



WISBECH TOWN CRICKET and HOCKEY CLUB



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF WISBECH TOWN HOCKEY CLUB

DATE: 17TH May 2023 at 19:30

PRESENT: Matt Esser (Chairman), Ali Mason (Joint Treasurer), Hats Bateman, Charlie Baxter, Andrew Ward, Jordan Bown, Amy Brown, Claire Burton, Louise Cooper, Georgie Dunn, Andrea Eggleton, Sharon Empson, Jason Esser, Jo Gomm, Rob McGregor, Drew Harvey, Lewis Jackson, Lisa Jackson, Tom Jupp, Ashleigh Lawrence, Paul Lawrence, Stephanie Leeks, Sam Markilie, Jason Mallett, Charlie Muscat, Helen Pentelow, Steve Rodgers, Jonathan Shippey, Kevin Shippey, Jordan Trundle, Nat Ward, Emma Webb, Hannah Welcher

APOLOGIES: Jane Peggs, Howard Atkins

The meeting commences at 19:30 with the Chairman welcoming all present. Agenda items were then discussed as follows.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman proposing approval of the minutes of the previous year's AGM which took place on 22/4/22.
No objections.
Agreed.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman presented his report

The past year has been a momentous one for the club and every single member should feel extremely proud of what has been achieved in the last 12 months.

I would like to start by going on record and thinking everyone who has helped the club in some way this year. This ranges from the Committee, captains, umpires, coaches, and all other volunteers. Without you, the club would not be able to operate, and it has been fantastic to see such a broad of variety of people helping out in some way this year.

In just over two weeks' time, we will officially open our brand-new Astro Turf Pitch, after what feels like a lifetime of trying to reach this point. The way the club has pulled together over the past few weeks to raise the additional required funds has been wonderful, and really shows how much this new asset can bring the club together and set us up for the future. The opening of the pitch will mark the start of the next chapter for the club, and we must ensure we absolutely maximise the opportunity we have.

Our junior section continues to go from strength to strength with record numbers of children attending our sessions. We have also hosted a couple of our own tournaments towards the end of the season, for which we received some fantastic compliments from other clubs for how superbly well these have been organised.

Senior results have been a mixed bag. The Mens 1s were unfortunately relegated from Division 1N and will look to bounce back strongly next year. I would like to go on record and thank Charles Baxter for his years of leading the side



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and we will appoint his successor tonight. The Mens 2s finished 3rd and will look to bring young players into the side next year. The Mens 3s had an amazing season and won every single game and the league title. Well done to Mike and team. The Mens 4s also performed strongly and I would like to thank Brandon Ruff for his work as 4th team captain for the last few years as he steps aside to focus on his personal game.

After a strong start the Ladies 1s slipped away slightly and finished 7th and will look to target a top 4 finish next season. The ladies 2s also finished a respectable 7th and the Ladies 3s had a strong season finishing 3rd. This season we launched our Ladies 4th team, and despite some early season jitters with availability, they have gone from strength to strength, picking up their first win along the way. In a time, where many clubs are dropping the number of teams that they put out, the fact they we have increased ours really should be celebrated.

Tonight, we will appoint the new Committee and Captains for 23/24 Season. As you will have seen on the Agenda, I have taken to opportunity to refresh our committee structure for the coming season to ensure it remains fit for purpose and provides the club with the focus it requires. The biggest change will be the appointment of 2 new Competition, Fixtures and Membership officers which will replace the previous role of Teamo officer. These new roles will manage the Junior and Senior sections respectively, ensuring each section has the relevant focus with all Administrative and off field matters. They will work alongside the Club Captains who will continue to focus on on-field playing matters.

For the first time we will also appoint Vice Club Captains and Vice Captains for each team, ensuring every team has the relevant focus and support.

We have received nominations for some new faces onto the committee, and assuming they are voted on I look forward to welcoming them aboard to continue to bring fresh ideas and thinking to the club. To those that are standing down, I thank you for your support and wish you well.

As we move forward into the next 12 months it is crucial, we target the following areas:

- Continued development of our Junior Section and encouraging progression of our young players through our senior teams.
- An improvement in on Field Senior results, particularly at the top end.
- A varied and inclusive Social Events Calendar
- Continued financial stability in what are extremely challenging economic times for us all, whilst ensuring we continue to provide an offering that gives value for money and support for those who need it the most.
- Finally, and most importantly, Maximisation of the new Astro Turf – for the first time the club will take over the running of this asset and it must work to ensure it is financially self-sufficient which will mean targeting increasing our usage of the pitch, ideally with increased hockey and targeting increasing our membership numbers. This opportunity is the single greatest opportunity the club has potentially ever had, and we must all ensure we maximise it.

