Northants County Badminton
Committee Meeting Minutes
12th October 2023

Venue
The Yeoman, Wootton, Northampton

Attending
Melissa Davey (Chairperson), Stephen Willis (Head Coach), Karen Sturgess (Secretary), Becky Rice (Vice Chair), Hon Wai Lee (Junior Treasurer), Bhavika Mistry (Social Media), Rachael Maywood, Jermaine Lovelace, Sachin

1. Apologies
Lucy Sturgess (Fixtures Secretary), Simon Sturgess (Assistant Coach)

2. Minutes from previous meeting
These were agreed and approved.
Action: Circulate and get signed

3. Matters Arising (if not agenda related)
Moira Atkinson has resigned from the position of Welfare Officer. Becky Rice has offered to take over this role. This was proposed by Melissa Gentle and seconded by Stephen Willis. All members of the committee voted for this unanimously.

4. Chair Persons Report
Due to a "matter of concern" being raised with Badminton England and following on from this a visit being made to Stephen and Melissa's house from a Director of Badminton England to discuss this, Melissa expressed her wish that this meeting be used as an open forum to ensure that all committee members could have an opportunity to get "things off their chest" if needed.

There were a lot of rumours flying around, many people were upset and there was a feeling that maybe members of the committee were not all working together for the same aim.

Melissa explained that she wanted this association to move forward with strength and felt that this could not be achieved with the back biting that was taking place.

Jermaine opened the discussion by referring to the recent Restricted Tournament that had taken place. He felt that the event itself was amazing and that there had been some great games and good attendance by players. He raised the point that the message that had been put on Facebook during the tournament he felt he agreed with 85-90% of what was said, but feared that the tone was somewhat unfriendly and that it has taken away the focus on the tournament and instead meant that there were many questions being asked from players as to what was going on. He did not feel that this should have been posted in a public place and that it should have been dealt with by the committee internally.

Melissa responded by saying that in normal circumstances she would agree but the point of the posting was that a “matter of concern” had not been brought to the attention of the committee and instead had been directed to Badminton England and now it was public knowledge that there were internal issues within the county. That as an association we do have a policy and procedure as to how these types of situations should be handled and this was not followed.

Bhavika then raised a point about a few email exchanges that had taken place between herself and Melissa and explained that she had never had any intention of these messages upsetting anyone but the responses had made her feel very uncomfortable and concerned about communicating with Melissa.

Bhavika also made reference to the posting on Facebook during the restricted and had explained that it had made her feel very uncomfortable and that the attitude to her was very hostile. Due to how this had made her feel, her Dad had attended the tournament with her as she did not wish to attend by herself.

Melissa felt that Bhavika’s tone was not appropriate in the emails and we did discuss the fact that we can all read something differently as humans.

There was a lot of discussion then regarding the “matter of concern” that had been made to Badminton England. Steve and Melissa explained that it was very upsetting and embarrassing for them to be contacted by Badminton England asking for a Director of the association to go and meet them to discuss the issue. The implications of this included the county being refused funding due to concerns of a conflict of interest between DK Way and NSCBA, their reputation as coaches which Steve felt was undone in front of him during the meeting with BE, their livelihoods and that all the work that they had put into NSCBA the previous year seemed to be under-mined. Steve and Melissa explained that they had given their time and shuttles free of charge to try to get things off the ground in the county and they felt that the committee members were not all working in unison to continue what they had started. They were very upset that there was even a hint of wrong doing from BE.

It was explained that at the present time the “matter of concern” had not been made into a formal complaint but Melissa had asked BE to escalate it to make it formal because that way they would then know who had contacted BE and would have a much better understanding of the content of the issue.

All members of the committee were asked if they were aware of the “matter of concern” and whether they had been approached by any parents at all. Rachael Maywood did explain that a parent had approached her and she had advised her to contact DK Way directly and she had subsequently on another occasion explained that there was an option to go to BE if the parent was not happy with the response. Rachael was asked why she had not approached the committee herself so that this could be dealt with internally and she said she did not know why she had not done this. Rachel was then asked directly by Melissa (Chair) if she herself had put forward her own complaint to BE regarding this or any other issue relating to the Chairperson or TheDKway Badminton Academy. Rachel denied that she had done this.

It was explained that an email had, allegedly been sent to a parent who attended the trials and attends Wellingborough Club, and this email was inviting the player to come along to TheDKWay Badminton Academy. It was suggested that the emails had been handed

over by Alex Dunn to TheDKWay when he moved to France. However, this was one email address and all they were trying to do was to give children as much opportunity as possible to play badminton in Northamptonshire.

We talked about the ripple effect that this issue has had on many members of the committee and how upsetting this was. Steve and Melissa had considered walking away and it was agreed that we cannot look to achieve what we want to without everyone being on the same page.

We agreed that we needed to draw a line under this so that we could all move on. Sachin stated that we needed to ensure that if there are issues going forward, then this needs to be handled internally and also from this point onwards, nothing should be discussed outside of the committee members especially with other counties. All committee members agredd unanimously with this proposal.

Becky Rice did speak on behalf of any of the parents of children playing in DK Way and NSCBA and there was no feeling that there was any conflict of interest between the two clubs.

Everyone was feeling very emotional at the moment and we need to ensure that we support each other going forward.
Action: Going forward all members of the committee need to ensure that any issues or matters of concern as raised with the committee members immediately so that we can look to address things ourselves. Nothing should be discussed outside of the committee / county.

