

Minutes of Shefford & Sandy Hockey Club
Annual General Meeting
24th April 2010

Classroom of the Future, Sandy Sports Centre

Present: Chairperson- Hannah Bartram, Treasurer Tony Payne, Secretary Kirstin Rayner, Mens Club Captain-Sean Parsons, Membership Secretary Tessa Chiswell, Fixtures Secretaries Mike & Diane Tipper

Apologies: Ladies Club Captain- Julie Barnes. 12 members of the Club

1. Welcome by the Chair

HB welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Chair's Report - Hannah

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 “Its’ been a mixed season for the Club”. I think that comment still applies this year!

The ladies teams have had a great year. For the first time, the Ladies 1s were crowned champions of the 5 Counties Women's Hockey League and next season will be playing in the East League. Not to be outdone, the Ladies 3s team won promotion for the second year running whilst Ladies 2s finished 6th and 4s came 4th. The men's teams had a tough season with the Men's 4s team having to fold, but ended up with the Men's 1s and Vets coming third in their respective leagues, Men's 3s finished mid-table whilst unfortunately Men's 2s were relegated.

The Club also did exceptionally well in the England Hockey national vase competition for Men's, Ladies and Men's Vets. All three teams got through to the quarter finals, which is an impressive result for a small club. For the first time we also entered the Ladies Vets competition but did not progress quite as far – this time!

Some highlights

- **ClubsFirst**

The Club was awarded the England Hockey ClubsFirst accreditation mark earlier this year after several years of effort – and paperwork! Steve West started off the process, so many thanks to him for all his work.

What it means is that we have been formally recognised as providing a safe, effective and child-friendly club environment. The Club now has a comprehensive set of policies and processes on a range of issues such as child welfare, health and safety, codes of conduct

and data protection plus a development strategy. Most of this is common sense stuff, but it's good to get it documented and signed off by England Hockey. In addition, we are required by Stevenage Sports & Leisure to have a safeguarding children policy and proof that we CRB-check individuals where appropriate.

- **Juniors**

The junior section continues to grow from strength to strength, with 30-40 youngsters turning up to training every week and a number continuing to filter into the senior teams. Once again we ran junior competitions for U11s and U13s which were very successful. We had 6 clubs participating and 16 teams, representing at least 112 kids. Unfortunately the U15s tournament had to be cancelled due to bad weather. Juniors also participated in tournaments at Bedford, Luton and Leighton Buzzard; and some attended county goalkeeper training.

I have asked Trevor Bridger to briefly outline some of the successes of the juniors so will say no more – but I would like to thank Trevor for all he does for the juniors. Also want to thank Doug, Steve, Elli, Cheryl and others that help make the coaching so popular.

- **Sponsorship & Donations**

We successfully applied for £700 from the Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation to pay for the junior tournaments and to purchase a junior goalkeeper kit. Its worth mentioning that our ClubsFirst accreditation helped our application, as it hopefully will also do with other potential funding sources.

The RSPB also gave us a one-off donation of £250. These were funds accrued from the days when many Shefford & Sandy players used to play in the RSPB summer hockey squad, sadly now defunct. This money was also spent on junior equipment.

Thanks to a donation from a parent, we were able to purchase a set of junior match shirts.

Liz Orbell also continues to sponsor the Top Goalscorer of the Year awards.

- **Online kit shop**

The Club launched an online kit shop last summer. The main benefit of this is that we no longer have to hold and manage stock, and people can order branded items whenever they want, without us having to make a large club orders.

There's been plenty purchasing going on, with the shop selling more than 30 tracksuits and hooded tops, 43 pairs of socks and 29 playing shirts. The main limitation has been the lack of a suitable ladies cut of playing shirt, but new longer Mercian kit is now available and we'll be getting some samples soon.

Future challenges

- **Finding new coaches – and players**

We have a rather pressing need to find new coaches – for the ladies, men’s and juniors – one of which needs to be a Level 2 coach to meet the ClubsFirst requirements. This is no easy task – especially as the ladies section has been through several coaches this past season alone – so if you know of any qualified coaches you think might be interested please let us know! We do pay our coaches – which not all clubs do – so it’s not an entirely thankless task. We did run several goalkeeper training sessions which were well received, and we hope to repeat again next season.

We urgently need to recruit more senior players into the Club. The men’s section was particularly hard hit this season, with the 1s and 2s losing about 8 players and many players having to work regularly on Saturdays. We do have a good number of youngsters coming through the system, so hopefully we’ll be able to field another team in 2-3 seasons time, but in the meantime it’s been a real struggle to get squads out every week. The ladies section has been strong on the pitch this season, but again numbers are tight with under 50 registered players and 4 teams.

