**Kendal and District Table Tennis League**

**Minutes of Management Team Meeting – 19.30, 25 Nov 2021, by Zoom**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Present –*** Peter Leahy (PL) (Chair), Mick Taylor (MT) (Sec), Norman Philbey (NP), Martin Wakelin (MW), Chris Knowles (CK), Jeff Pimblett (JP), Fran Currie (FC)  ***Apologies***  Bob Gale (BG), Phil Swift (PS), Bryan Rhodes (BR), Mike Sunderland (MS)   1. ***Minutes of previous Management Team meeting (30 Aug 2021) and matters arising***  * The minutes have been distributed and were taken as read. * Safeguarding: MT has not yet sent out details of courses. He will rectify this. * Two person teams: The majority at the Pre Start Council Meeting favoured 3 person teams so this was adopted for the new season. The rule changes necessary to permit 2 person teams in future were approved, so that option is available if required. * Marketing (PL update): PS has agreed informally to have a go at designing a logo. * A Ping Pong Parlour in the shopping centre seems problematic at present, as it would need manning. PL will add club info to the Active Cumbria website. PL has attended a marketing seminar given by Active Cumbria and will attend a follow up session on web design.      1. ***KO Cup***  * The KO Cup Final from 2020 was held last night at Natland. Dalton CC beat Grayrigg A 6-3 in a close fought match. Handicaps worked well. * It was agreed that MT and BG do the draw for this year’s KO Cup. It was also agreed that matches should be counted in deciding the result (eg 8-1, 7-2 etc) rather than games (eg 27-8) as in the League. * The final is scheduled for the week commencing 18 April 2022. In the past this has been at Burton. MT to discuss with BR.      1. ***Divisional Shield***  * Dallam School is not available this season, so we need an alternative venue. * After discussion it was decided to hold Div 1 Shield at Burton and Div 2 Shield at Natland, both on Sundays in January. MT to book venues. MT offered to organise the Div 1 event on the day, PL the Div 2.  1. ***Junior Events***  * MS has offered to organise a junior event at Kirkby Stephen (half day training, half day tournament) in the Christmas Holidays. Agreed to ask MS to go ahead with this. * MW will organise a TT Kidz in February 2022. * We will ask MS if he’s able to organise a junior event during the Easter Hols at Burton.  1. ***Third Division***  * MS report by email: Potentially 4 teams from KS and 1 from Warcop for 3rd division. Once every 3 or 4 weeks favoured, 2 person teams, say at Burton, Natland, Dallam, Kirkby Stephen. KS are happy to host 1 or 2 such events. Sundays 16.00/16.30 favoured. * MT will enquire about using Kendal Leisure Centre. * To progress this, PL will liaise with MS and set up a WhatsApp group with MS, MW, NP and MT.  1. ***Premier Club***  * MS set up KDTTL as a Premier Club with TTE a couple of years ago. MW asked could we do this again. It would facilitate putting on TT Kidz events at any club. PL will speak to MS about this. * PL is training to become a Licensed Coach. MW is not licensed.  1. ***PL’s Discussion Paper for League Development***  * This has been distributed to League members and is included in Appendix A to these minutes. So far there has been very little comment, so please read and provide feedback. * It was agreed to use this paper as a blueprint for the way forward for the League, with a good quality website being a priority. * Such a website could cost £1500 to £2000 and the cost would need to be shared between clubs and the League. * It was agreed that the League should utilise some of its financial reserves to move things forward rather than leave money lying idle. * TTE are producing a model website for leagues and clubs. MT will investigate. * Brighton TT Club have a good website. CK to investigate.  1. ***AOB***  * A4 size envelopes for certificates: CK has some and will speak to PS. * FC still has no internet access to the League banking. Tony March has agreed to go into the branch and try and sort it out.   The meeting closed at 21.15 ***Distribution*** All League members (by email).  **Appendix A**  **Kendal & District Table Tennis League**  **Proposed Plan To Attract New Players**  **Draft For Discussion (V3 PEL 20.9.21)**  Our League has been shrinking for many years and now has very few junior players. This will impact the League’s future viability but also has an immediate impact, parents of juniors have always been a great source of support as volunteers, helpers and fund raisers. We also have very few women currently participating and almost no ethnic diversity within the League. We need to project a fresh modern image that will ensure our offering compares favourably with that of other sports.  