

CUMBRIA SQUASH & RACKETBALL

Chairman`s Report

2022/2023 AGM

Hello Members,

Welcome to this AGM - and thank you for coming along. I remind you that to speed up the meeting we are following the process we operated at the last AGM (2021/2022), which was the first held after restart from Covid lockdown. That is to send out our reports to the membership prior to the meeting, as we have normally done over the years, **but will not read them at the meeting** – we will only discuss items associated with them as raised in advance to us by yourselves. So that means we expect you to please read them in detail and let us know if you have any concerns with them.

This AGM package includes the Treasurer`s Report and comprehensive activity reports from Chris Lilley for all of our competition activities. My Chairman`s Report (this report) adds to his report where appropriate to do so to support /enhance what he says and reports on other activities that I have had direct responsibility for and other administrative responsibilities within my Chairman`s remit.

A. LOOKING AT THE REPORT FROM CHRIS FIRST

I remind you that the Treasurer`s Report is a general summary based upon the detailed Management Accounts that traditionally we don`t issue but are available on request to the Treasurer for anyone who may have a concern about it and want more details. You will see that we are in a very sound financial situation with main contributors being Executive Committee – NW Region Forum (NWRF), CSR Executive Committee - Member IMS and County League Team Fees, Sponsorship from our sole local sponsor Thomas Graham,) , Sund control of our reserves.

Taking each in turn.

1 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

ES North West Region Forum – to help to Clubs

As all members are aware from previous AGM and Executive Committee minutes, money from ES to support CSR and member clubs in the Covid lockdown periods and in their bounce-back work was allocated at intervals to the NWRF that distributed it equally to each of its CAs - Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside and Cheshire. There are no such hand- outs this season of course.

I am a member of the NWRF and thank it for the generous way it supported our county over recent years

Forum information is that ES may be abandoning the Regional Forum process and replacing it with something not yet decided. My colleagues in the forum from the other three counties are disappointed about this as we all feel that our NW Region liaison generally has been very useful to us all and whatever ES comes up with we are considering continuing it on an informal basis – we are still working on this.

CSR–Executive Committee - to help clubs

As you will be aware at your club experience over the first two seasons of Covid restrictions the Executive Committee waived the Club **Individual Membership Subscription for the first two seasons** and for year 2 the **County League Team Fee** was also waived.

Sponsorship - Thomas Graham Limited – Our sole sponsor

You are all aware of the generosity of our sole sponsor and at each AGM I make a point of giving Roger Smith: (MD) a very well deserved big thank-you. As reported at the last AGM 21/22 season was the end of our 15 year agreement with him. On being reminded of this, Roger immediately organised with me an increase in the arrangement by another 5 seasons starting this season 22/23 – fantastic.

We never take this for granted and I like to remind our members at each AGM just how generous a sponsorship it is and why we are so appreciative with it – as follows – each season Roger gives:

- £1000-00 cash, to be dedicated to junior activities - and free squash shirts for all players on all of our county teams – junior, senior, and masters. He asks very little for his support – he is happy that we promote his firm whenever we can and with advertising on the shirts and on county league and county closed champs literature.

Thank you very much Roger for this generous support over the years

Control of Expenditure

This really speaks for itself – we are very careful how we spend our money – our expenditure is under the strict control of our Treasurer (Chris) who gets approval from the Executive Committee for all significant expenditures.

B MY ACTIVITIES outside of those reported by Chris

1 TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES

Coach Development carried over from 2020/21

As a result of Covid lockdown at the start we had a list of activities that could not be carried out of as a result of it but we still wished to do. Only one could not be completed in 2021/2022 when we restarted – and we have still been unsuccessful with it this season - that is **financially supporting the County Coach to progress to his Level 3 coaching qualification** – The problem was and still is administrative/communication problems at ES. Gavin is still keen to get this qualification and is still waiting for ES advice on timing, organisation etc. he is trying to progress it.

Marking & Refereeing

Pre-Covid after holding a successful M&R Workshop with a ES M&R expert tutor, we made a decision to continue with such workshops, maybe annually. That was stopped by Covid and was restarted this season.

