Minutes of The 69th Hereford Table Tennis League Annual General Meeting on Monday 13th June 2016 at 7.30pm at The Richmond Place Club, Hereford.

The President Olaf Newcombe was unable to attend the meeting, so Chairman Brian Kitchener began by asking if members would prefer a Vice President to chair the meeting. Members agreed that Brian should continue.

1. APOLOGIES: Olaf Newcombe, James Palmer, Martin Gwilt, Chris Knowles, Helen Levy, Dave Hallam, Colin Dolding.
2. RECORD OF MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Kitchener, Roger Allsebrook, Rosemary Chatterton, Harry Jutle, Richard Owens, Liz Hallam, Huan Davies, Mark Farr, Bryan Farr, Andy Castle, Bob Rhodes, Steve Knight, John Hunt, Pauline Hart, Simon Morgan, John Bacon, David Gwilt, Roy Davies, Tony Sales, Kyle Day.
3. MINUTES OF THE 2015 MEETING: Minutes had been distributed to all members by email with the agenda. Agreed as a true record unanimously. Proposed: S Morgan. Seconded: J Bacon.
4. MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE AGENDA: None.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Firstly, I would like to thank my honorary colleagues of the Executive Committee – Rose, Roger, and Martin for their work in making the League function successfully throughout the past season - and to Harry for his continued support with his wealth of knowledge and experience which has proved invaluable to me on various aspects of League business.

My thanks also go to the other members of the Committee for their assistance during the season. We were always fortunate in managing to raise a quorum at meetings and, sometimes through lively debate, reach a decision that served our purpose. A particular mention goes to two of these members - Huan and Simon - the latter for making the meetings straight forward and short and Huan for enabling the meetings to be held in an uninterrupted and relatively quiet venue - thank you both.

Regarding the Fixture Fulfilment rule 6. – 6.1 & 6.2 it is necessary to apologise to those teams affected at the time, mainly those in Division Two. The committee found it very difficult to adjudicate when this issue first presented itself and I take personal responsibility for this in as much as I did not ensure committee meetings were arranged in a timely manner to enable the prompt decision making that was required. This needs to be taken into account by the newly elected committee members for the forthcoming season.

I have found the role of Chairman to be extremely demanding and time consuming. A number of items had to be resolved early on in the season, the main one being the League Sponsorship which I was working on back in March of last year and eventually finalised before the playing season began in September. Sourcing other sponsorships and investigating viability of potential new venues were a further two tasks. I also wanted to explore ‘moving forward’ with the Hereford Table Tennis League with the hope of obtaining increased participation and interest by existing and potential new members - so I suppose you could say that some of the extra demands of the role were self-inflicted!

In addition I failed miserably to find a willing volunteer to act as Welfare Officer. As most of you know this position is a requirement by TTE for all leagues to have in place and once again something that the new committee will need to add to their ‘To Do List’ for the next season.

Finally, it is with some regret that I have decided that I will not stand for re-election as Chair, or put myself forward for any other post on the Committee – but of course wish those who are appointed every success.

Report proposed by S. Knight. Seconded J. Hunt. All agreed.

6. SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Following Brian's announcement in his report that he does not wish to continue as Chairman, I would like to thank him for the work he has done, and also hope that there will be somebody else willing to take on the job.

When compiling this report I wanted us to remember Gordon Stables, who held this job for 12 years and played table tennis for many more years than that. Gordon's neatly typed and annotated minutes are testament to his thoroughness as League Secretary. Glancing through the records I noticed a few things that still seem relevant. There was a tactful note on one of his regular newsletters: 'Thank you to team coordinators who I am sure make every effort to keep all their teams informed'.

I now rely on the website and emails, but there is still an issue about how we can keep everyone informed, as some players aren't able to check their emails regularly or access the internet to find information they need. When the league and county run events, it would be good for as many people as possible to know about them, so please let us all, as Gordon said, make every effort to tell other team players about what is going on.

