

CUNBRIA SQUASH and RACKETBALL

Chairmans Report

2023/2024 AGM

Hi members.

CURRENT SITUATION

This has been a very difficult and unexpected couple of seasons after Covid for one major circumstance – the loss of Chris Lilley from our organisation at the end of 2022/2023 season resulting from he and family moving away from the county to live near his daughter. Chris had the following responsibilities that he did extremely well leaving us without a Treasurer, Junior Organiser and County League Secretary - we also lost his wide experience in all aspects of our operations from many years on the Exec which is a great loss to us in our decision making.

To keep us going effectively this season we had to make the following changes in 2022/23. Those changes were reported in the AGM of that season but to remind you they were Guy Huxtable volunteering to take the Treasurers job and Jonny Irving volunteering to take over the website and communication duties freed by Guys move. We were also very fortunate that we had a new volunteer Martin Cockroft who took over the County League Secretary responsibilities freed by Chris. These people are permanent members of the Executive Committee. We were also fortunate in another new volunteer Sarah Carroll taking over the Junior Organiser position freed by Chris. She did not want to work on the Executive Committee but worked outside of it in close liaison with our Junior County Coaches Gavin Stephenson and Victoria Bell. I stayed working on the Exec as Chairman and Secretary and other responsibilities I have. We were also helped outside of the exec by Damien Whellan.

So, to start this season the Executive was made up of me, Guy, and Jonny who are trustees of our organisation and Martin who is an ordinary member, we were supported as required by the other people outside of the Exec. Please refer to the organisation Chart for 2023/2024 issued in the AGM package, for specific details of us all.

This is a very small number of volunteers to do a mountain of work just to try to keep things going with our “bread and butter” activities but unfortunately, we could not even do that. The situation we were in meant that some of the regular work we always managed to do previously had to be dropped because of lack of volunteers to manage it. My list below will identify those activities bringing true my prediction made many times over recent years that this would happen unless we got more volunteer support. One area where we did make excellent progress in 2022/2023 and this season was the Junior Group that was not influenced by lack of volunteers. We had great performances in these two seasons in all aspects of the group for boys and girls – my list below identifies that.

But just as we were complementing ourselves in the Junior activities things changed in the worst possible way that has made the volunteer situation even more important for next season in the fact that Junior Organise Sarah has resigned from her position. We are currently trying to fill that position, and Sarah has kindly delayed her leaving date to keep things going to cause

minimum adverse effect on our juniors until we are successful in doing so – we thank her for that. So, more and more problems to resolve at this AGM

All people mentioned above in their new jobs have done great work which is much appreciated. As well as losing out as above, apart from some M&R work and the junior County Coaching drive we have effectively given up on development in any other activities – ES special development activities - which means we are missing out on that across the wide range of our events which is to the disadvantage to us all. Unless we get more help from clubs we can't attempt to change that situation – it would be unfair to expect the existing helpers to do more work and we will not do that

The cut back on activities started last season 2022/2023 when we did not hold the Racketball or Masters County Closed Champs and had major reduced involvement in ES Masters Inter County Champs. This season was the same for all the master's events. These were no surprise to me

It is very important that a replacement Junior Organiser is found as soon as possible if we want to achieve continuation of those great performances since Covid ended. As an interim measure Gavin has agreed to organise and run the Junior County Closed Championships for next season which are to be held soon – our thanks to him for this. What we do after that is in our hands – we must get a new Junior Organiser. As we all know, juniors are the future of our organisation, and we must not let their development drift away

The following section lets you know what we have or have not done during the season

SEASONS ACTIVITY REPORT

Over recent seasons Chris has produced a comprehensive activity report for the AGM but in his absence, we will not be getting that for this meeting. I believe members should be reminded at the AGM what we have and have not done so I have prepared the following simple bullet point list to keep you informed. Full details will have been reported for these during the season. I have presented in blue some the areas of concern

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES

- Boys and Girls Junior County Closed Championships at all age groups
- Boys and Girls County Teams in ES Inter County Champs at all age groups
- Boys and Girls County Coaching sessions at all age groups - across the county

All the above are very impressive performances – enhancing what we achieved in the previous season

SENIOR ACTIVITIES

- Men's and Women's County Closed Championships
- Men's County Team in ES Inter County Championships
- **Could not field a Women's County Team in the IC event**
- Men's and Women's Mixed Racketball County Closed Championships
- Men's County League – a new innovative approach that has been very successful has been introduced by Martin. He has also updated the League Rules

MASTERS ACTIVITIES

- Men's Over 35 County Team in ES Inter County Championships – thanks to Damien - no other teams could be organised and involved at any other age group
- No Men's or Women's County Closed Championships at any of the age groups

Other than the Over 35 team, the main reason for this low support is we have no volunteers to organise specific activities for all the age groups. Ideally, we need such helpers working with a “master's manager” to oversee and manage the whole aspects of master's squash for men and women. If we can't get those people, we will lose a squash service for a massive group of players in the county – which is a sad situation that we should not allow to happen.