The course which was very successful and enjoyable was presented at Carlisle Squash Club by Steve Eccles ES Referee Instructor & National Referee – 23 people attended – adults and juniors. Steve and I made it **a Marker Awareness Workshop** rather than a M&R qualification course – we have a lot of players and other people who mark for us and we wanted to start the process of standardisation of their efforts across the county. I am thinking of holding a similar workshop with Steve later next season (23/24 season) – sometime in the second half of it.

Junior coaching –

The great success with it in 21/22 season due to the drive by Chris and Gavin was repeated this season Chris has covered this in his report. Plans are already in place for a continuation of that next season with our new Junior Organiser Sarah and Gavin.

2. INFRASTRUCTURE

Workinton & District Area – one of our main concerns is that there are still **no** dedicated Squash Clubs in the area. There has been very little progress on changing this situation. To remind you of the problem – the nearest is Wigton

Club to the West and Windscale Club (Egremont) to the South – a totally unsatisfactory situation for the players of our sports in the area

The following is a short status report on each of the previous local clubs in the area that has created this situation:

Cockermouth – No progress - The court is in use after building refurbish by the Rugby League Club but no contact from them or the previous squash club players – I believe that there are players who would like to set up a club and join us – we are following up.

Whitehaven Sports Centre– No contact – from owners GLL or the local council – to say if they intend to restart squash or not - we have given up on this.

Workington- Junior Club at the last AGM we reported that we had reformed a junior club at the Sports Centre on another trial basis for eleven weeks. This was unsuccessful, it was financed by us but on review by the Executive Committee was not financially viable in the long term. Project has been abandoned

Workington - Senior Club

At the same time, we have been working with the Sports Centre to try to form a Senior Club at the centre.

I reported at the last AGM I was waiting for a meeting with the top man for the local Leisure Centres, Workington, Maryport & Keswick to discuss introducing a senior club at Workington. I had that meeting which was received very well by him and he made promise to go away and think about how he could help us to set it up – he was most encouraged to know that the club would be administered by squash members – because the centre was short staffed. – he said he would contact me. That never happened.

Over the months I have contacted him several times to meet him again with similar result and promises– so I have given up on the formal project for now.

But, maybe all is not lost because I am in contact with a few members of the centre who play squash casually who want progress on a new club – I have been told they have already set up a club ladder run by them so maybe that is a good starting point for another attempt. I will be visiting those players at the centre to find out.

3 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (Refer to the attached Organisation Structure – for the current status of the Exec)

General Operation and Concerns

We have continued to struggle generally on the Exec with lack of volunteer support to do the mountain of work that Chris and I are reporting – that means most have over 3 jobs which is totally time consuming, inefficient and unproductive - and being blunt, totally unfair on those people who do help.

During the season (as we have done for many seasons) we have requested for additional volunteers from clubs and this season we have been fortunate in Martin Cockroft and Sarah Connell taking over some of the responsibilities of Chris who is leaving us with Kate in October to live near their daughter in Suffolk. Martin for County League and Sara as Junior Organiser

I have thanked Martin & Sarah for joining us but their involvement which we appreciate very much, only fills the gaps left by Chris – for progressing day to day competitions etc. With the exception of our regular junior development – county coaching – which Sarah and Gavin have already organised for the new season and my work on M&R Workshop, we don't have spare capacity to do any other development work on other aspects of our operation e.g

- We don't have a County League for women
- We struggle to field a Women's Senior Inter County Team
- WE don't have a Masters Inter County Team

- We only have a small entry of women in Women`s Senior County Closed Championship
- We don't have a structure for organising Men`s & Women`s Masters County Closed Championships and Inter County Championship – we enter a couple of teams for men but none for women. To summarise we don't have a champion to focus on Masters activities across all of the age groups
- We have missed out over the years on special development work initiated by ES to encourage juniors and adults to take up our sports – we have no Exec members to focus in the individual projects etc, etc

We need volunteers dedicated to all such work – ideally one person one job. Continuing to operate without such development will inevitably lead to stagnation of our organisation

Trustees

As part of the preparation for his move Chris has resigned as a Trustee for our organisation – leaving current CIO Trustees as me, Guy Huxtable and Jonny Irving.

