

## **CHAIR'S REPORT : AGM 2020/21 : SAT 23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 2021**

I start my Chair's report with a debt of gratitude to Ged who stepped down as Chair after 10 years and also as First Team Manager after 14 years. When Ged took over as Chair the club was fragile and vulnerable in all areas including the relationship with SCC. Mike as Secretary and me on finance soon joined him on a quest to not only repair the damage but to restructure the club in every way and make it stand alone and be financially independent. Virtually everything was changed. Roseberry ladies merged with us and the development of our junior section started. At that time we had about 80 senior members and very few juniors. Today we still have about 80 senior members but about 80 U18's, 100 U13's plus at least 100 parents/ guardians. This makes us one of the biggest and best clubs in the region. We initiated, implemented and supported all changes. But the increase in numbers and quality of juniors is down to Gary and his dedicated and talented team of coaches, Kenny, Phil, Johnno, Matty and Pete. We have juniors in every team and moving up the teams. Without them we would not have 5 men's teams. Because most juniors leave us at 18 for further education Gary's U13's give a constant feed of players into the league system when they reach 13 years old. Ged, Mike and I worked together mostly unseen for many years. With Ged's retirement from work, more holidays and an expanding family far away his time for the club reduced. This was at a time when the club was continuing to develop and grow. He and Mike supported me as I gradually took over the running of the club. Mike and I set the vision and development plans for the club with the wisdom of Ged behind us. Ged acted as a respected figure head and chaired committee meetings when he was available. When I took over as Acting Chair I was already doing job so just continued what I had been for the last few years!

Before I start the rest of my report I have attached a brief job description for a Chair which supports my report. The Chair is not the Chair of a Committee it is the Chair of a Club. Including players of all ages and non playing members plus parents/guardians teamo records 495 individuals (and increasing.) The Chair must be prepared to devote a lot of time to fulfil the role effectively.

Club year 2020/21 was totally dominated by covid. When covid arrived Scott was appointed as our EH Covid Officer. Louise took up the role to process all our thousands of covid registers everyone had to make at all fixtures home and away and attendance at training sessions .Plus ensuring seniors and parents on behalf of their juniors had completed a Participation Agreement. Between the three of us we quickly put in place risk analysis, signage, QR codes, one way systems, hand sanitisation points and issued good practice guidance to all members, coaches, team managers, etc. We also undertook opening and closing the Eggy site sanitising all areas including toilets before and after activity. The school were very complementary on our procedures. No other hirers were allowed on site except us during the covid period and as another reflection on our relationship with the school they gave us keys to come and go as we wanted. Pete was appointed Welfare Officer and brought a new insight into the role. Nothing much more to say about 2020/21. It was a difficult year we all handled well and although expensive we came out of it raring to go in 2021/22

We are now 5 months into the club year 2021/22 and it has been the most difficult start to any club year for many reasons. The introduction of England Hockey's "fit for the future" has resulted in many difficulties. A complete new league structure and the introduction of a Game Management System has produced many challenges made worse by the late introduction and then failure of their new computer systems. All these changes are for the better but as with other things the process of change is seldom easy. Mike and myself but mainly Dennis as our new EH Club Administrator have been adopting the new GMS into the club and cascading it out to team managers, umpires and players.

Finding and funding venues for training and fixtures whilst Eggy pitch is being rebuilt gave me other things to worry about. All is now more a less sorted. The £32/hr we pay for Eggy pitch becomes highly significant when other venues are quoting between £45 and £70 per hour with restricted slots available and mostly at

“off peak” times. Our relationship with Yarm has been developing but it took a big leap forward when they agreed to let us use their pitch for some fixtures at no cost. Many thanks to Gary. Gary and I are acting site managers with at least one of us being there for all training sessions and fixtures.

With my treasurer’s hat on all short and long term club development plans and business plans are supported with cash flows and included in budget forecasts.

We are now five months into club year 2021/22 and I thought it useful to update you on activities so far.

Firstly I totally re wrote the Club Constitution for adoption at the AGM. The new one brings us up to date and reflects the changing hockey world around us such as the new GMS system. It also recognises the changes we need to make to our committee structure to encompass the way we want to operate in the future. Historian/Archivist recognises the need to not forget our past and where we came from. Bob was a fabulous fit for this role. Committee Secretary Bob organises and monitors all committee meetings taking a lot of work off me and leaving Mike as Club Secretary to focus on hockey activity outside the club particularly links to EH plus with me looking at the future in terms of “vision” and “development plans.” Dennis volunteered to be Club Administrator. This role is primarily for GMS but also includes the now redundant roles for membership secretary and fixture secretary and fits neatly with teamo and website roles. Gemma has also agreed to be an administrator focusing mainly on ladies items. The roles of Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Welfare Officer have also been created to help share the work load of these important roles and give a safety net of cover. With the majority of our members being juniors it seemed sensible to include two parent/guardian representatives. The constitution no longer includes a President and I will speak more on this at the meeting.

