

## **NOTES FROM THE BOARD MEETING ON 8-9 FEBRUARY**

### **Constitutional Review**

The Board reviewed the proposals from the Constitutional Review Team [CRT] in great detail, the document having been delivered on 28 January. A number of queries were answered and the Board agreed to adopt the proposals and support them at the AGM on 11 July. The proposal will be tabled on behalf of the Board by Ian Davies whose presentation at the CRA Delegate Meeting on 5 January was universally praised and we received very complimentary feedback on the general arrangements for the whole day.

It is a complex subject and the CRT has written an explanatory document for circulation to members highlighting the main points and their impact.

### **Conference Weekend and the AGM**

There have been no other submissions of proposed Alterations to Rules or Notices of Motions for debate.

Much time was spent reviewing all of the feedback regarding the way last year's AGM was managed, particularly the voting. It was agreed that we should revert to the tried and tested method of providing each LRA with a formal voting card for use. Each would be endorsed with the LRA name and the number of votes it should cast. It places, as ever, some clerical burden on the office but is thought worth the effort. Much quicker voting results should now ensue.

The Friday Evening event will be run by the Youth Council as a single function this year for members young and old. It will feature a Brazilian Buffet taking up the World Cup theme.

Saturday's main event is in the final planning stages with an attractive range of speakers and workshops thanks very much to the efforts of our President. We have taken on board numerous suggestions made by our members last year, such as improved room shapes and place allocations to the workshops and these have all been addressed.

There has been a feeling that our presentations of Life Memberships and LMSAs risked being overshadowed. These are prestigious awards and need proper recognition. The LMSAs may be presented during the Conference Saturday as the Friday Evening event attendance has been dwindling. The tradition of Life Memberships being presented at the Annual Dinner will continue and we will ensure that prominence is given to this ceremony.

A Quiz will be held on the Sunday morning. One thing though – can we please have an indication of how many competing teams will be entering? If you have a County RA or a society team wanting to enter the event, please contact Ian Campbell a.s.a.p. to help with our planning. Email him at: [ian.campbell@whsmith.co.uk](mailto:ian.campbell@whsmith.co.uk) by 31 March.

As a new initiative, it is proposed to run a web-based booking system for this year's event. A well-established operator has been investigated and comes recommended by the FA who themselves use them extensively for course and event bookings. Details will be out shortly.

Finally, it was agreed that the entry fee to the Conference Saturday for all Associates & non-members will be £25. Our Full Members of all ages gain free entry, as ever. There will be no entry without a ticket; group bookers take note!

### **Conference 2015**

We have had many good proposals to take this elsewhere than the Midlands where we have been based ever since Southport some nine years ago. A major consideration in choosing a venue is the members' cost and time of travelling to/from the event. That is why Central England has its attractions. A reasonable alternative is to try the London area that has not hosted Conference in living memory. We have secured a very good deal at the Radisson Heathrow. It is a prestigious hotel with excellent facilities and costs comparable to those at Hinckley. Heathrow has very good transport links to the whole country – not just by plane – though booking sufficiently in advance can result in bargain air fares from all round the country for those not wanting to drive.

### **Head office staffing**

It is our intention to recruit a new Office Manager as soon as possible; steps have already been taken. Recent changes to our operations have convinced us that this need only be a part-time job for much of the year; supplementary help might still be needed at peak times. The view is that somebody of suitable experience and background is needed at a level of seniority between General Manager status and Administrative Clerk.

Board members have been working in the office for the last few weeks and now have a hands-on feel for what the job requires, hence our change of plan. That was an experience never before gained as the office had always been overseen somewhat remotely and a lot was assumed or taken at face value.

### **The Head Office building**

A review of staffing had led us to firm conclusions about office space and location. On the latter, the Coventry area has many attractions – not the least the ease of getting there so we will certainly keep it as our base. However, we have far more space than we now need. The current Board are sometimes asked whether we should ever have moved to Westwood Park in 2010. At the time it would have seemed a good move – Westhill Road had many problems and we did need the space that the current site provided. However, times change and we must change. The Board has decided that we must move to smaller premises in the area and this has been put in hand. The office lease is a valuable asset so we will consider the financial options of selling the lease against letting out as landlords.

### **RAshop.co.uk**

The business has been successfully moved to the new operation at Nuneaton. Early feedback has been most encouraging and any minor issues promptly addressed. Paul Field is continuing to monitor the situation closely.

### **Website**

There seem to be problems needing resolution in gaining access to the server from where the site operated. Until these are resolved, it will remain non-functional. Members of the RA Board are currently working on this with a potential new service provider.

### **RAMMS**

It is planned for replacement later in the year. A new system is being developed that should be easier to operate and have better functionality. It will be thoroughly tested before a roll-out to prevent a repeat of the current problems.