Further discussion will be held on Executive operation part of the meeting Agenda

4. CHANGES AT ENGLAND SQUASH

ES is planning to introduce a new **England Squash Membership and Affiliation Scheme** that has many beneficial aspects for members re the terms and conditions of membership

These are the main points/changes we have been advised of;

- Clear references to Coach membership
- Addition of the Code of Conduct for England Squash Members
- Wording to provide clarity on membership benefits and where members can find more information on which benefits require activated membership

ES has been holding webinars to discuss this with member CAs/clubs/players – Guy attended one of them and produced detailed notes of it but we have not studied them and been fully involved with the development due to lack of available Exec members to focus on it. So I guess we will have to go along with whatever is delivered to us when the new system is launched in spring 2024. Another good example of why we need more people on the Exec..

This completes my report

What are my feelings about our performances?

Keeping in mind about what I have just written earlier re lack of general development I am delighted that we have had another very successful season on our bread and butter competitive activities and technical activities supporting them this season, across our full range of activities across the board. This effectively matches our excellent performance achieved in 20/21 season – which was our first bounce back season after Covid lockdown. As Chris says, we did not fully complete the programme but the reasons for that do not detract from the achievement.

This has been the second season for Chris in his position of Junior Organiser and I have no doubt in my mind that the impressive way he (supported by Gavin) has managed the job and worked with the youngsters and their parents is a major contributor in changing their attitudes for and support of our activities. Junior development is our highest priority activity.

I think the most meaningful **but cautious** ending statement I can make is to make it based upon the statement Chris made in his Executive Summary at 21/22 AGM

“Overall, county squash has bounced back very successfully with a great base for us to build on for the future” This is however just the base line that needs the development support I have just mentioned if we want to have a vibrant, comprehensive, and innovative organisation in the future

Deep down I am highly delighted in where we are – particularly from our juniors. I know we have unfortunately lost Chris but I have every confidence that Sarah supported by Gavin and guided by Jonny will deliver the same good performances from our juniors that he has done. That feeling is extended to the expected performances of Martin and other people in the administration that have had responsibility changes to fill the gap created by Chris. I am very disappointed that we still do not have sufficient volunteers to focus on development work across our wide scope of activities

I now have a few standard items that I believe are essential to include in all my annual reports.

SAD NEWS - BEREAVEMENT

This is the report that I do not like to write but unfortunately have had to do over recent seasons.

I regret to report that Jim Foggitt the Chairman of the NWRF died in January this year. Jim, a lovely man from Merseyside had been in that position for several years from its formation by ES. At the time of his death from dementia I sent our condolences to his family and our forum colleagues.

This is a direct extract of a note sent to all of my forum colleagues from Andrew Breen, Forum Coach, a close friend of Jim and colleague in the coaching world – all our forum colleagues fully support it .

“Jim did a great job in setting up the forum, chairing it and developing it. He was a dedicated highly qualified coach who gave his services to schools pupils. He will be a greatly missed in the forum”

CONGRATULATIONS

At each AGM I am pleased to acknowledge and congratulate special achievers:

- All winning teams and individuals mentioned in Chris` reports.
- Chris himself for his great achievement in being chosen to receive The Hazel Award
- Neve Runcie for achieving the Matthew Allison Award at the Junior County Closed Championship
- James Worsick for being selected for the Player of the Year award in this seasons County League

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

I could not end my report each AGM without saying thank you to a few people.

