**BIGGLESWADE & DISTRICT FRIENDLY BADMINTON LEAGUE**

**MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019**

The Annual General Meeting of The Biggleswade and District Friendly Badminton League took place on Wednesday 5th June 2019 at the Weatherley Centre, Stratton School, Eagle Farm Road, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire at 8.05pm

The Chairman Les Weston opened the meeting by welcoming the committee and representatives of the following clubs:-

**Academy, Bassingbourn, Biggleswade Ivel, Cam Gears, Hitchin, Redhoods, St John’s, Norton/Baldock**, **St Neots, Wootton.**

1. **Apologies received** belatedly from Royston, Couzens, and Onyx badminton clubs
2. **Minutes of the last meeting**

Proposed by Rob Wade, Seconded by Chris Spring

The meeting unanimously approved the minutes of the last AGM

1. **Matters Arising**

Shuttles – to continue using the Mavis blue 600 for the time being although there was a comment that they seem to break easily

GDPR forms were filled in as needed by clubs and players last year

Web site has been a success

1. **Fixture Secretary/Secretary’s Report:- Elaine Drury**

I think last year I reminisced about the good old days when we had lots of clubs and teams in the leagues, and as I am passionate about badminton and want to see the Leagues survive, I am going to bore you again with a little bit about the history of the league! When playing a bowls match just this last Saturday I met an 80+ year old lady at Sandy Conservative Bowls Club who told me she used to play badminton and it transpired that when playing for Wrestlingworth in the early 1960’s her club was instrumental in setting up our Biggleswade Badminton Friendly league. They used to play in all the village halls locally throughout Bedfordshire and North Herts. before sports halls took over. I doubt whether anyone here played against Wrestlingworth......I am not quite as old as this lady but I do remember playing there.....narrow, rather dark hall, no room at the back as the baseline was only inches from the back wall and of course with the old scoring system the match finishing in the early hours of the morning, but we quite often had homemade cakes and sandwiches to keep us going between games!

Hard to believe that in 1985 we had 38 mixed teams of 3 men and 3 ladies, 26 men’s teams with 6 players in each and 14 ladies teams with 6 players !

In the 80’s we would have nearly 30 different clubs to play against, by the late 90’s numbers were already dropping to about 20 and so it has continued to decrease.

If you are lucky enough to win a trophy tonight look at the names on it. I had reason to look back at some of these records..... sorry Couzens, going to drop you in it....they unfortunately have mislaid the Men’s Division 2 trophy that they won last year, so as it still has not turned up they have replaced it with a brand new one, and we needed to get the names of all the previous winners on it. Luckily we did not need to go back to the 1960’s as the Men’s 4 Leagues started in 1994 alongside the Men’s 6’s the latter finally being dropped in 1997.

By looking in depth through these records, Wrestlingworth being the earliest 1964, all these club names sprang out:- Walsworth, Arlesey, Biggleswade M.H., Fairfield, Sandy, Johnson Matthey, Cobra, Ickleford, Tempsford, Ickleford, Heath Hall, Ashwell, Langford, Taylors(Stevenage), British Aerospace, Bedford & County, RAF Henlow, Stotfold, Pixbrook, Manton Road, Bromham Castle/Castle Road, Bedford International, Letchworth, St. Neots Eagles, Priory Eagles, Wings, Muniserve, Gamlingay, Lasers, Texins, Royston Wingers, Racquets, Talisman, Eaton Socon, Ernulf, Highbury, Baldock Templars, Icarus, Strings, Aramis, Purwell, Masters, Smash, Wilbury, Stevenage Allstrings, .......all clubs who used to play and have now disappeared. Have any of you ever heard of these clubs, are any of them still running**......can they be persuaded to join the leagues again** or have they all disappeared into a badminton graveyard. The decline in sports/social clubs with places of work closing, e.g. Muniserve, Taylors, British Aerospace is one reason. My old club Baldock Templars started to decline when we had to leave first Baldock Town Hall, then the old gym at Knights Templar so we dispersed and joined another club, Feathers, becoming Feathers Templars in 2002. Several clubs probably got swallowed up by amalgamating with other clubs (e.g. Purwell joined Broadway in 2009) because of declining numbers or losing their playing venues. Finding courts to play on seems to be becoming a problem which is hard to believe with all the sports halls around now. I know that this next year for instance the Stevenage Ladies league which only needs 8 Saturdays during the year is losing Barnwell sports hall as the school wants to run more profit making events!

