

## **Brighton & Hove Walking Football Club**

### **Annual General Meeting - 3rd March 2025**

**Present:** Jobe Berrington (Chair), Julie Busfield (Treasurer), Jo d'Ambra, Peter Liddell, Paul Flux, Kim Hayes, John O'Donoghue, Franklin Wenham, Will Holland, David Adey, Neil Lewin, Dan Earwaker, Peter Faulkner, Nick Tate, Jeannette Hollingdale, Nigel Hollingdale, Ian Gretton

**Apologies received from:** Robin Adams, Rose Gardner, Rod Chinn, John Finch, Joe Meredith

**Minutes of the 2024 AGM:** These had been emailed to all members and were approved.

**Matters arising: (i)** Franklin's coaching sessions - these had been well attended when they were free but numbers had fallen off when a charge had been introduced and the sessions had been suspended.

**(ii)** The question of preparing a welcome pack and offering mentoring to new members still needed to be considered.

**Chair's Report:** Jobe said it had been another successful year, thanks to members' involvement, with several notable achievements, including:

- The resumption of the Clearwell Cup, a successful event, thanks to the hard work of John O'D and his team.
- After a break of several years, renewal of sponsorship by Clearwell Mobility - thanks to Peter L
- Healthy finances (see below).
- The club's first ever participation in an overseas tournament, in France.
- Continuing involvement of teams in various tournaments - thanks to all team managers.
- A steady influx of new members - thanks to Rose for her work as Membership Secretary.
- Well-run weekly sessions at Preston Park, Hove Park and Moulescoomb.
- An increasing number of social activities.

A number of issues still needed attention, however, among them:

- A selection process for tournaments that satisfies everyone (see below)
- Keeping all members happy, especially in the way weekly sessions are organised.
- Consideration of an extra "strolling" session for over-70s and less physically able members.
- Events to celebrate the club's 10th birthday.

Jobe thanked everyone at the club, and particularly the Management Committee, for their commitment to its successful operation. Individual members' efforts and energy were invaluable. He paid a special tribute to David Adey, who was standing down from all management roles due to health issues. He wished David a speedy recovery and thanked him for all his hard work on behalf of the club.

**Treasurer's Report:** Julie said that the club had a healthy bank balance of £2,996.87. Membership renewals had raised £3,997, and around £500 was being spent on new playing kit.

**Membership Secretary's Report** (presented by IG in Rose's absence): Overall current membership was 121. In the open category four members had not renewed their membership, although none had been regular attenders or long-standing members. In the women's category, 24 elected not to renew, probably due to an increase in the number of other clubs.

A number of former members have pointed out that they are still on mailing lists and have asked to be removed, while there are recently-joined members who may be missing from lists. An updated membership list will be circulated to Management Committee members, squad managers and session organisers to make the necessary amendments.

**Weekly Sessions:** Julie said that more people were needed at Sunday sessions because of the number of members who had left. Nick added that some sessions at Preston Park had recently been called off, because of poor weather or insufficient numbers, but sessions were generally going well.

Nick said that Hove Park sessions were going well and that Rose had taken over some of the tasks previously undertaken by David A. He appealed to members to let him know in advance if they were going to arrive late, but this problem had largely been resolved. A new system would be trialled in April whereby members would let him know in advance whether they would be attending a session, and, if successful, this would be introduced in May.

Peter F thanked Nick for his efforts but said that it was unfair that he should have to do everything and suggested that other members could share refereeing duties. Both Franklin and Ian said they would be willing to share refereeing duties in future, since neither was currently playing, and Jobe said the club would endeavour to get more people involved in refereeing.

**Tournaments:** Franklin said the Bees had had a difficult year. They had been without a recognised goalkeeper for some time but had done well in Worthing tournaments, a credit to the players. Peter L said that the standard of the competition the Dolphins faced had improved dramatically over the last five years, and that they had also had goalkeeping problems, but he was generally very pleased with performances and with the attitude of the players. The Dolphins and the Bees would be taking part in a tournament in Italy later this year. John O'D said the Penguins consistently finished mid-table in Worthing tournaments. They had played friendlies at Rottingdean, Bexhill and Lewes.

