaches and that system will continue. Steve West, possibly Dougie but also new coaching recruits Jo Hare and Rob Nunn have agreed to take us on.

For the men, and juniors, Simon Holloway, is keen to stay on.

We urgently need to recruit more senior players into the Club. Paulette Martin has already put a number of 'recruitment ads' onto various hockey websites – so hopefully that will pay dividends. We do have a good number of youngsters coming through the system, which is already helping, but it has been a real struggle this season to get squads out every week.

## **4. Social events**

This time last year I noted that the 'social scene' in the club had more or less disappeared, except for the End of Season party. I have already

mentioned the very popular Christmas Party that never was, plus Tessa is organising the Elvis & Curry night in early June, and Jo Hare is organising a Race Night in early Sept – so lots to look forward to.

As you know, the Club was offered 20 Olympic hockey match tickets – which were hugely oversubscribed (but fairly allocated via a ballot!). Subsequently, EH got in touch to say not every Club had taken up their tickets, so we have applied for more – watch this space!

## **5. Fundraising**

We have not done much fundraising this season, so I think we could do more. Although the economic climate is not great, there are still grants out there if you know where to look. Existing committee members already have their hands full so if anyone would like to take this job on, it would be much appreciated.

## **6. Junior sub-committee**

We'd also like to establish a junior sub-committee which gives juniors a better voice within the club and helps ensure the club gets more parents as volunteers.

## **To conclude**

To conclude - I'd like to thank the Committee, captains, umpires 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 to thank all those that contribute.

I will now hand over to Tony to take you through the Club's accounts.

# Shefford and Sandy Hockey Club 10/11 accounts. AGM Report

## 10/11 Highlights

Accounts will not be finalised until well into May at the earliest. This year the Sports Centre billing for pitch hire been very poor, some matches have been double counted, and most of the snow cancellations from November and December were not correctly billed. I'm also waiting for the last of the match fees and end of season money to come in.

Given the number of unknowns still present this report will be shorter than normal and I will publish a full summary on the website.

## Overall

- The gradual loss of senior men players became far worse this year, and this contributed to a significant decrease in membership income. We are down over £1000 on last season.
- Match day income has also dropped slightly and didn't cover all our pitch hire and tea costs.
- Overall we are likely to have a deficit of around £2000 this season.
- Pitch hire costs will go up by 20% next season as part of the sports centre's attempts to stay in the black. We will need to increase match fees to £10 and £5 to cover pitch hire increases.
- We will need to increase membership income to cover the loss of senior players. Hopefully this will be limited to a £10 increase, but if the final accounts are worse than feared this may have to go up more and I'll be looking for permission from the AGM to make a final decision with the committee.
- We get a significant number of our bills between August and September and typically need £3000 in the bank at the end of the season to cover these costs before the next years membership comes in. I'm hopeful that income from the Elvis night will keep our accounts healthy enough to cover all our pre-season costs, but we may have to ask for earlier payment of membership next season to keep ourselves solvent.

## Expenditure

Expenditure is pretty much as expected, although the harsh winter reduced our training costs with a number of sessions cancelled.

## Income

Income is expected to be a couple of thousand down of budget through reduced membership and match income.

## 11/12 Budget

Match day costs will go up next year through pitch hire, although cost of teas will be unchanged with our move to the village hall.

Increased pitch hire also affects our training costs which are paid for from membership income. I am not yet aware of any other significant increases in our costs.

I'm proposing that subscription rates and match both increase next season:

- Subscription rates at least at £110 for adults, £70 for committee members and captains, £60 for juniors/members in full-time education and £25 for goalkeepers with full kit. £20 increase for payment after October 2010
- Match fees up to £10 for adults, £5 for juniors and students in full time education.