

Northants County Badminton Committee Meeting Minutes

16th November 2023 @ 7.15pm



Venue

6 Heronsford, West Hunsbury, Northampton, NN4 9XG

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 (arrived at 8.00pm), Jermaine Lovelace, Sachin, Simon Sturgess (Assistant Coach)

1. Apologies

Lucy Sturgess (Fixtures Secretary)

2. Minutes from previous meeting

These were agreed and approved. Circulated and signed

3. Matters Arising (if not agenda related)

No matters arising

4. Chair Persons Report

Conversation directed to Rachael Maywood

Mel referred back to the discussion point from the previous committee meeting where Steve and Mel had explained to the committee that a complaint had been received at Badminton England relating to a conflict of interest between NSCBA and DK Way.

At the previous meeting Rachael had been asked directly if she had made this complaint and she had advised the committee she had not.

At this meeting, Mel then explained to the group that they had then received confirmation from Badminton England that 2 complaints had been made, one from a parent of one of the children playing in our squads (Parent X) and the other from Rachael Maywood.

Rachael was asked to explain to the committee the circumstances behind these complaints. She advised us that she was aware that a Parent X had raised a complaint as they felt that they had not given any personal information to DK Way, that they had been contacted by DK Way regarding their son playing badminton for DK way and therefore felt that this was a breach of data protection guidelines. Parent X had sent an email to DK Way but had not received a response and therefore she went to Badminton England directly.

Rachael was then asked why Parent Xs complaint had not been brought to the committee and why she had also made a complaint to Michael Reid at Badminton England - why could it not have been raised internally – why did it have to go to badminton England – the committee should have been given an opportunity to try to resolve it internally in preference to it going outside Northamptonshire County Badminton.

Mel had also been contacted by Sarah Sankey who then relayed a number of agenda topics that had been discussed at the previous committee and wanted to discuss this with our chairperson. At the previous committee meeting we all agreed that any issues that were discussed at these meetings would remain between us and were not to be discussed outside of the committee and especially outside of the county.

It was felt that Rachael's priorities were not for Northants Badminton but for Sankey Academy.

Karen Sturgess did ask Rachael to explain why she had any concerns when Steve and Mel had first come to Northampton in sharing the database of junior players. Karen could not understand why this affected Rachael as she had never had anything to do with Junior County badminton even pre-Covid. Karen explained that from her and Simon's perspective they were glad that there were people willing to try to resurrect junior county and that their only concern was the funding that the juniors had accumulated. (Karen did explain that she had relayed this to Steve & Mel previously).

Rachael said that it was her son who had concerns and Karen again asked why this was the case and he neither had been involved in Junior County badminton as a part of the committee previously. It did not make sense.

Rachael was asked how she could remain on the committee when there was now a breakdown in the trust and relationship that the rest of the committee had with her.

Mel offered Rachael options going forward:

1. To resign
2. To go through a disciplinary investigation (Rachael had left the room before this was relayed to her)

Rachael at this stage left the meeting and handed in her resignation

Conversation after Rachael had left the meeting

Mel then went on to explain that some emails that had been sent from Kent to some of our players had been "provided" by Badminton England – not DK Way or Sankey Academy. Badminton England have now "re-trained" Kent and have advised them that they are not allowed to do this.

Mel then explained about the recent release of the Transgender Policy that has been released by Badminton England. This now means that girls can enter 5 events in a tournament if they wish too.

BWF have not released a Transgender Policy to date – if any players or committee members have any comments in relation to this then they should email Sue Storey.

Mens is now called Open and two girls can enter but have to be the same sex at birth.

5. Treasurers Report

Melissa has made contact with Barclays Bank to ask to them to change the address to Melisa's address in West Hunsbury. Mel has made contact with the bank on numerous occasions to see if this can be changed but to date this has not been actioned. A complaint has now been and this should be addressed in 2 days. However, the complaint was raised

two weeks before and no contact has been made from Barclays. They had advised that the address should have been changed after 5 days but this is still outstanding.

However, all bills are now up to date and paid.

6. Country Junior Squad

We won our first Shires match the previous week which was an U17 match v Worcester. The score was 14 – 6 and there were some very strong positive performances from many members of the squad.

The squad is definitely evolving because many of the players are playing up an age group and therefore when they are back to their age group they are finding their feet.

It is interesting to see that 5 of the female members are going in the right direction and are getting training from external coaches and this is showing in their play, leaving the other girls behind.

The training sessions are going well. Some of the U15 players are struggling but really pleased with the U17 and U19 squads. There is plenty to work with here but it would be good to get some more players to bring a little more strength – something to work towards.

It is apparent that some parents are now realising that their children are being left behind because they are only turning up for county training.

Because of situation with academy and the concern regarding a conflict of interest between county and DK Way, Steve is more reluctant to approach the players to offer more opportunity to receive coaching / to get time on court. Hon asked if the committee could send this out. Steve felt that the players do not necessarily need to go to DK Way but they do definitely need to play more.

It is still very positive but there are still bumps in the road – some players going in the right direction but some being left behind. However, Simon and Steve cannot produce miracles in just one night.

Action: The Committee needs to send something out to the parents and then get a follow up social media post to encourage to children play elsewhere.

It was felt that the trials next year might be a different story and at this point we might need the county squads to be a particular size and standard. As part of the trials, we will also need to look at the match scores and rank the players accordingly.

The combination of the juniors and the seniors has not worked out as hoped. It is taking a lot of time and commitment for everyone to try to cover this and there are not enough coaches at present to assist.

We discussed re-structuring the Wednesday session maybe doing two groups 5-7pm, 6-8pm and 7-9pm and maybe with the younger group some of the parents could help out a little.