We ran a summer hockey camp last August in a bid to recruit more juniors, and whilst it was well attended it tended to be existing club juniors that came along. However, assuming we can run it again this summer, we will advertise much earlier – i.e. before school finishes – and promote it through our new Club-Schools links.

- **Rebuilding the Club’s social scene**

Over the past few years the ‘social scene’ in the club has more or less disappeared, except for the End of Season party which continues to get good attendance. I personally think that’s a real shame, as the social aspects of the Club have historically been as important as the playing aspects. I really hope that with a new social secretary this situation can be reversed.

- **Delivering the ClubsFirst requirements**

We have made a number of commitments under ClubsFirst that we will need to deliver against – such as developing better links to the county and regional hockey structures, better engagement with local schools, recruiting more coaches from within the Club, running a club questionnaire – as well as making sure we regularly review our child welfare policies, CRB checks, etc.

There are other issues such as:

- the constant need to find **umpires**. The Club actually has quite a lot of qualified umpires – the issue is getting them to umpire. We do appreciate that many umpires are also players, which can make life more complicated.
- Continuing to recruit and develop **juniors**, so that they gain confidence and the ability to move into the senior squads when appropriate. The plan is to once again host junior competitions next January, and encourage juniors to compete in other Clubs’ events.

- Constantly looking to improve **communications**. We hope to significantly reduce the annual hassle of getting people to return membership forms and payment by sending out pre-completed forms which you only have to return if your details have changed, and providing the Club's bank details so online payments become possible as well as cheque or cash.

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.

3. Treasurer's Report - Tony

09/10 Highlights

Accounts will not be finalised until well into May at the earliest. This year the Sports Centre have been billing pitch hire quarterly in advance. As you can imagine with the harsh winter there are a lot of corrections to be done before this is finalised. We've also not been billed for teas since December.

Overall

- We continued to lose senior members and had to drop a men's team. However, reductions were no worse than expected and membership income has held up well.
- Overall the accounts are looking to balance. Excluding club strip, the accounts are looking balanced and at the moment I see no need increase membership rates of match fees next season.

Expenditure

Expenditure is expected to be close to £3000 under budget

- Match costs are reduced due to losing a men's team.
- Coaching costs – pitch hire and coaching fees - are about £1400 below budget. This is due us going back to a single training session for the ladies, and thanks to the snow and ice.
- We spent about £1000 on junior strip and 'keeper kit. All this related to sponsorship/grants we got last season and this.
- Well over £1500 worth of club strip has been ordered, but because of our arrangement with Hockey Centre we only need to pay the balance on unsold stock at the end of the year. This is about £600 and I intend to carry this line over to next seasons' accounts.

Income

Income is expected to be only £700 below budget despite us losing a men's team..

- Thanks must go to Liz Orbell, the RSPB mixed team and the Bedfordshire & Luton Community Fund for sponsorship of about £1000. much of this toward our junior section.
- The junior section itself has generated more income and is increasingly covering its own costs for training and competitions.
- We had solid income from kit sales (socks shirts shorts).
- Membership income held up very well given the recession.

Looking forward: 10/11 Budget

The only concerns I have for next season are around the membership holding. In particular the ladies' section are running at close to the minimum number to support 4 teams from a financial point of view, and we all know the men's senior section has been shrinking for a few seasons now.

At the moment I'm not aware of any significant changes to spend or income next season so I assume I am assuming will run with a similar budget to last season and I would be comfortable if we went up to a deficit of £1000. Beyond that we would need to take some short term actions.

One difference next season is that the Sports Centre are changing their billing process so captains will need to get match fees to me more regularly.

I'm proposing that subscription rates and match fees remain unchanged next season:

- Subscription rates remain at £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 2010
- Match fees remain at £8 for adults, £4 for juniors and students in full time education.

4. Men's Club Captain report – Sean

Struggled to get a full quota of players out every Saturday, as a result had to drop Men's 4s team altogether. The impact of a significant loss of players from Men's 1s meant the Men's 2s suffered – probably resulted in their relegation for the second year running. 3rd place for Men's 1s but had a discipline issue 2nd half of the season which did not help. However should be better next season as some youngsters coming through next season. Men's Vets are getting older – but still finished 3rd. Good cup run in EH national plate competition. 1s good cup run also- beat Leicester away 3-2 when Leicester had not lost at home for 2 seasons. Most disappointing has been the lack of people at training- need a new coach, and a bigger cross section of players there. Must get more to training and social events.

