

HARROGATE STRAYS WALKING FOOTBALL CLUB



MINUTES ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) 27th March 2025

Harrogate Strays Walking Football Clubs Annual General Meeting – Minutes

Introduction

The club's AGM was held on Thursday 27 March at St. Robert's Centre, Harrogate. At the outset those attending the AGM wished to send their best wishes to Rod Clifton, the Club Secretary, who was absent on medical grounds.

The meeting was attended by 20 members

CLUB REVIEW

Annual Report

Bernie O'Brien as Chairman presented an Annual Report, which covered a range of issues, including:

- A financial summary noting that the club has a healthy balance sheet;
- The Committee's decision to waive ongoing membership fees for existing members;
- Consideration of reducing the session fees, which proved not to be feasible;
- Reviews of the existing sessions, either for a 3rd session or to change the days of the week, neither of which were pursued after membership surveys supported the status quo;
- Growth in club numbers which currently stands at 70 members;
- Dissatisfaction with occasional unacceptable behaviour at club sessions which primarily affects the faster game and where sometimes it feels like players are resorting to 5-a-side rather than walking football. See item below on further discussion on this topic;
- The need to recognise and value our social members and remember that they have an important role to play in the club. Also players who normally play in the faster game might benefit from occasionally playing in the slower game;
- The decision that the John Wilcock Memorial Cup should be a broader tournament not only remembering John but also recognising other members who have died during the year and those who have had to retire due to ill health or injury. This year the tournament will be held towards the end of April and will be renamed the JW (Just Walking) Cup;
- Competitive team involvement and summaries of the different teams' performances. Analysis shows that approximately 50% of the club membership had represented the club at some level over the last year; and
- The club's charitable work on behalf of Candlelighters and St. Gemma's Hospice.

Bernie asked to record the club's acknowledgement of the great generosity of the club's members in support of the charities over the past year. He also expressed special thanks to those who provide support in various ways, such as session referees, first aiders, team managers, kit and equipment purchasers and the unsung members who help most regularly with pitch set-ups at the Army Foundation College (AFC) and Rossett Sports Centre. There was

special mention for Paul Rogers who has successfully taken on responsibility for looking after our club media and has been so successful that he has also been approached by the Walking Football Association (WFA) to undertake a similar role for them.

Affiliations

- The Club is currently affiliated to the FA (West Riding), The Walking Football Association and England Football Accredited. Whilst it was recognised that the FA West Riding were not particularly pro-active in their support of walking football we do use their Public Liability Insurance and Players Personal Insurance policies which more than pays for the £6 annual affiliation fee.

Annual Financial Report

Tom Robinson presented the 'unaudited accounts' for the period 1st April 2024 to 20th March 2025

- This time last year the cash held at the bank was £1,395. At the present the balance held at the bank is £3,257
- The Management Committee had undertaken an analysis of the effects of reducing the current session fees to £3 or £4 per session. This analysis showed that this was not financially viable and that £5 was the optimal amount. The Management Committee have therefore decided that there will be no increase in session fees for the coming year, but do reserve the right to revisit this decision should circumstances change
- Last year the Management Committee decided not to charge an annual membership fee for existing members. After careful review the Management Committee has decided not to charge existing members an annual membership fee for the second year running. New members will be charged an annual fee held at their current rates of £15 for full membership and £5 for associate membership
- At the last AGM the Management Committee reported that we had just one month's Financial Operating Reserves meaning that the club could last for about a month without any revenue and still meet its liabilities. This was considered too low and we set ourselves a target to increase our Financial Operating Reserves to two months. The Management Committee is therefore pleased to report that we have exceeded our target set last year and we now have Financial Operating Reserves of 3 months
- For both our training venues we set a target that they should deliver a profit of 25%. We are therefore pleased to report that the AFC delivered a profit of 29.4% and Rossett Sports Centre a profit of 45.5%. Across both venues we achieved a profit of 38.6%, an increase of 3.7% on the previous year
- The amazing generosity of our members has seen the club raise £3,550 for charitable purposes, with £2,095 of this amount going to 'The Candlelighters' our sponsored charity

BOARD ISSUES

CMC Election Process

The AGM voted unanimously to confirm the re-election of the current Management Committee. It was noted that there were no other candidates, which gave rise to a later plea for members to consider whether they might in time have an ambition to run the club.