Gordon's records show that the AGM 8 years ago had to vote to agree on the match scoring system. Exactly the same proposal is listed on tonight's agenda, as well as a continued effort to sort out postponements.

Some things do change, though. The success of the last 2 seasons seems to have laid to rest at least for now the great debate about whether to have 2 or 3 divisions.

Thinking of this season, I would like to thank Martin Gwilt for his work as Match Secretary and his expertise helping to make everything run smoothly.

Overall, this season has followed a similar pattern to last year's, but with a bit more overlap of League and County events for me, as they are both advertised and reported through the website. Cicely Palmer, Harry Jutle, Steve Knight and Simon Morgan have all been involved in sending me reports of County events, and it has been interesting to follow the progress of the Cadet, Junior and Veterans teams in County and National tournaments.

I have received a few enquiries from new players and tried to direct them to suitable teams and clubs. It would be really helpful for me to have more details available about the opening times of different clubs and whether they have room for new players, so hopefully all clubs will be able to return the questionnaire I sent out last week. Thank you to the 3 clubs that have already replied.

Finally, quoting directly from the secretary's AGM report from 2008, 'thanks to our sponsors continuing to support the League financially and presenting the trophies on Presentation Night. I spent a very pleasant evening but without any success in the quiz or the raffle.' I could add to that - thanks very much for my trophy!

Report proposed by S Morgan. Seconded S Knight. All agreed.

7. TREASURER’S REPORT:

Accounts for the season were circulated and agreed. In response to S Knight's query, Roger explained that increased costs of trophies covered 2 seasons. Generous sponsorship from Winesolution was noted, and Brian confirmed that their sponsorship is promised for at least 4 more years. Teessport no longer pay sponsorship to our individual league although they support 365 websites nationally.

All members supported maintaining the same league entry fees for next season.

Report proposed S Morgan Seconded R Owens. All agreed.

8. MATCH SECRETARY’S REPORT: In Martin's absence, Rosemary made the following observations about the match season:

This year's table tennis season has involved 24 teams and 110 players with some very competitive matches.

To show the closeness of many matches -for matches resulting in a draw or 6-4 win, there were 30 in Division 1, 28 in Division 2 and 29 in Division 3. However, Division One did also have 12 10-0 results, compared with only 1 in Div 2, reflecting the great strength of the top teams that seem to benefit from their international profile. Only one league match was conceded, because of scheduling problems.

The new playoff rule was employed, with 3rd Division Weobley Eagles securing promotion convincingly against Crackpots B. Green Farm Challengers had to play superbly to hold off the challenge from Crackpots C and retain their place in Div 1.

Most handicap matches were fairly close suggesting that the handicapping was done well - again congratulations to Martin and his committee.

Members agreed to accept this account as substitute for Match Secretary' report.

Proposed R Owens, Seconded S Morgan. All agreed.

9. PROPOSALS FOR ALTERATIONS FOR THE LEAGUE RULES – see agenda for full details of proposals.

Rule 6.1

Proposal by Committee and Steve Knight to extend postponement time allowance from 28 days to 42 days, passed unanimously. Also to add, 'The team responsible for postponement must advise the Match Secretary within 24 hours of the original date, **by email..'**

The need for the committee to act more decisively to enforce the rule was noted, and the importance of keeping Martin informed by email was stressed. With these points clarified, Simon Morgan's proposals for Rule 6.1 and 6.2 were withdrawn.

Rule 9.

Both proposals by John Bacon for changing point scoring were rejected by a large majority, so existing rule remains unchanged. John Hunt pointed out that his players at bottom of div 1 were still motivated to fight for the every game even after they had already 'lost' a match.

Rule 10.

Simon Morgan's proposals to enforce earlier match start times for junior teams:

Several objections were raised to this. Bob Rhodes explained the genuine difficulties facing some players who have to work and travel long distances. Members were sympathetic to the problems facing juniors, but several members thought that the suggested penalties were unworkable. Andy Castle pointed out that players who arrive late should not expect to be allowed warm-up time. Mark Farr explained that late start is a problem not just for juniors, especially in venues that have a fixed closing time. Harry Jutle noted that there are existing rules designed to stop matches running too late, and it was agreed that: - players should protest about persistent latecomers; - committee need to enforce existing rules, and - all players should try to honour requests to start matches as early as possible, especially those involving juniors. Committee should remind teams about prompt start times at beginning of next season.