The following is a set of suggestions as to how we may go about attracting new junior players and players of all ages and ability. The key to this is to use the combined resources of the League and its member clubs in a co-ordinated way. A theme that is evident in many of these ideas is that of approachability. Approachability may well be the main barrier for clubs trying to attract new players (especially underrepresented groups).  MODERN WEBSITE  We need a better and clearer way to communicate our offering.  A modern, easy-to-use branded (ie a logo or image) website organised by the League with a page for each club.  The website will provide clear information catering for a range of different player types, about what is available for them, and where and when it is available and who to contact about it. For example,   * Female players with specific female contacts * Age 7-11 year olds may be directed to the sessions offered by Burton, Kirkby Stephen and Dallam, * Experienced league players to the clubs with Division one teams, * Social players to club nights, Bat & Chat sessions at Kirkby Stephen and the sessions at Kendal Leisure Centre * Beginners or those wanting to improve to appropriate coached sessions   The League pages will provide an overview and the individual club pages will detail the specific offering of each club with times of sessions and arrangements   1. MAKE EACH CLUB AS ATTRACTIVE AS IT CAN BE   Each club needs to be as attractive to new and existing members as it can be. As well as being able to find out about the club and what it offers on the website, an essential starting point, the player experience should be as positive as possible once a player comes through the doors of the club. That would mean, for example, modern rollaway tables where possible, decent nets, barriers if they are needed, some spare equipment of a good standard for beginners who do not have their own and appropriate coaching and training equipment where this is part of the club offering.  Making the Club as approachable as possible will be more important than new equipment. Offering taster or beginners sessions, arranging a female member to meet a prospective female player and providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for people who may feel nervous about joining a new club could be the difference in attracting a new player or not.  As a first step each club to identify what, if anything, it would like to do to improve its offering.  A good starting point would be to ensure all our league clubs are listed on the Table Tennis England “where to play” map. None of our Clubs are listed! (I have now added Natland. The Club’s constitution needs to be uploaded and you need to accept the TTE Safeguarding protocol)  If new equipment is needed, this needs to be listed in order of priority of purchase. If you know exactly what you want, please be as specific as possible (table type, net type, etc. You may have storage space issues so need a particular table that will fit the limited space you have). Please think about what makes a good facility eg a proper sports floor, not carpet; good lighting; good signage so it is easy to find you; if balls are being lost all the time during play perhaps barriers or a professionally mounted curtain etc. If hall improvements are required would the improvements be supported by the hall owners/managers? Do not be hesitant in identifying the totality of what your club would do if funding is available.  FUND RAISING  The League will make applications for funding on behalf of its member clubs where it is able to do so. Sports England, Table Tennis England, The National Lottery and local Trusts are all realistic sources of funding, particularly for one-off equipment purchase, but each club will have to play its part by doing the following:   * Making sure it is “Grant eligible”. In most cases, this means that the club   1. has a written Constitution (pro formas are available on the TTE website and from Clubs that already have one),   2. has its own bank account with two signatories,   3. has a set of accounts for income and expenditure for the last two, possibly three years. For most grantors, an Excel spreadsheet is sufficient to comply with this requirement. * Raise some money itself. Those offering grants look much more favourably on applicants who have raised some money themselves to go towards the equipment being purchased. It does not have to be a large percentage of the value but this “seed money” is a good indicator of commitment. The League will put some of its reserves to work as seed money but each club will have to contribute too if it wants to receive grant funds raised via the League   The three areas outlined above would seem to be the most important but there are many other areas where collaboration between the League and its members could be beneficial.  