5. Country Junior Squad

We talked about the structure of Junior Badminton in Northamptonshire and agreed that we need clubs and an academy in the area to strengthen things.

Nearly all the junior members have paid up and completed all the necessary forms. We were just chasing the last paid up and then we need to ensure that all the Juniors are affiliated to the B A of E.

We need to try to get more coaches involved. Simon Sturgess to ask Emily Fisk if she was interested in supporting on a Wednesday evening. Rachael did say that she might be able to help first session. Jonny B is also helping as his son attends the first session.

We have nearly organised all the Shires matched for U15, U17 and U19 and Karen Sturgess will look to get the dates published to all the parents as soon as possible. We will then need 2 parents per squad to take care of matches and this will give them representation on the committee with voting rights.
Action: Shires match dates to be circulated to parents and Rachael to add to web site

6. County Teams and Seniors

We are struggling to get the First and Second team players to attend the Friday night sessions and we need to work out how we can get them to come along. Bhavika offered to contact the players to encourage them to attend and would also ask if putting on a Thursday session might be of interest to the players.

We have added a Third team into the league.

Action: Bhav to see if she can get some buy-in from the 1st and 2nd team players to attend on a Friday. Send out a poll to see if a Thursday may be of interest.

7. Masters

The Masters restricted is due to be played at the end of the month. There are events at all age groups Over 35, Over 40, Over 45, Over 50, Over 55, Over 60, Over 65, Over 70 & Over 75. Players can play in their age bracket and below.

We agreed that we would purchase new trophies for all events and all age groups. We need to advertise this event to get more entries.

We agreed that Colours would be awarded to players for the amount of games they play for the county.
Action: Purchase new trophies for the Masters Restricted.

8. Northants League

It was a challenging task organising the league with the start of the season fast approaching. The Divisions are as follows:

- Mens Div 1: 6 Teams
- Mens Div 2: 8 Teams. DKWAY were not able to secure a venue, and have postponed their entry to next season
- Ladies: 3 Teams, with the welcomed return of Harborough Feathers. DKWAY were not able to secure a venue, and have postponed their entry to next season
- Mixed: 3 teams, with two of those entries from Towcester
- Doubles: 5 teams, with two of those entries from Towcester

Matches are underway, with some rearrangements and no significant issues have been reported.

Northampton University have enquired about entering a Men's team. We await their response on how they wish to proceed.

At present, the League tables on the website are up to date

There was a question raised about whether Oundle School need to affiliate to Northants County
What would schools get out of being part of Northants County – we have not received any info from this

Can we find out from a school that is affiliated to Northants how they did this? We believe that players can then play restricted and Shires Leagues
Action: Melissa to see if she can find out what they would get from this

9. Weavers School

We book on a block booking basis i.e. there is a hall charge only.

We can access the hall Wednesday & Friday for County and then at the weekend for Shires league matches and tournaments.

If we want to book Weavers on a Tuesday, Friday and Saturday and Sunday – 5-10pm (Must book the whole hall - £45 per hour and the whole hall)

Central are not able to use their hall for three weeks so they are going to use Weavers for this period.

There is an October ladies coaching session – 7.00 – 9.00pm with 11 people signed up which is really good. Bhavika will use three courts.

10. Past Events

We have run the Junior Restricted for all old age groups U11 – U19 over three weekends. We need to ensure that we really focus on this for next year and if possible, get the dates out for next year asap.

We will look to see if we can run the American Youth – at the end of the season
Action: Karen Sturgess to look at calendar to see if we can fit in American Youth once Shires matched arranged.

11. Trophies

There are a lot of old trophies that are no longer being awarded and we did discuss throwing these away
Action : advertise on Facebook in anyone would like their old trophies

12. Financial Matters

We are looking to move the Bank Account to Metro but the address on the current account needs to be the same as the address of the Metro Account. This is being changed with Barclays and then we will look to get the account moved.

We need to ensure that we have a separate Treasurer for the Seniors and the Juniors and that the following purchases need to be agreed by the committee:

- Up to £500 – delegated powers – Chair Person & Treasurers
- Over £500 – committee decision

Chris Read has now found out what needs to be done to move the Senior account. We agreed that Melissa, Bhavika and Karen would be the signatories.
Action: Bhav to discuss moving the Senior Account to have Mel, Bhav & Karen as signatories

13. Coaching

Covered above – we do need more coaches especially to help on a Friday night.
Action: See if we can get a Timetable of who can cover what

14. EGM and Constitution

We discuss the proposed constitution and it will be amended as the last sentence has been duplicated.

Colours to be awarded for 5, 10, 20 & 50, 75 & 100 appearances in County Matches.

We agreed that we needed to adopt section 11 now. This was proposed by Melissa and seconded by Bhavika. All members of the committee were in favour of this.

Sub-committee was agreed as Stephen Willis and Simon Sturgess. Captains of team to be nominated.

Action: Teams to be entered by the end of October. Karen Sturgess to send out the constitution to all clubs and all players and a virtual meeting to be held on 3rd November to discuss and vote on this.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.23pm.

Signed: M. Gentle Chairperson: Melissa Davey (Nee Gentle)	**Date: 6th November 2023**
Signed: K. E. Sturgess Secretary: Karen Sturgess	**Date:** 06.11.23
Signed: Treasurer: Hon Wai Lee	**Date:** 06 November 2023