With above points noted, Simon Morgan withdrew his rule proposal.

Rule 12.

Steve Knight explained that this proposal had been included in error by Rosemary and should be withdrawn.

Rule 14.

Rule clarification proposed by committee - that in a playoff match a draw would be interpreted as victory for the higher team. Agreed unanimously.

Amendment proposed by Steve Knight that a playoff match should be held at the higher team's venue rather than the lower team's. Narrowly defeated 6 votes in favour v 7 against.

Rule 15.

3 alternative proposals concerning interavailability of players for different teams in the same club. Simon Morgan pointed out that the existing rule favours larger clubs. Rosemary replied that all rules allowing player substitution within clubs favour the larger clubs regardless of whether it is within the same division. Members recognised problems of smaller clubs, but on balance members agreed that allowing playup should help to avoid postponement. Part of the problem this season has been that some clubs have not understood the rule and have not used it enough.

Tony Sales asked how the ranking works for players who join mid season and Rosemary said we now have access to national statistics that should help with ranking of new players. Simon Morgan pointed out that some players improve dramatically during the season and distort the rankings. Andy Castle replied that even if that happens it is not deliberate manipulation of the system and therefore is not a serious problem.

All 3 proposals were rejected, each with a large majority, so existing rule remains.

Rule 21.

Proposals by committee re trophies were agreed unanimously.

11. League Fixtures 2016-17: Matters for Consideration**:**

Members supported suggestions that committee should try to arrange start time of match season earlier in September and incorporate 2 free weeks to help avoid postponement problems.

John Bacon asked about possible new venue and Brian explained that he will be able to give more information following County AGM. Other possible venues to consider: Kindle Centre recommended by Roger Allsebrook, and Richmond Place Club, although that is likely to have limited availability during winter season.

12. Election of Presidents and Vice-Presidents:

President Olaf Newcombe. Proposed: S Morgan. Seconded: R Owens. Agreed.

Vice- Presidents, Richard Owens, Roger Allsebrook, Nimmie Hodges, Ashley Brown, Margaret Newcombe, Harry Jutle. Proposed: S Morgan. Seconded: H Davies. Elected on block.

13. Election of Officers and Committee:

Chairman: No proposals from members present. Brian Kitchener is willing to continue as Acting Chairman until a replacement is appointed.

Vice – Chairman to be decided at the first League Meeting.

Secretary: Rosemary Chatterton. Proposed: B Kitchener, Seconded D Gwilt.

Treasurer: Roger Allsebrook. Proposed: S Morgan. Seconded: B Kitchener.

Match Secretary: Martin Gwilt. Proposed: S Morgan. Seconded: A Castle.

Committee Members: Gill Davies has resigned and her long service was gratefully acknowledged. All other existing members: John Bacon, Liz Hallam, Dave Hallam, Huan Davies, Richard Owens, Andy Castle, David Gwilt and Simon Morgan re elected. Proposed by S Knight, Seconded Bob Rhodes.

14. HONORARIA: To remain at £300 plus £50 for Chairman's expenses . Proposed: S Knight, Seconded: D Gwilt.

15. Date of next committee meeting: Monday 11th July 2016.

16. AOB:

Steve Knight reminded the committee of the need to enforce rules promptly so they can achieve their purpose effectively.

Pauline Hart informed members of the county table tennis event planned for 14th July at Aylestone, with the aim of attracting new players to the game. She asked for members to advertise it wherever possible.

Dave Gwilt reminded members of the problems facing single team clubs and suggested that we think about ways to support them.

Rosemary Chatterton said that individual clubs can benefit from sending reports to local press independently of HTTL if they want to attract new players.

Meeting ended at 9.50pm.