Northants County Badminton
Committee Meeting Minutes
9th February 2024

Venue
6 Heronsford, West Hunsbury, Northampton, NN4 9XG

Attending
Melissa Davey (Chairperson), Stephen Willis (Head Coach), Karen Sturgess (Secretary), Becky Rice (Vice Chair), Jermaine Lovelace (Northants League), Rob Cunliffe (Schools representative)

1. Apologies
Hon Wai Lee (Junior Treasurer), Sachin (Social Media Officer), Lucy Sturgess (Fixtures Secretary)

2. Minutes from previous meeting
These were agreed and approved.

Send the poster to the parents re clubs to play in

Rob to serve as Schools Representative

Action: Circulate and get signed

3. Matters Arising (if not agenda related)
None

4. Chair Persons Report
The Schools Representative has now been appointed as Rob Cunliffe. Bhavika Mistry has resigned.

Sachin has filled the role of Social Media representative and has taken over and created a new web site.

It was confirmed that the letter of complaint against Steve and Mel was send from Rachael Maywood to Badminton England and a copy of the letter was circulated to the committee members.

We have tickets available for All England and this will allow members access to the Members lounge

There has been discussion recently regarding the Equalities policy in regard to badminton – tournament entry fees may be too expensive and also there is an issue where certain demographics are being excluded from the tournaments. Shuttles have gone up to £24 per dozen and medal costs have gone up by 25%. The court hire has also gone up.

Badminton England are trying to get more people involved in running tournaments but the junior age groups are struggling as well.

You tend to find that at Under 16 the children enter lots of tournaments and play a lot but then they stop due to exams or University entry

We need to send an email to the school to advise what they are getting for their money when they affiliate.

There are 2 girls who live in Northants but are registered for and play for Buckinghamshire. As Northants was starting up at the time that they registered for Bucks, questions have been asked to Badminton England as to why they did not send them to our county juniors as they live and go to school in Northants. No satisfactory answer has been received yet.

They cannot transfer mid-season but they have said that they will transfer at the end of the season

Mel and Steve advised that as a county, we could apply for special decompensation to Badminton England to move the twins from Buckinghamshire to Northamptonshire. It was agreed that this was not something that should be done before ICT.

5. County Junior Squad

A Badminton Festival for Key stage 3 & 4 has been arranged for 12th March 2024 at Oundle School. There will be trophies give to the winners and T-shirts for all players attending.

We really hope that this will then help in advertising the event for next year.

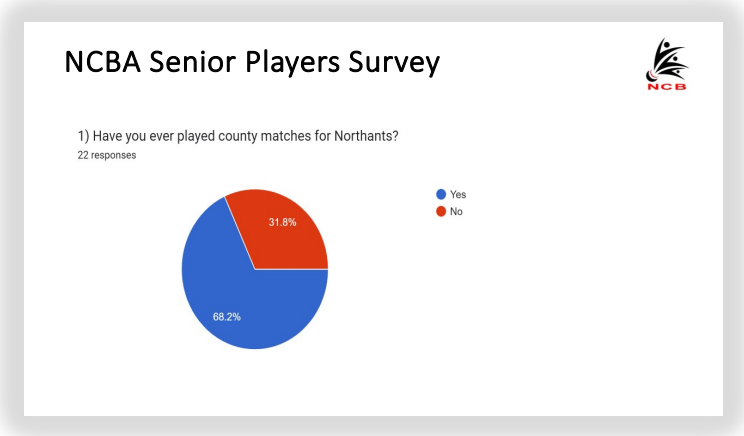
Simon Sturgess
You can see that there is definite improvement with a lot of the players and this is great to see.

There is still an issue with concentration levels with some of the squad players.

