



## AGM MINUTES - 20<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024

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### 1. Members present

Ant Welch (Chair), Owain Astley (Vice Chair; Eros), Heather Astley (Secretary; Eros), Sheila Palmer (Challenge Cup Secretary; Eros), Steve Hodgson (Match Secretary; Prestatyn), Melinda Lyons (Holywell), Dave Markey (Committee Member; Eros), Ann Hipkiss (Connah's Quay), Alex Mutch (Buckley), Robert Taylor (Denbigh), Paul Jones (Holywell), Alan Matthias (Rossett), Hazel Hyslop (Llanferres), Peter Williams (Llanferres), Lara Griffiths (Llanferres), Callum Sant (Buckley), Steve Hodgson (Prestatyn), Caitlin Hodgson (Prestatyn), Ben Betts (Buckley), Rob Jones (Hawarden/Eros), Steve Eltham (Buckley)

### 2. Apologies

Mikey Parr (Committee Member - Treasurer; Llanferres), Jamie Noble (Committee Member - Tournament Coordinator; Eros), Jane Liddle (Committee Member - Junior Coordinator; Rossett), Brandon Smith (Committee Member - Media Coordinator; Prestatyn), Will Melvin (Llanferres), Matt Orchard

Clubs not represented: Flint Phoenix

### 3. Reports:

#### a) Chair

Ant Welch:

#### Introduction

The 2023-2024 season is the second year NEWBL has run with the current committee. A full year of competitive play has been completed and the presentation evening has recently been successfully held. Thanks to all those involved in the effective management of both.

#### Organisational overview

We had one in-year resignation (match secretary) which was successfully managed as there was already a co-match secretary in place. I am resigning as Chair as I have moved out of the area (and indeed Wales) and wish to extend my thanks to all those who have supported both the league and me over the last two years.

#### Key achievements

The mixed league has continued with the addition of the men's and women's leagues facilitating more play. Successful presentation evening. AGM facilitated. Overall, play and administrative arrangements have supported positive participation throughout the season.

#### Financial performance

The treasurer will provide a separate report. Participation and membership The new league structure has been played for the year with further proposals to be voted on at the AGM. Anecdotal feedback about the new league play has been positive. Any disputes/issues that have arisen have been dealt with according to the league rules.

#### Media and marketing

Both the website and social media have been used to provide timely updates and the fixture outcomes have been updated regularly.

#### Governance and compliance

All matters conducted throughout the season have followed league rules. Proposals to consider any amendments to the rules will be tabled at the AGM. The league supported one club who were having issues with the sports venue with a positive outcome.

#### Community engagement

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Junior badminton moving forward positively and to be discussed in relation to north east Wales badminton at the AGM.

### **Challenges and future plans**

Tournaments and juniors will have a sub-committee to support them. No other significant plans are in the pipeline for the coming season to consolidate the recent changes in the last 2 years.

### **Conclusion**

Again, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to all members of the volunteer committee, all players and clubs in the league and wish everyone the very best for ongoing, positive participation for the future

#### **b) Match Secretary**

Steve Hodgson: A great season, ups and downs along the way but I think everyone has enjoyed it – the idea was to grow badminton and hopefully we can do that further next season. Most clubs have enjoyed the new Cup format and feedback has been very positive.

#### **c) Treasurer**

Dave Markey (for Mikey Parr): 2023-2024 is the first full year of operation since COVID and since I took over as Treasurer. I am therefore not in a position to compare this year's financial performance with a typical earlier year. However, I can report that the finances remain healthy. As can be seen from the Statement of Income and Expenditure, we have made a surplus of approximately £458 over the course of the year. This is slightly false, as our financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March and ends before the season is complete. Therefore, financial items such as the presentation evening and late season cup finals will not be seen until the next year accounts. That said, the position is good, with a likely surplus of approximately £200 to be seen at the end of the season. This is, in part, associated with the higher number of team entries due to more leagues. A number of tournaments have been run throughout the year and have been an operational success. In terms of finances, these have, more or less, broken even. A generous sponsorship grant has aided this and, without which, a small loss on tournaments would have been suffered. The treasurer's recommendation is that there is no justification for increase in team fees or introduction of an individual member fee (Under the previous administration, a member fee was paid to NEWBA). Future expenditure is likely to be slightly lower as there will be no additional requirement to purchase trophies for league or cup competitions for the foreseeable future. However, it is the treasurer's view that the member clubs should not be subsidising tournament entry for open tournaments and we may wish to consider a modest increase in tournament entry fees to cover increasing costs of shuttles and courts.