It has been a privilege to serve as Chairman over the past 12 months and to confirm I will be standing for election again this year, and providing I am re-elected shortly I look forward to working with you all to deliver another year of continued growth for the club.

There were no questions.



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3. CONSIDERATION OF CLUB ACCOUNTS

The Treasurer presented her report.

The Treasurer explained that whilst the focus of the AGM was to report on finance for the Hockey section, it was important to reflect on some wider WTCHC finance matters first given the joint nature of the Club and her respective roles for the whole club. Key points to note being as follows:

- At this time of year, we would normally expect to have a formal documented set of accounts from Barwell Accountants, relating to the Financial Year End on 31/10/22
- Given the significant club re-developments (astroturf pitch currently, and pavilion to follow hopefully in the not-too-distant future) we are working through some changes in conjunction with our accountants (and alongside other advice received):
 - Re-registered for VAT with effect from 01/03/23. We have been very close to the threshold (taxable turnover £85,000) and the timing is helpful to ensure we could achieve maximum benefits from the Capital Goods Scheme (CGS) for the Astro works (in the first instance).
 - After many years of considering a change in our accounting period, we have taken the decision to change from the Financial Year End of 31/10 to 31/3 which in the longer term will be much more logical to coincide with a change of seasons for both sports (cricket season starts, and hockey draws to a close). Previously 31/10 has always cut through the hockey season, making year on year comparisons more difficult and time consuming.
 - This change in accounting period means we have deferred the formal documented accounts from 31/10/22 & these will now be compiled for a 17-month period to 31/3/23.
 - Barwell are waiting for my work to be finalised on Sage to a point when they can instigate these extended end of year accounts. The target date is for completion for both my work and theirs is mid-late June.
 - Given the CGS (pitch), fundraising events and an extended 4-month VAT quarterly submission (due after 30/6) there is a lot of activity to process on Sage. In the short term the change of accounting period is further complicating this BUT it will be worth the extra effort when we can get beyond these critical few months.
- Key factors from a financial perspective for the Hockey section:
 - As above, we don't yet have the formal accounts but separately attached to these minutes are Profit and Loss figures from Sage which compare the period ending 31/10/22 to 31/10/21.
 - The 2 years ended up being remarkably similar in the net result with profits of £6551, compared to £6625 for previous 12 months. Turnover was vastly different given the Covid affected previous period but the net results very similar.
 - These profits are eaten up by Hockey's contribution to the Joint costs for the running of the club's facilities. I will be handling this differently from 1/4/23 onwards, creating a management charge each for cricket & hockey of £6,000 (£500 per month). Naturally this will need to be monitored to make sure it remains sufficient to meet the overall expenses of running the pavilion.
 - Performance for the period since October has been steady, it's going to be a completely different picture from June 2023 onwards where we have the responsibility of maintaining and running the pitch. Calculations have been included to incorporate a sinking fund for the future of the pitch 10-15



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years down the line. A year on year budget for that will need to be carefully reviewed to make sure it is achieved. This means maintaining the status quo of where we are at the moment, as well as making sure the fund grows so that we don't find ourselves in the same situation again. We have looked at the budgets, everything is in draft at the moment, but we will get figures firmed up during June and going forward.

- What I have assessed from the figures is that we've got to look at making some changes to the likes of membership subscriptions and match fees, and Matt is picking up on that next.
- To basically conclude where I am at the moment it's a massively active role, the last 6 months have been unprecedented and I could easily say that if I was in a business environment I would be doing a 10-15 hour a week job as a minimum. These are special times needing special treatment but what has really helped is the new tools we have gradually introduced, a till behind the bar, Teamo, the website stuff that we have done for some of the events and social activities. We need to continue to develop and use those tools as they play a big part in streamlining the job that I need to do. Alongside this, being able to spread the workload more is key and bringing in support from people with the appropriate skills to help us.

