

ENGLISH ICE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION COMPANY LIMITED
MEETING OF DIRECTORS 5TH MAY 2007

Minutes of meeting of EIHA Board on 5th May 2007 at the Marina Hotel, Hull at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Ken Taggart, Tony Oliver, Geoff Hemmerman, Rob Laidler, Bob Wilkinson, Neville Moralee, Mohammed Ashraff (Referee-in-Chief), Charles Dacres (National Child Protection & Equity Officer).

In attendance: Liz Moralee (minutes).

Apologies: Irene Jones.

OPENING REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

KT thanked everyone for attending. He said there are many problems and complex issues at the moment.

PROPOSAL TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING
25TH NOVEMBER 2006

The minutes of the Board meeting on 25th November were read, and approved with the following amendment:

Under Insurance & Child Protection, “The employers’ liability and public liability are shared between Zurich and SLE” should read “The employers’ liability policy is now covered by Zurich whilst the public liability is spread between Zurich and Sports Cover UK Ltd”.

Proposed **TO**, seconded **RL**.

MATTERS ARISING

None.

COMPANY BUSINESS – MISS JONES

I. Jones has informed clubs that there is a deadline for returning membership forms in time to be allowed to vote at the AGM.

FINANCIAL REPORT – MR MORALEE

NM has sent out the April reports. The auditors emailed the 2006 financial report to him on 4th May. He and **BW** have signed it off. The report is straightforward, and still shows a profit. **RL**’s 288a was not submitted until after the last financial year, so his name does not appear and there are no expenses listed as being specifically for him. The EIHA are now required to pay corporation tax, as surplus has increased and the first £10k of a company’s profit is now liable to tax. The surplus of nearly £40k is larger than in the past, so this might lead to questions at the AGM. He explained that when the company was first incorporated in 2000, this was at the end of the year, when most registration income for the season had already arrived but there were still heavy outgoings to come. This meant on paper the company showed a big loss, so he agreed with the auditors to write this off in stages. Since he took over as financial director turnover has increased from c. £20k to just over £500k.

He said the finances are in a healthy state. Prices are rapidly increasing, so obviously it is important to allow for this. The auditors say it is prudent to hold reserves of 80% of annual expenditure, but the EIHA have nowhere near that. He explained that non-profit-making does not mean that the EIHA should not make a profit, only that all the money is going towards the stated aims, rather than to Directors or shareholders. It was felt that the surplus is low,

especially when there have been so many threats of lawsuits, and the EIHA have spent several thousand pounds simply on consulting lawyers. **TO** will check whether the Directors' liability insurance covers the company itself as well as individual Directors. It was agreed to approve the financial report, which **NM** will email to all the Board as soon as possible, proposed **KT**, seconded **GH**.

NM is still considering charges for 2007/8. Registration increases should be marginal unless plans need to be changed due to major decisions at this meeting or the AGM. Some thought it would be better to have increases every year at the rate of inflation, since clubs always hate substantial increases even when fees have been frozen for several years. **NM** will distribute proposals.

CHILD PROTECTION & INSURANCE – MR OLIVER

TO has not needed to deal with any child protection cases recently. **CD** is working with an IT company on setting up an e-learning website for the child protection course. **KT** asked why the EIHA could not have CRB checks done online. **CD** has not pursued this as yet.

TO has made a request to the insurers for details of premiums for next season, but has had no response as yet. He will distribute the information as soon as he receives it. He considers the travel insurance policy a great success. Increasing numbers of clubs and individuals are contacting him about it. One application was found to include parents, and he had to tell the club that the cover could not apply to these. For the new season he will remind clubs that the travel insurance policy is only for players and for other personnel who are both registered with the EIHA and acting as team staff on that trip. He has been approached several times by other brokers, but thinks the EIHA should remain with the current insurers. As well as having expertise in dealing with hockey, Lockton are now one of the biggest brokers in the world. **AIG** have been exceptionally good when there were claims.

He cannot attend the CCPR meeting on 15th May, so **RL** has agreed to go. The next one is the AGM.