ACTION POINT 1 – Anyone interested in taking on one of the Management Committee roles should speak to one of the existing members

Appointment of an Independent Audit for 2024/25 Club Accounts

Debbie Naylor kindly agreed to take on the role of volunteer auditor for this year's account

CHANGES TO THE CLUB CONSTITUTION

The AGM also voted for changes to the club Constitution regarding:

Independent Auditors

- A requirement for just one volunteer auditor to inspect the club accounts or where this is not possible an external auditor should be appointed for which a charge would be payable.

Change to the quorum for future AGMs and other motions

- It was proposed that the quorum should be reduced from the current 20% of eligible membership to 10%;
- Potential use of technology including video conferencing was to be considered
- It was also suggested that we should consider the option of holding the AGM in the evening and at 'The Empress on the Stray' where there would be no charge for the use of their upstairs room

ACTION POINT 2 - The proposed amendments to the Constitution will be circulated for ratification on a majority vote.

Items for Discussion

Bidding Process for Rossett Sports Centre (RSC)

It was evident that the meeting understood the rationale behind the processes currently used to allocate the limited spaces we have at the RSC and there were no other suggestions how the current allocation system could be improved.

However, Paddy Keightley did raise the following for discussion. Paddy explained that there seems to be 3 different groupings - 1) competitive players who play for the teams; 2) competitive social players who would like more opportunity to prove themselves to play in the teams; and 3) social players who benefit in other ways from attending the session, whether physically, socially and/or mentally

Paddy proposed that every second Wednesday session should be handed over to the team managers so that the managers could work with their respective teams to deliver, coaching, fitness training and playing sessions. This would be intended to develop stronger and more cohesive teams. However, after lengthy discussion and consideration of the significant impact that this would have on our Wednesday social players an alternative proposal was mooted to take advantage of the spare capacity offered at the AFC on a Monday

ACTION POINT 3 - Team Managers were tasked with meeting to consider the practicalities behind a proposal to increase practice time for their squad players, including setting space aside for fitness training and coaching at the AFC session on a Monday.

Disciplinary

There was a serious discussion about on-field disciplinary behaviour, the outcome of which was that the AGM supported a motion to require referees to apply stricter rules on the most common offences (i.e. not walking, physical contact, aggressive tackles) and on dealing with verbal or physical altercations.

A vote was taken at the meeting which fully supported the need for referees to apply the rules strictly and consistently and also communicate more clearly their decision making

Also it was agreed that any player receiving a red card would automatically receive a 2-week ban as a period for cooling off and reflection.

The reintroduction of post-match referee's reports was discussed and it was agreed that these should be raised and presented to the Management Committee on an 'exception' basis, where the referee thought it was necessary

ACTION POINT 4 – Referees should apply the rules much more rigorously and consistently with immediate effect and report back to the Management Committee via post-match reports where disciplinary matters are involved

Player Awards

Lawrie Coulthard presented a trophy to Derek Rowe on behalf of the 70s' squad in appreciation of Derek's successes in managing the Over-70s, including the team winning the club's first silverware in a cup competition at Cottingham. Lawrie later submitted a proposal that Harrogate Strays introduce annual club awards to celebrate individual achievements. The nature of the awards were to be discussed outside the AGM, with team managers to determine what sort of awards should be presented.

ACTION POINT 5 – Team Managers to meet together to discuss a process for introducing future player awards

Club Facilities

Andy Town raised the issue of the club looking for options to acquire access to even better facilities. Ideas were swapped about future opportunities, and Andy was tasked to work with Derek Rowe in assessing whether the club could find alternative facilities that better suit the club in terms of session timings and capacities.

Any Other Business

Richard Abbott mentioned that last year he suggested setting up a club walking group, but that this did not really get off the ground. He therefore proposed and it was well supported that he try again. Anyone interested in joining the club should contact Rich on his email

richard66.abbott@gmail.com

ACTION POINT 6 – Anyone interested in joining a club walking group that is being set up by Rich Abbott should contact Rich direct on his email which is

richard66.abbott@gmail.com

ACTION POINTS

NO	ACTION POINT	PROGRESS
1	Anyone interested in taking on one of the Management Committee roles should speak to one of the existing members	
2	The proposed amendments to the Constitution will be circulated for ratification on a majority vote	
3	Team Managers were tasked with meeting to consider a proposal to increase practice time for their squad players, including setting space aside for fitness training and coaching at the AFC session on a Monday.	
4	Referees should apply the rules much more rigorously and consistently with immediate effect and report back to the Management Committee via post-match reports where disciplinary matters are involved	
5	Team Managers to meet together to discuss a process for introducing future player awards	
6	Anyone interested in joining a club walking group that is being set up by Rich Abbott should contact Rich direct on his email which is richard66.abbott@gmail.com	