

MINUTES OF THE MR CRICKET HOCKEY EAST ADULT LEAGUE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting 14 September 2023

At the Novotel Hotel, Stansted Airport.

1. In attendance: Rosemary Prince, Chair, (RP), Chris Perry (CP), Phil Churchman (PC), Vicky Benedikz, Suzanne Armitage, David Burt, Andy Longfield, Ali Smyth, Phil Barlow, Sarah Farmer, Ruth Aldous, Sue Owen, Nicki Cast (by audio link).
2. Apologies: Neil Liversedge, Emma Houlihan, John Benedikz, Chris Rowland, Richard Munns, Neil Webb, Marc Lloyd.
3. RP welcomed the new members, Andy Longfield (Bury St Edmunds) and Phil Barlow (Romford).
4. The Minutes of the last regular meeting (20.04.23) had been circulated with the Agenda, principally for the benefit of the new members: these had been delayed at the time due to the sensitive nature of the Plashet issue, which had subsequently been resolved by a special meeting on 30 May 2023.
5. Matters Arising:
 - a. Plashet: CP reminded the meeting of the issues and the outcome, which had led to Plashet being denied promotion: there had been no response whatsoever from Plashet, and importantly no appeal. The “informant” had rung CP complaining that we had disclosed his identity, and he was now scared for his safety; he has been informed that anyone who has been named was by Plashet, not by the League; we had not disclosed his identity, indeed we had been keen to protect him; we would never confirm who our informant is.

Nicki Cast is again their league manager and, whilst keen to draw a line under last season, she is concerned that some issues remain. It was noted that their team sheet for this weekend’s fixture named the umpire as Sukhdev Matharu, the same umpire who was unregistered and unqualified last year. There was no means by which we could check his qualification, which would need to be Level 1 Assessed. Nicki also has ongoing concerns over the Club’s management and policies.

CP reminded the meeting that we had not been able to deal with the player who played whilst still on a Red Card, which was a personal discipline issue; in the absence of a Disciplinary Officer in the East, this has now been referred to Jo Pennycook at EH, and CP will take up these issues with her.

- b. Broxbourne M2: the minutes of 20.04.23 records the meeting having approved the penalty points imposed for the Club fielding an unregistered player for its final games (and thereby filing a false team sheet), which condemned the team to relegation. CP informed the meeting that the Club had complained about the communication of that, upon which it appeared there was an irregularity. It was pointed out to the Club that did not change the facts of the issue and the penalty stood: there has been acrimonious correspondence, but no appeal.
- c. Luton Town: CP informed the meeting that this was an addition to the agenda, having only arisen that morning. LT had informed the League a month ago that it had found itself in serious financial difficulty, worse than expected, and would be withdrawing a side from the League. There was now an issue over a transfer. A Luton Town player is seeking a transfer to Bedford, which is objected to by LT. The Club says that he was in financial control over the last 2 seasons, and a new treasurer has identified unexplained payments made to him; it appears the accounts have not been audited. The Player complains that the Club have not put anything substantive to him, and from the emails we have seen today that would seem to be the case: the Club say the new Treasurer has not yet had time, certainly the Club's position is currently inadequately set out. The Meeting, referred to the Regulations and agreed on a timetable for each party to put a detailed case, with evidence.
- d. Presentation Day: this year we had moved from Letchworth to Culford School, Bury St Edmunds. Whilst it is right that we had asked for a central venue, and Bury had volunteered Culford, Bury had done nothing further; we had found it difficult to deal with Culford, and most concerned about the cost, the venue had been free to us at Letchworth. It was agreed we would not be returning to Culford, that we would appeal again for a central venue, and if no club came forward with a viable suggestion, we would return to Letchworth.

We were also concerned about the Trophies: the numbers it had become unmanageable for one person, and Sarah Farmer and Sue Owen agreed to take it on, perhaps assisted by collection points for return in North & South. We also need to start on a programme of replacement, so many are either full or damaged. We could fund that progressively by saving on the expense of the Day itself.

6. Finance: Vicky reported that the only outstanding issue was the fine imposed on Watford for failure to attend the Presentation Day as a League Winner. They say they were not aware of the date. They are a “cross-border” club, and do not get East notices. We agreed the position stood: they are historically an East club, and well-aware of our Presentation Day, and they have never provided us with any contact detail. Trophies are referred to in the Regulations, enough to have alerted them. Vicky also reminded the meeting that we had not imposed any fines last year, and her view that the “honeymoon period” was now over was endorsed fully; she expects the managers to impose fines as per the Regulations.
7. Managers’ Reports: this meeting taking place pre-season there were minimal matters to report. Ali Smyth reported that we had allowed a re-arrangement of a EWL Premier game between City of Peterborough and Cambridge University due on 16 September: although the Regulations do not allow this for university sides at Level 2, this was an agreed arrangement between the clubs; the League recognised the October slip date was unlikely to be otherwise used, and because of the very early season-start date (due to an early Easter), CU would be unfairly disadvantaged. CP also reported that in EML 6SE, Old Loughtonians had made a very late change to the start time for their game against Witham: just within the time allowed (by a day) but seemingly without specific confirmed notice to Witham: that would be contrary to a change in the latest Regulations.
8. Development Teams: The Rules have been well-publicised by the League during the last year, but still some teams appear to have been uncertain in their commitment: we will have to see what happens. However, the League needs to admit that it had made a mistake in one quadrant that had left DTs with few games, and not picked up until too late. This is regretful, and the League will do all it can to assist the teams

affected in trying to arrange additional fixtures, and will make sure the mistake is not repeated for the next season.

9. Governance: during an appeal a few months ago, the appeal body had questioned whether the decision being appealed against was a decision reached by the League as a whole. To avoid this being an issue, PC produced a briefing paper, circulated in advance, which was approved. The meeting agreed that the Area League Management Committee required as part of the regulations would consist of a RP, CP & PC, together with any relevant League Manager being able to make decisions, which CP will record, the wider League management committee would continue to operate as normal. RP confirmed that this has already been passed by the Board who said it met with their approval. Special Exemptions can still be the responsibility of the respective manager, but any other issues that may lead to an appeal we will need to record. Instead of our usual quarterly meetings, having regard to the ease of remote meetings, we propose to have meetings every 8 weeks, so as to check on decisions.
10. 2023-2024 Regulations: These are on the website, together with a note regarding relevant changes. PC produced a spreadsheet of all the Regulations on which he had identified all occasions in which the League has a discretion, and annotating the Regulations with our general approach. Promotion & Relegation was confirmed, with a slight variation from last year, and has been on the website a couple of weeks; this also includes teams declining promotion, or wishing to change quadrants. Presentation Day and trophy penalties was added, £100 each. The document was approved and has now been added to the East Website.
11. Any Other Business:
 - a. Ruth Aldous asked whether users without Facebook were missing anything. PC confirmed that any Notice of importance was sent to each club's contact and put on the East Website. Facebook was being used for less formal communications, mainly arising from his own use of GMS, and advice he could pass on.
 - b. PC also pleaded with all managers to in-put Penalty Points weekly: GMS pick up conceded or awarded games, but not the penalties.
12. Date of next meeting: 12 October 2023, at 7.30, by Teams.