Perhaps next year, we would review the squads at Christmas and look to move any players (up or down) if necessary – one for the future

6. County Seniors





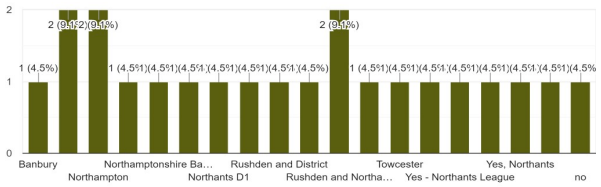
NCBA Senior Players Survey

1a) If you answered yes to Q1 what do you like best about playing for the county?
17 responses

- The team spirit
- Playing as team and enjoying it
- It's an honour to be chosen to play for Northamptonshire
- I would like to play County matches
- The opportunity to earn a shirt and represent the county
- I was selected for the county squad as a teenager but did not pursue as focussed my time on studies .
- Feel proud to play for county and to meet other counties
- Team event and enjoy playing competitive
- Playing in a League which is a very good standard
- Competitive badminton
- A great level badminton players
- Opportunity to play at a higher standard
- A higher more competitive level of badminton and supportive teammates.
- It's playing alongside people who are passionate about playing badminton and you are representing the county at a higher level than you would normally play. This helps to improve your game. Always look to improve.....
- The exposure to high level competitions
- Team play
- The challenge and opportunity to play players stronger than me/us and from outside the county.

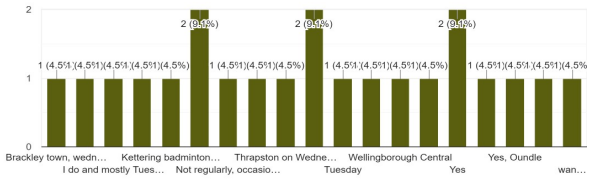
NCBA Senior Players Survey

2) Do you play in a league? If so what league?
22 responses



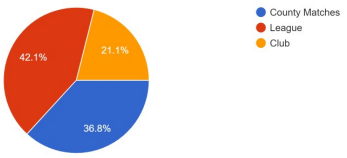
NCBA Senior Players Survey

3) Do you regularly attend a club? If so what club and what day do you play there?
22 responses



NCBA Senior Players Survey

3a) If you answered yes to questions 1, 2 and 3 please write which one is your best/favorite?
19 responses



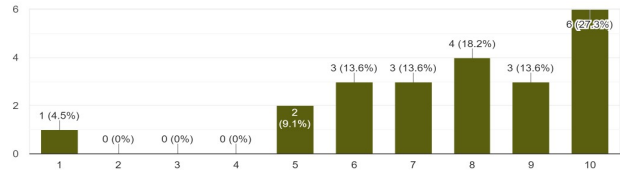
NCBA Senior Players Survey

4) What is the first thought that comes to your mind when you think about playing for your County?
22 responses

- Winning
- Pride
- I'm a little too old now
- Who am I playing with
- Playing a higher standard
- A little elitist and only for a select few
- Opportunity to play with good players. Good experience
- Large losses due to being a county that doesn't necessarily train
- I would like to have the opportunity to practice with masters players before deciding whether county matches are appropriate for me. I am returning to badminton after a 25 +yr break!
- Privileged
- Representing my county
- fit
- Long travel distances, but also wanting to be better at playing
- Playing competitively
- Good competitive badminton
- Good & enjoyable matches/ trainings
- Always want to play at my best so as not to let your partner down.
- Challenging
- Politics (unfortunately)

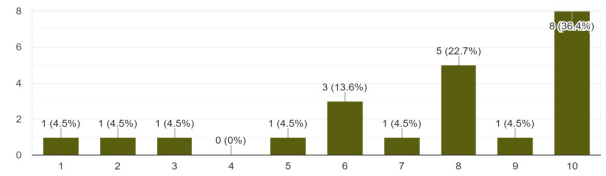
NCBA Senior Players Survey

5) On a scale of 1-10 how do you rank being part of a county team?
22 responses



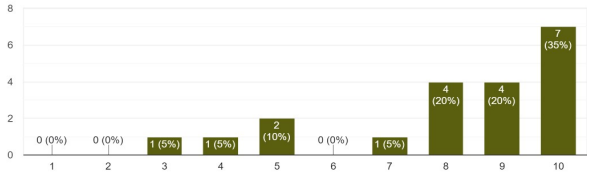
NCBA Senior Players Survey

6) On a scale of 1-10 (1 being the lowest) how do you rank being part of a League playing team?
22 responses