STOP PRESS

I am delighted to report the great news just received from Victoria to solve our concerns on Masters County Closed Championship – she has volunteered to run a range of age group championships next season as a starter for similar competitions in future seasons. Victoria, thank you very much, you are our saviour in this area which has been one of our major concerns. As Guy says – **you are a star- Fantastic**

All we want now is a similar volunteer to organise Masters County Teams for the various age group competitions in ES Masters IC events.

MARKER WORKSHOP

Our intention this season was to hold Marker Workshop that was so successful in the previous season. To be run by Steve Eccles a top ES Referee and Referee Instructor. Steve presented it then.

Arranging that was delayed due to problems with my computer preventing me sending e-mails. But I am currently working with Steve to arrange a Workshop to be held hopefully in October at the start of next season

DEVELOPMENT WORK

Apart from our regular junior development activity – county coaching – managed by Sarah, Gavin and Victoria and my work on M&R workshops we don't have any spare people to do any other development work on other important aspects of our operation that ideally need working on e.g.

- We don't have a county league for women
- We struggle to get a women's county team
- We don't have great support in the women's senior county closed
- We have effectively lost all our master's events local, and ES Inter County.
Refer **STOP PRESS** note above to resolve the local aspect.
- We don't promote and encourage women's squash
- We have missed out over the years on taking advantage of special development initiated by ES to encourage juniors and adults to take up our sports etc. etc
- There are many more I could mention

We can't even think of working on any of these because we have no Exec members (or helpers outside of it) to focus on the individual projects. Failure to change the situation will inevitably lead to stagnation of our organisation far away from the vibrant and very effective county organisation we had in the recent past. And we will not be providing the service our members deserve.

We have some very good people in the Exec (and helpers outside of it) doing great jobs in their areas of responsibility – but it is unfair to expect them to do any more work to achieve some of the above. That will not happen.

As well as meeting constitutional requirements the purpose of this AGM is to consider our Volunteer Appeal. All clubs have been sent an Appeal poster that I hope club managements have considered and come forward with some resolutions to our situation.

Clubs - this is a very serious situation

At each AGM I think it important to mention the following standard/interesting items and say thank-you in my report:

THE HAZEL AWARD

In 2010 both Vince Todhunter a 29year served member of the Exec and Ronnie Harris who served 26 years retired. Vince as the longest served achieved the award in 2012 and our intention was that Ronnie should get it in 2013. Unfortunately, he was hospitalised with a very serious illness and had to be missed and for unknown reasons after his recovery has never been selected until this season. It is wrong that he had to wait all these years, and we apologise for that but are very happy that at last we have righted a wrong and a 26-year served volunteer in our organisation has at last been recognised. I should have acted years ago to prevent this happening. Ronnie was very appreciative and proud to get the award and sent me a lovely thank-you note

ENGLAND SQUASH

- **North West Region Forum**

No follow up from ES yet re info mentioned in the 8 Feb Exec meeting minutes about the future of the forum process. Not sure if the process is abandoned. Regardless of ES decision me and my NWRF colleagues (Cumbria Lancashire, Merseyside and Lancashire) have discussed continuing the forum on a casual arrangement - which we all agree is that we would like to do – awaiting feedback from them.

- **Revised Membership System and County Governance Standards**

As mentioned, in 8 Feb Exec minutes ES has closely worked in consultation with CAs on these subjects for changes to be made and implemented to improve them, As said in those minutes we elected only to be involved in the consultation in a limited way - for resource reasons and were happy to stand by whatever the final result was. The changes made were communicated to clubs and are now implemented.