A letter has just come from Stephen Britton about the Martin Sibley insurance claim. He advises the EIHA to be very careful about what they say to Forbes, Martin Sibley's solicitor, especially in response to questions about unregistered off-ice officials and referees' responsibilities, and to keep the insurers informed. However he can see no reason to withhold other information. It is the insurers who have turned the claim down, because at that time unregistered off-ice officials were not insured. **NM** thought it unwise to send any information, since Forbes have not ruled out the possibility of court action against the EIHA. He attended Forbes' assessment at the rink, but told them nothing apart from straightforward facts such as where the goal judge stands. It is still unclear how the accident actually happened. **BW** is particularly concerned about this claim, because MPs have raised the issues of Marc Twaite and Paul Berrington. Since these injured players did not receive payouts from their clubs, Richard Caborn is now expecting **IHUK** to see they are compensated. If players are injured and their club or league goes into liquidation, they could then make a claim against **IHUK**. It was agreed to work on the letter to Forbes over the next few days, for **TO** to send marked "without prejudice". He will forward correspondence about the Martin Sibley claim to Lockton.

Later in the meeting there was a discussion of what information to send to Forbes. Most thought it best to send all the information they have asked for, so they cannot think there is something to hide. They probably already have the EIHA Rules & Regulations. The **IHF** rules about rinks are geared towards World Championship venues, and 90% of the world's rinks do not meet these requirements. **BW** said the EIHA could be in trouble if they are not complying with **IHF** rules; **GH** asked if this meant that hockey should be stopped at most rinks. There is no outline of the referee's responsibility. The rule book is very clear about the referee's responsibility with regard to playing rules, but says nothing about what he should do about the venue. A referee may bring any hazard to the rink's attention, but then so may any person present. **MA** said it is the responsibility of rink staff, not the referee, to ensure that netting is in good condition and properly fixed. Goal judges should be informed how close to

the ice it is safe to stand. He asked who is looking at which rinks are safe for hockey. This would need a visit to every rink by people trained in risk assessment. It was asked who would be liable if there were then a problem. **GH** said if something goes wrong, the problem is usually not with the risk assessment but with people failing to follow procedures. **MA** has been following the case of the cricketer injured by a sight screen; the council said the hirers of the ground should have done a risk assessment. He said a risk assessment would protect insurance, and give weight to clubs' requests for safety alterations. He said clubs should be advised that they are not to take responsibility for safety, but should tell their rinks to make alterations where necessary. It could cause trouble for Billingham IHC if the EIHA say they do not approve of clubs using unregistered off-ice officials. Billingham could say the EIHA insisted on goal judges, so this was the only way they could comply. At the time the EIHA advised clubs to have off-ice officials trained and registered, but this was not compulsory. The aims of the EIHA are in the Memorandum of Association. At the time of the accident Billingham IHC were affiliated to the EIHA. Responsibilities of clubs are shown in various documents. As far as the Board are aware Billingham IHC were complying with EIHA and IIHF rules. They had netting up as required. It is the club's responsibility to supply their own off-ice officials. Martin Sibley had no training. There were off-ice official courses available, but these cover only the specific duties; the goal judge section is about deciding whether the puck was in the net and counting shots on goal. Forbes can be sent a manual. It is assumed that anyone who volunteered knew what was required.

