

# Stafford Veterans Bowling League

## Minutes of the Zoom Committee Meeting January 20<sup>th</sup> 2021 at 2pm

**Present:** Ian Spedding (Chairman), Ken Lancaster (Secretary), Phil Hood (Treasurer), John Andrews (Safeguarding Officer), Anne Mace (Competitions Secretary), Steve Barton (Alstom), Brian Belfield (Alstom D), Graham Blocksidge (Brewood), John Dunning (Stafford C), Mick Evans (Alstom A), Judy Ganecki (Hatherton), Malcolm Harratt (County Officers B), Keith Hill (Littleworth A), Derek Hodgkiss (Rowley Park), Helen Hood (Stafford U3A), Mike Horsfall (Little Stoke B), Richard Jones (Stafford B), Jan Lyne (Burton Manor), Derek & Sylvia Morgan (Hatherton B), Ivan Owen (Penkridge A), John Wells (Victoria Park A)

### **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their willingness to take part in the Zoom format.

Apologies for absence had been received from Steve Box (Rugeley Progressive) Howard Jones (Stafford A) and John Kerwin (Vice Chairman).

### **1. Meeting Protocol**

At the Chairman's request, Phil outlined some basic procedures regarding how each agenda item would be introduced and how members could contribute.

### **2. Update on Constitution and Officers**

Ken reported that, following his email of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020, he had received no proposals to make changes to the Constitution and no nominations to the Officer posts. **The Constitution as amended in 2020 and the Officers elected in 2020 would, therefore, remain unchanged for 2021.**

The post of President had become vacant following the sad death of George Tweddle in September 2020. George's contribution to bowls locally and to the Veterans League of which he had been Secretary was recognised. As the President's post is purely honorary, a decision on a replacement will be deferred until proper consideration can be given.

### **3. Update from BCGBA:**

Ken reported on a Zoom meeting held in November by Mark Bircumshaw at which reference had been made to the possibility of no club fees being collected for 2021 and that various National Competitions had been cancelled. He also reported that he had attended National Data Base training and urged club representatives to take advantage of the training on offer. Mike Horsfall reported that he had received information through the Potteries Association that fees were to be reduced rather than scrapped for 2021. We await developments on that.

#### **4. Annual General Meeting 2021:**

Ken pointed out that, although the Constitution required the AGM to take place on the second Wednesday of February, there was no possibility of it happening during current restrictions. Mark Bircumshaw (BCGBA) advised that the AGM initially be postponed but, if it subsequently needed to be cancelled, there would be no issue with the BCGBA providing that the league accounts were posted on the website. This will be done.

#### **5. Financial Statement (Phil)**

Phil shared the financial situation for 2019, 2020 and the projected position for 2021, pointing out that club fees would not be charged this year, the sponsorship from Stan Robinson in 2020 would be carried over into 2021 and that Officers would not be taking their honoraria for 2020.

Overall, the league finances appear sound and Phil was thanked for his report.

#### **6. Competitions**

Anne suggested that the Borough Shield and Individual merit competitions be combined, called the Borough Shield and appear in the calendar in late June. Noting that the earliest competition in the calendar would now be the drawn triples which is likely to be the most problematic in terms of social distancing, it was agreed that Anne be given total flexibility on arranging competitions at the most appropriate times.

Anne also reported that this would be her last year as Competitions Secretary. A number of captains expressed their thanks for the excellent work she had done and Ken asked that anyone interested in taking over should contact him in order, perhaps, to shadow Anne this year.

#### **7. 2021 Season:**

Ken opened his remarks by indicating that the current pandemic situation meant that there was considerable uncertainty over when the League would be able to start. He emphasised that it would not start until we were able to be compliant with any advice and guidance from Government and the BCGBA.

In order to complete a full season 26 weeks would be needed so we would need to start on April 7th at the latest if we were to finish in September. Starting any later would take us into October which may be problematic over green availability. The option being considered by the over 55's Leagues of pushing the league start date back to mid-May is a non-starter because of the number of fixtures. The Over 55s league has fewer teams.

Steve Barton reported that, at a meeting the previous day, Alstom had decided that they would have to amalgamate their two first division teams. Also, in order to be able to operate safely in terms of likely Covid restrictions on social

distancing, the two remaining Alstom teams would not be able to be at home at the same time.

Apart from Alstom, Ken had not been informed of any other teams withdrawing. A wide-ranging discussion took place about the implications for the current fixture list including playing half a season, playing matches on different days or different times of day and the issue of promotion and relegation at the end of the season.

Following a proposal from Malcolm Harratt seconded by Derek Hodgkiss, **it was agreed unanimously that the Officers be given “carte blanche” to determine arrangements.**

Regarding available greens, Hatherton had confirmed that they would continue to play on the Littleton green in 2021 and that Hatherton A & B would be renamed Littleton A & B. It was still hoped that they would be able to return to their own green at some point in the future.

The Victoria Park green is now fully accessible following the completion of work in the park. Ken thanked John Andrews for having sent him a newspaper article indicating that the new café close to the green had been granted an alcohol license and that it was intended to hold evening events there including the possibility of film screening on the bowling green. This was a cause of major concern and would need monitoring and possible representations to the Council.

In conclusion Ken asked that he be kept informed as quickly as possible if other teams found that they needed to withdraw from the League.

## **8. League Website**

Ken reported that Mike Beckett who had created and run the League website since its beginning was handing over to Damon Neale but, as far as he was aware, the site would remain as before. He urged Captains to update their player lists on the website as there were still people listed who did not play at all in 2019.

## **9. Any Other Business**

There being no items raised the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and valuable contributions. He also thanked Phil, Ken and Anne for their input and Helen Hood for having enabled the meeting to take place using her Zoom account.