

Annual General Forum Minutes

27th August 2019

Meeting runtime

1 hour 33 minutes

Location

Google Hangouts

Non-Voting Attendees

Harry Smith (Development Director and Chair), Matt Bateman (President), Abby Whiteley (Vice President and minuting), Josh Fogg (Operations Director), Marianna Parroquin (Olympians Quidditch)

Voting Attendees

Edmund Kitchen (Bristol Quidditch Club), David Goswell (Oxford Mammoths), Fergus Powell (Cambridge Quidditch Club), Alex Jaggs (Southampton Quidditch Club), Cameron Bell (Oxford Universities Quidditch Club), John Morris (London Unspeakables), Tom Harvey (Swansea Swans), Bevan Cope (Nottingham Nightmares), Rachael Breare (Leicester Quidditch Club), Peter Stace (Bath Quidditch Club), Eleanor Hollindrake (Tornadoes Quidditch Club), Nathan Kirwan (Chester Centurions), Charli Davies (Velociraptors Quidditch Club), Lucy Nicholls (Loughborough Longshots), Emily Anthony (Leeds Griffins), Reuben van Zyl (Sheffield Squids), Katya Savva (Warwick Quidditch Club), Isla Adams (Winchester Quidditch Club), Joe McMullen (Bangor Quidditch Club), Andrew Telford (York Horntails).

Annual General Forum Agenda

1. [Financial Report for 2018/19 Season](#)
2. [Constitutional Changes](#)
3. **Venues for upcoming QuidditchUK Events**
 - a. *Southern - Oxford 9/10 November (Tentative)*
 - b. *Northern - Sheffield 23/24 November (Confirmed)*
 - c. *EQT - Manchester 1/2 February (Tentative)*
 - d. *Dev Cup - Manchester 29Feb/1March (Confirmed, dates may shift)*
 - e. *BQC - Shrewsbury 4/5 April OR 18/19 April (Confirmed, dates pending EQC)*
4. **Additional Venue Notes/Policies**
 - a. *BQC Seeding*
 - b. *EQT Spot Allocation*

5. Goals going forward

HS: Opens meeting, introduces attendees, explains how the meeting will operate.

1. Financial Report for 2018/19 Season

Briefing

JF: Introduces the financial report, gives the “headline points”. Last season, QUK made a loss of around £1,700 and this year we are operating with a surplus of £2,500, meaning we have remade the £11,000 from last season and the loss. Slightly lower membership last season but recovered throughout the year by altering costs. There was a banking error (attributed to JF) where a venue and marquees were paid for twice, but that money has been recovered and QUK has not lost money as a result. Next year, the aim is for more stringent checks on incoming and outgoing invoices to avoid similar incidents.

MB: This double invoice was caught and resolved quickly. Asks attendees to turn off cameras to improve streaming.

JF: We are just waiting for the last of that money to come now.

JF [cont.]: We introduced Team Scotland this year and were able to divert funding from outreach and development to support them. TeamUK were funded using the normal channels and we had successful fundraising this year. We trialled TUK-specific merchandise, but most feedback indicated preference for tournament-specific merchandise. On the whole, we have operated throughout this season at a surplus, and we could overcome difficulties (such as cancelled events) next season without serious difficulty.

Discussion

MB: Requests that JF talk through fees format for next year.

JF: At the last general forum, it was emphasised that a shift towards team fees would be preferable (over player fees) because this makes it easier to get subsidies from universities. Coming into next season, player fees will go down and team fees will go up concomitantly. The price is expected to be similar or slightly lower, depending on venue cost, but most of the change is shifting the cost into team fees.

JF: EMT are currently working on budgets, which aren't quite ready to reveal yet, but a budget for the year will be released within the next couple of weeks for people to access.

2. Constitutional Changes

Briefing

MB: I will go through the document by section, please comment if you require any clarifications or have any questions.

Briefly introduces each section and the legal status of the document.

Discussion

MB: If policy conflicts with the constitution, the constitution wins. Goes through well-known acronyms, explains EQF specifically. We have no plans to leave the EQF. Unofficially, it is unlikely we will host an EQC or EG imminently due to Brexit complications, but that will not be addressed at length here. We are applying for BUCS and Sports England because it would make the whole experience much cleaner by aggregating fees for tournaments and other expenses. Any official club which has paid is considered a member and bound by this constitution. Our official name will be QuidditchUK Ltd for HM Government and HMRC, but otherwise it is QuidditchUK.