IHUK UPDATE – MR WILKINSON

Stuart Muir has taken over from the late Stuart Robertson as SIHL director. There was a board meeting on 26th April. Simon Kirkham is the new referee-in-chief. **BW** and **NM** gave **MA** strong support for this position, but were outvoted by the EIHL and SIHL directors. National federations will now need to pay only once for an ITC however long the player is staying, and may convert a limited to an unlimited ITC free of charge. This will mean a shortfall in IHUK funding of c. £20k. At the meeting the EIHL directors first proposed a levy on all players in the country. **NM** pointed out that while players are the income stream for the EIHA, the EIHL's income stream is spectators. Then without warning the EIHL directors brought out a new funding plan, where each club pays a fee to IHUK and then obtains ITCs free of charge. The EIHL are planning to implement this for their clubs next season. **BW** initially thought this might work, but having had more time to think he is not happy about it. He considers the EIHL should be paying in relation to numbers of spectators. **NM** has distributed a report on the plan and its implications. **KT** said the plan is taxation without representation. **NM** said at the moment the EIHA are paying a £13k contribution, but the ITC charges, mean the total paid to IHUK is c. £25k (the EIHL pay a £20k contribution and provide IHUK with office services). IHUK have cut costs to the bone, and without ITC income the GB teams programme would not exist. **KT** is sure the EPIHL clubs will not be prepared to continue paying the same knowing that ITC costs should be less. **NM** asked what is to happen to the GB teams if there is no income to replace the ITC shortfall. **BW** reminded the Board that when the YMG were consulted about raising registrations by £2 to fund IHUK, they asked why their children should be paying for Canadians. It is mostly the EPIHL clubs who will save money on ITCs, and the Board thought if the EPIHL clubs will be paying less to IHUK it is unreasonable to expect other clubs to pay more. **BW** pointed out that at the EPIHL Finals EIHA officers do most of the work but the income goes to the clubs. **RL** said there will be discussions over the next few months about whether the event should continue to be run by the EIHA. **NM** said if ITCs are free of charge there is likely to be an increase in non-British-trained players in the ENIHL. **MA** suggested a gate tax for the EIHL and EPIHL. This should be introduced with a press release about how fans will be supporting the GB teams. Once the shortfall was covered the clubs could keep the rest. However this would be difficult to administer, and the EIHL are unwilling even to discuss charging spectators to fund IHUK. There will need to be discussions with SIHL about IHUK funding for IHUK. **KT** asked if this issue should be brought up at the meeting with Richard Caborn, where he has a

lot he wants to say. **BW** said the GB teams desperately need money to rise up the world rankings. **GH** said more publicity to the rest of the hockey world would help the GB teams programme. Few people are aware of how the system works, for example that teams receive more money from the IIHF the higher they finish.

BW has spoken to Sportmatch, after Newcastle Vipers managed to Sportmatch their sponsorship money from Mobilx. He would be able to register the School of Excellence under his own name and Sportmatch sponsorship from the EIHA, and Sportmatch EIHL contributions for GB teams. However there will not always be new money available. **CD** said Bradford IHC Sportmatched sponsorship from the rink. Harry Howton offered to travel to clubs to brief them on Sportmatch, but only three clubs asked. **BW** thinks it is worth the effort to make so much more money.

BW said there are problems with the U10s, with only 50 fixtures fulfilled this season. He and Val Wilkinson have asked Conference chairs and secretaries to a meeting on 3rd June to discuss U10 issues, and Directors are welcome to attend. The meeting will also involve planning for the U10 jamborees for the IIHF centenary. The local clubs will be asked to run them. There is a possible sponsor for medals. He is planning a dinner in the evening, and would like to bring the Churchill Cup. He will ask Martyn C Harris if there are any survivors of the 1936 Olympic team who can be invited.

CORPORATE CARDS – MR WILKINSON

BW has spoken to **NM** about this. **NM** now has a debit card for the account, and with Board approval he can obtain more. **MA** suggested having credit cards instead; **NM** will look into this. **NM** said it is very important to provide receipts for the auditors. **MA** will send **NM** his company's expenses policy.

EXPENSES – MR WILKINSON

BW has discussed with **NM** his concerns that within the EIHA many people are doing important jobs for nothing. He asked if there is any way the EIHA could give them thank-you bonuses or presents. Most were in favour of some kind of formal recognition. The Articles of Association prohibit remuneration for Directors. Already various arrangements are made to give treats to officers, such as the junior dinner and the box at the EIHL Finals. There are awards for every five years of service. The OCM have introduced certificates and badges for long-serving officials. **KT** said while currently people are overworked, if the EIHA started paying bonuses there would be many offers to do important jobs from people interested only in the money, and more in-fighting. Also clubs would immediately expect much better service. Volunteers carry on for as long as they are enjoying the work, but payment changes their attitude. Hockey now needs a large number of people to run. **NM** has worked out at various times what the Board would cost the EIHA if they were all paid, and how much it would cost to give an honorarium for all officers, and the total is always huge.

