

ENGLISH ICE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION COMPANY LIMITED
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2007

Minutes of EIHA AGM on 9th June 2007 at the Buckatree Hall Hotel, Telford at 10 a.m.

Board Present: Irene Jones, Geoff Hemmerman, Rob Laidler, Neville Moralee, Tony Oliver, Ken Taggart, Bob Wilkinson.

EIHA: Jayne Bowns (Midlands Conference Secretary), Tony Boynton (Recreational Section Chairman), Charles Dacres (National Child Protection & Equity Officer), John Freeman (Recreational Section Treasurer), Andy French (EPIHL & Junior Fixtures), Liz Moralee (Coaching & Officiating Administrator, Minutes), Rita MacKriel (Midlands Conference Chair), Alan Moutrey (Head of Coaching), Malcolm Preen (Statistician, Webmaster), Jacqueline Pye (Northern Conference Chair), Pauline Rost (South East Conference Chair), Anna Walters (Women's Premier League Fixtures).

Members: Basingstoke: F Seagrave (Bison Ladies), C-A Watt (U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Billingham: B McCabe (ENIHL, Ladies, U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Blackburn: E Williams (Ladies), G Gillingham, R Gillingham (U19 x 2, U16, U14, U12, U10); Bracknell: S House, T Lack, D Kyte (Bracknell IHC All Ages); Bradford: B Brown (ENIHL, U19, U16, U14, U12); Cardiff: P Hayes (ENIHL, U19, U16 x 2, U14, U12, U10), M Ball (Ladies); Chelmsford: S Green (EPIHL), F Wright (Ladies), G Staples (U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Coventry: D Adey (Ladies), D Martin (U19 x 2, U16 x 2, U14 x 2, U12 x 2, U10); Flintshire: N Ryland (ENIHL), C Roberts (U19, U16, U14, U10); Guildford: S Annetts (Ladies, U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Haringey: A Andrews (ENIHL); Invicta: J Mason (ENIHL, Ladies, U16, U14, U12, U10), B Parkinson (U19); Kingston: S Jones (ENIHL), S Ralph (U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Lee Valley: E Joseph (U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Manchester: G Crebbin (U19, U14); Milton Keynes: D Fairhurst (ENIHL), F Heron (U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Newcastle: J Pye (ENIHL, Ladies, U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Nottingham: K Webber, R Blount (ENIHL), L Fisk (Ladies, U19 x 2, U16 x 2, U14 x 2, U12, U10); Oxford: G Dent (ENIHL, Ladies, U19, U16, U14, U12); Oxford University: G Dent (Ladies); Peterborough: G Coomes (ENIHL), A Wilson (U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Romford: A Taylor (EPIHL, ENIHL, U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Sheffield: L Millard, S Packwood (EPIHL, ENIHL); Slough: P Rost (EPIHL, U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Solent & Gosport: R Richbell (ENIHL, U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Solihull: A Gordon (U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Streatham: J Koral (Streatham IHC All Teams); Sutton: G Apsley (All Ages); Swindon: M Thompson (EPIHL), M Armstrong (Ladies), S Godfrey (U19, U16 x 2, U14 x 2, U12, U10); Telford: N Alderson (Ladies), T Rathwell (U19, U16, U14, U12, U10); Whitley Bay: J Crammond (ENIHL), G Wood (Development All Ages/Women).

Present not yet members: Basingstoke Bears: L Dorrington, L Pearson (Ladies); Isle of Wight: F Seagrave (Juniors).

OPENING REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

KT thanked everyone for coming. He hoped the atmosphere would be calmer by the end of the meeting.

APOLOGIES

Sue Tomalin, Mohammed Ashraff, Ashfield Avalanche.

PROPOSAL TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 10TH JUNE 2006

The minutes of the 2006 AGM were read and approved. Proposed Chelmsford, seconded Solent & Gosport.

MATTERS ARISING

None.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – MR K TAGGART

KT explained that the EIHA became a limited company in the 1990s. Grant aid and Sportsmatch applications for England and Wales come through the EIHA unless they involve GB teams or GB-wide programmes. Becoming a limited company removed financial risk for the members and Board.