I haven’t mentioned of course all of the clubs represented here tonight, some which have been playing for many, many, years. Ivel, Bassingbourn,Hitchin,(originally a mixed club but now just men) and Couzens (originally Broadway but was renamed Couzens in 2013 in memory of one of their players Carl Couzens who tragically died in 2008 at the young age of 36) have all played since the 1970’s or earlier, Royston joined in 1983, Cam Gears 1985, St. John’s 1993,Redhoods 2003, Onyx 2007,Academy 2008, and Norton/Baldock 2013,

Therefore 13 clubs registered in the Biggleswade Leagues this year, two more than last year thanks to Wootton and St. Neots joining us in 2018.

29 teams entered, made up of 18 Men’s teams divided into 3 divisions

1 Ladies division with only 4 teams

1 Medley division with 7 teams

The **Medley** division replaced the old Mixed Division and from feedback seems to have been well received. Only one of the 84 matches was conceded and the other 83 had some very hard fought games. I hope Wootton and St. Neots enjoyed their first season with the Biggleswade League. Although St. Neots struggled to field a team at times I would like to thank them for playing every match and not conceding. It only involves 2 men and 2 women. Hopefully more teams may enter so we can have 2 divisions. Of course it would be brilliant if we could resurrect the ‘Mixed’ league.

With only 4 teams in the **Ladies Division** there were obviously not many games but all matches were played. We need to try and see if we can save this Division.

Well done to all the teams in **Men’s Division 1** for playing every match. St John’s A won it fairly comfortably. Academy A although holding up the league I am sure will have benefitted from their year in Division 1 and will come back stronger next year.

There were again some very hard fought matches in **Men’s Division 2.**

There were 2 conceded matches one which impacted heavily on which team would win the league. Ivel B conceded the last match of the season to Academy B giving them all the games which meant the latter ended with exactly the same points as Cam Gears.

There were unfortunately 6 conceded matches in **Men’s Division 3**. Onyx especially had a sad end to the season with injuries and could not put out teams for their last 3 matches. I would like to congratulate Wootton men on winning this league and hope they are looking forward to Division 2 next year.

There is a proposal about points for conceded matches which will hopefully be discussed later.

The big change this year was our new web site. Provided you knew how to open it I think it told you everything you wanted to know once it was up and running thanks to a Stotfold computer man, Trevor Freer. Certainly it has made my life much easier.

I would like to thank all those captains or secretaries that sent in their match results promptly whether by email, scanned or Royal Mail, upside down or sideways.....I don’t mind as long as they arrive on time, as again it meant the results could be kept up to date. I do not have a posh phone by the way so please send results to my email address. There were only a few results I had to chase up. Where possible matches were rearranged amicably and it is only a pity that this year we had 9 conceded matches especially the one that broke Cam Gears men’s hearts!

Please check captains what you sign! Some score sheets still only had either initials or first names.

That has meant I have to go back and check the original entry forms to make sure they are bone fide members of that club. Please also may I ask again those clubs that have more than one team to put quite clearly whether it is the A, B, or C team on the score sheet.

The rules which are on the web site are there to ensure that everything runs as smoothly as possible during the season so please reacquaint yourselves with them every so often, especially if you are bringing in a new player at the last minute as rules 12 and 14 may help.

Hopefully all the teams that played this year will enter again this next season. We are hoping that we will magic a few new teams too. Please all keep your ears to the ground and see if you can persuade a few more Medley entries or if you can find any ladies who would like to be competitive and enter a team.......and of course we can always accommodate more men!

Entries should be in by August.

**The web site documents will be updated to the 2019-20 season so you can download entry forms etc. from there**. **Please don’t forget to send in your entry forms by the beginning of August.**

Thank you again to all club secretaries, treasurers’, fixture secretaries and captains for all the hard work put in to keep your clubs running smoothly so that the majority can just turn up and play. A lot of work goes on behind scenes.