Some thank you's to:

- Big thanks to Claire Burton who has really helped in the last 2 years with her support with finance within Teamo. It's actually with that in mind that we have had some dialogue about reengineering some of these committee roles. Finance within Teamo is an important job and there is a lot of cross-over and dialogue with captains. Finance of the membership sits in Teamo, so that will be picked up within the 2 separate roles that are being re-defined for Seniors and Juniors.
- Captains for all of your help. You are all doing your stuff to make finance work so far as Teamo goes.
- Big thanks to Hats Bateman with her secretarial stuff, which has often touched on finance matters.
- Events - Nat Ward and Rachael Bateman. Getting information together on projected income and expenses and having a clear idea of what they are when organising events is massively important.
- Duffy (Matt Duff) and the bar staff – I have already mentioned the till. Everyone has a part to play in this which really helps.
- New sounding boards with the fundraising – Aaron Burton, Emma and Rob Booty, brilliant to have people involved in the club who have professional skills to bring. I am certain they will be a great help moving forwards.
- Most of all though big thanks to Jo Gomm and Matt Esser who have just done a fantastic job. Nat (previous Chair) had a massively difficult job with so much going on (Covid/condemned pitch etc.) and since then we have continued to ask a lot of everyone. Matt and Jo have really given us momentum and I'm extremely grateful for all that they are doing.

Chairman: Are there any questions to Ali on any of the areas she has covered?

Andrew Ward: the new clubhouse – there is a lot of talk but when will it start?

Treasurer: no definite answer to that at the minute.

Andrew Ward: is it all going to be paid for?

Chairman: the reality is, we can't put a date on that at the moment, we are working on it behind the scenes. Building prices as people know are just going up and up and we will need to do additional fundraising for that project as well. I would not want to sit here tonight and give a date other than to say yes we are working on it but that is all I could really say.

Jo Gomm: the reality is as with the pitch, we may have to go for it before the funds are in place and rally round



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once more.

Treasurer: the responses we are giving are not meant to be at all flippant but we just need to clear the decks of the pitch at the minute. From a time point of view volunteers make a massive contribution. Big thanks especially to Drew Harvey. There is a lot of hands-on stuff and clerical stuff involved in trying to get it right. We have given ourselves a lot of confidence in getting to this point. We now know what effort is needed to get this even bigger project across the line. We would all like to say we are ready and give a date but there is still stuff to iron out to get a clear direction with it. Absolutely confident it is going to happen, the funds are substantial but they are just not as substantial as they would have been a couple of years ago. The level of support we have behind the scenes is good. Once we have all the practicalities of the pitch out of the way there will be a lot more activity in relation to the pavilion and we will then be able to better understand what can be practically achieved and when. We are definitely not saying years away.

Chairman: We have made the mistake in the past of giving dates and times and have not stuck to them so I think it is important that we don't do that.

There were no more questions on finance but on a related matter, the Chairman addressed the meeting in relation to subs and match fees as follows.

Every year it is important that club carries out a full review of its Subscription and Match Fee rates to ensure they are both fair and reasonable for members, but equally provide the club with enough income to ensure continued financial stability.

The WTHC Committee in conjunction with the Joint Club Treasurer have carried out the review to form its budget and subsequent proposal for the 23/24 proposal. It is important to share with members all the factors that have been considered:

- Subs have not been increased since 2020 and Match Fees have not been increased since 2015.
- Current high rate of UK inflation.
- Significant rises in Energy prices, meaning the club has incurred an increase in its running costs.
- Rise in food prices and the knock-on effect of providing match teas to all players.
- Despite the need for the renovation, the club's pavilion does still provide excellent on-site social facilities, which members have access to, which is not the case for many other clubs who use local pubs or similar facilities.
- The construction of the new Astro Turf Pitch, meaning for the first time in many years, the club can provide state of the art facilities for its members.
- The immediate requirement to start building a sinking fund for the next regeneration of the pitch in 10-15 years' time. We must be self sufficient and not rely on donations to fund future refurbishments.

It is also important to consider what other local clubs charge when taking a decision on the clubs' rates:

- March Town Hockey Club – Adult £120, Full time student £70
- Peterborough Hockey Club – Adult £180, Student £120
- Ely Hockey Club - Adult £130, Concession £90
- Long Sutton - Adult £70 but £14 per game Match Fees and an additional training charge.

Consideration of the above factors combined with the research of other local clubs' rates and completion of a draft Budget for 23/24, the committee have taken the decision to implement the following increases for the upcoming



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season:

- All Subscription rates will be increased by 20%
- All Match Fee rates will be increased by 10%

The rates will be as follows:

23/24 Subscription Rates	
Category	Rate
Adult	£120
Adult with Cricket	£96
Student	£84
Associate (Up to 8 games)	£60
Junior	£60

23/24 Match Fee Rates		
Category	External Matches	Internal Matches
Adult	£11	£8.25
Student 18+	£7.70	£5.75
Junior 13+	£6.60	£4.95
Off Season/Social Hockey Training		£4.00

These increases will help support the club in meeting the challenges ahead of us, in particular the inflationary pressures on many of our expense lines.