NCBA Senior Players Survey

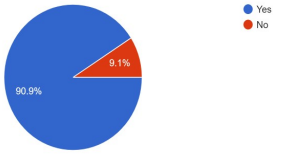
7) On a scale of 1-10 (1 being the lowest) how do you rank being part of a Club?
20 responses



NCBA Senior Players Survey

8) Would you like to have regular county training sessions?

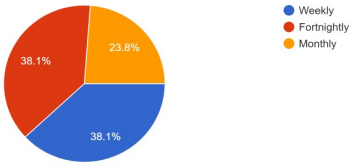
22 responses



NCBA Senior Players Survey

8a) If you answered yes to question 8, how regularly would you like sessions to be held?

21 responses



NCBA Senior Players Survey

8b) If you answered no to question 8, please can you suggest other alternative as to how we can create a team that can play competitively?

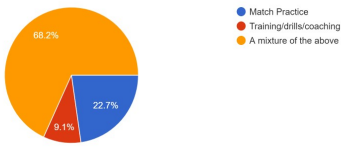
6 responses

- Weekdays are too busy so a training session once a month would be nice. I have not been asked to play this season which I think is down to that I didn't attend Fridays. I am fine about that as I think the committed players should play first but Fridays was not possible for me.
- At my age body not up to too much badminton.. and attending regularly not always possible due to other commitments. Possibly looking at clubs and players who would like to participate to get a larger pool of players..
- Regular attendance. Good communication. Plan ahead for the tournament
- N/a
- More commitment from team players
- I would love to participate in training, but already do quite a lot and personally close to burn out. Needing to prioritise my family and mental health, rather than adding more travel and late nights to my week. Weekends might be good instead, but I also work occasional Saturdays so this complicates my availability too.

NCBA Senior Players Survey

9) If you answered yes to question 8, what format would you like training sessions to be?

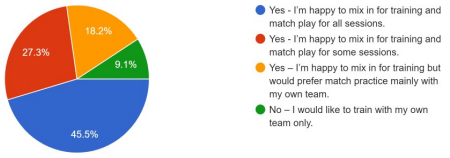
22 responses



NCBA Senior Players Survey

10) Would you be happy for all 1st team, 2nd team, 3rd team and masters' players to attend the sessions?

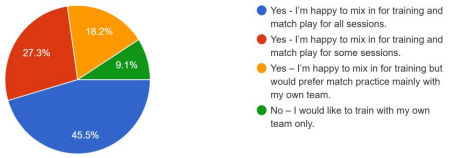
22 responses



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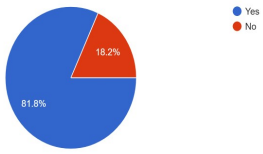
22 responses



NCBA Senior Players Survey

11) Are you happy to play at Weavers Leisure Centre?

22 responses



NCBA Senior Players Survey

11a) If you answered no to question 11, please can you suggest an alternative venue?

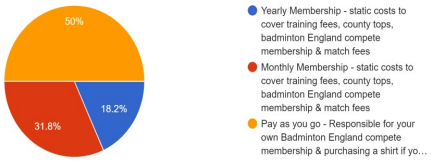
6 responses

- Would always prefer closer to home (Oundle) but not very central for others...
- Anything Northampton or something that is suitable for most players.
- This is mostly because I live too far away from Weavers, but I'd prefer something like Towcester. Sorry I am not aware of venues other than leisure centres.
- Not sure
- Central northamptonshire so it's even travel for everyone.
- Appreciate it is centrally located for much of the county, but I have to travel quite far for work and from home, so the time and additional travel is the main barrier for me.

NCBA Senior Players Survey

12) What sort of fees would you like?