### **Central Recruitment**

There was a discussion on the problems this had caused. There was a backlog of applicants that was still being processed by dispersal into appropriate Societies where they could begin to enjoy the full membership benefits. It is a priority to clear this queue. By contrast, the office was speedily processing other membership enquiries – almost on a same-day basis – as it was easier to cope with. Numerous applicants had been referred direct to Society Secretaries for them to process. It was pointed out that, when the proposed revision to the Constitution comes into effect, the potential problems will be alleviated.

### **Overseas Members**

This was raised as little attention seems to have been paid to them in recent times. It was reported we have 11 on the books whose main motivation was to be kept in touch with developments in the game. They believed that our ties with the FA were of value. The observation was made that, although not a priority, we could seek to form links with comparable referees' organisations in foreign parts.

### **QUEST**

A progress report was made by Laura Ritchie who co-ordinates this. Further applications were still coming in for consideration by the Quest Audit Team. Lincoln is the latest Society to be awarded the BRONZE AWARD. There are more potential Bronzes in the pipeline and it is hoped some Silvers. We are still waiting for our first attempt at Gold. Societies are encouraged to seek an award if only to test themselves against best practices. Applications/enquiries can be made to the office email.

### **Youth Council**

Laura reported briefly on their progress and extended an invitation to Board Members to attend their next meeting on 23 February. Paul Field and Ian Davies would be taking up that invitation. A concern that was discussed was the patchy take-up by County FAs establishing their local Youth Councils. Young referees are our future and they must be encouraged to participate in both RA and FA administration and initiatives.

### **Finance**

Paul Field gave an update on our financial position. The projected year-end accounts should show a small operating surplus despite a number of extra expenses this year such as the costs of moving the RAshop to Sporting Touch. No increase in subscription or insurance premium rates for 2014-15 is planned, nor for 2015-16 either.

### **Sponsorship**

It has been our ambition to find general sponsorship in addition to the generous help we get from the FA, PGMOL, etc., for running the Conference. The problem arises that we need to pursue different lines to those employed by the FA and that leaves us with too little scope among internationally and nationally recognised brands. In short, the FA has got a lot of good deals tied up that preclude us from competing with them. On the positive side, funding that the FA and PGMOL enjoy washes down to us in part anyway but it would be good to add to our own funding independently so we could invest, for instance, in more publicity and referee development material.

### **Benevolent Fund**

Members were brought up to date with the workings of the Benevolent Fund and how that is governed by the Trust Deed. In order to regularise affairs in compliance with the Trust Deed, Laura Ritchie will be appointed the Clerk to the Trustees and so deal with the day-to-day admin. John Harvey, as Chairman of Trustees, will work with her and Paul Field to update the bank account signatories.

## GETTING READY FOR THE 2014 CONFERENCE

Advance notice of this year's exciting programme of presenters on the Saturday:

FIFA officials	Select Group officials	FA/PGMOL personnel
Simon Bennett *	Lee Mason *	Neale Barry – FA Head of Senior Referee Development *
Stuart Burt *	Jake Collin *	Ian Blanchard – FA Senior National Game Referee Manager
Darren England *	Jon Moss *	Simon Breivik – PGMOL Sports Scientist *
Andre Marriner *		Gemma Gale – RDO (Derbyshire) *
Sian Massey		Daniel Meeson - FA National Game Referee Manager
Michael Oliver *		Ray Olivier – PGMOL Training and Development Manager *
Jane Sims		Adam Watts – PGMOL Assistant Referee Manager *
Anthony Taylor *		
Natalie Walker		

All those asterisked will also be working on the Youth Council training event on the Friday afternoon. We thank them all for giving up their valuable close season time and to David Elleray for making the arrangements.

**This year's Workshop topics will be:**

**Controlling the penalty area**

**Getting fit to be in position to make the big decisions**

**Mass confrontation**

**Mental strength to cope with big decisions**

**Offside**

**When does a reckless challenge become serious foul play?**

**When is handball really handball?**

### **MORE ON REFEREES AND INCOME TAX**

The FA made available sound advice on the taxation of referees' earnings. It was written by Saffrey Champness [SC], a firm of chartered accountants, and gave some useful help for the greater understanding of the legal position.

There have been some further queries raised on personal situations that very much vary from individual to individual. In this short piece we will attempt some further clarifications:

- All **match officials at the top of the game** are already subject to taxation on their fees and expenses such are the significant gross and net incomes they can derive from officiating.
- **'Grass-roots' referees who have normal day-jobs** on which they pay tax and national insurance and who do just one or two games a week through the season for minimal match fees are unlikely to trouble the authorities. Nevertheless, using the published guidance, they would all do well to keep a written record of the match fees they earn and all the expenditure they incur through the season. There is a very telling phrase in the SC guidance: **"if they anticipate making a profit"**. You are taxed on net income i.e. after all your expenses – as exemplified in the SC guidance – are deducted from your earnings.