He gave a presentation (copy attached). He introduced the Directors while going through their titles and functions. They do other work in addition to their main duties as listed, for example he has been helping Sue Tomalin with discipline. The EIHA are actively involved with all the GB teams except the Seniors. The amount of work involved is continually increasing, especially over the last few years. This is because some sections have become much bigger, particularly rec and university hockey. Also directors and officers have to do a great deal of chasing up. One of the most time-consuming jobs is dealing with the frequent fixture changes and the consequent juggling of officials, which sometimes mean 20 phone calls as well as many emails. Directors are required to stand down in rotation, but may be re-elected. Further people may be co-opted on to the Board. The Board now insist that new people co-opted on must not be attached to a club. All the current Directors have a lot of experience at club level but have not been closely involved with a club for some time.

The IIHF's rules apply worldwide. However some of them cannot be rigidly adhered to: for example their specifications for rinks are designed for World Championships, and 90% of rinks do not comply. The IIHF deal with only one governing body per nation, which in the UK is IHUK. As well as liaison with the IIHF, IHUK run the GB teams and deal with ITCs. It was the IIHF who recommended that IHUK become a partnership of the governing bodies running hockey. At the time these were the Ice Hockey Superleague, British National League, EIHA and Scottish Ice Hockey Association. The Northern Ireland Ice Hockey Federation joined IHUK later on, but following a great many problems in Northern Ireland SIHL have been looking after hockey there. England and Wales have worked together for a long time. Each partner organisation has two representatives on the IHUK board. The EIHL is profit-driven, while the EIHA and SIHL are development-driven. Over the last year IHUK have been successful and worked together in harmony. The Sports Minister is unhappy about some aspects of ice hockey, particularly two insurance claims which were not settled. In the past he has had some sports completely overhauled, and while he does not seem particularly unhappy with ice hockey his interest in it is likely to have some impact.

The development structure is along IIHF lines, except that they recommend U18 and U20 leagues, for which the EIHA would not have enough ice time. Numbers are going up at some clubs, but others are in difficulties. Not enough players are coming in at U10. There will be a meeting soon to look at solutions to this and other problems in the U10s. While some talk about the EPIHL as though it were a professional league, it is a development competition which in his opinion has only one or two clubs which could cope with professional hockey. The league has been stable, and is now pushing upwards towards the former BNL level, while the ENIHL is also improving. Players in these leagues who did not learn their hockey in the UK are non-British-trained players, not "imports". There have been discipline problems in the U19s. The Junior leagues have worked well this season apart from fixture congestion. The Conference Tournament is still driven by a small number of people. The Conference teams provide the following year's England teams. The England teams up to U16 play in

tournaments abroad every year. England U19s play against Scotland at the EIHL Finals Weekend. The England U17s form the basis of the GB U18s, and the England U19s likewise with the GB U20s. The expanded England Women programme is working well. The EIHA is almost the only hockey governing body in the world with a national teams programme for U16 girls. The Board and officers try to stay out of clubs' internal business. He considers the current voting system is as fair as can reasonably be expected. With each team allowed a vote, there is no risk of having one team voting on behalf of others with whom they have no genuine connection. He asked clubs to bear in mind the shortage of ice time everywhere, which is one of the biggest problems in the EIHA. He has told Richard Caborn that the UK needs 50 more ice rinks. The reply was that someone needs to show how rinks can be made into an investment. The government have largely lost interest in winter sports, even those they used to fund substantially, and EIHA representatives have to remind them at events like CCPR meetings that hockey exists. Even where there is a rink hockey is often low priority because other activities provide more income, especially since *Dancing On Ice*.

Regarding the press release about U16s no longer being allowed to play up in senior leagues, councils have no issues with youth leagues or the Conference and national teams programme, but only with U16s taking part in adult hockey in front of a paying audience. The two U16 players to whom Essex County Council refused to grant licences had hardly any ice time in the senior team. Indeed this is the same for most of the U16s in the EPIHL and ENIHL, who are there to make up the numbers. Essex County Council have now informed other councils about the issue. Another council have said they do not mind U16 girls playing in senior women's teams so long as they are not playing in front of a paying audience, but they do not mention risk assessment issues. At Chelmsford it was made clear that the issue was one of child protection, and an U16 should not be playing against adults. Chelmsford said one of the players refused a licence was 14 and quite small. They also wanted to make clear that it was not the club who went to the council, but a concerned parent who had been threatened with legal action. They have legal advice that if U16 players play in senior games without a licence they are breaking the law.