MB: Our core goals and objectives are growth (expanding athletes throughout the country), raising standards, being financially sustainable, and maintaining the values of the community. These goals will be reviewed at the end of each season.

MB: Our responsibilities are to act in the best interests of our core mission (above), transparency, mediating between our members and the IQA and the EQF, ensuring the rules and refereeing are standardised, enforcing those rules, provide a tournament structure giving a national champion, standardised safety, encouraging growth, giving clear lines of communication and ways to challenge our decisions, providing and equipping a national team, and providing yearly reports on our finances and projects. If you think we missed anything, please let us know.

EK (Bristol): I wanted to ask about international quidditch bodies: so, I assume the IQA and EQF have constitutions - do these trump our constitution or are they subordinate to ours?

MB: We are not subordinate to the EQF; they only deal with international transfers, they have no jurisdiction over domestic transfers. However, we are subordinate to the IQA. We pay membership fees every year and you could go to the IQA if you disagreed with anything QUK did and ask for us to be disciplined under their remit. I am happy to provide more details about this relationship after the AGM if you want to know more about it.

IA (Winchester): I complained about reffing at BQC and was told there would be more ref workshops; it would be useful to have more.

MB: We have two more planned for later this summer which will be announced shortly.

IA: Great, I've had a lot of people asking me about reffing and I haven't known how to suggest useful things.

MB: Yes, reffing is something we'll focus on and improved in the future.

HS: This will be incorporated into 5.j. on the constitution about developing the growth of the sport, to include refs as well as players.

MB: The next section is about the president and how the EMT operates. Explains notice periods, voting weight, responsibilities, resignation, firing and other aspects outlined in Section 6.

MB: Section 7 explain incorporation status and the articles of association. This involves a legally binding agreement that determines the operating status of QuidditchUK, and means that any of the three shareholders who stand down do not retain their shares. We considered incorporating as limited by guarantee, but that would require every member to pay £1 and play a formal role, or to incorporate every single club, and that became very cumbersome. The shareholders (Directors) are the President, Vice-President and the Operations Director. We intend to create a Board of Directors at some point in the future and will consult with the community before doing so, but it isn't feasible at this juncture. The Directors are not paid and receive no additional power over and above other members of EMT. We may be taxed on membership but this should not increase membership fees. We may be able to pay less on venues and resources like Epione as a result of our incorporated status.

MB: Section 8 explains the Executive Management Team (EMT), the current members, and how it operates, including through regular meetings. Member clubs can challenge and vote down policies which QUK introduces. There is a newly introduced two-year term, after which EMT members must re-apply for their position. There is also a new provision saying that department heads who step down cannot then work in their department in a lower position, because this has caused operational issues in the past.

MB: Section 9 outlines all the departments; I covered most of this in Section 8.

MB: Section 10 - national team. We must always have a national team, not specified as Team UK or Team Scotland, but there must be one. There are no current plans for Team Wales because it's not currently a priority; we are interested in putting funding and development in that area, but that does not currently include a national team. Players cannot be members of multiple national teams or national governing bodies. There is a provision in the constitution for addressing bias and suspect decision-making in the Team UK selection process; QUK can veto players but this is not an absolute power, there is a process, and it may be used in disciplinary contexts. National teams can be dissolved at any time, and the existence of the team does not guarantee opportunities for it to compete. The IQA is not currently happy for one NGB to have multiple representatives at World Cup, so as it stands both Team Scotland and Team UK could not attend; this can be discussed later when World Cup becomes more relevant.

JM (Bangor): Accountability is important; would you be able to summarise the parts of the constitution which relate to accountability so teams don't have to traipse through the whole constitution and can hold QUK to account.

MB: I'm not sure what you mean. Do you mean you want me to summarise this further?

JM: Just asking if there could be a document summarising how people can challenge QUK on decisions if they aren't aware they should go to the constitution.

MB: Yes, we'll discuss that at EMT, thanks for bringing it up.

HS: We'll follow that up.

EA (Leeds): Request for clarification on 10.c. and 10.d.

