

Annual General Meeting

Monday 11th September 2023

Venue Billericay Town FC
meeting started 7:30



Committee members present: Derek Hornsey, Richard Coleman, Gerry Tyler, Kevin Preston, Peter Osborne and Simon Crump

Clubs Present

Beacon Hill, Billericay Town, Chelmsford City, Cheshunt, Colchester Phoenix, Concord Rangers, Countrywide, Grays, Leyton Orient, Paringdon Pirates, Romford, Southend



Chairman's Report

I know that this season has been a lot better than the previous one. To ensure that we continue to move forward we're going to have to work together. There is a small minority of members that would like the league to remain as it is when it was first started. Over the years the League has grown and is now the biggest in the country. To ensure we keep trying to move the league forward it is imperative that it be funded properly. We all play this wonderful game for well-being friendship and camaraderie and are all individuals. That is what makes this league special. We can't have a few members thinking that we as a committee are only interested in making money. Moving forward as a committee we are always aware of costs, and strive to make sure that every penny spent is cost-effective. At Billericay this season the committee reintroduced hospitality, and so far, the vast majority of players have enjoyed coming into the bar for food and a drink. There are still a few clubs that do not wish to take part. Please can every club make the effort to come in for food after each tournament. It would cost less than a pound per person for each tournament. It has been a pleasure to be part of this amazing set up and I am looking forward to the start of the new season.



Minutes of the last meeting: Copies given to each member Club

proposer and second
proposed by Romford seconded by Colchester Phoenix

Matters arising:
None

Secretary's Report

All in all, this season has been a very enjoyable one. 50s are well supported but venue makes it hard to increase the size of Divisions two and three. We are looking at an alternative venue that will allow for a 10 am start. The facility has changing rooms a Bar and Coffee shop and will be ready for the start of next season. Before a decision is made all teams in that age group will be balloted for feedback. The choice

of venues is made by our members not the committee. We can only find alternatives. The choice to accept the change is down to our members.

The 50s have been excellent this season and although these started with one team withdrawing the remainder of the season has gone well.

60s season has now concluded and has been well contested with some very exciting games. We still all need to make sure that on arrival we all help to set up. After the afternoon tournament everyone should help clear away, that goes for all age groups.

65s, and 70s have been also been well contested and there is still a passion to win at these age groups. They are an absolute pleasure to watch.

This season we have reintroduced hospitality at the Billericay Tournaments and once for the 50s at Chelmsford. From feedback, it has been a success, it is intended to continue next season. There have been a couple of members that do not agree with the reintroduction of hospitality however the vast majority want it to carry on,

It's nice to see the vast majority of our 60s, 65s and 70s in the bar socialising after each tournament. For those that do not stay after each tournament please make the effort and come into the Bar for a sandwich and a drink the atmosphere is something special,

Before we started this season, it was pointed out by a couple of our member clubs that they thought the League was charging too much and it was trying to make money. We withdrew the imposition of player registration fees and did not take each Clubs' bond. We propose to re-impose the player registration fees and also the club bonds next season. These proposals provoked questions and debate. Chris Jullings (Chelmsford City) asked why there was a need to collect bonds from clubs, which may have a financial impact on some. Only one club had defaulted during the 2023 season and the majority of clubs have been members of the EWFL from the outset without defaulting in any way. Based upon risk, the imposition of bonds would seem unfounded. The reply was that the Bonds had been at a proposal made by a member Club and the motion was carried at last year's AGM. After taking another vote the overwhelming opinion was that members should not have to pay a bond.

On the subject of player registration fees, Peter Osborne pointed out that based upon the accounting documents provided by the EWFL, its net assets at 11th September amounted to nearly £3,000. He advocated that further work, in the form of a proper financial forecast for the end of 2023 and for 2024 as a whole, needed to be prepared. These will inform decisions about what changes are necessary to the current financial model. It was agreed that Peter would work with Richard and Gerry to produce the forecast. Proposals will then be put to the membership.

We have listened to lots of different views on how we move forward. As a committee we will strive to improve everything we do, to insure we deliver only the best for everyone.

Football whether it be mini soccer 11 v 11 or Walking Football all have one thing in common. All those that play or referee absolutely love the game. Our League has brought so much pleasure to all of our members, whether you are five years old or seventy receiving an award for your achievements, is one of the most memorable experiences we can have. Our aim is to improve our trophies and medals to represent our achievements.