The club continues to ensure it is providing value for money and the committee believes that the increase for this year is proportionate, when compared to other local clubs and when considering the improved facilities, we are now able to provide.

Subscription payments can again be split into 5 separate monthly payments and any members wishing to use this option should liaise with our Membership officers when the subscriptions become due, who will amend Teamo accordingly.

The club recognise that this news may be difficult for some people, in what are already extremely challenging financial times. As has always been the case, Matt Esser, as Chairman of the club, along with the Club Welfare Officer, Sharon Empson will be available for a confidential discussion should it be needed. We are keen to encourage participation in hockey from all sections of our community and we are very conscious that some individuals and families may not have sufficient financial resources to meet the full cost of club membership. With this in mind, we are committed to developing a formal "Participation Assistance Fund", ahead of this next season and beyond so that we can carefully manage our budgetary objectives, whilst also being able to consider confidential applications for financial support.

Match Fees and Subscriptions will be reviewed again ahead of the 24/25 season.

The Chairman invited questions.

Boomer: if you play cricket, does that £120 include the cricket?

Chairman: No but you do get a discount. Seniors will be £96. 20% discount.

Nat Ward: also with the figures from other clubs, they may not have had their AGMs yet so they might also be increasing theirs, I have heard from other people their subs are going to go up as well.

Chairman: I do believe we are and will continue to be cheaper.

Emma Webb: they haven't changed in a long time.



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Kev Shippey: I can't remember the last time.

Treasurer: the other thing, I don't know where it sits in the report and in order to bring this all together, what we are sticking our necks out with here in a big way is that we will use the pitch more to generate money through us using it more. Social hockey. Fun hockey. Mixed hockey. Vets hockey. Junior hockey. We have a pitch there that we can all use and that can encourage us to arrange summer hockey friendlies with local clubs and midweek games throughout the season (such as once a month maybe with other clubs). We do expect there to be an interest in doing that.

Nat Ward: we can hopefully go to County to offer the pitch for their trials as no one has wanted to use it before.

Treasurer: yes, we have the option of looking to hire it out as well but first and foremost why would we only want to use it on limited occasions. It is in our scope to use it a lot more. The match fee rates that Matt has spoken about – we have some intra-club rates, we will keep those going as well (with an increase on those as well). And importantly as well, the other thing that we did quite a lot of in Covid times, in the off-season we do need to charge for sessions that are outside the training cycle of the season.

Rob McGregor did that last year and the rates that Matt and I have looked at are £4 per session. We have missed 2-3 months so are behind but we can hopefully catch up with a lot of usage in the summer. We have got a lot of members. Given how many we have got (in the region of 130-140 regularly playing members), we can up the usage and create some social fun hockey for all age groups.

Chairman: I would like to thank the room for your support on this generally. If there are questions you would like to ask very confidentially about the finances then please do come and see Sharon Empson or I. We are here to help if we can.

4. ELECTION OF HOCKEY CLUB OFFICERS FOR THE FOLLOWING ROLES

The Chairman confirmed that the following roles had been identified in the agenda and nominations received. Proposers and seconders will now be required for each:

a. Chairperson

Matt Esser handing over to Harriet Bateman who subsequently proposed Matt Esser as Chairman for the forthcoming term. The proposal was seconded by Natalie Ward and the appointment made.

b. Vice-Chairperson

A nomination has been received for Jo Gomm to fulfil the role of Vice Chairman. Kev Shippey proposing, Georgie Dunn seconding. The appointment was made.

c. Club Secretary



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A nomination has been received for Amy Brown to fulfil the role of Secretary.
Matt Esser proposing, Jason Mallett seconding.
The appointment was made.

d. Senior Competition, Fixtures and Membership Officer

A nomination has been received for Harriet Bateman to fulfil the role of Senior Competition, Fixtures and Membership Officer.
Rob McGregor proposing, Claire Burton seconding.
The appointment was made.

e. Junior Competition, Fixtures and Membership Officer

A nomination has been received for Claire Burton to fulfil the role of Junior Competition, Fixtures and Membership Officer.
Georgie Dunn proposing, Hannah Welcher seconding.
The appointment was made.

f. Welfare Officer

A nomination has been received for Sharon Empson to continue in the role of Welfare Officer.
Jo Gomm proposing and Emma Webb seconding.
The appointment was made.