- John Graham, Accountant of Penrith Club for auditing CSR Management Accounts
- Roger Smith for Thomas Graham sponsorship
- NWRF (Jim Foggitt Chairman) providing generous financial lockdown and bounce-back support for our members.
- Windscale Squash Club for their continued generosity during the season in supporting Whitehaven players.
- Carlisle Squash Club for allowing us to once again hold the County League and League Cup event and looking after us so well. Thank you Ronnie and Victoria
- Carlisle Squash Club – for allowing us to hold our major county closed championship events – and for running the senior events for us. Thank you Victoria and Ronnie
- All other clubs who have supported us in any way
- Chris & Gavin for the mountain of work they have done to ensure the high support for the whole junior scene that they achieved in 21/22 continued this season

- And as usual, last but not least, my colleagues in the Exec. and those that operate outside of the Exec for their good work and dedicated service to our organisation over very unusual and difficult circumstance. Thank you for spending hours and hours of your valuable time to keep us operational

THE FUTURE

We are making great progress in getting back to normal at club and county level after Covid but we must keep up the drive to be successful in covering and developing all aspects of our squash and racketball sports and widening our scope of activities as I mentioned earlier. .

We can and need to do much more development work over all activities in our organisation in liaison with England Squash but need more volunteer support for the Executive Committee to give us the opportunity to do so. It is essential for the future of our organisation that you give us that support. I am confident our new organisation structure with our new volunteers will do a great job to assist this in their areas of responsibility

Anyway, I have a good `half full` feeling for 2023/2024 season so let us be optimistic, get on with it and make it happen, enjoy the challenge and experience and keep smiling in doing so - as I will be doing.

And to risk boring everyone with this subject – please remember that if you want us to run a comprehensive, efficient and effective organisation with longevity **we need more volunteers on the Exec. So please clubs do your duty and give me a call - Our successful future is in your hands**

Thank you for taking the time to read this report

Best wishes for a good 2023/2024 Season

Please keep safe and well

Tom

18 September 2023

PERSONAL COMMENT

Just to inform you that I have issued a letter to all clubs detailing how I spent the large cash gift given to me by yourselves for my 80th birthday, as I promised I would do. I used it to give me, June my wife, and family something special to remember for that important birthday occasion. We achieved that as you will see from the letter.

Our sincere thanks once again to all who contributed

Tom & June

Cumbria Squash & Racketball

2022/23 Season Reports by C Lilley

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Executive Summary

- After some 14 years serving on the Exec committee in various roles, my wife and I have decided to move to Suffolk to be closer to family. I have thoroughly enjoyed being involved with numerous aspects of county squash, having represented both Penrith and Cumbria teams.
- I am pleased to report that Sarah Carrol has taken over Junior Lead, Guy Huxtable Treasurer, and Martin Cockroft League Secretary
- Again this year, a substantial amount of time and money has been spent on supporting Juniors, via subsidised county coaching, county closed, Workington Junior Club (WJC) School taster sessions and Inter County competitions (ICC).
- We successfully ran senior team leagues and cup finals, latter being held at Carlisle Squash Club.
- Three men's teams (Seniors, O55s & O65s) were entered into England Squash's (ES) Inter County Championships (ICC) with various degrees of success.

1. Management Accounts

- Over the last 3 years, we have been awarded some £7,250, from England Squash based on our plans to invest in county squash, after Covid, especially juniors, and that meant we started off the year with large cash reserves, considerably higher than our target level of £5,000. Subsequently we have invested in our various junior programmes and supported Wigton Squash Club with their redevelopment project.
- Furthermore, our website provider Clubnet decided to stop, and we were obliged to go with another system. The lowest (and best) quote was from a local provider, Greystoke Wed Design. Whilst the basic system cost £900, ongoing annual fees will be far less.
- Total income was £3,804; notably:
 - o Thomas Graham sponsorship: £1,000
 - o Teams and subscriptions of £2,173, although at reduced tariffs
- Total expenditure was £9,137:
 - o County Junior Coaching: £1,196
 - o Website & Marketing: £1,359
 - o Northern Cup: £611
 - o WJC: £482
 - o School taster sessions: £414

- o Trophies: £1,673
- o Senior ICC: £558
- o Junior ICC: £814
- o Junior team shirts: £641
- o County Coach admin and ES support: £368
- o Wigton Project: £500
- Overall loss was £5,333
- Cash reserves at year end: £12,240 cw £16,789 cw last year.