My own personal experience is that this season has been one of the most pleasurable one in the 50 years I have been involved in football.

Treasurers report

Des Livings had put in an official complaint to Essex County FA with regards to the previous season's accounts. His concerns were that there was a discrepancy between what has shown to have been deposited into the League account, and what was actually shown.

Income paid into the Leagues account were correct as per bank statement. Unfortunately, due to not having access to the Leagues bank account, monies that were owed by members clubs were not being able to be checked. Having to wait months for access to League's bank account all contributed to not being able to check payments. The biggest problem was not having a new Treasurer with access to our account. All in all, not a satisfactory way to find ourselves in after the League had started.

The Secretary was the only person who eventually gained access to the League bank account and he put the income and expenditure Excel sheet together to send to the Accountants.

What did come out of Mr Living's complaint was the number of Clubs/Teams that failed to pay Tournament fees and Registration Fees. This was calculated to be in the region of £3,500. As a reminder, it is the responsibility of each member to ensure all sums of money are paid on time. It was proposed that Clubs failing to deposit tournament and Registration Fees on time will incur a penalty fine. When put to the vote it was unanimous that fines be imposed. However, when asked for a volunteer to take on the role of disciplinary secretary there were no takers.

Richard confirmed that the financial statements for 2021/22 and 2022/23 had been certified by an independent accountant. Engaging an accountant had been very difficult. Of those approached, only one was able to offer their services.

Election of officers

Current officers remain in office this was accepted by the floor.

Constitution

Agreed by all members.

Referees' Secretary

I have taken on a few more referees and we do have 19 registered. Questions were asked about the standard of refereeing and how as a league we could continue to improve the standards set out by members. There were concerns that some referees do not appear to have a full grasp of the LOTG, and there have been inconsistencies in refereeing standards. After much discussion it was decided to make sure we implement the multi-stage model set out by Peter Osborne and the Referees Committee earlier during the year.

Representative Football

Unfortunately, the EWFL's representative manager, Gary Murphy, was unable to attend the meeting due to defective surgery to his hip. Chris Jullings expressed his personal thanks to Gary for his work on EWFL team representation. The response from EWFL members is that Gary is doing a marvellous job keeping all Clubs well informed with what is going on. Training is going well and some tournaments have been organised. He was wished a speedy recovery.

Laws of the Game

1. After the past few seasons, hot weather conditions have been increasing to the high 20s and lower 30s. It was proposed by our members that we limit the temperature that we play in EWFL events to a maximum of 26° as per government guidelines. This is to ensure that all of their members play in a safe environment. Clubs will be advised of the cancellation of an event the day before it is due to take place. This decision will be informed by the weather forecast.
2. It was proposed that as from the start of next season, to ensure that referees had a contact point within each team, captains must wear an armband.
3. Romford asked a question about having two teams at the same age group. Would they be able to register all players for both teams? Peter Osbourne clarified that where clubs have multiple teams in an age group, players may be registered for all teams in that age group. However, players are not allowed to represent more than one team at the same day event/round of the competition. (For example, if they play for Team A in the morning they cannot play for Team B in the afternoon).
4. Norwich had made a proposal that the EWFL LOTG be revised to allow a player to be dispossessed of the ball (tackling from the front). This was supported by Leyton Orient, who felt that this was consistent with the FA's LOTG. It was explained by the Committee that the EWFL LOTG are based upon the FA's laws but modified to minimise the risk of contact/injury. This model has served the EWFL well since they were introduced in 2016. The proposal was rejected by the clubs represented at the meeting.

Other matters

1. Romford asked how many teams this season will be promoted and how many teams will be relegated. It was confirmed that it would be two up and two down.

2. Chris Jullings felt that further work needs to be carried out to develop a more effective communications model. Currently most of the EWFL's communications are channelled through 'WhatsApp' and 'Robin Road' but these are not always the most suitable media and the composition of the groups on these apps is uncertain. The Committee agreed to avail itself of Chris's offer to provide assistance in developing a more effective model.

3. The EWFL explained that a number of north Essex based clubs have expressed an interest in the joining the league. This may influence the selection of venues for 2024, which are being explored by the EWFL, and may give rise to a north/south split. Once again, any proposals will be put to the membership.

Presentation by Essex County FA

Due to Jake Ling's departure from ECFA, the body was unable to field a representative.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.33pm.