g. Men's Club Captain

A nomination has been received for Kevin Shippey to be the Men's Club Captain.
Jason Esser proposing and Jason Mallett seconding.
The appointment was made.

h. Men's Vice Club Captain

A nomination has been received for Jason Esser to be the Men's Vice Club Captain.
Charlie Baxter proposing and Sam Markillie seconding.
The appointment was made.

i. Ladies' Club Captain

A nomination has been received for Sharon Empson to be the Ladies' Club Captain.
Hannah Welcher proposing and Charlie Baxter seconding.
The appointment was made.

j. Ladies' Vice Club Captain

A nomination has been received for Louise Sandall to be the Ladies' Vice Club Captain.



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Jo Gomm proposing and Emma Webb seconding.
The appointment was made.

k. Umpire Liaison Officer

A nomination has been received for Ian Scott to be the Umpire Liaison Officer.
Jonathan Shippey proposing and Lewis Jackson seconding.
The appointment was made.

l. Social Media and Press Officer

A nomination has been received for Alice Salmon to be the Social Media and Press Officer.
Keving Shippey proposing and Louise Cooper seconding.
The appointment was made.

m. Events Officer

A nomination has been received for Nat Ward to be the Events Officer.
Georgie Dunn proposing and Emma Webb seconding.
The appointment was made.

n. Junior and Senior Head Coaches

A nomination has been received for Sam Markillie to be the Junior Head Coach.
Claire Burton proposing and Rob McGregor seconding.
The appointment was made.

A nomination has been received for Drew Harvey to be the Senior Head Coach.
Nat Ward proposing and Georgie Dunn seconding.
The appointment was made.

o. Parent Representative

A nomination has been received for Emma Booty to be the Parent Representative.
Claire Burton proposing and Nat Ward seconding.
The appointment was made.

p. General Committee Members

A nomination has been received for Hannah Holt.
Nat Ward proposing and Ashleigh Lawrence seconding.
The appointment was made.

A nomination has been received for Hannah Welcher.
Claire Burton proposing and Sharon Empson seconding.



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The appointment was made.

A nomination has been received for Jason Mallett.
Sam Markillie proposing and Jason Esser seconding.
The appointment was made.

A nomination has been received for Ashleigh Lawrence.
Claire Burton proposing and Rob McGregor seconding.
The appointment was made.

A nomination has been received for Louise Cooper.
Helen Pentelow proposing and Hannah Welcher seconding.
The appointment was made.

A nomination has been received for Rob McGregor.
Sam Markillie proposing and Jo Gomm seconding.
The appointment was made.

A nomination has been received for Mike Lawrence.
Kevin Shippey proposing and Georgie Dunn seconding.
The appointment was made.

A nomination has been received for Tom Jupp.
Jo Gomm proposing and Jason Mallett seconding.
The appointment was made.

The Chairman confirmed that the Committee appointments had all now been made unless there was anyone else in the room that wished to join.

Helen Pentelow expressed an interest.
Charlie Muscat proposing and Jason Mallett seconding.
The appointment was made.

5. ELECTION OF TEAM CAPTAINS AND VICE CAPTAINS

The Chairman confirmed that this year, Captains and Vice Captains will be appointed to ease the burden of the role. Informal arrangements are already in place but this year it was decided that these should be formalised.

Ladies' 1st Team Captain

A nomination has been received for Jo Gomm.
Georgie Dunn proposing and Nat Ward seconding.
The appointment was made.

Ladies' 1st Team Vice Captain



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A nomination has been received for Laura Bell.
Claire Burton proposing and Nat Ward seconding.
The appointment was made.

Ladies' 2nd Team Captain

A nomination has been received for Harriet Bateman.
Georgie Dunn proposing and Jonathan Shippey seconding.
The appointment was made.

Ladies' 2nd Team Vice Captain

A nomination has been received for Ali Mason.
Hannah Welcher proposing and Nat Ward seconding.
The appointment was made.

Ladies' 3rd Team Captain

The Chairman confirmed that Emma Webb is stepping down and thanked her for the time in the role.
A nomination has been received for Andrea Eggleton.
Helen Pentelow proposing and Claire Burton seconding.
The appointment was made.

Ladies 3rd Team Vice Captains

Proposals were made for both Emma Webb and Nancy Davis to be 3rd Team Vice Captains.
Claire Burton proposing and Louise Cooper seconding.
The appointments were made.

Ladies' 4th Team Captain

A nomination has been received for Ashleigh Lawrence.
Jo Gomm proposed and Sharon Empson seconded.
The appointment was made.