The Board were far from happy at Essex County Council's justification for the decision. They therefore made no changes to the rules at the beginning of the season. They consulted other councils, governing bodies of other sports, and the CCPR. It is quite likely that clubs could find a council to give the answer they want. However it is hard to elicit written guidance, as organisations are worried about incriminating themselves. Councils also need to consider the issue of playing in front of a paying audience. Other sports such as rugby, football, field hockey and cricket are having similar problems and bringing in similar rules. Ice hockey is in a particularly difficult position because it is perceived as dangerous, as shown by Essex County Council's letter. They also obtained legal advice, which was that having children playing alongside adults leaves the EIHA exposed to risk. The Board are very worried about putting the EIHA at risk of legal action. They are already spending £100k on liability insurance. If there were a claim the premiums would double, and they do not know how they would find the money. The law is coming more and more into hockey, for example recently a brawl led to a player being charged with GBH, fined and put on probation. Under present legislation the EIHA cannot afford to take risks; the world has changed a great deal since players such as Tony Hand played senior hockey in their early teens. The Board therefore decided to change the U19 League to U18, with minimum ages in line with IIHF recommendations of 15 for the U18s and 16 for the EPIHL, ENIHL and Women's Leagues. (People who thought players age 16 – 18 would not be allowed to play misunderstood the press release.) 16-year-olds may also play in the EIHL. While it might not seem logical to separate adults and minors in the U18s while allowing U16s to play senior hockey, it removes the legal issues.

U16s will still be allowed to train with senior teams, as this is a situation which involves far less aggression. TB said clubs and hockey organisations are legally obliged to protect children. This is why the Recreational Committee restricted rec hockey to over-18, although there was a lot of opposition to this. The Board will continue monitoring how other sports deal with such issues.

The Board would also like to move towards making the ENIHL an U25 league, and are inviting suggestions from clubs on how to work towards this. In the UK, national teams have always done well at younger age groups, but are still struggling at U18 upwards, in spite of improving standards in Scotland (the new SPHL should help even more). The number of players dropping out in their late teens is a concern, even though this is obviously a time when people have a lot of other pressures and priority changes. One representative said his son will probably give up next year because training at 11.30 p.m. is inconvenient, especially around exam time; many players probably drop out for similar reasons. **KT** would like to see senior teams with more people who will motivate players to stay on, especially quality coaches. The changes to the ENIHL should cause fewer teenage players to drop out because they cannot get into senior teams. He said the people who complained about the proposed changes were generally concerned only for their own clubs. Only 80 of the players born in 1989 who will be moved out of youth hockey by the change to U18 are not already playing in senior teams. The senior leagues should be able to accommodate nearly all of them; although a few senior teams said they use 22 players in every game, on gamesheets the norm has been c.15 players per team. Oxford said if most ENIHL teams have spaces already there is no need for age restrictions. They said winning does not matter in the younger age groups, even for England teams. They are unhappy that older players who cannot get ice time in higher leagues might no longer be able to remain in competitive hockey by moving down to the ENIHL.

KT said changes to ENIHL rules will be talked about at the ENIHL meeting. Some wanted to talk about it at this meeting as it affected all the leagues. Coventry do not think there is enough visibility about what happens, although the meeting minutes have provided some insight into issues such as U16s in senior hockey. They said the structure, procedures etc should be on the website, and they should have a copy of the Rules and Regulations. They thought the clubs as a group should have representation, and also the ice providers, with more chance to provide feedback.

Solihull asked why Coventry's proposal, which they seconded, for the leagues to change to U11, U13, U15 and U17 was not circulated to clubs. **KT** said this would be discussed by the YMG, however Solihull wanted it discussed at this meeting. **IJ** said this is a company AGM for reviewing the previous year, and the place for making changes to leagues is the section meetings. Oxford said to have any real standing a motion must be made at the AGM, as decisions made at the section meetings may be overruled by the Board or league management committee. The proposal was for the U19 meeting, but **GH** said it should have been on the AGM agenda as it involved several sections. Coventry said people should not hide behind procedures; junior and U19 teams at a rink are usually run by the same people, which is why the Junior and U19 meetings are now combined. It was agreed that as this discussion affects all sections it should carry on under Any Other Business.