It would be very difficult to work out which people should be eligible, and how much each should receive. Also this income would be taxable. Whether someone receives remuneration or not might depend on whether or not they are still with a club. Most thought vouchers would be better than giving cash. A meeting allowance was suggested. This must not lead to an increase in meetings to the sake of it. The allowance should only be for the core people in each committee. However it might be difficult to determine which are the core people and functions. For this too the amounts would quickly build up. The matter will be discussed further at the next Board meeting.

COACHING PROGRAMME – MR WILKINSON / APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF COACHING PROGRAMME – MR LAIDLER

Alan Moutrey is stepping down as Head of Coaching after July. It was felt that he has done an excellent job, in terms of both coaching expertise and man-management. **BW** has discussed the position with **NM**, and they both consider the new Head of Coaching needs administrative skills, as well as knowledge of coaching and hockey generally. **KT** has told Alan Moutrey that he wants the programme to be led by a qualified coach who can move it forward. While Tony Hall, Erskine Douglas and Darryl Easson might seem like natural successors, none of them want the job. **BW** said apart from these three and Alan Moutrey, no one has wanted to do the work. (In general he has found that when people are sent abroad to courses and camps, they are rarely willing to take on responsibilities when they return.) Alan Moutrey has agreed to make recommendations to the Board, and there will be further discussions with him over the weekend. He will help his successor over the transition period. **CD** said the National Coaching Seminar should give the programme an action plan for the next few years.

REPLACEMENT OF MR OLIVER AFTER HIS RETIREMENT – MR WILKINSON

BW has consulted several people about this. There is no one who can carry out all **TO**'s duties. In spite of many people asking him to stay on, he does not want to change his mind. **KT** has asked **CD** about taking over from **TO** with child protection and CCPR issues. **RL** has offered to attend CCPR events. However it might be difficult for him to go to all the quarterly meetings in London. **NM** will continue to attend some of these.

BW thinks any new Director should be from the South, as many people in the South are unhappy that most of the Board are from the North. It was emphasised that the Board must be very careful about co-opting new Directors, especially as it is not easy to remove them if they prove inadequate. Unfortunately the South has lost many hard-working people who might have made good Directors. **I. Jones** has issued a notice inviting nominations before the AGM. **KT** has spoken to various people in the South who he thought might be interested. He told them that it is unwise for many reasons to be involved with a club when on the Board; it turned out most were unwilling to relinquish club commitments. He proposed that David Hurn be co-opted on to the Board. He is willing to abandon commitments to the Oxford club. **MA** said some of the clubs would not be happy if a new Director were co-opted on from a Div 2 club. However David Hurn is doing a considerable amount of work for the EIHA as well as Oxford. It was decided to announce **TO**'s retirement at the AGM, and co-opt David Hurn to the Board at the next Board meeting after the AGM. It was agreed unanimously that **TO** should be Honorary Vice-President after he retires, proposed **NM**, seconded **BW**.

REC SECTION ONLINE REGISTRATIONS / WEBSITE – MR LAIDLER

Tony Wood had sent in advance a report on the online system for rec registrations, which is working very well. It cost c. £2.5k to set up. **BW** said doing all registrations in this way is a brilliant idea in theory, but Val Wilkinson has given it a lot of thought and does not believe the system would work for the Juniors. Also uploading the photos is very time-consuming, and junior players would need a new photo every year. Juniors need a parent's signature. **RL** said the Rec Section brought in a new system in order to make their work easier, and there should be technology that would do the same for Val Wilkinson, for example letting clubs type in details so she does not have to. He said the EIHA need a strategy for new technology. **BW** is not sure that dispensing with licences is a good idea for all sections, and thinks it would cause trouble especially with coaches. **MA** said it is simple to make licences with credit card machines, with up to five fields printed on them. If having machines for all the registration secretaries were too expensive, one of them could make all the cards.