It is apparent that some of the seniors are now seeking coaching outside of the county and we need to plan for the future to ensure that this can be offered in Northants. It's not possible at the moment but we need to work towards this.

Is there any way that Emily Fisk would be able to assist on a Wednesday?

Action: Karen and Simon to discuss with Emily.

We need to complete a questionnaire for the Seniors to canvas their thoughts and feelings in what they would like to be put in place for the future – coaching?, drills?, matches?, frequency?, best day? Do we look to try to put this in place from the New Year if possible?

The courts can then be used by other players if required on the days that county is not using them

7. Senior Squads

We managed to field three teams for the first round of county matches but it was a bit of a struggle.

The First team played Lincs in the morning and lost 6 - 5 Lincs and then Bedfordshire in the afternoon losing 6 - 5 again, however we were not able to field a full team.

Simon attended the other two matches – Northants 2nds played Northants 3 with the 2nds winning 11 – 0. Then the 2nd played Essex and lost 10 – 1 with the 3rds playing Lincs 2nds and losing 11 – 0.

Everyone played very well and many players were new to county competition. We also had 4 junior girls playing up.

The scores did not reflect the games, the teams were very friendly and there were some very good games.

Bhav did explain that she is struggling for the next matches for the 2nds and 3rds. The 3rd team is okay but there are very few players who are available to play for the 2nd team.

Simon did explain that there were no referees at the event and the shuttles had been stored in a cupboard with no one being advised where they were, which delayed the start of the games. Spare shuttles were handed out at the end of the match which Becky has.

There had been an issue with some of the new county shirts

Action: Bhav to get a list of those spelt wrong, wrong size and maiden name not married name on the back and this will be sorted.

8. Weavers

Weavers have advised that they are not putting exams on. Mel to see if we can use the hall now for the dates that they had advised it would be closed.

Weavers wanted a club or an academy for the deal to be complete.

Becky had explained about some grants that are available for up to £25k. Deadline is the end of November – Hon and Becky to then see if they can get together to discuss this.

There are 4 different grants – one is specifically for Queensway.

We should be in a situation where an academy can be set up in Northampton this is all about promoting badminton.

The Shires squads need 2 parent representatives and to they can then sit on the committee. We have parents for the U19 and Hon has volunteered for the U15. We need to see if we can encourage other parents to get more involved and to help.

There is still a long way to go with Weavers. Jermaine would be prepared to help but could do once per month to see if he can canvas thoughts and feeling from parents and players.

Mike Reid has spoken to them to withdraw from a Tuesday. This will be given back to B E.

Mel has submitted applications for more Tournaments and is hoping that they will be approved. There will be a Senior Bronze on 10 / 11 August 2024 and an U17 bronze on 5 October. Any proceeds will go to Northants to cover any costs where the county were looking to subsidise fees for the players. Mel has applied but is aware that she will not get all of them but will make sure that we get one for County Seniors and one for county juniors.

9. Masters

The Restricted was held but there was not a great turnout

We need to make sure that we can get the information to more players but word is now getting around.

10. Northants League

This is running fine. Jermaine is being lenient with the rules at present to not penalise clubs.

Kettering have made a complaint about the lateness of Towcester's Mens B team and the atmosphere created by players feeling that they were pushed to play after the designated end time of the match.

An apology has been made from Towcester to Kettering

11. Social Media

Instragram – this is doing well. More is being posted and there is more interest

Facebook – one page to now be created for the merged county

Can we get more information out about what the committee are working on and who makes up the committee and their role?

Can we give information out on who is in what squads so that all players are aware who is who?

Web site – Sachin to take over the web site. Mel will provide all the details and Sachin will take over. It expires on 01/12/2023. Set up again from scratch.

Emails to be sent out regarding vacant positions on the committee

Action: Karen S to sort

12. Affiliations

School affiliations are £30 per year and it would be good if more schools affiliated to the county.

They get entry to the Schools Tournament and access to coaches

We need to see if some of our U19 / U17 can help at schools so that the schools get something back

There are 15 schools in the area that are affiliated to us which is a good start

Action : Put that in the grant application – Becky

13. Financial Matters

Grants - Becky and Hon to discuss grants for the county

14. Any Other Business

Agreed that committee meetings will be held quarterly

Action : Mel to sort

Committee make up:

Melissa Gentle – Chairperson of NCBA

Karen Sturgess – Secretary

Jermaine Lovelace – League Representative

Bhavika – Treasurer of Seniors and Social Media representative

Hon – Treasurer of Juniors

Parent liaison - U19 –Vacant, U17 – Sachin / Wendy

Schools representative – vacant

Club Representative – vacant

Action : Mel to sort

U19, U17 & U15 Shires – Mel contacting teams and then we need to provide a squads of players for the match so that perhaps the parents could help out more.

Action : Mel to sort

Look to arrange dates for:

Junior Trials

Senior Trials

Junior Restricted

Senior Restricted

Master Restricted

Ladies only coaching – another session

Action : Mel to sort

Last session on 20th December from 6-8pm – Christmas party – bring food and play silly games

Sunday 17th December – meal for the committee?

Sankey Trip to Malaysia – 1st – 15th July 2024 can be posted on our site

Put out a suggestions box to the parents

Action : Mel to sort

Will we get tickets for All England?

Mel has documents for us to be premier club which would then get 20 free tickets

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.40pm

Signed: <i>M. Gentle</i> Chairperson: Melissa Gentle	Date: 26.01.24
Signed: <i>K.E. Sturgess</i> Secretary: Karen Sturgess	Date: 13.12.23
Signed: Treasurer: Hon Wai Lee	Date: