

Pétanque England



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors held on Saturday 15th August 2020 by videoconference

Present:

Clive De Silva (CDS), Ken Buchan (KB), Martin Hughes (MH), Alan Roden (AR), Barry Wing (BG), Ray Keemer-Richards (R K-R), Ajay Keemer-Richards (J K-R), Cary Bush (CB), Jim Marstin (JM), David Baxter (DB), Colin Roper (CR), Christine Spray (CS), Toni Gates (TG), Bob Parker (BP)

1 Apologies for Absence

None

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The previously circulated minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 18th July 2020 were approved as a true and correct record.

3 Matters Arising

3.1 Expense Claims and Budgetary Control

To be dealt with under item 4

Action CB

3.2. Receivables (not for publication)

3.3 200 Club

CB was still looking into the feasibility of running a 200 club

Action CB

3.4 Insurance

CB had sent several emails to our insurers asking for examples of what impact our present insurance arrangements would have on the liability of members. He had also requested quotes for membership levels of 2,000 and 10,000. To date there had been no response and unless this changed in the near future, he was minded to seek quotes from an alternative insurer.

Action CB

3.5 Website Training

MH will provide AR with website training as soon as convenient and circulate the statistics regarding website traffic

Action MH

3.6 Survey Statistics

MH had still to compile the gender responses to the Women in Petanque question as this was a time-consuming exercise but would do so as soon as time permits.

Action MH

4 Treasurer's Report

4.1 Proposed Budget for 2021

CB presented a budget for 2021 based on current targets and the actual expenditure for 2019.

The membership level was estimated at 2,000 and the projected gross income was £71,203, including, club fees, membership fees, competition income, players contributions and sponsorship. Administration and Insurance costs amounted to £17,841, Domestic Competitions £11,000, Coaching & Umpiring £6,500, Junior Development £3,048 and other sport development £4,202. Squad representation costs were estimated at £52,742. These estimates would produce a net deficit of £24,130. CB compared this forecast with the actual figures for 2019 which showed a deficit of £10,665 and the previously circulated 5-year forecast which showed for 2021 an estimated deficit of £26,638. CB had prepared a forecast to show that on the present NPP estimates we would need 3128 members to break even. If we lost a further 500 members the loss would be £38,451.

CB considered there were 4 options: -

- (a) cut back on all domestic programmes and reduce squad costs to reach break even
- (b) reduce squad costs by £24,000
- (c) All programmes except youth programmes have to be self funding –
- (d) Revert to the membership to request that reserves are used to fund the 2021 shortfall

CB pointed out that we need to prepare a fully costed business plan before the end of the year so that the application for charitable status can proceed.

MH considered that the biggest problem in budgeting was the uncertainty about the membership level for 2021. There could still be fears about Covid at the beginning of next year which will dissuade some from renewing. He suggested that we may need to have alternative budgets for different levels of membership. He felt that the important objective was to adjust the balance between domestic and international playing in a way which our membership will support. He did not think that it was prudent to embark on new initiatives such as the Schools programme in the present situation of uncertainty. He also suggested that the £1,500 costs associated with the Inter Regionals should be recovered in some way from those who attend.

Based on feedback he had received RK-R did not consider it likely that the membership level will exceed 2,100 in 2021. KB could not understand why Domestic Competitions should be shown as costing £11,000 when they should be self-financing. CB pointed out that the cost needed to be offset against competition entry income but agreed that domestic competitions should not run at a loss. He suggested that the domestic competitions needed to be properly costed and budgeted.

DB suggested that we should be aiming to achieve a surplus of about £5,000 to provide enough wriggle room to ensure that we broke even. He also felt that we should review the budget in March when our membership level would be clearer. MH pointed out that commitments may have been entered into by then. TG wondered whether unused budgets from 2020 could be carried forward to 2021 because there were extra competitions in 2021. CB did not think this was good accounting practice and could lead to criticism from the membership.

CS considered that it was by no means certain that international events would take place in 2021 and that it would be better to concentrate on domestic competitions. DB pointed out that these were easier to control financially because there was no prior expenditure.

MH thought that there was little prospect of any international squad development work taking place this year and that the budget allocations would not therefore be used. This would increase the surplus to be transferred to reserves to about £25k. He asked whether any of this could be carried forward to fund international events in 2021. CB did not regard this as appropriate. Current expenditure should be covered by current income. The use of reserves could be justified to fund long term development projects, but it would be advisable to agree a minimum level for reserves. It was agreed that CB would prepare a recommendation on reserves for the consideration of the Board.

Action CB

Attachments: -
[Financial Forecast for 2021](#)

5 Membership Recruitment Incentive Scheme

BW suggested that more should be done to encourage membership recruitment in view of a potential loss of members resulting from the disruption and disillusionment caused by the Covid-19 restrictions. He outlined the main features of the Draft

Membership referral scheme which had been circulated previously. Essentially this provides for a reward of £5 to be paid to any existing member who recruits a new member and a discount of £5 to any new member joining. New members would also receive discounts from selected suppliers. A special prize would be paid to the first member to recruit 50 new members. There were also rewards for the region and club which were the most successful in recruiting new members.