MB: So this may be someone that doesn't have any open investigations against them, but someone who is not an appropriate choice to represent us as a national team member. For example, if you have previously had behavioural issues when you have competed at a club level, there might not be an open disciplinary case against you but we may not be willing to have you represent us at an international level. This has never previously been an issue but this is to provide for such a case.

IA (Winchester): Last season there were a lot of issues with transfers, such as players being transferred for EQT. Is there any way to clarify transfers for the upcoming season and make it more simple?

MB: Yes. That was an unusual case where multiple players from a small set of clubs were transferring simultaneously, and we'll be having a look at that policy for next season. That isn't in the constitution but it is something we're addressing.

MB: Section 11 - removal of department directors. Outlines circumstances specified in 1.a. to 1.o. If there is a reason - not necessarily evidence - for dismissal, they are suspended while this is investigated. Explains how the decision process about removal is taken, and what occurs in the immediate aftermath.

MB: Section 12 - volunteering policy, essentially what we want to stand for as an organisation. Non-discrimination policy both within QuidditchUK specifically and any member clubs or individuals registered with QUK. Applications for roles must be open; department directors can promote within departments but they cannot, for example, make someone assistant director without a full recruitment process.

EK (Bristol): I wanted to talk about the point specifying that QUK has the right to overrule decisions about teams made by club members, is that correct?

MB: No that's not quite right; if you're turning away club members due to factors such as race, sex, or anything discriminatory, that's not okay. When it comes to selecting players for teams generally, that's different. People should be welcome to come and play, but if you're not turning away players for non-legitimate reasons as covered by our discrimination policy, we won't intervene.

EK: So would the club face disciplinary action because of that?

MB: Yes, if QuidditchUK found a club to be turning people away because, for example, they were a member of the LGBTQ community, membership of the club

would be revoked and the club could not attend BQC. Relevant club leadership would be required to step down and, if non-compliant, tournament bans or low seedings at tournaments could be enforced.

MB: Section 14 - constitutional policy. Explains how amendments are made, both from member clubs and EMT.

HS: You accidentally skipped Section 13, could you do that next?

MB: Yes, apologies.

MB: Explains Section 13 - membership policy. Clubs can challenge changes to membership fees if they are not given sufficient notice. Tournaments should be announced at the start of the season so they know what they are expected to pay. We have the right to decline membership if clubs are found to be in violation of our non-discrimination policies. Explains General Forums, the AGM and quorum, the latter of which must be met with clubs, not teams.

LN (Loughborough): So I'm not sure if this is the right place to ask this question, but I'm not sure where is, so I'll go for it. Everyone who was at QPL at the weekend will have noticed a lot of booing towards referees, and I was wondering if QUK will come up with a disciplinary policy regarding players and clubs who participate in ref disrespect like this, as this isn't something we want to be encouraging in the sport.

HS: To cover what we do have, we have a QUK event discipline and suspension policy, and there are notes on this kind of issue in the individual membership policy. I will take note of this now and get back to you, or have Eamonn get back to you on this, quickly.

KS (Warwick): I had a question about the fees changing. At Warwick, we have to submit our grant funding forms in Term 3, so we've already done it, and we have to provide evidence that what we've submitted is correct, so is there any way we could find out if team fees are changing before 1st September so we can submit the correct information?

MB: So we aren't changing the total you'll pay in fees, only changing the way it's weighted between team and player fees. Contact Josh about your specific situation and we'll see what we can do, we will announce team fees as quickly as possible.

JF: Yes I'm hoping it will be announced within the next week or 10 days, we're just finalising a few things.

MB: Active policies - this is all the currently active policies. Explains how policies are introduced to QuidditchUK.

MB: We are going to move to a vote - please email us if you have any serious questions.

FP (Cambridge): Is there a summary of changes of the constitution so we can see them?

MB: There will be one, but right now you'd have to do it manually.

FP: That's fine, it would be useful in the future but I understand this one has essentially been rewritten.

MB: We did consider doing it but it was too much of an overhaul.

MB: We have had a technical issue as Google has not operated as intended so we don't currently have quorum; this cannot be ratified until we have all the votes but these votes will count.

HS: We are going to hold a second AGM with those who couldn't attend the first; your votes will carry over to this meeting and be added to theirs, which will count towards whether the constitution is ratified or not. Please put your votes in the chat.