David A said that the Dolphins Over-70s were undefeated in tournaments, and that they had entered the national competition. Julie said 12-13 women's teams now took part in a monthly tournament at Withdean and that the Starlings were doing well.

Franklin referred to what he described as the "Rod Chinn situation," where a member had been asked to play for the Bees and then the Dolphins but had declined both and had continued to play for the Penguins instead. He said that a member should play for the

Dolphins if selected. He or she should not be allowed to play for the Penguins in a tournament if they had turned down a request to play for the Dolphins or the Bees.

In a paper read by IG, Rose said that two cultures had developed within the club - (1) the Dolphins/Bees culture based on the organisational structure of a regular football club with the primary goal of creating the best chance of winning, and (2) the Penguins culture of giving a broader range of members the opportunity to play in tournaments than can be achieved in a hierarchical structure. Both cultures needed to be acknowledged and supported. Players who elect to play for the Penguins would then be able to do so free from the expectation that they “should” play for the Dolphins or Bees if asked. All members should be allowed to follow their own preferences in terms of where they elect to play.

Peter L said he had never known a football club where there was no hierarchy of teams. Going “the Penguins way” risked creating a different club.

Jobe said that all people wanted from the club was the enjoyment of playing, and playing in tournaments was part of that enjoyment. The ethos of Walking Football was very different from “ordinary” football.

Franklin said it appeared that the Penguins were trying to get success at the expense of people who had been loyal to the club, adding that the three team managers should get together before tournaments to choose their squads. Nick said that people who did not attend sessions at Hove Park or Preston Park should not be chosen to represent the club in preference to others who do attend.

Suggesting that a group of members should meet separately to discuss the issue of selection, Jobe proposed a change in the Constitution, giving team managers full responsibility for deciding who should play in tournaments. Peter L proposed changing the Constitution to create a hierarchical structure.

**(Note: Changes to the Constitution can only be made after the precise wording of the proposed change(s) has been put before a full meeting of members. A Special General Meeting will be held so that any proposed amendments can be correctly submitted.)**

**Clearwell Cup:** John O'D said that the revived Clearwell Cup tournament had been a great success and he thanked all who had taken part. He agreed to take on the organisation of this year's tournament.

**Website:** Julie said that the club's website had become very fragmented and not very user-friendly. The meeting agreed her proposal to engage a web designer who would re-style and restructure the site at a cost of £350.

**Social Activities:** John O'D reported on a number of successful social events, including a visit to a screening of “Dear England,” a Euros 2024 sweepstake, a night at Hove Greyhound races, a Christmas dinner and a quiz night. Nick said the club's annual cricket match would take place this year on 20th July.

**10th Anniversary:** Jobe reminded members that the club would celebrate its 10th birthday this year and he asked for ideas as to how to celebrate the occasion.

**Election of officers:** (see below)

**Any Other Business:** Nick thanked Peter L for securing £1,650 in sponsorship for the club from Clearwell Mobility.

The meeting closed at 21.05.

**Management Committee:** The following were elected to form the club's Management Committee:

**Chair** - Jobe Berrington

**Treasurer** - Julie Busfield

**Membership Secretary** - Rose Gardner

**Minutes Secretary** - Ian Gretton

**Social Secretary** - John O'Donoghue

**Session organisers** - Nick Tate, Rose Gardner (Hove Park), Rose Gardner (Preston Park mixed), Julie Busfield (Preston Park women)

**Team Managers** - Peter Liddell (Dolphins), John O'Donoghue, Rose Gardner (Penguins), Franklin Wenham (Bees), Julie Busfield, Jo d'Ambra (Starlings)

**Publicity Officer:** Robin Adams

**Kit Managers:** Jeannette Hollingdale, Nigel Hollingdale

**Co-opted Member** - David Adey