FINANCIAL REPORT – MR E N MORALEE

The auditors' financial report for the year ended 31 December 2006, with **NM**'s report, had been distributed in advance (copies attached). The Board had suggested that it was prudent to raise registration fees on a year-by-year basis in line with inflation, so he was proposing a modest increase for 2007/8. Oxford asked why the members were being asked to accept the financial report when it had already been signed off by the Board. **NM** said it is helpful for everyone to see the report and formally approve it. In future years the Board will wait until after the AGM to sign it.

Several clubs said the EIHA seem to be in a healthy financial position, and they could not see why they needed such a high, and increasing, level of reserves, even allowing for the possibility of legal action. They would prefer more of the money to go back into hockey. They also said it is easier to justify continually increasing fees when they are being spent on something worthwhile. **NM** said they have to allow for completely new projects, such as Oxford's proposal for hockey recruitment last year. Insurance premiums can increase dramatically. Registration fees were frozen last year. The CCPR recommend 80% of annual turnover as reasonable for reserves, and the EIHA have nowhere near that. Oxford said the

EIHA appear to have less need for reserves than other sports organisations, because they do not have major expenditure like wages. **KT** said the last time the EIHA were involved in a lawsuit it cost £30k. Even consulting a solicitor is expensive, and there have been a number of issues this year where they needed legal advice. **NM** said last year's surplus (rather than profit) was £39k, which is small compared with the turnover of just over £500k. This cannot be paid to Directors or members, but is retained for the use of the EIHA, and if the EIHA were to fold any money left must go to another body with similar aims. While the amount in the bank at 31st December looks very high, there is nowhere near that much now. This is because most of the income arrives between August and October, while spending is heaviest in the latter part of the season. The accounts would give a truer picture if the financial year had the same start and end dates as the hockey season.

Bracknell asked if there was a budget for marketing, which they said a limited company is required to have. They have not used the leaflets, and would be more interested in having promotions such as video clips. They would like marketing to appear as an agenda item in future. **NM** said there is still money available for marketing, but amounts must depend on what people want and how much this costs. If anyone sends in a proposal with costings it will go on the agenda. Bracknell however said the Board should come up with proposals about marketing for the clubs to approve. Oxford said the proposals at the last AGM, where it was stressed that someone needs to take responsibility for marketing, were for videos and websites. People then decided this would cost too much, although no one had been asked to provide costings, and then the project was hijacked by other people with different ideas. **NM** said he has never said videos and websites would cost too much, and there has been no Board decision about it. While he does not wish to take responsibility for marketing, money can be made available for these things. Sutton said many parents want to be involved. They like the posters, and think this is the time to work on recruitment, especially of U10s. Getting the basics right is crucial for development, and marketing is one of the basics. It was agreed to accept the financial report, proposed Nottingham, seconded Coventry.

INSURANCE REPORT – MR A OLIVER

TO read out his report (copy attached). Chelmsford said there is confusion over whether 14-year-olds are covered for playing adult hockey. **TO** said he has informed insurers whenever there have been changes of eligibility rules, but they have never put limits on what levels a player may be insured at when playing up. The EPIHL have the same personal accident cover as the other leagues, and their separate public liability insurance includes younger players playing up.

The AIG cover includes trials and beginner programmes where players are not registered. Solent & Gosport said insurance only covers players who are listed for training, and clubs need to keep records in case there is a claim. **KT** advised that players on trials should be registered once they have been at the club for two sessions, otherwise it could be seen as abusing the system. If clubs provide details of their beginner schemes etc these could be added to the cover.

Coaches and managers are covered by public liability insurance, but this does not include criminal charges. **TO** will inquire about extending insurance to cover such possibilities. The sports coach UK group membership which the EIHA used for coaches for several years included legal help, but they decided to change insurers because of high price increases. Individual coaches can join sports coach UK if they want extra cover. **JF** said if people take out extra insurance they are not allowed to claim on both. **TO** said they may claim twice on personal accident. The EIHA cover is not for large amounts, and semi-professional players would be wise to take out extra cover. He agreed to provide guidance on the website about the insurance issues discussed.