MA said the new Coaching Programme website should be ready by mid-May. **BW** said Malcolm Preen does an excellent job with the EIHA site, but it is an information site only. He

would like the Conference Tournament to have its own website, in similar fashion to the Chris Verwijst Tournament site, with the tournament history and photographs of winning teams. This would be linked from the EIHA site. **GH** will provide all the tournament records. He said now the games are being filmed, it might be possible to have them shown live on the site.

MINIMUM BENCH NUMBERS – MR HEMMERMAN

GH says although he anticipated many problems over this rule, there have been few games this season when a team played below strength.

DEADLINES – MR HEMMERMAN

There have been problems over clubs being unaware of when the deadlines were, although they appeared on Val Wilkinson's registration paperwork, and there were no changes from last season. **GH** thinks there should be more publicity of the deadlines, including a specific notice to clubs. **BW** said it might be best not to schedule games for the weekend of the NHL games in London. He has written to Gary Bettman saying when a team from the UK go abroad to play it is standard to inform the foreign federation, but was told the NHL can do as they please.

FACE-OFF TIMES (ALL LEAGUES) – MR HEMMERMAN

MA is planning meetings in the North and South between referees and EPIHL and ENIHL coaches. These are unlikely to take place before September, because many teams do not know until then who their coaches will be. **GH** said the biggest problems in leagues is when there is a big disparity between numbers of teams playing home games on Saturday and teams playing home games on Sunday. Senior teams do not want the season to be lengthened, because that means paying the players for longer. The playoffs clash with GB World Championship games. **BW** said the EIHL want to take all the international breaks. Hungary U20s want to come to the UK in August to play GB U20s.

Because of the 6.45 face-off deadline, many games were never played and many others went to running clock. Most thought some discretion over the deadline was needed. **MA** said the deadline is in the Rules & Regulations, and there have been many problems with officials complaining about late face-off. The OCM therefore decided on a surcharge for face-offs later than 6.45 for EPIHL, ENIHL and Women. The Board would be able to change the rule. He said referees give a 5-minute penalty for a late face-off, and this tactic is working. **GH** said some of the times clubs give for face-offs are unrealistic. This means officials are unwilling to accept allocations for these clubs' games, because they know they will finish late. He proposed changing the face-off deadline to 7.30 (possibly only on a dispensation basis), which would ease not only this problem but also the general fixture congestion. Others said 7.30 is too late, both for officials driving home and for children with school the next day. Most thought only U16s and above should be able to face off at 7.30. **GH** pointed out that times of arriving home vary a great deal with distance travelled, for example if Whitley Bay travel to Telford for a 4.30 face-off they will not be home until midnight. He considers face-off times for games is nowhere near as serious a problem as late-night Conference training. He is where possible scheduling the teams which are closest together to play each other on Sundays. **MA** said officials specify how far they are prepared to travel and at what times, so if games are allowed to face off later there will be some games which no officials will accept. This is partly why he is considering having a three-man system only for senior hockey and U19s, and U16 Div 1 if possible. Referees do not want to shorten a game because it faced off late. It was agreed to have face-off deadlines of 7.30 for Saturdays and Sundays for 2007/8. A 7.30 game must face off promptly with no leeway allowed. This will be reviewed after a year, with input from **MA** and the fixture secretaries.

REFEREES' NON-APPEARANCE AT APPEALS – MR LAIDLER

RL and **MA** have been exchanging correspondence about this. **MA** thinks the last two appeals he attended should not have taken place at all, since the appeals procedure specifies that an appeal requires new evidence, and there was none. The last one was an appeal only against the length of the suspension. He said the panel should provide an explanation for the decision. **KT** said a lawyer has told him natural justice demands that everyone should have the chance for an appeal. In one recent appeal the referee's report exaggerated, while another was about reputation. There have only been three appeals this year.