Club insurance has been updated to include an element of personal cover for the first time.

Numbers attending U13 and U18 junior training continue to increase. I attend all junior training sessions as I feel the Chair should be visible and accessible to all our juniors and their parents.

Dennis and I are updating the website and trying to get more people to contribute.

I introduced teamo some three years ago and it is the best thing we have ever done to improve areas of club administration such as membership data, fixtures, availability, team selection, charging subscriptions, match fees, training fees and its link to “stripe” our cashless payment systems. We still have some problems with messaging which the teamo administrators are working on.

Last year we failed in our bid to become an EH Performance Centre but Gary and I are already working on the application to become a Performance Centre in September 2022. This time we are including Egglecliffe and Yarm Schools in our bid. It is very important that we become a centre and it will be included in our “vision” in ClubMark which I am updating at the moment. I did the preparation and put in our successful ClubMark application in 2019. ClubMark is awarded by Sport England and England Hockey and is the only qualification recognising a club as being “fit for purpose”. It covers six main areas, Leadership, People, Ways to Play, Social, Local Community and Stretch and Develop. Within these areas there are sixteen targets to fulfil. Once got it can be taken away. Continuous maintenance and improvement especially with ever changing “vision” and “development plans” are essential. ClubMark keeps you on your toes forever looking at now and the future and is an agenda item at every committee meeting.

It is very important to have a presence outside the club and contribute to hockey in the local area and beyond. Over the years many of our officials have been part of the North East Hockey League, Durham Clubs League and the Northumberland and Durham Hockey Umpires Association. All of these are now defunct taken over by the new Yorkshire and North East Hockey Ltd as part of the EH “fit for purpose” initiative. Gary and I are on the committee of Durham County Hockey and we are involved in its dissolution and reforming

as Durham County Sub Area. Gary is the Player Pathway Administrator and I am Treasurer. My main aim is to work with Gary developing the already successful system but make it more affordable to the juniors who take part. The player pathway attracts over 300 juniors from the Durham area. Between us, Eggy and Yarm we supply 40 plus of these juniors, most of the coaches and a welfare officer in Pete Edwards. As it states it is a pathway and without it Riley Shelton, Joe Belshaw and more recently Will Ferguson might not have reached England trials. Plus many others who are on the way up such as Max Mowbray and James Beck. Whilst on achievements I must mention. Mike one of our most successful umpires who has now reached Nation League status. Joining Billy Morgan and Mike Thomas in the role of honour. Another endorsement for the club.

I am always on the look out for available grants. We have in the bank £6500 which is part of the last grant. Over the years I have been successful in attaining over £20,000 in grants.

We are forever in debt to Harriet Spalding and Mandale Homes for sponsorship to enable us to subsidise full kit bundles to all our members over 12. This ensures all players turn out in the same gear reflecting the professionalism of our club. Since the initial sponsorship I have successfully negotiated £1000 yearly top ups to bring the total to over £5000

Fund raising continues with Kitch running race nights. They also promote social mixing between players, juniors and their parents and friends and supporters. Last year I handed over the running of Hockey 100 to Derek. I put Hockey 100 in place about eight years ago to replace CricHoc. Between them these draws have contributed over £10,000 to club funds.

The last and most important thing I have been involved with is Eggy School. For over five years I have been the contact with the school and built up many personal relationships with them. They could not have been better or more supportive especially in keeping hire charges down. Any reasonable thing we ask for they agree to. My last meeting with them was in July. They take our relationship very seriously demonstrated by the meeting attendance, Simon White Chief Executive of the Trust, Lynsey Oyston Head of Eggescliffe School, Sarah Dunn Finance Manager, Paul Bridge Trust Facilities Manager and Dave Jolly Eggescliffe Site Manager. To summarise what was discussed. They agreed to keep the pitch hire rate at £32 until September 2022 and then negotiate a realistic and affordable increase. Simon asked us to keep hold of the £6500 we have set aside for dugouts. The building of a toilet block adjacent to the pitch was also favourably received for consideration. They welcomed and supported our bid to become a performance centre. I offered our fund raising support for anything that would add value to the replacement pitch project such as extra goals, etc. We also talked about the long term and the setting of a community agreement/long term plan/relationships. The last thing we talked about was how the site will be managed in terms of hiring out facilities. The academy has formed its own "internal company" to manage hirings for the whole academy with a "board of trustees". They already have in place a member who specialises in funding applications for projects to help the academy and all its hirers. They are focused on community use.

I have nominated myself to continue as Club Chair for the remaining seven months of club year 2021/22

David Yule

Acting Chair

27<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021