AR suggested that where a club was responsible for recruitment rather than an individual it should receive the reward. MH felt that we should contact lapsed members to identify the reasons for their departure. MH agreed to compile a brief survey for lapsed members to complete. RK-R pointed out that there was a churn of about 300 members each year. DB pointed out that the scheme could be unnecessarily expensive. In an average year clubs were able to recruit about 300 members without incentives to replace players who had left.

Action MH

It was agreed that Board Members would provide BW with any further comments or suggestions by 23 August

Action Board

Attachment – Draft Membership Recruitment Incentive Scheme

6 NPP Ranking Events Programme 2021

MH explained that the revised NPP ranking events programme had been reduced to 6 events comprising 3 triples events, 2 doubles events and 1 singles event.

6 Events Group – Draft Playing Calendar 2021

TG complained that events for Juniors and Espoirs had not been considered until all other events had been fixed. The selection events for Juniors had to be crammed into the congested early part of the year and the playing parents of juniors could find that they were not free to take their children to junior events. For 2021 she had fixed junior events to coincide mainly with veterans' events to minimise inconvenience, but she considered that in future Juniors and Espoirs should be treated with equal importance to the adult sections. It was agreed that in future the Events Group would invite the Junior and Espoirs leads to participate in any meeting at which the draft playing calendar was formulated.

Various issues concerning the draft calendar were raised. The proposal to hold qualifying events for the Champion of Champions in June with finals taking place at the Inter Regionals was felt to be impracticable because regions were unlikely to have concluded their championship events by June. It was suggested that some other kind of showcase final should be

arranged at the Inter Regionals and that the Champion of Champions should revert to October. It was suggested that some of the dates designated as Regional Days were too late for them to be used by Regions to hold inter regional qualifiers. AR suggested that the Eurocup finals should be postponed for 1 week to take advantage of the extra 1 hour of daylight. TG questioned the financial viability of the proposed North Sea Tournament. Concern was expressed at the inclusion of privately organised invitational events such as St Avertin on the calendar. DB considered that we trying to do too much.

The possibility of signalling a return to competitive play by holding the Euro Cup finals and/or one or more of the ranking events later this year rather than next year was discussed. However, it was felt that it would be more appropriate to hold a one-off event such as the titles weekend. It was agreed that the Events Group would get together with interested parties by 4th September to review the suggestions made and revise the calendar accordingly.

Action
Events
Group

7 NPP International Representation 2021

MH agreed to circulate the list of FIPJP and CEP championship events planned for 2021 and 2022. Participation in these events will depend upon the outcome of the budgetary issues presently being considered

Action MH

8 Umpiring

BP explained the reasons for the proposed rules changes previously circulated by the Umpiring Commission. He pointed out that some regions did not appoint Regional Umpires and others had no qualified umpires at all. Consequently, the Umpiring Commission felt the Commission should simply comprise all the qualified umpires of good standing. The proposed rule changes also required the Board to appoint someone chosen by the Commission to be a director. There were also various other proposed modifications to the rules relating to the frequency of executive committee meetings and the functions of the commission. BP also indicated that the Umpiring Commission wanted to have a budget from which the expenses of umpires officiating at events would be paid. He suggested that if a second umpire was required at an event then this should be provided by the host region failing which the region would be required to pay the cost of importing the umpire from elsewhere,

CB pointed out that the paper from Peter Hardy, the Anglian Regional Umpire was totally opposed to the proposals from the Umpiring Commission Executive.

KB was pleased to see from the minutes of the last Umpiring Commission meeting that the Commission recognised that candidates for the umpiring exam were not adequately prepared and welcomed their proposal that written handouts should be prepared to assist candidates and that a system of mentoring should be instituted. He felt that too many candidates failed the umpiring exam and were so discouraged by this that they were not prepared to re-sit. AR was aware of a very able candidate who failed but was given no feedback and did not pursue his umpiring ambitions. CB had taken the umpiring exam several times. Some of the questions were very vague and complicated portraying situations rarely encountered below international level and often involving the application of several different rules. Candidates are not allowed to keep the question papers. CB felt that there should be two levels of exam. For the basic level, the questions should be based upon situations umpires regularly encounter at events such as the Inter Regionals rather than international, competitions. AR did not consider it necessary for umpires to be fully qualified if a senior umpire was present or on call to deal with exceptional queries which may crop up.