Appeals are often in a different part of the country from the officials' home. **MA** said if the appeal is about length of suspension the official should not be required to attend. **NM** said there is no reason for **MA** to attend appeals unless there is a dispute over rule interpretation. The chair of the appeal panel should decide who should attend. It was agreed that for an appeal the player should be accompanied by no more than one other person, and all the paperwork must go to all the panel at least seven days in advance, subject to the chair's decision.

MA thinks a player who is given a long suspension should be allowed some input before the final judgement. **NM** said other sports have a cooling-off period which gives everyone a chance to give their side of the story. While it is for the players' benefit that the EIHA are always in a hurry to make the final decision, this is not always the most sensible course of action. The rules say only that a match penalty means the player is suspended until informed otherwise by the EIHA. **MA** said in some sports players are suspended until further notice. He said if the suspension is for four or more games, the club and coach should be informed, to give them the chance to send evidence. **KT** said it is made very clear that they do not need to wait until they receive notification of the suspension, but should instead get the evidence to Sue Tomalin by the Wednesday after the game. **MA** said there should be a central list of suspensions which is sent out to all discipline officers every week. As well as keeping everyone informed, this would help achieve greater consistency of penalties between sections. There have been problems with persistent offenders, so he would like the standard tariffs to be doubled.

U16S PLAYING IN SENIOR LEAGUE – MR LAIDLER

CD has consulted other sports governing bodies and lawyers, but received no definitive guidance. Advice varies between local authorities. He spoke to Essex County Council, who said ice hockey is a rough sport, and unsuitable for U16s playing in senior leagues. If there is a problem the council can be liable if they issued the player with a licence. The English Cricket Board advise not to place a player in unreasonable risk, or put the opposing team in a position where they cannot play as they would wish. Young players must wear helmets with faceguards. U13s need parental consent for playing in an adult game. There are certain places on the pitch where U15s may not stand. **KT** said that while cricket is dangerous, the big issue for hockey is body contact. **BW** proposed following the IIHF World Championship minimum ages of 16 for U20 and senior competitions and 15 for U18. It was agreed that players must be at least 16 to play EPIHL, ENIHL or senior Women. Whether players too young to play in these leagues would be able to play EIHL would be the EIHL team's decision.

For an U16 wanting to train with a senior team, **CD** said it would be the coach's responsibility to obtain parental consent. In rugby a junior playing alongside adults needs approval of the parents and the Colts coach. Clubs will be told that U16s may continue to train with senior teams.

Changing the U19 league to U18, with a minimum age of 15, had been discussed previously. This would avoid problems of U18s playing alongside adults in the U19s. **NM** was very unhappy at the prospect of dropping such a bombshell at the AGM, and advised giving clubs one year's warning. There are c. 200 players who instead of having one more year in the U19s could be forced out of league hockey. **KT** said if the U19 league carries on there could still be

serious problems if a 19-year-old injures a 16-year-old, with a serious risk of lawsuits. However councils might start granting licences to U16s. CD said in this case it would be best to follow precedents from other sports. There could also be problems over insurance, and if there are any claims the premiums are likely to increase hugely. **GH** said some ENIHL teams rely on 15-year-olds to meet minimum bench requirements. **BW** suggested asking I. Jones to send clubs a letter giving the options. **KT** said the Board are responsible for keeping people safe, and this is one issue where they need to make a hard and fast rule, as allowing the clubs to decide would only cause mayhem. Clubs should be notified that the U19 league will change to U18 for 2007/8, with age limits of 15 for the U18s and 16 for the senior leagues. **RL** said a press release must go to the clubs straight away. It must show how the decision is being made for good reasons. **NM** said the press release should make clear that the EIHA have been forced into such a decision because of developing legislation in child protection, and after consultation with statutory authorities and other sports governing bodies. CD said lawyers regularly quote the Sheldon Kennedy case. **NM** however pointed out that in hockey all there is to go on is Essex County Council's decision, which is full of holes. He is therefore concerned that the EIHA could face major problems whatever they do.