COACHING REPORT – MR A MOUTREY

AM's report had been distributed in advance (copy attached).

REFEREES REPORT – MR M ASHRAFF

Mohammed Ashraff was unable to attend as he was under doctor's orders to stay at home. Clubs said they appreciated what a good job he was doing and hoped he would recover quickly. His report had been distributed in advance (copy attached). **KT** said it is up to the coaches and officials to get the hang of the new standard of rule enforcement. Coventry said they have had issues with referees, the main problem being consistency of approach. They have been able to speak directly to Mohammed Ashraff about it, and were happy with the outcomes. However clubs can see no visible process for coaches and managers to address problems. They pointed out that referees are a big part of a club's costs and yet they can ruin games. **KT** said this is true, but relationships are two-way, and coaches need to take some responsibility as well. The EPIHL have been using a feedback system. Other sections are also allowed to do this, but clubs have not taken advantage. He will make sure that clubs are aware of how to provide feedback on officials.

Some clubs are finding that they send people to referee courses in the hope of being able to use mostly local officials, but the new officials are not given games (other clubs however said all their officials were being used). **KT** will follow this up with Mohammed Ashraff. TB said as an official he has realised it is vital for them to keep Mohammed Ashraff informed of when they are available. Many officials are rarely available because they are players first and officials second.

There is to be a new minimum age limit for officials. This will probably mean losing c. 30 linesmen. Mohammed Ashraff is trying to find solutions, especially as these include some of the best linesmen. Clubs were pleased that it will now be policy to terminate the game and call the police if a referee is attacked. **KT** said the league chair will decide on awarding of points, as it should depend on how far into the game the incident occurred. There is unfortunately not enough ice time to replay the games. There was a proposal that the points should go to the team which did not cause the incident. Regarding player suspensions, every case is different. If the police are involved decisions have to wait until they have finished. The In House Rules will cover these issues.

There has been an incident of the crowd giving a player racial abuse. The referee was unaware they could do anything about it. **KT** believed a letter had gone round to all officials about this. The same player was later attacked by an adult when leaving the rink, and the club were told that this was outside the game and they should call the police. **KT** said if an adult attacks a child under any circumstances the club should call the police. He would talk to them about it after the meeting.

CHILD PROTECTION REPORT – MR C DACRES

CD's report had been distributed in advance (copy attached). There was a vote of thanks to **TO** for his hard work on child protection. CRB checks need renewing every three years, so some people will need another check soon. The summer is a peak time for checks, when there are likely to be delays. Those needing their checks renewed will not be prevented from registering, but should make sure they get the checks completed as soon as possible. He thinks people are getting the hang of the forms and the CRB should have fewer to return in future. LM has a supply of countersignatory forms.

He has been consulting the DCMS about age limits and related issues. He went to a course two weeks ago with McKay Law and asked about their position on it, but has not had a reply. The CPSU are not providing answers either. He has asked the DCMS about the position of 18-year-olds, but is still waiting for a reply. Someone aged up to 16 is a child, and someone aged up to 18 is a young person. Every Child Matters covers people aged up to 19. Issues

over U16 girls will be covered at the Women's meeting. It can also be discussed at the Junior meeting as it affects junior teams.

He had a meeting about the online child protection course on 8th June. Work on it is going well. He can give a display for anyone who is interested.

Coaches and managers should note the addition to the Code of Conduct for Coaches (point 15), which covers transgressions not mentioned in the rules. All coaches and managers are required to sign the Code of Conduct and are expected to have read it first, but clearly many do not. He is working with LM on possibilities for providing all coaches with a handbook of useful information. They need to be alerted to changes in the Code of Conduct. Where there have been suspensions he has been unhappy at the amount of gossip. If the club has no official confirmation that anything has happened, people should simply say they are not in a position to answer.

He is very concerned about late face-off times, which mean at school the next day players have problems functioning or do not turn up at all. He urged clubs to consider players' welfare when scheduling. This applies not only to junior teams but also to women's teams which are using young girls.