Other ideas:   1. Social media profile. This could be the key to promoting the league to younger people. Instagram, Tick Tock and YouTube are the main platforms used by younger audiences to access content and they are free to use. We will need to speak with younger members of the league to ask them what they would like to see and what they might respond to. Other platforms such as Facebook will target other demographic groups. 2. More coaches. This would mean we have the capacity to offer more coaching at different times and different locations. This is linked with the cost of hall hire (point C below). To ensure we can offer coaching at the most expensive venue if the demand is there perhaps we need to have an average price for coached sessions (surplus from the sessions at the cheapest venues offsets the deficit at the more expensive venue). 3. The cost of hire per hour for each club venue. If we know the comparative costs of hall hire, it may help clubs when increases are being proposed to them. 4. ‘Networking into school’ contacts and getting our offering known. We can use the graphic work for the Website in posters targeted at schools and different age groups. Can we get profiled on school Facebook pages?? 5. Advertising. This is probably not a cheap option but once we have a clear offering for the League and each club, it may be something to explore. 6. Table Tennis for those with disabilities. Do we currently cater in any League club for anyone with a disability? If not, could we? How might we go about offering table tennis? We would need to consider the following: location, playing and coaching support, level and type of disability we would be able to support. If we ever decided that we wanted a dedicated table tennis facility, this offering would be key to attracting the necessary funding. 7. Linked with point F and Point H is the issue of the league’s community interaction. For example, charities such as MIND encourage physical exercise-could we promote our taster and beginner sessions to them or other organisations to attract a broader section of the community. 8. Ping Pong Parlour in Kendal. Ping Pong Parlours are a TTE initiative and are a contract between TTE and a provider of an empty retail space. In summary, TTE provides all the equipment and branding/graphics and the retail space owner provides the venue (eg. an empty shop in a shopping centre). The space owner also provides all ongoing support thereafter (venue and equipment care and security). The benefit for the retail space owner is a reduced commercial rates bill (for providing a community facility) and hopefully increased footfall. Having done a little research, it is clear that other parties need to be involved to make the Parlour a success. A parlour in Bolton is a couple of tables in a room with entirely blank walls. There is nothing to tell Parlour users where they can play   more table tennis. There is nothing to tell them times for coaching sessions at the parlour, nothing to initiate lunch time competitions for local businesses and those working in the community. A successful parlour in Kendal could be a good way of attracting new players to table tennis and a good way of advertising our League and clubs but it would need pro-active involvement from us to make it work.  If a Ping Pong Parlour is too ambitious we could certainly organise a promo day in Kendal as a one off.   1. Fund raising by individual clubs. Each club really does need to have a bit of spare cash in the bank. With this buffer it is easier for clubs to offer subsidised sessions for juniors, free taster sessions for prospective members and the like. Most clubs in our League are part of a very specific local community. The fund raising need not be targeted at those who play table tennis but rather those that might enjoy participating in a locally organised event at the local village hall, eg. bingo night, beetle drive (do they still have those?), quiz night (all Covid permitting) or just a Christmas raffle, etc. 2. ~~“Bribery”~~ . I. Incentivisation. We could offer t-shirts for all juniors who get coached in the Kendal League clubs. T-shirts would be branded with the League name (small) and Club name (large) with colours, logo, graphics as used on the website (cost could be built into our grant applications).   Please add your ideas.  CONCLUSION  If the League and clubs support the general direction of the ideas outlined, we will have taken the most important step of all but not the hardest step. To implement items 1, 2 and 3 will take a lot of work at individual club level and at League level and will not be a quick fix. However, many areas can be worked on at the same time if we have the numbers of individuals willing to take on a task.  Many of the “Other Ideas” could also be worked on at the same time particularly where we need a lot of research to educate ourselves before moving forward. Helpers needed. | ***Action***  ***MT***  ***PS***  ***PL***  ***PL***  ***MT, BG***  ***MT***  ***MT***  ***MS***  ***MW***  ***MS***  ***MT***  ***PL, MS, MW, NP, MT***  ***PL, MS***  ***All***  ***MT***  ***CK*** |