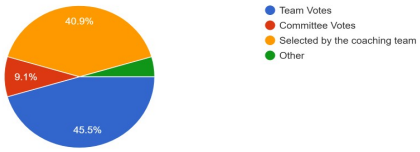
22 responses



NCBA Senior Players Survey

13) Each team will need a team captain for representation and it is a very important role to keep the teams going each season. How would you like the team captain to be selected?

22 responses

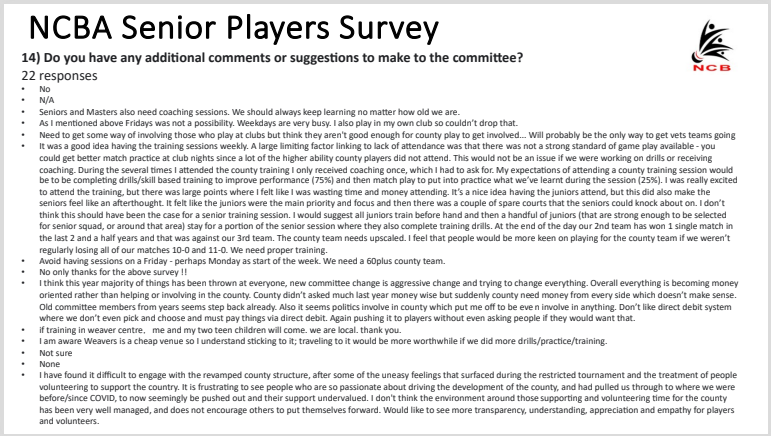


NCBA Senior Players Survey

13b) If you selected other on question 13 please suggest an alternative

4 responses

- N/A
- Volunteer?? Always difficult to have someone commit to responsibility
- Not sure
- Combination of the above?



NCBA Senior Players Survey

14) Do you have any additional comments or suggestions to make to the committee?

22 responses

- No
- N/A
- Seniors and Masters also need coaching sessions. We should always keep learning no matter how old we are.
- As I mentioned above Fridays was not a possibility. Weekdays are very busy. I also play in my own club so couldn't drop that.
- Need to get some way of involving those who play at clubs but think they aren't good enough for county play to get involved... Will probably be the only way to get vets teams going
- It was a good idea having the training sessions weekly. A large limiting factor linking to lack of attendance was that there was not a strong standard of game play available - you could get better match practice at club nights since a lot of the higher ability county players did not attend. This would not be an issue if we were working on drills or receiving coaching. During the several times I attended the county training I only received coaching once, which I had to ask for. My expectations of attending a county training session would be to be completing drills/skill based training to improve performance (75%) and then match play to put into practice what we've learnt during the session (25%). I was really excited to attend the training, but there was large points where I felt like I was wasting time and money attending. It's a nice idea having the juniors attend, but this did also make the seniors feel like an afterthought. It felt like the juniors were the main priority and focus and then there was a couple of spare courts that the seniors could knock about on. I don't think this should have been the case for a senior training session. I would suggest all juniors train before hand and then a handful of juniors (that are strong enough to be selected for senior squad, or around that area) stay for a portion of the senior session where they also complete training drills. At the end of the day our 2nd team has won 1 single match in the last 2 and a half years and that was against our 3rd team. The county team needs upscaled. I feel that people would be more keen on playing for the county team if we weren't regularly losing all of our matches 10-0 and 11-0. We need proper training.
- Avoid having sessions on a Friday - perhaps Monday as start of the week. We need a 60plus county team.
- No only thanks for the above survey ! !
- I think this year majority of things has been thrown at everyone, new committee change is aggressive change and trying to change everything. Overall everything is becoming money oriented rather than helping or involving in the county. County didn't asked much last year money wise but suddenly county need money from every side which doesn't make sense. Old committee members from years seems step back already. Also it seems politics involve in county which put me off to be eve n involve in anything. Don't like direct debit system where we don't even pick and choose and must pay things via direct debit. Again pushing it to players without even asking people if they would want that.
- if training in weaver centre, me and my two teen children will come. we are local. thank you.
- I am aware Weavers is a cheap venue so I understand sticking to it; traveling to it would be more worthwhile if we did more drills/practice/training.
- Not sure
- None
- I have found it difficult to engage with the revamped county structure, after some of the uneasy feelings that surfaced during the restricted tournament and the treatment of people volunteering to support the country. It is frustrating to see people who are so passionate about driving the development of the county, and had pulled us through to where we were before/since COVID, to now seemingly be pushed out and their support undervalued. I don't think the environment around those supporting and volunteering time for the county has been very well managed, and does not encourage others to put themselves forward. Would like to see more transparency, understanding, appreciation and empathy for players and volunteers.