Please see additional Balance Sheet & Bank Reconciliation.

#### **d) Tournament Coordinator**

Heather Astley (for Jamie Noble): We held 3 tournaments this season, beginning with 9<sup>th</sup> September 2023: Pre-Season Handicap Tournament which marked the return of the League Handicap tournament following Covid and was a huge success and a really enjoyable day.

17<sup>th</sup> February 2024: BW Graded Series This was the first Badminton Wales sanctioned event run by NEWBL for many years and it was really well attended by players from all over the country and the competition with a really high standard of play.

25<sup>th</sup> May 2024: BW Junior Series

This Saturday if anybody would like to volunteer to help! This will be the largest junior tournament in Wales in nearly a decade despite it being in half term and during exam time for the older players so we are very excited to be hosting this and bringing so many young players to North East Wales!

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All these events will run again next season with the dates included below for reference. Thank you to everybody who supported by playing, handicapping, completing the draws, printing, finding partners, advertising, scoring etc. etc.

Running a tournament is a huge amount of work and we really appreciate everybody who gives up their time. North East Wales is rapidly getting a name for how well our tournaments are organised and supported which is key in continuing to grow the sport in this area.

**e) Challenge Cup Secretary**

Sheila Palmer: Thank you to everyone that took part this season. 9 of our 10 league clubs entered the Cup competition, fielding 16 teams in total. Thank you to the Cup committee who helped with the handicaps and independent drawing of matches. Thank you to the NEWBL Committee for funding the court hire for the semis and finals and the shuttles for the finals as well as engraving trophies and buying medals. There were many excellent matches which led up to the exciting semi finals which were Cup: Rossett A v Rossett B (11-7) and Eros B v Prestatyn A (12-6) and Plate: Holywell A v Prestatyn C (15-) and Flint Phoenix A (13-5). The winners of the Cup were Rossett A (11-7) and the winners of the Plate were Holywell (12-6). Thank you also to Duncan Church for being in charge of the results desk for the semis and finals.

**f) Junior Coordinator**

Steve Eltham (for Jane Liddle): Established junior clubs are being well attended and increasing their numbers. Others like Eros of Mold and Llanferres juniors, had only been playing a few weeks when the season started in October and their confidence has grown over the months.

Junior League started in October with 7 fixtures throughout the season. As our junior clubs grew in numbers, teams were added to the League and by the third fixture we had five divisions and more teams on the waiting list. We had teams from Buckley, Connah's Quay, Eros, Rossett, Llanferres Christleton and West Cheshire Performance Centre. Sadly Prestatyn and Flint didn't feel ready to field teams this season. Enthusiasm, competitiveness, sportsmanship and team spirit have been exemplary which has made the season a joy to be part of.

The culmination of the season was the Gareth Coppack Tournament where all teams - 84 boys and girls - came together to play 147 games throughout the day.

NEWJBL has part-funded performance and development sessions on Fridays from February to May which were run by Matt Vacher and Heather Astley.

Gen Tyler, Chris Rees and Josh Hart came up to Ruthin School to provide a Community Coaching Course to 24 volunteers from all our junior clubs in April.

We have also secured places for all our junior club welfare officers and Rob Pullen on the first BW/UK Coaching Safeguarding Course to be held in June.

Thanks go to team managers and volunteers who give their time at their clubs and at junior league.

**4. Election of Officials:**

Role	2023-24	2024-25	Proposed By	Seconded By
Chair	Ant Welch Llanferres	Owain Astley Eros	Owain Astley	Dave Markey

Vice Chair	Owain Astley Eros	Callum Sant Buckley	Callum Sant	Sheila Palmer
Secretary	Heather Astley Eros	Heather Astley Eros	Heather Astley	Sheila Palmer
Match Secretary	Steve Hodgson Prestatyn	Steve Hodgson/ Caitlin Hodgson Prestatyn	Steve Hodgson/ Caitlin Hodgson	Dave Markey
Treasurer	Mikey Parr Llanferres	Mikey Parr Llanferres	Mikey Parr (written)	Sheila Palmer
Tournament Secretary	Jamie Noble Eros	Jamie Noble Eros	Jamie Noble (written)	Heather Astley
Media Coordinator	Brandon Smith Prestatyn	Dave Markey Eros	Dave Markey	Heather Astley
Welfare Officer	Rob Pullen None	Ben Betts Buckley	Ben Betts	Heather Astley
Challenge Cup Secretary	Sheila Palmer Eros	Sheila Palmer Eros	Sheila Palmer	Steve Hodgson
Junior Coordinator	Jane Liddle	Jane Liddle	Jane Liddle	Heather Astley
Committee Member	Dave Markey Eros	None	None	None

## 5. Matters arising:

### a) Rearranging Matches

One club mentioned that it was very difficult for clubs when there were genuine reasons for a postponement such as illness or injury etc.