KB had some reservations about the Commission's proposed rules because they took away any accountability to the Board. He thought that the proposed departure from the principle that the Commission should comprise regional representatives to be unhelpful. Regions needed to be involved in the workings of the commission to keep open the two-way conduit of information on umpiring matters. He suggested that if regions had no qualified umpire, they should appoint an "Umpiring Co-ordinator" to sit on the Commission. CR pointed out that when the Coaching Commission was established there were some regions which had no qualified coaches. The rules were changed to permit Regions to appoint "Coaching Co-ordinators" if they did not have a Regional Coach. He was pleased to report that virtually all the "Coaching Coordinators" had since become qualified coaches. He felt that it was important that each Region had someone who understood the ropes. MH was reluctant to see unqualified umpires on the Umpiring Commission and felt that if any "Umpiring Co-ordinators" were appointed it should be on the understanding that they were prepared to undergo the qualification process. DB supported the proposal for Regions to appoint an "Umpiring Co-ordinator" if they had no Regional Umpire.

KB did not think that it could be constitutionally correct to give the Umpiring Commission the power to appoint someone to the Board. Directors had to be elected by the members or appointed by the Board but could not be appointed by an outside group. MH would be happy for the Commission to make a recommendation

to the Board for the appointment of its chair but ultimately this is a decision for the Board.

MH would like to hear the Commission's response to the suggestion for a tiered examination system. He understood the need to strive for excellence, but this may need to be an incremental process. CS agreed that a tiered examination system made sense. Football and many other sports adopted this system.

It was agreed that KB would draft the Board's response to the Umpiring Commission.

Action KB

DB pointed out that the allegation in the Umpiring Commission Executive Minutes that the PE Secretary was encouraging Regions not to appoint Regional Umpires should be formally refuted.

Action KB

9 Any Other Business

9.1 Covid.19 Update

CDS reported that following the recent announcement from the Government he had emailed the DCMS for further clarification. For the moment, the upper limit on numbers remained at 30

Action CDS

9.2 CEP Disability & Petanque

CDS had reported that the CEP was setting up a Petanque & Disability section and had issued a questionnaire for federations to complete outlining what activities there are for disabled players. CDS would be reaching out to Regions to find out what they do and once the replies were in would complete the questionnaire. KB pointed out that the CEP needed to know how many disabled licensees we have but the database does not provide this information. AR questioned how disabled is to be defined. CDS will ask the CEP for clarification.

Action CDS

9.3 Members AOB items

Eric Wilson, Chiltern Region – Request for full reimbursement of his subscription. – The Treasurer had replied to this request pointing out that refunds were limited to £5. Details of how to claim had been provided.

John Whitworth, Southern Counties – Covid 19 Advice for over 70s – There is no recommendation in our current Covid-19 advice that that over 70s should not be playing.

Brian Stote, Heart of England – Problems in making Payments through Loveadmin. Many members had encountered difficulties making payments via Loveadmin by debit/credit cards. The difficulty lay with the Paypal portal which made this method of payment difficult. DB had spoken to Loveadmin who recognised the problem and were thinking of moving to a different payment provider. However, it was unlikely that this would happen before the next payment cycle. DB was experimenting with the possible use of a system of receiving payment by direct debit which would be easier to use and have the potential of enabling payment to be made by instalments.

Marion Jones, Devon – Member Recruitment Incentive Scheme - KB will provide details of the scheme

Action KB

Jamie Davidson – Anglia – Need to promote the benefits of PE to non-members – Jamie’s enthusiasm to promote the sport at grassroots level were admired and appreciated by the Board. The Board also recognised that in the absence of contact details there are difficulties in communicating with those who are non-PE members. RK-R and the Sport Development Group were trying to build up connections with unaffiliated groups and would liaise with Jamie regarding activities in East Suffolk.

Action Sport Development Group

Dean Ashby - Kent – Carrying Forward 2019 titles. – It was agreed that as there had been no titles events in 2020 Dean could continue to describe himself as the “Reigning Triples Champion”

Action KB

Simon Doble – Timing of Subscription Refunds. – This had been replied to by the Treasurer – he was awaiting bank account details.

9.4 UK Coaching Week

KB reported that UK Coaching were organising a “UK Coaching Week” in mid-September to show support for the coaching community. UK Coaching have promotional material which can be adapted or incorporated into our own social media messaging. CR & CDS will look into it.

Action CR & CDS

9.5 Membership Recruitment Incentive Scheme

BW asked whether those members who did not renew in 2019 could be classed as “new members” if they became members in 2021. It was agreed that new members would remain as those who had not held a licence since 2018. BW & CDS agreed to speak to our commercial partners about offering a discount to those who had renewed in 2020 rather than to new members.

Action BW & CDS

9.6 Facebook Discipline

TG reported that she had heard some criticism from members about the removal of some posts from Facebook.

9.7 Central Government Sport Funding

RK-R reported that the Government was proposing to allocate £350M to local councils to support sport development. Tom Wilson was preparing an application to the Medway Unitary Council for funding for a schools youth league in the Medway area. If this was successful, the experiment could be replicated elsewhere in the country.

**Action Sport
Development
Group**

9.8 Pakefields Visit

CDS indicated that 3 rooms would be made available by Pontins for an overnight stay on 5th September. Anyone attending the meeting should let him know if they wanted to take advantage of the offer. Preference would be given to those who had furthest to travel.

**Action
Board**

15 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place by way of video conference on Saturday 17th October 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

**Action
Board**