In summary, the Seniors do seem as if they wish to train, either fortnightly or monthly and appear to be happy to mixed with the other squads but would like some match practice within their own teams too.

7. County Masters

The Restricted Tournament Trophies need to be handed out

8. Northants League

There are some match cards missing as matches have nee rearranged but Jermaine has been collecting these in

We need to see who won the leagues pre-covid and see what clubs may have league trophies

Ian Wilkes – sitting £8,000 which should be used for setting up a purpose built building for badminton

9. Social Media and Web Site

Heja App
Need feedback from all of you but I think Heja is working well. It is doing what it should do. Though it's not 100% perfect but I think working well. It has removed lots of administrative work and seems transparent while coaches are selecting teams.

Parents and Seniors adopted well after few initial teething issues.

We have **PRO license till Dec 2024** and after that we need to renew it.
Any suggestions please let me know.

Get everyone to sign up
First team need to get on them
Send photo to sachin for the first team

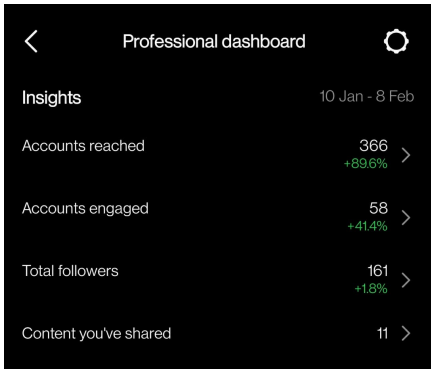
Social Media (Instagram and Facebook)
1) Social Media is going as it. We started getting more traction from other counties and from non-members followers.
2) We have started following other counties, members, and non-followers. This is helping us to get more impressions and interactions over Instagram.
3) I would like to urge you all to engage with posting which we are posting on every week. This engagement can be based on comments, likes, or forwards, reposts. This will increase our presence on social media, and we will be appearing on more searches by Instagram.

4) Facebook page is very **closed page**, so we are not much focusing a lot on that. But I am keep sharing same stuff what we have posted on Instagram.

If we get requests for people wanting to join, ask why they wish to be a part of the group

Instagram Dashboard is looking more promising based on Instagram Dashboard.
Between **10th Jan to 8th Feb 2024,** we have **+89.6%** higher to reach more accounts. **+41.4%** more engaged and we have +**1.8%** more followers.

All + means we are going in right direction, but you all need to engage.