A committee member explained that due to the huge volume of matches (210 last season!) it was just not feasible to allow rearrangements and we were trying to be more flexible than the Rules had been previously.

Another committee member mentioned that for some clubs it would not be possible for them to rearrange any matches due to their court time and heavy match schedule.

Another club pointed out that even one concession could be damaging to a division because it could change who gets promoted/relegated at the end of the season which is not what anybody wants.

The Committee proposed the following rule change:

- 5.1 The postponement of matches following 31<sup>st</sup> July is not permitted except for the unavailability of the hall or severe inclement weather or, in exceptional circumstances, by the order of the League Committee. Any club wishing to postpone a match must obtain the permission of the League Match Secretary before informing the opposing club. Player unavailability, owing to commitment playing in another league, would not be considered as an exceptional circumstance to grant a match postponement.

It was mentioned that it may be a better idea to not state a fixed date in case the Fixtures were delayed for any reason.

Voted on whether to change the time frame to 2 weeks after the Fixtures are published or 3 weeks.

Result: 6:3 in favour of 2 week time frame to make any amendments

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b) Conceding Matches – Club Vote

As a League we need to agree on a sanction for a Club who concedes a match and create a rule for how many concessions can be allowed before it is detrimental to the Division. Amendment of Rule 5.3 may be necessary.

One club mentioned the financial impact that other teams conceding games against them had had on their club that season – if a club books additional courts for matches and the other club concedes then they are potentially losing all the court charges as well as potentially missing out on match fees. They questioned whether we could impose a financial penalty on a club for a short notice concession?

A committee member asked how this could be enforced and mentioned that as a Committee we had removed financial penalties from the Rule book at last season's AGM.

Another club did not like the idea of financial penalty and felt that point deductions were a better outcome.

The committee reiterated that we want to encourage play wherever possible and even lacking players we would hope that teams would still turn up for their matches when scheduled and play what they could.

In the end no rule could be decided upon so for this season it remains up to League Committee's discretion with a view to revisit the topic at next year's AGM.

c) Changes to Registrations & Amendments

Proposed Rule Changes/Additions:

3.2 For League registration purposes, all clubs must submit their team registration fee (£10 per Team) and lists of their men and women, in each case in strict order of individual merit, to the League Match Secretary by the ~~30th September~~ **second Sunday in September** ready for the start of a new season. Clubs that fail to meet this requirement will not be allowed to play badminton in the League until the list has been received by the League Match Secretary and a points deduction will be applied, which will be decided by the League Committee.

A club noted that it is important that clubs do not over extend themselves and enter too many teams to keep fulfilling fixtures feasible across the whole season.

A club mentioned that you could see the first Team Registration as a provisional list then finalise by 72 hours prior to the first match as per the new rule 3.4.

Another club pointed out that second Sunday in September was the 8<sup>th</sup> in 2024 which mean that some clubs would only have had one club night so potentially move it back a little?

One club wondered whether it would make it difficult with BW and clubs getting their players registered but another club pointed out that with the new Badminton Wales Membership platform people are supposed to register themselves and it covers a calendar year not a playing season.

Voted unanimously to change this to 15<sup>th</sup> September.

3.4 Additions to the registration list may be made ~~in writing~~ to the League Match Secretary at any time **by re-submitting the registration list fully completed and signed by a club committee member.** ~~provided that the~~ Any additional registrations must be consistent with the club's order of merit and that the player does not play in matches during the ~~24 hours~~ **72 hours** immediately preceding the time and date of the first match for which registered.