The guidance shows there is ample scope for matching your likely match fees with an equal amount of expenditure over the course of a season and so the net taxable income should be zero or close to it.

- Between these two extremes there are two classes of match official who will need to think carefully about whether they ought to declare earnings as the penalties for non-compliance can be severe. The first group are those referees just below the National List levels who can pick up quite large sums in match fees operating on the **Contributory and Feeder Leagues** over the course of a season. They particularly need to keep very accurate records of the income and outgoings and then follow the SC advice on declaration of net earnings.
- The fourth group of referees who do need to take serious stock of their position are those operating at 'grass-roots' but who **do more than a couple of games a week** as 'hobby' referees on the local parks. There are those amongst us who, for instance, may work several evenings each week on 5-a-side leagues that pay significant 'wages' to their officials. They may be doing this in addition to Saturday, Sunday and midweek afternoon matches. There are stories of people taking home several hundreds of pounds a week from refereeing at these levels. At such a rate of income, there would very likely be a significant net income that ought to be declared.

A **particular word of warning** to those unfortunate colleagues who receive state benefits as well. There have been some reported cases where those with time on their hands and a qualification in refereeing have filled their days pursuing their hobby to the extent that they derive significant net incomes.

Again, such income should be declared as it might impinge upon benefits' entitlements. The authorities do not differentiate between doing a 'normal' job and earning fees from pastimes such as refereeing; it is all gross income.

A final reminder that the guidance to referees applies just as much to the FA, CFA and PGMOL Workforces – **assessors, mentors, coaches, tutors etc.** Just like referees they should also keep a record of all income and expenditure and make declarations of net earnings to HMRC as per the SC guidance.

### **DURHAM CELEBRATES**

A great evening was enjoyed by all at the Durham County RA's Annual Dinner hosted by the Sunderland Referees Society and held at Nissan Sports and Social Club on Saturday 9 November 2013.

Presentations were made to Dick Madden and Peter Willis receiving their 50-year RA Membership Awards.

Dick, who retired from active refereeing in 1986 due to health problems, began assessing for the Durham County FA and continues to do so after some 27 years. Dick has been a Vice President of the Sunderland Referees Society for a good number of years and never misses the monthly committee and general meetings. This is something Dick thoroughly enjoys and hopes to continue for many more years to come.

Peter will be remembered above all for his service of 19 years as President of the RA from 1984 until 2003. He rose to be an eminent Football League referee, officiating in the 1985 FA Cup Final and retiring from the list a season later. It is good to see him looking so well having not had the best of health in recent years.



Dick Madden and Peter Willis with John Wilson [centre] who made the 50-year RA presentations on behalf of the RA Board.



Dick Madden with John Topping, Company Secretary of Durham County FA, who also made a presentation to Dick for his 50 years' service to Durham FA.

### **THE 2014 BOARD ELECTION**

Ballot papers were sent out to all Societies using the latest email addresses we had for each. It is a secret postal ballot and completed papers must be **posted** to arrive by 14 April. The Board urges every Society to raise this with its members and to record their vote. If your society has not had correspondence, please tell us.

### **SAD NEWS**

It is with sadness that we report the death of **Brian Chapman**. Brian was for many years the Chairman of the Cambridge and District Referees' Society and was well known and respected both nationally and in local football for his contribution to the game.

In 2009 Brian was awarded the prestigious 50 year Membership Award and the occasion was celebrated at an event in Cambridge that was attended by the late Jack Taylor.

### **MONIES SUBMITTED TO THE OFFICE**

Please can we ask that with any cheque sent to the office there is a brief explanation of what it relates to. Some arrive without any covering note, often for a mixture of subscriptions and supplies. Even if you only write on the back of the cheque what it is for it will help us enormously.

### **GOOD NEWS ON NEXT YEAR'S INSURANCE – STOP PRESS**

There will now be additional cover at no extra cost to members for Theft of Clothing & Personal Effects both from a locked building or motor vehicle. Theft from unattended vehicles is excluded unless items are kept out of sight in a locked boot or compartment and there is evidence that vehicle has been broken into. The sum insured for Kit and Personal Effects remains at £200 with a £25 excess applying. As with other policies, thefts must be reported to the police and a Crime Number obtained in order to process any claim.

**RA News is produced by ICC and distributed to all County RAs and Societies as well as to our Life Members. It is intended that every member should see it and get to know what is happening. Most Societies have an email circulation system to their individual members. Please forward this to them.**

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