Ladies' 4th Team Vice Captain

A nomination has been received for Stephanie Leeks.
Sharon Empson proposing and Helen Pentelow seconding.
The appointment was made.

Men's 1st Team Captain

The Chairman confirmed that Charlie Baxter is stepping down and thanked him for his time in the role.
A nomination has been received for Tom Jupp
Charlie Baxter proposing and Jason Mallett seconding.
The appointment was made.

Men's 1st Team Vice Captain

A nomination has been received for Jason Esser.
Charlie Baxter proposing and Nat Ward seconding.
The appointment was made.



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Men's 2nd Team Captain

A nomination has been received for Jonathan Shippey
Jason Mallett proposing and Jordan Trundle seconding.
The appointment was made

Men's 2nd Team Vice Captain

A nomination has been received for Kevin Shippey.
Jo Gomm proposing and Georgie Dunn seconding.
The appointment was made.

Men's 3rd Team Captain

A nomination has been receive for Mike Lawrence.
Kevin Shippey proposing and Steve Rogers seconding.
The appointment was made.

Men's 3rd Team Vice Captain

A nomination has been received for Ciaran Lowe.
Claire Burton proposing and Steve Rogers seconding.
The appointment was made.

Men's 4th Team Captain

A nomination has been received for Jordan Bown.
Monty proposing and Rob McGregor seconding.
The appointment was made.

Men's 4th Team Vice Captain

A nomination has been made for Steve Rogers
Ashleigh Lawrence proposing and Jason Esser seconding.
The appointment was made.

Mixed A Captain

A nomination has been made for Georgie Dunn.
Nat Ward proposing and Hannah Welcher seconding.
The appointment was made.

Mixed B Team Captain

A nomination has been made for Lewis Jackson.
Nat Ward proposing and Rob McGregor seconding.
The appointment was made.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESSS

Before opening it up to the floor, the Chairman announced that he did have one final item of business in relation to Club kit.



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As has been previously communicated to the membership, WTHC will be changing its kit for the 23-24 season. This is due to its current sponsorship deals expiring, the current kit becoming very worn out and a requirement of a number of members needing new playing kit. With the opportunity to make a change, as has been previously communicated, the decision has been made to change the club colours to Navy and Red, meaning the whole club will have the same colours. This change means that training kit can be universal for the whole club, and this is already on sale on the Mr Cricket and Hockey website.

After significant discussion, the committee have decided that due to the colour change, it is important that we find a way to ensure that all members have new shorts/skorts and socks as well as the new shirt. This is because, if members chose to remain with the current black shorts or skort the image of the club would be significantly affected.

Unfortunately, kit (along with most other purchases) has also fallen victim to significant inflation and so prices are much higher than the last time the club purchased kit around 4 years ago and so it is important the members have the financial information, so that there is understanding of the costs involved in this project. The total cost to purchase new playing shirts, skorts or shorts and socks for every member playing senior hockey is likely to be over £10,000 (based on player participation numbers from last season). It is important to state that the club does not have a budget to fund this transformation, and so the committee has been looking at solutions that can help current and new members finance the purchases, as it has done on the previous occasions when kit has been refreshed.

Once again, we have been looking for sponsorship to support some of WTHC's operating costs and kit sponsorship is one of the areas we have focussed on. So far, we have been fortunate to receive a total of £4,800 in sponsorship from 5 companies; Elgoods Brewery, Meadowson Piling Ltd, Grovemere Property Ltd, Fraser Dawbarns and Knowles Transport Ltd, all of whom will have their logo on the new kit (for a minimum period of 3 years). We are extremely pleased and grateful to have secured these funds as it will help us to manage certain costs (over the 3-year period) and will also allow us to offer some support to players when purchasing the kit.

Before finalising our offer of kit support to members, we have been speaking with other local clubs to establish how they manage kit and have found the following information:

- March Town Hockey Club – Members must buy all their playing kit themselves (circa £70/person)
- Spalding Hockey Club – Members must buy all their playing kit themselves (circa £70/person)
- Pelicans Hockey Club – Members pay £35/person for their playing kit. The remainder of the cost is covered by Sponsorship.

Based on this, and considering our own draft budgets, WTHC have taken the decision that from this season we will be asking members to pay £45 per person to cover the cost of playing kit. For this, each member will receive a new shirt, new skorts or shorts and new socks, which has a value of around £70. We believe this is a fair proposition, given the costs that are involved, and we feel, it still holds up very well against other local clubs (and much better than some further afield).