Vote – Unanimous agreement

3.11 A player may not play as a reserve for any higher team in more than half the total number of matches throughout the season. **The Match Secretary will confirm these figures for each league once the League Structures have been finalised for the season.** The total shall be cumulative regardless of which of a club's teams the player acts as a reserve for. If a player acts as such a reserve more than the specified amount, the events in which the player played, and all lower games, shall be awarded to the opposing team and the results of the match amended accordingly. Following the maximum number of games as a reserve being reached, the Club must inform the League Match Secretary within seven days of the event. **The player then either remains in their current team and is no longer eligible to play as a reserve, or on playing their next match as a reserve, is automatically registered into the team higher than the one they are currently registered for and is no longer eligible to play in the lower team.**

Vote - Unanimous agreement

d) Men's & Women's League Rules - Club Vote

Feedback for the Men's and Women's Leagues has been overwhelmingly positive and it has proved a very successful trial season, however, we would like to vote on whether clubs would like the format to remain the same with each player playing 2 events or whether they would like to extend it to each player playing 3 events. Once we know the outcome of this vote we will formalise the Rules and distribute them to Clubs prior to the start of the season.

Club	Voting Representative	Vote
Buckley	Steve Eltham	3 events
Connah's Quay	Ann Hipkiss	2 events
Denbigh	Rob Taylor	2 events
Eros	Heather Astley	3 events
Flint Phoenix	None	None
Hawarden	Rob Jones	3 events
Holywell	Paul Jones	Abstaining
Llanferres	Peter Williams	3 events
Prestatyn	Steve Hodgson	2 events
Rossett	Alan Matthias	Abstaining

\* Holywell and Rossett abstained from voting as they do not have any teams in the Men's or Women's leagues.

Result: 4 votes for changing to 3 events and 3 votes for remaining with 2 events therefore it will now change to 3 events for each player with everybody playing with everybody in the team.

e) Challenge Cup Structure - Club vote

Feedback for the trial of the new Cup 3+3 format was also very positive but one club has fed back that they struggled to fit their games in. We would like to vote on whether to continue with the new 3+3 format or whether to revert back to the old 4+4 format (the same as the Mixed League). Again, we will then need to amend the Challenge Cup Rules.

Club	Voting Representative	Vote
Buckley	Steve Eltham	3+3
Connah's Quay	Ann Hipkiss	3+3
Denbigh	Rob Taylor	4+4
Eros	Heather Astley	3+3
Flint Phoenix	None	None
Hawarden	Rob Jones	3+3
Holywell	Paul Jones	4+4

Llanferres	Peter Williams	4+4
Prestatyn	Steve Hodgson	4+4
Rossett	Alan Matthias	3+3

Result: 5 votes for remaining with 3+3 format and 4 votes for reverting back to the old 4+4 structure therefore the Cup will remain with the 3+3 format adopted last season.

f) Name change - North East Wales Badminton

Due to the dissolution of NEWBA, NEWBL is now the only body facilitating badminton in North East Wales. This includes Seniors, Juniors, Tournaments, Coaching, Training, Events and more so we would like the name to better reflect this and propose changing from North East Wales Badminton League to North East Wales Badminton.

Vote - Unanimous agreement

g) Key dates for 2024-25

As per Rule 1.12 the Club Details need to be returned to [match-secretary@newbl.co.uk](mailto:match-secretary@newbl.co.uk) by 31<sup>st</sup> May

Tournament Dates (Deeside):

- Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2024 - Pre-season Senior Handicap Tournament
- Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2024 - BW Junior Series
- Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025 - BW Senior Graded Series

Junior League & Gareth Coppack Memorial Handicap Tournament dates & venues TBC by Jane Liddle

Challenge Cup Semi Finals & Final dates & venue by Sheila Palmer

## 6. A.O.B.

1. Steve Hodgson discussed the possibility of changing the method of communication between clubs and the Match Secretaries next season with all teams have their own WhatsApp group with Steve & Caitlin & be free to add in who they like (Captains etc.) so can see how many times people have reserved up, who is registered etc.

All clubs agreed that WhatsApp was a method of communication they already used within their club

One club mentioned would it be worth having a dedicated number to keep badminton separate to personal messages.

Steve & Caitlin to discuss further and contact clubs when necessary.

2. Steve Eltham asked if anybody would like to be involved further with Junior badminton to contact himself or Jane Liddle. Heather also mentioned that NEW Badminton could also support any clubs who are interested in setting up a junior contingent in their club and they could also contact Josh Hart who is the Badminton Wales Regional Community Manager for North Wales ([joshua.hart@badminton.wales](mailto:joshua.hart@badminton.wales))

Meeting closed: 21:30

Date of next AGM: Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 (provisionally)