The 5 leagues could not have had winners without the efforts of all the 29 teams of players - so well done everyone, thank you to all your players for participating.

I hope you have all enjoyed your games and will all be playing again next season.

**Congratulations to all the winners of the Leagues**

Wootton might like to know the history of ‘The Lady of Eindhoven’ trophy as they are going home with it tonight!

Way back in August 1980 a team of Biggleswade league players organised by Dennis Holliday travelled to Eindhoven and played in a badminton tournament against a Dutch team there B.C. Levendaal. I must admit I do not know the result but by all accounts a good time was had by all and B.C. Levendaal then came to England in October 1981 for a similar tournament. The Dutch presented Biggleswade with a miniature sculpture of ‘The Lady of Eindhoven’, whom I assume was a local dignitary of the town, who was seated, dressed in long flowing robes and held something aloft in one hand. This was then mounted on a big block of wood and it was decided by the committee at that time it should be a Points Award Trophy – to be awarded to the team that scored the highest amount of points.Unfortunately this trophy which was made of some sort of green plaster became very battered and broken...whatever she had held aloft snapped off and vanished. It was such a heavy trophy that it was used as a door stop. After 35 years I assume it disintegrated altogether and a cup, which does look a little silly, was fixed in its place. The history is now in the plaque with all the names of past winners on the base. We nearly lost the plaque 2 years ago when it came off and went down the seat of someone’s car! It is certainly not something you would want to put on your mantelpiece....I think Wootton you too will use it as a doorstop!

**Treasurer’s report:- Christine Spring**

This season sees us with a deficit of £31.79. Subs were raised last year by £2 but with expected expenditure next season to be no more that this I see no reason to increase them further. The league funds currently stand at £863.06.

**Income & Expenditure Accounts – Year Ended 30/05/2019**

Income Expenditure

Subscriptions 348.00 Trophies & Engraving 200.00

Clubs Reserve Interest 0.19 Website 143.98

Sundries 0.00 Sundries 36.00

Deficit 31.79

**379.98 379.98**

**Receipts & Payments Accounts – Year Ended 30/05/2019**

**Receipts** **Payments**

Bank Balances 30/05/2018

Current A/C 752.59 Trophies & Engraving 200.00

Reserve A/C 142.26 Sundries 36.00

Subscriptions 17/18 348.00 Website 143.98

Clubs Reserve Interest 0.19 Bank Balances

Current A/C 720.61

Reserve A/C 142.45

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1. **Election of Officers**

The present Committee of

Chairman - Les Weston,

Treasurer - Christine Spring,

Fixtures Secretary/Secretary - Elaine Drury

were proposed for re election by Rob Wade and seconded by Simon Bygrave and elected en bloc for another year.

Les Weston did intimate that this would be his last year as Chairman.

1. **Proposals**

Elaine Drury proposed that the Biggleswade & District Friendly Badminton League should adopt the ‘**averaging method’** used by Stevenage and Letchworth leagues on conceded matches so that it will hopefully be a fairer way of solving the problem of teams ending on the same number of points when some matches have been conceded.

Seconded by Matthew Glew

The proposal was carried by 6 for and 4 abstaining.

**Appendix- Averaging Method**

If a match is conceded neither Team will have any points added to their total match points; i.e. the non-conceding Team will NOT get all six points

The conceding Team will have their number of matches played increased by 1 (one) therefore reducing their average.

The number of matches played by the non-conceding Team will remain unchanged, therefore keeping their average the same.

This system means the Team who concedes will lose out however the Team who were conceded to does not gain, thus discouraging Teams to accept conceded matches in order to gain points easily.

**9. A.O.B**

The Ladies league is struggling to survive. Will wait to see how many teams enter.....should they play everyone twice?

**Please now clubs put in some teams!**

**Presentation of Trophies**

**Ladies Norton/Baldock**

**Men’s Div 1 St John’s A**

**Men’s Div 2 Academy B (**the trophy was unfortunately not returned in time to be presented)

**Men’s Div 3 Wootton**

**Medley Norton/Baldock**

**Lady of Eindhoven Wootton**

The meeting closed at 9.50pm