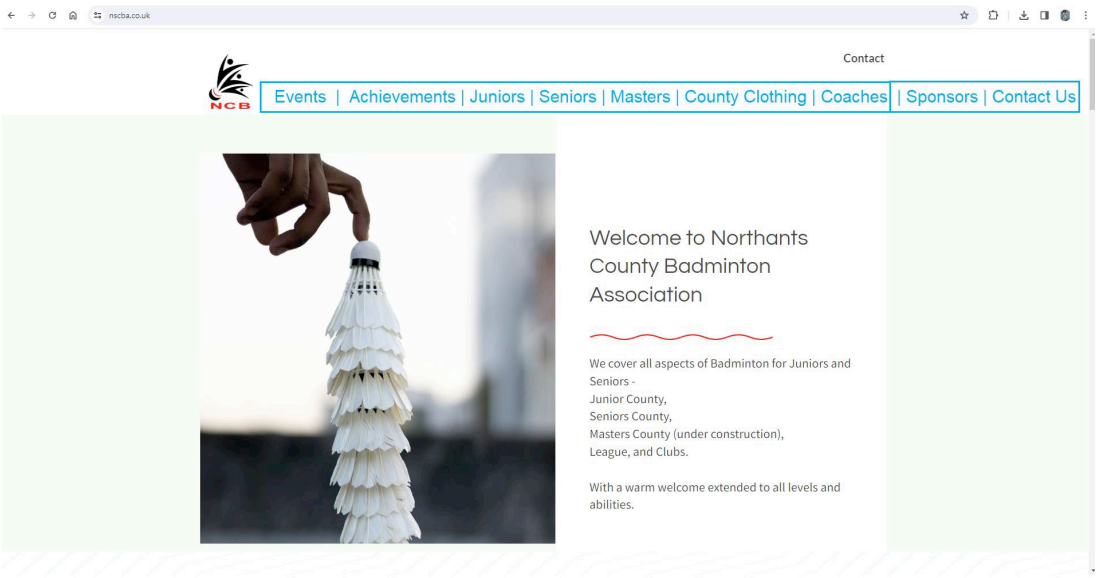


Any suggestions please let me know.

Website Building
1) Melissa kindly started first page. Thanks, Mel, for that. I have some idea as below which I think might help but yes happy to take feedback from all of you.

Thinking following design and need content from all of you. This is my idea now but as I said happy to get feedback from all of you.

Individual tabs will have pages and contact inside it.



Let Sachin know if you want anything different

10. Past Events
For the Shires matches there has been a mixture of results

U17 – are mid table

U19 – are at the bottom
U15 –

It has been hard to fields teams

11. Trophies

As above

12. Financial Matters

Barclays – Ombusman
Mel has still not heard from the Ombusman even though there was a specified period in which there should have been a repky

The Mandate has been completed to change the Senior accounts over

Hon is happy to act as Treasurer for Senior and Junior squads

13. Coaching

We agreed that Jonny Bouguard would be refunded 50% of Joshua's fees as he has been helping out with coaching

14. Any other business

Central venue for matches

- NSB
- CCS
- New school
- Wootton Park

No strings coordinator
Badminton England are looking for us to be able to have a No strings coordinator at Weaver

There is a course that needs to be completed on line. Each week the coordinator pays for the courts and then the money that is received from those attending goes to the coordinator
Zach?
Becky?

This would be on a Monday at Weavers and Becky was interested in doing this

County can fund it

The players play with Plastic shuttles

Funding for a purpose-built badminton centre
Mel to start petition to get the funding for our own place
It would need to be a Racket centre – maybe Paddle Tennis or Table Tennis to run alongside badminton

Weavers
Do we think that Weavers should continue to be the home of Northants County. Probably not the best venue. We could get funding if we subscribe to Smash up

At the moment Stefan is acting as head of PE and Scott does the booking. The Head of Sport is walking away and if Stefan gets the job then we might be in a better position

ICT

We discussed the players in general who might attend ICT and Steve felt that the girls perhaps needed to try a little harder. It seemed as if there was a bit of complacency as there was no other competition.

With the boys it will be a really tough decision as there are a number of players that are being considered by the coaches.

Steve and Mel talked about the twins who are registered with Bucks and explained that there might be a possibility for them to be available for ICT.

We reviewed the Eligibility Policy for Northants County and agreed that they were not eligible to play.

The coaches who will be attending this year are

- Steve
- Simon
- Zach
- Mel

Regarding funding, the Seniors still owe £1000 from last year and it was agreed that they would donate £1000 this year as normal towards ICT costs

The entry is £890 which would work out £220 per person but we agreed that we would keep the prices the same as they were in 2023.

The players would also receive 2 tops for ICT

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.13pm

Signed: Chairperson: Melissa Davey (Nee Gentle)	**Date:**
Signed: K. E. Sturgess Secretary: Karen Sturgess	**Date:** 16.04.24
Signed: Treasurer: Hon Wai Lee	**Date:**