FINANCIAL

You will see from the treasurer's report that we are in good financial circumstances. You will know from the 18 April 24 Exec minutes that Guy has invested £9k – something we can get interest from

CONGRATULATIONS

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

- All winning teams and individuals involved in the activities I mentioned above
- Ronnie Harris for achieving The Hazel Award
- Lily May Bulman (Windscale)-for achieving the Matthew Allison award at the Junior County Closed Championships
- Players being selected for the Player of the Year Awards in this seasons County League Div A Brandon Groggins (Windscale) – Div B Andrew Thwaite (Wigton)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

I could not end my report to the AGM without saying thank you

- Roger Smith CEO for our sole sponsor - Thomas Graham. Thank you, Roger your continued generous support is very much appreciated.
- Windscale Squash Club for allowing us once again to hold the County League and League Cup event and for looking after us so well with your signature hospitality. Thank you, Ian and Barbara,
- Carlisle Squash Club for once again allowing us to hold our main Junior and Senior County Closed Championships and the Marker Workshop. Thank you Ronnie and Victoria. A special thank you to you Victoria for running the Senior event for us in your very professional way which is admired county wide. **And now for volunteering to run the Masters County Closed Championships – detailed above**
- Sarah for the good work you have done with Gavin and Victoria in the short time you have been with us as Junior Organiser– including of course for the great success you and your team have had since Covid with our juniors. We are sorry you are leaving us and wish you well in the future. Also, a big thank you for holding position until we get a replacement for you – much appreciated.
- All clubs who have supported Sarah and team in organising and holding our junior county coaching initiative. And other clubs who have helped with that or helped us in any other way
- All new volunteers in their new jobs on the Executive Committee, existing members in their changed responsibilities on it and volunteers helping from outside it, for their hard work generally in keeping us operating very well in the absence of Chris – excellent job guys – much appreciated

My feelings about our current situation re volunteer support

My comments in Chairmans Reports over many years about the very limited volunteer support we have had on the Executive Committee, and the adverse effect it would end with if we did not change the situation, has now come to fruition. This season we have had to drop a major group of men's and women's activities – the Masters local events (**now resolved**) and ES Masters Inter County events. And, we only have very limited development work across the board and that

can only hurt us in the long run – that has started this season. Unless we do something about the situation, starting this meeting, things will get worse and we will end up as a mediocre County Association. There is no way current members will be expected to do more work – it will be wrong and unfair of us to do that expect that – so we need new blood.

One change that it is essential to make NOW is to replace Sarah as Junior Organiser and to do that soon to free her from her current commitment to us, mentioned above. And, for the sake of maintaining continuity of coaching and developing our juniors which is our main priority.

We have not worked hard for our organisation over many years to have it deteriorating in this way from its situation as a high performance, well-respected, well-run and wide-ranging CO in ES network of counties which means very much to us all, to a mediocre insular organisation **I am very concerned that this may happen** – So come on clubs and get us more volunteers to prevent it. Victoria has set the volunteer ball rolling so other people please follow her great example

Have a great new season anyway – and keep smiling

Regards and Best wishes

Tom

27 Aug 2024

Treasurer's report – Cumbria Squash and Racketball year ending 30th June 2024

- We changed Treasurer this year, so many thanks for Chris Lilley for having done this so well for so many years
- We also changed banks from Barclays to Virgin Money, and have a current and deposit account with them
- We are still holding cash in excess of our reserves policy, but have dropped the reserves slightly this year as we ran a small deficit
- Thank you to Thomas Graham and Son for continuing to sponsor the county, and especially for their support for juniors
- We had a banking gap this year when Barclays closed our account and before we got the Virgin Money one set up, so thank you to suppliers and volunteers for their patience (and we have now received compensation from Barclays for this of £750, which will show in next year's accounts)

Expenditure	
<i>Total junior expenditure</i>	<i>3,707</i>
Coaching	2,106
Tournaments	1,601
<i>Total senior expenditure</i>	<i>2,344</i>
Administration	146
Inter-counties	120
Other	52
Tournaments	2,026
Total expenditure	6,051
Income	
<i>Total junior income</i>	<i>1,426</i>
Coaching	426
Sponsorship	1,000
<i>Total senior income</i>	<i>3,943</i>
Administration	1
Interest	115
Rebate	550
Subscriptions from clubs	1,916
Total income	5,369
Surplus/deficit	- 682
Current account balance 30th June 2023	2,551
Deposit account balance 15th April	9,081
Total cash available	11,633

Guy Huxtable – 25th August 2024