Votes

For: All 20 voting attendees

Against: None

Abstain: None

AJ (Southampton): As Katie was saying about fees, we have two days to submit information about our fees so I was hoping we'd be able to do it now as the constitution said it would be by 1st September. Would we be able to get information about regionals so we can submit this to the university?

MB: We will give all the information about regionals in a few minutes.

3. Venues for upcoming QUK Events

Briefing

MB: We have everything mostly lined up for the major events; these are 90% confirmed.

Discussion

MB: Southern will be held in Oxford, tentatively, on the 9th/10th November at a new venue, not Horspath or Brookes. This is the one most subject to change, but that date should not be changing. Northern is going to be in Sheffield again on the 23rd/24th at the same venue as last year as we have a great relationship with them, that is locked in. Both EQT and Development Cup should be in Manchester. EQT will hopefully be on 1st/2nd February. That is tentative as the European rules require us to submit our teams by February; we are asking for leeway of a couple of days. 29th February/1st March for Development Cup should be in Salford, same as last year. BQC will be held in Shrewsbury on either 4th/5th April or the 18th/19th April, that is confirmed. We don't know that until we have the date for EQC but it is locked in and will be one of those weekends. The 11th/12th is Easter so it will not be then.

EQC could be in April or May, we don't know. Division 2 should be in March. We'll announce BQC properly once we know about EQC. EQT will be a 6/6 split with the top 6 from each region, not the same as last year with 7 and 5. Development Cup will get spots for BQC, and the longer time between those tournaments will allow more time for decision-making. There will be more play-offs at BQC, allowing everyone to get more games, in response to teams saying last year that they only had four games at BQC. This will entail a higher demand for referees and we do expect a slight step-up from teams due to that. We are working on our seeding policy, but it shouldn't be a huge change. There is no community/university split this year, we will look at it and other overhaul ideas for next year.

IA (Winchester): They all seem quite northern locations for the tournaments; last year it was expensive to go to Manchester and Newcastle, and having so many northern venues again is quite frustrating for us.

HS: Gen from Events has noted that all the cities which are hosting have good transport links; Matt will explain further.

MB: Yes, cost of venue and transport links were factors. Manchester and Shrewsbury are more in the midlands, the average distance across all teams is slightly further but everyone can access them more easily. We're never going to have a venue which makes everyone happy.

IA: Oxford is also quite far.

MB: We'll never have somewhere accessible for everyone.

HS: We understand this is not something everyone will ever agree on in terms of distance. We have needed to consider geographical location, finance, dates and availability of venues, multiple factors are coming into play and I'm sure Gen will be able to give you more information about why we chose those locations if you're happy to email directly.

IA: Thank you.

BC (Bath): Just wondering if you were leaning to either date for BQC ideally, as you're between two.

MB: We would prefer a later BQC, but we are at the mercy of exams and a few other factors. We can't confirm either way.

BC: Thank you.

LN (Loughborough): Quick question about Dev Cup - it's definitely going to be the top three going to BQC? Last year that only happened because someone dropped out.

MB: Yes, the teams improved a lot at Dev Cup and we like having the incentive of teams working towards a BQC spot, so it will be three from the outset this year.

EK (Bristol): What is the North/South BQC spot split?

MB: We are still working that out and will announce it soon.

HS: I have a note from our Events department. We have had a large issue this year in terms of volunteers for our events. Gen has needed to be the tournament director for tournaments which is not how these events should be run and we've had a recurring group of very dedicated volunteers putting in a lot of hours to these events, and even then we're at the

absolute minimum. We are looking at ways to increase the number and enthusiasm of people volunteering, and we really would like to promote opportunities in our events department to help with these events. Now you know the dates and locations, we're able to plan these events more in advance, and if you'd like to volunteer please get in contact with Genevieve or Molly.

4. Goals going forward

Briefing

MB: We do have a list of goals but we stipulated 90 minutes, so we will send it out for teams to review at their leisure.

HS: If you have any questions on them, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Conclusion

HS: Thank you for attending, and get in contact with us if you have any further questions.

MB: It also helps us towards Sport England, having this meeting, so thank you for giving up your evenings to help get us towards that goal.