5. Ladies Club Captain Report - Julie

Overall – as a ladies section we've got to be pretty happy with the season. Final league standings were:

- 🏆 Ladies 1's – Premier Division, 5 Counties Champions
- 🏆 Ladies 2's – Division 1 coming 6th in the league
- 🏆 Ladies 3's – Division 2 Champions
- 🏆 Ladies 4's – Division 5 coming 4th in the league

Two of our teams will therefore be going up – The Firsts to the East League and the Thirds will be joining the Two's in Division 1 of the Five Counties. Well done to all players in all teams this season for a fantastic set of results.

I do however recall at the beginning of the season wondering how we were going to get through. From memory it was around Week 1 when we faced our first tranche of injuries. We suffered twisted ankles, injured knees and it certainly felt like more.

It is to the credit of the team captains in their communication and suggestions as to movement of players that we managed to get through these times. Thank you to those players who displayed a flexible approach in playing for other teams.

It is with regret however, that I confirm that three of our four Ladies Captains will not be continuing in their captaincy roles next season.

Rachel Dawson (1s Captain) has decided to hang up her captaincy boots for a while - I believe to enter rehab. She will however continue in her role as defender / midfielder / up front / junior coach and general person to go to if you need to know anything about sporting opportunities.

Liz Infield (2s captain) is to retire gracefully after 2 years at the helm. Thanks also to Kath Wilson who was, to be fair, dragged kicking and screaming into captaincy of the 3s who has decided to retire on a high, with her team achieving promotion. Kath however can still be seen next season, screeching down the right wing for the 3s (Usain-Bolt-like).

With every dark cloud comes a silver lining and the good news is that our captains going forward are Paulette Martin for the 1s, Natalie Nunn for the 2s but our search continues for a captain of the 3s. Names on a postcard please! Paulette and Nat have an extensive background in hockey and my thanks to them for taking over. Let us look forward to continued success during the 2010/2011 season.

Liz Orbell will remain lead captain of the 4s, and continues to seek new players for development. Liz and her team are keen to recruit their next group of young players (press-ganged or voluntary) to share and give the benefit of their many, many, many years of experience!

As always, on behalf of the Ladies Section special thanks goes to those hardy souls who spend their every waking hour coordinating and carrying out their hockey obligations – just so that we can wallop a ball with a stick of a Saturday! As ever, thanks to the Tippers for bringing forth our opponents and to Dave Eggleton for assisting with umpires. Thanks also to our umpires who turn out on a weekly basis, in all weathers, in spite of never been contacted by Dave! (Only joking Dave).

Finally a special mention to our 1s for their extra-ordinary success in reaching the quarter finals of the EH Ladies Vase competition. An outstanding effort by all those involved. Well done.

All that is left to say is to enjoy the summer, but don't forget:

- 🍷 c. 186 kcal in a dry glass of wine; and
- 🍺 c. 100 Kcal per half a pint of lager.



Enjoy.....

6) Juniors report – Trevor Bridger

Fantastic that more and more kids are coming to training- children coming through is lifeblood of the club- if not clubs fail. Need to ensure foundation of club is strong- great to see juniors coming through. Please talk to neighbours to encourage more kids to come along .- opportunity to play more games- U11s / U13s- possibility of games on Sunday mornings. They have all done well in tournaments this season- none have come last, and beat Bedford which was great! 3 boys and 1 girl in u13 County. Some in adult County also.

7) Election of Officers

No nominations received- every position is filled- only vacancy expression of interest from Liam Burgoyne for Social Secretary which was agreed. Note Karen Hall is Child Welfare Officer and is happy to stand again in this role. Many thanks for Committee members who have agreed to stand for another year.

8) Any other business

- Neil Blannin (via e-mail) - good idea to get match reports to Biggleswade Chronicle if you can. Helps promote the club.
- Cheryl- Of the opinion teas are not good enough, particularly as Ladies 1s will now have visiting teams travelling some considerable distance. HB advised that the school replaced its teaching classroom ovens last summer and therefore SSL can no longer cook the large lasagnes, cottage pies, etc it used to provide. Also need to remember that SSL have just £43 to feed 26 people which is a challenge. Nonetheless HB said she would raise the issue with SSL again. Alternative places to have teas were suggested by Paulette. However it was pointed out that quite often when the teas are in a different location to the pitch, visiting teams

sometimes just head home. Somewhere else in Sandy could possibly be OK. It was suggested we provide better quality food in smaller quantities which is predominantly for the away teams only. Kath said she had received some compliments from away teams about our teas. Problem may be in fact SSL staff rota not providing enough time for food preparation. Other people felt it was important to keep teas at same place as the pitch for social reasons - it has been emphasised at meeting is an important element of the club. Question received on how to recruit new members. HB advised she distributes posters to LAA upper and middle schools via the schools sports co-ordinators. Will send poster to all Captains and Tessa for distribution.

Meeting closed at 12.45pm

KR
27-04-10