2. Junior Report

- We held 6 coaching sessions around the county, with an average attendance of 16
- The county closed attracted 40 juniors across four boy age groups and three girl age groups. Results:

	Winner
GU1 1	Libby Housby
GU1 3	Hannah Whitfield-Bott
GU1 5	Neve Runcie
BU11	Connor Ward
BU13	Frank Carroll
BU15	James Lawson
BU17	Nathan Sellers

Note: Neve Runcie was selected for the Matthew Allison Award for the junior who showed the best sportsmanship, support to organisers, good and fair play etc.. throughout the championship

- After many years of absence, we entered three boys ICC teams in ES's Stage 1 held in Sheffield: U11, U15 & U17. We didn't take our strongest possible teams and lost all of our matches, but all our youngsters played well and enjoyed the experience.
- We originally submitted two girl's teams (U11 & U13) but when we found out that the final schedule (no stage 1) was for two full days down in the Coventry area, we decided to withdraw both teams. Hopefully, this season, there will be 1-day preliminary stage in the north of England.
- We entered three mixed 5-player teams in the Northern Cup, which was held in the Manchester area, with 5 other Counties. U11s finished 4/5, U13s 4/6 and U15s 6/6. All the kids thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and acquitted themselves in a great sporting manner.

3. Leagues & Cup Competitions

- As last year, we retained 12 teams, but only 5 in League 1 and 7 in League 2.
- Carlisle B won League 1 (12/12) and beat Carlisle A in the A cup.
- Appleby won League 2 again, and beat Kendal C in the B cup.
- Carlisle's James Worsick won the Player of the Year Award, who played all his matches at no. 1 in L1, winning 9 out of his 12 matches.

4. ICC

- We again entered three men's teams, Seniors, O55s (5 players) and O65s (3 players) teams. Unfortunately, we were unable to field a ladies' team.
- The senior team consisted of Ben Hetherington, Joseph Broadley, James Worsick, Jonny Honeyman and Thomas Bragg. Despite fielding a very strong team, the competition was even stronger, and they lost to both Durham & Cleveland and Lancashire.
- The O55 team of Tony Hetherington, Graham Braithwaite, Andrew Bell, Andrew Little and Steve Dent beat Merseyside but lost to Cheshire.
- The O65 team included Terry Belshaw, Collis Shiek, Richard Utting and Rob Gaskin. They beat Merseyside, but lost to Lancashire and Northumbria.
- Given the lack of support for the O55, it is doubtful whether we can enter a team this season.

5. Senior Closed

- Victoria Bell once again organised an excellent senior closed comp, which saw Victoria bell and Ben Hetherington crowned as champions. There were over 60 entrants, in 7 men's competitions, and 2 women's. Results:

	Main		Plate	
	Winner	R-up	Winner	R-up
Ladies A	Victoria Bell	Ash Hunter		
Ladies B	Kath Gray	Kayley Greenall	Anita MacWilliam	Sarah Holdsworth
Group A	Ben Hetherington	Joseph Broadley	Will Box	Thomas Bragg
Group B	Phil Sanderson	Adam Reid	Wayne Kingston	Tony Hetherington
Group C	Matty Pate	Nathan Sellers	Ste Benson	Simon Mattock
Group D	Rob Armstrong	Adam Gill	Neil Whelan	Mark Jackson
Group E	Brad Simpson	John Bell	Paul Bell	Elio Garden
Group F	Steve Dent	Josh Rubacs	Mark Thomson	Dave Runcie
Group G	James Lawson	Christian Judd	Niall Ward	Aiden Whelan

6. Racketball Comp

- Unfortunately, due a very low entry list, this competition was cancelled, which is a shame after last year's inaugural event, with a turnout of 16 players.

7. Masters' Comp

- Unfortunately, this competition was not held due to time constraints. Hopefully this, and the Racketball competition, can be resurrected for the new season.

Chris Lilley

Treasurer, League Secretary & Junior Lead

Cumbria Squash & Racketball

<https://www.cumbriasquash.co.uk>

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