It should also be noted that on occasions in the past when kit has been changed, it has usually only been the shirts that have been provided by the club, meaning that members have needed to make their own arrangements to fund the remaining items.



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Providing kit for new members who join the club in subsequent seasons (where new kit is not being bulk purchased) has been an ongoing challenge. The introduction of this charge will remain fixed and will ensure that all new members (over the minimum 3-year period) will be offered the same arrangements to acquire new kit when they join. Naturally, any replacement or additional kit (such as lost property or extra socks) will need to be fully funded by the individuals themselves.

The £45 charge will be introduced as a separate charge to Subs and a minimum £15 deposit will be due when an order is placed. The remainder can be paid as two further £15 instalments or in full.

If any member is in the position where they can cover the full cost of their playing kit (£70) themselves, then this would be most appreciated. The club would use the extra funds generated from the unclaimed £25 subsidy towards its new 'WTHC Participation Assistance Fund'.

The ordering of the kit will be through the club (and NOT directly with the suppliers). Management of the new kit will fall under the responsibility of the newly appointed Senior Competition, Fixture and Membership Officer, Harriet Bateman. Hats will be in touch with all members to confirm their required sizing and payment schedule.

As a club, we recognise that for some this may be unwelcome news, and it is not a situation we have taken lightly. However, we are confident that this decision allows us to have a fantastic new kit, ensure we have financial stability and continue to be affordable in comparison to other clubs in the area.

The Chairman invited questions in relation to the kit:

- Andrew Ward:** is there any help for the goal keepers?
- Chairman:** smocks will be part of this plan and this is being discussed separately with Helen Pentelow. This is also something the Club hopes to get sponsorship for.
- Helen Pentelow:** the other one didn't work last time so I do need to see them.
- Chairman:** agreeing to sort that out.
- Drew Harvey:** has the date passed for all of the sponsorship logos to now be added to the shirts?
- Chairman:** Working backwards to receive the kit for September, we have to formalise by 23rd June 2023.
- Drew Harvey:** Could a further sponsor be squeezed on there?
- Treasurer:** if there is someone else available then yes, there is still time.
- Steve Rogers:** is the same offer available on away kit?



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- Chairman:** we have decided that we won't be replacing that for this season. White shirt and white socks still goes well with navy shorts. It seems wasteful to replace them so we will just be ordering some top ups but we may have to replace them in a couple of years but at the moment not.
- Steve Rogers:** is each side going to get a couple of spare tops for those that don't play regularly or who are trying out for the first time.
- Chairman:** yes but we really need to keep that to a minimum though. When we place the order particularly for teams lower down, we will have to keep a few Club spares that we can hand out when we go and find someone to play.
- Jason Mallett:** We have always order more so that there are Club spares to pass around when needed.
- Andrew Ward:** what about the juniors?
- Chairman:** the Juniors only got new shirts this season. The Club was very fortunate to find a sponsor for junior shirts so it is not felt that they need to be replaced this season as that would be wasteful. They are virtually brand new.
- Claire Burton:** we have still got some new ones.
- Chairman:** they don't wear the same smart shorts etc they just wear what they can find with the shirts. Later down the line if we need to replace them we would look for another sponsor.
- Paul Lawrence:** Issues with the kit?
- Chairman:** I'm glad you raised that. We have had some issues with the new design. We have seen some issues with Mr Cricket with the heat sealed bit peeling off. Cricket guys have had this problem. James Williams and I went to see Mr Cricket a couple of weeks ago and we were assured that it is sorted now but if we find any further issues he will refund and replace straight away. If it happens send him an email or tell me.
- Claire Burton:** we had the same problem and they re-pressed it. They said don't use softener with them.
- Paul Lawrence:** hoodies etc are we leaving that to each individual team to decide?
- Chairman:** we are not going to tell you what extras to buy. If the men's first team decide they want to all buy the same zip up tops that needs to sit with individual captains.