GH said the problems are even worse in the Women's leagues, where some 220 U16 female players are affected, with around 78 of them being new to the sport. **KT** said the Women should change to a single league divided into North and South, with development cup competitions for U16s. **GH** also reminded the Board that the England U16 Girls play against senior women's teams at the Prague tournament. **KT** advised that they should not go, but find a tournament for U16 girls instead. However **GH** and **BW** have researched this and found very few options available, as not many countries have U16 girls' teams. Playing U16 boys could present even more risks. Some thought rules on U16s in adult hockey should be different for the Women because they play non-checking. However **KT** said checking is not the only issue, and if an adult even falls on top of a minor there could be a lawsuit. **BW** said if the U16 are not going to Prague then there is no point continuing with the team. It was agreed that the Prague trip should go ahead. **BW** said the furore started at Chelmsford is crucifying hockey development. **GB** Women had been aiming to reach the Olympics in 2014, but he said there is no chance of this if the rules have to be changed. **KT** said they need to think about the risk of being sued.

MA said many parents have written to him about the position of U16 officials. As well as the acts cited by Essex County Council, there is legislation about working hours, and U13s are not allowed to be employed in any capacity. These rules were not written with sport in mind. Working hours permitted are different on Sundays, which would affect a high proportion of games. All the time they are in the rink counts as working hours. Legal advisers do not have clear answers. The National Network for Children in Employment and Entertainment say the law cannot be circumvented by giving services instead of payment, and the officials would still need to go to the council for licences. 8 officials are 13 or under, and 77 are 14 or 15. There is now a minimum age of 13 for attending Referee Level 1, and only officials aged at least 14 are being allocated games. **MA** said there will not be enough officials to cover all games. Possible options are: allow U16 officials to receive travel expenses but no match fees; change the payment system so the U16s deal only with the clubs; or change policy on which leagues need a three-man system. He does not want minors to be in charge of an U19 game. **GH** suggested letting U10 games be officiated by coaches. **MA** reported that the World Championships are going to a four-man system, but it is unlikely that it will be introduced in top European leagues next season as the IIHF are waiting for feedback. Joy Tottman needs to practise with a four-man system; this could be done in events such as the Conference Tournament. **NM** reminded the Board that there has been no legal challenge, and some of this legislation has been in existence for 70 years without impacting on sport, so he advised taking no action for the time being.

GH asked if changing the age groups would mean a review of minimum bench numbers. **KT** said the rules would be unchanged, but there could be dispensations as before. **GH** reminded the Board that the minimum bench number rules were to be reviewed after one year. While they have been working well up till now, a minimum age of 16 for the Women's leagues

would cause major problems and make a disproportionate impact on women's hockey. It was pointed out that he can still give dispensation for women's teams to play with a short bench, regardless of whether or not dispensations are being granted in other leagues.

REVIEW OF NEW STANDARD OF OFFICIATING – MR LAIDLER

RL said now the new policy has been going for a year, the Board and officers need to consider how well it is doing and how they wish to proceed. **MA** said the OCM needed to set the standard high because of British teams' typical style of play, but later in the season they were able to relax it somewhat. Introduction of the new policy would have benefited from more education materials. The new policy has reduced injuries and violent conduct, and created more fast skating and goal-scoring opportunities. Smaller players are now not afraid to go up against larger ones. Players now know they need to check properly, which is a problem for coaches who are not good at teaching checking. **BW** said at the World Championships GB expected the referees to be harsh, but they were not. Joy Tottman has said the EIHA have been stricter over some infractions than North America, but looser over others. **MA** said the intention is to stick to low tolerance as described in *Ice Times*, which he expects all clubs will find acceptable. All referees will attend camps in the summer, where there will be a focus on these issues. The meetings between referees and coaches will help ensure that everyone knows what is happening.

EIHA DEVELOPMENT PLAN – MR LAIDLER

There has not been time for a meeting to update the development plan. **BW** and **NM** have been discussing how best to deal with some of the documents which ought to be updated and require input from many people. They concluded that it would be best for Board members and officers to work on them in pairs to begin with, and collate feedback from others. While these jobs need to be done it is important not to rush them.

EIHA RULES & REGULATIONS REVIEW – MR LAIDLER

RL believes these should not take very long to complete. There are decisions made at this meeting which should be included. The in-house rules need to be issued by c. 15th August. He suggested the updated Rules & Regulations could go out at the same time. **NM** said there is no hurry to issue the new Rules & Regulations, but they will need to be approved by the AGM at some stage. It was agreed to work on the new version over the coming year and have them approved at the 2008 AGM.

REGULARITY OF BOARD MEETINGS – MR LAIDLER

RL has said it would be better to have more Board meetings, as at the moment they are infrequent, and there seem to be more and more complicated issues to deal with. Communication has improved now everyone has access to the minutes. **MA** said discussions could often be done by conference call. He will discuss this with **NM**. **BW** thinks more people should be asked to Board meetings, including the heads of Coaching, Officiating, Child Protection, Discipline and Juniors.

PREPARATION FOR THE AGM AND SECTION MEETINGS – MR LAIDLER

RL said the arrangements for the AGM and section meetings make it difficult to discuss matters where the same people's input is needed at more than one meeting at a time, e.g. fixture secretaries. Another problem with having more than one at a time is that people sign in for one meeting and then go on to another. **KT** however said people simply need to delegate.

It was still thought best to have all the meetings over one weekend, and have general reports only at the AGM. MA has been considering how to hold the meetings on one weekend but consecutively; he will work out a schedule and distribute it.

KT said Andy French has not changed his mind about resigning as fixture secretary for the South Juniors. Tony Lack is taking over for the U16s and below. **BW** said there is no problem with this, but he was unhappy that he had not been informed. He has approached Rita Mackriell to take over as chair of the YMG. She is already doing much of the organising, e.g. for the Conference Tournament and Junior Finals. He will then be able to delegate a lot of the day-to-day work, but will still attend all the meetings as director of youth hockey.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

CD reported that a Level 2 coach at his club was caught on CCTV stealing a player's skates. The police ordered him to the station. He then brought the skates back, but they had a label on saying "Free to a good home". This meant the police did not press charges. The club have suspended the coach, and the rink have banned him out. There is nothing in the rules to cover such incidents. When coaches move clubs, the new club are advised to ask for a reference from the old club. MA however said clubs do not ask for references, as they are so pleased to have another coach. The EIHA are not obliged to register everyone who applies, however they need reasonable justification for refusing. CD said the coach brought the game into disrepute. He advised adding a passage to the coaches' code of conduct to say that coaches may face sanctions if they act in a way that is not in the best interests of the sport. **KT** will discuss it with him later.

It was agreed that the England U16 Girls should have a subsidy for the Prague tournament. Team Wales have asked for a subsidy for going to Prague. It was decided to let them know this is not possible. There is insufficient funding to send more than one team from the EIHA to each tournament. When Team Wales were given £500 to play Scotland this was a one-off. There was concern that if the EIHA start giving regular funding to Team Wales they will then be expected to fund Welsh teams at other age groups.

An assault on Rene Ross in the officials' dressing room prompted senior officials to write to MA, asking who is evaluating the suitability of rinks for officials changing and for hockey in general. He said it is important to find out which clubs have a risk assessment in place. **NM** said risk assessment issues should be between the club and the venue. If a club make a commitment to enter a league, part of this commitment is that they expect the rink to be fit for purpose. It was agreed that this should be included in the Rules & Regulations. Rinks in any case should have their own risk assessments. Officials have a right to refuse allocations where they are unhappy with the venue. **GH** suggested having a template with questions clubs should be asking their rinks. **BW** asked if this is necessary, since all these rinks have been used for hockey for a long time. **GH** said some rinks are in very bad condition, and they are becoming worse all the time. MA recommended that rinks should have separation between the home and away team; it is simple to put up a piece of wood between the benches. Officials are asking for hard-line rules about lines and lighting, as problems with these make it impossible to do their job properly. Alan Hankin, who is both an official and a rink manager, will draft a letter to rink managers.

The meeting ended at 5.00 p.m.

Signed..... Date.....