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- Treasurer:** arrangements for the playing kit needs to come through us as it is advantageous for us to manage it all. But we can talk further about the extra kit (and liaise with Merrick) and establish the best mechanism. We haven't talked about it previously. Arrangements for player sponsorship could also be an interesting topic when it comes to this.
- Chairman:** as regards the player sponsorship arrangement – if you find a player sponsor for yourself we last year gave a voucher that could be spent on kit for £50.
- Treasurer:** the sponsorship could be used against any of the training kit (or potentially the playing kit purchase if sponsorship secured in time). Given however that we need to get the playing kit order through soon, that potentially complicates matters.
- Chairman:** time is tight, we have gone for a bespoke kit this year. Not just an off the shelf shirt with printing on. There had been quite a few problems with numbers peeling off the back. This year it won't be because the printing is on the shirt as part of the pattern, sub-lamination. That means that our shirt is bespoke. It also has a specific design. We can't get the exact shirt that we have as a sample because they will be specially made but we need to get our bulk order in for 23rd June to have it here confidently for September.
- Paul Lawrence:** what are the samples, training kit?
- Chairman:** the samples are here to give you an idea of size. The playing shirts will have the V neck not the round neck.
- Hats Bateman:** they are coming up bigger in size, women especially.
- Chairman:** skorts and shorts are identical to the previous ones, they are literally just blue.
- Rob McGregor:** are the sample ones staying here?
- Hats Bateman:** I will also bring them along on the pitch launch day.
- Chairman:** another opportunity for people to try it on.

The Chairman then invited any other business on any other matters from those present.

- Charlie Muscat:** hockey teas the numbers are very low. We can't give up our Saturdays for people who say they are staying but then don't. The issue is we are out of pocket a lot of the time, we spend more than we get given back and then when it goes to waste it is disheartening. We will give it a few weeks but if it doesn't



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pick up you will have to go back to arranging your own.

- Chairman:** this then is a challenge for captains to address.
- Paul Lawrence:** what we need to do is ensure that selection is early enough and ensure that we get the response.
- Charlie Muscat:** it is not just the away teams, it is the home teams as well. One week we had 4 people stay. I give up hours of my time and Lisa for just 4 people.
- Jo Gomm:** all the teas are ready you don't have to wait.
- Jason Mallett:** we have also had great comments form other teams as well as to how good the food is. If we can't even be bothered to stay then it is an embarrassment.
- Paul Lawrence:** we have got Vice Captains to help as well now.
- Andrew Ward:** why don't any of the captains take the opposition through to the other bar.
- Kevin Shippey:** the days of buying a jug of beer have changed – drink driving rules. Captains would always buy a jug of beer for the opposition, get where you are coming from but you can't do that now.
- Steve Rogers:** just a real quick one that might help with that, there are some fussy people out there – is it possible at all to put what is being served to encourage people.
- Charlie Muscat:** we get told right at the last minute that there is going to be xx amount of people and then we would change from a large pot of curry to something smaller if it is fewer people. We have to also find the time to buy the products. We even cater to every dietary requirement, vegetarians, vegans, everyone and 9/10 they don't even eat it.
- Jo Gomm:** is it the same people who don't stay every week? Captains could get numbers.
- Charlie Muscat:** it does fluctuate very week.
- Jason Mallett:** if the girls have said they are going to do x y or z this week but the team comes back and says they are only going to get 4 people they have to change everything.
- Chair:** it is a good point that Charlie has made and it is a fair challenge and that's one for captains.
- Jason Mallett:** it comes back to what Ali says as well. The bar takings are keeping the Club



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- going as well. If people stay for tea and buy one drink it is all the more income and the better of the Club is.
- Andrew Ward:** there are ladies getting changed in the back bar.
- Nat Ward:** that will be team talks, we don't have a second ladies' changing room to do a team talk in so we use the back bar.
- Jo Gomm:** It's only the ladies.
- Andrew Ward:** If there is someone in there wanting a drink.
- Jo Gomm:** there is nowhere else to change.
- Andrew Ward:** if we bring someone else in and the ladies are in there.
- Treasurer:** 99.9% of the time they are not getting changed, they are having a team talk and putting their shin pads on.
- Andrew Ward:** when you go to these events and shows where does that money come from?
- Hats Bateman:** Easter?
- Andrew Ward:** like Gorefield show.
- Hats Bateman:** we don't get any money for going there.
- Andrew Ward:** In the catalogue for Gorefield.
- Chairman:** we pay to go there.
- Andrew Ward:** where does the money come from?
- Georgie Dunn:** it's to promote the club.
- Chairman:** we have to speculate to accumulate. It's taking a gamble that by outlaying some money, we may pick up one new member and get the money back and more.
- Rob McGregor:** we gained 7 new junior members.
- Kev Shippey:** what Ash and Mike have done this year and the places they have been to has been great advertisement.
- Claire Burton:** someone I know said suddenly we hear about you everywhere and everyone



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is talking about it.

Treasurer:

well done Ashleigh and family.

There were no more questions and the Chairman therefore closed the meeting at 20:43.