MR N MORALEE AND MISS I JONES ARE RE-ELECTED AS DIRECTORS UNOPPOSED

MR R LAIDLER CO-OPTED BY THE BOARD IS ELECTED AS A DIRECTOR UNOPPOSED

AF said the Memorandum and Articles of Association need to be brought into the 21st century. They are being reviewed.

KT thanked **AM** for running the Coaching Programme for the last eight years. He said during this time there have been hardly any problems over coaching.

He thanked **TO** for acting as vice-chair for 17 years, and for always being there to help sort out problems. A retiring present has been arranged. **TO** is carrying on dealing with insurance for a while longer.

The Chairman's Award for Development for the South went to Guildford, who have consistently done a good job. The award for the North went to Sheffield, who have worked very hard this year. **KT** is often asked what the criteria are. Next year he will look for a club where the juniors are working with the women and girls, and where the club works as a unit without coaches doing their own thing and pursuing their own agendas. He will look closely at small clubs.

STATISTICIAN'S REPORT – MR M PREEN

MP's report had been distributed in advance (copy attached). He said the warning when he started in statistics not to believe everything that was written on the gamesheet proved very true. He spends at least 20 hours per week on the statistics, and would like to reduce this. The statisticians have been trying for years to get messages through to clubs about what they should be doing, and also correcting the errors. However nothing is changing, because clubs do not pass information on to the off-ice officials or do not want to upset them. Dave Hill, RM and himself would very much welcome more volunteers.

Gamesheets are available from Clive Moore at this meeting and by post. MP has asked that a representative of each team signs the teamlists before the game so that they can see they are correct. The gamesheet must be signed by both team representatives and the scorer, and it is then the referee's decision whether the gamesheet is correct. He will now record no statistics for gamesheets where there are mistakes. Some clubs said this will cause problems, as it is

difficult to find volunteers. MP said any club volunteer is unlikely to have to deal with more than three gamesheets in a weekend, while he typically has 50. He cannot carry on doing the statistics if the current problems continue. Solent & Gosport said game day paperwork is not covered by coach or manager courses, and often no one knows how to do it. There have been no off-ice official courses recently. MP hopes the guidance on the website is easy to understand and will answer a lot of the off-ice officials' questions. Anyone with queries may email him. The information includes an updated shots on goal sheet with instructions. Comments are welcome as the documents are still being reviewed. Clubs need to send in shots on goal sheets as a double check. Coventry said if so many people need to sign the gamesheet it ought to be correct. MP said if there is a major improvement in gamesheets he will consider not asking clubs for shots on goal sheets.

Off-ice officials should call the referee to the time bench if they are unclear about what is happening, as it is easier to sort out problems at the time than try to do it at the end of the game. However this is not possible at all rinks. While MP has been saying team managers should sign the sheets, he said any representative from the team may do this, so long as they know what they are doing. Billingham advised clubs not to become involved in discussions with parents about their child's statistics. MP said occasionally parents' points are valid, but they should take it up with the club secretary. Some clubs are keen to have electronic gamesheets; a proposed spreadsheet from Kingston has been circulated for comment. MP said he likes the idea and the spreadsheet is good, but there is no feasible electronic system yet for the whole process. It is important for the sheets to be signed and he has not worked out how this could be done with an electronic system. He would like gamesheet distribution by email, but has not yet had time to investigate this. As well as removing problems with items being lost in the post, it would eliminate problems with figures being different on different copies of the same sheet. MP was thanked for his efforts; Solent & Gosport said he was much missed when he went on holiday.

DISCIPLINE REPORT – MRS S TOMALIN

Sue Tomalin was unable to attend. Her report had been distributed in advance (copy attached).

PROPOSAL FROM BRACKNELL LADIES – RECORDING STATISTICS – MIKE SUMMERS

Mike Summers was not at the meeting, so the proposal could not be discussed.

ANY OTHER COMPANY BUSINESS

Discussion resumed on age group changes, although some thought this should be left for the Junior, U19 and ENIHL meetings. Most clubs were unhappy about the change from U19 to U18. However it was pointed out that with adults now needing to be kept away from U16s, unless the U19 League changes to U18, 15-year-olds will have nowhere to play. There are too many teams at the moment and too many games, especially in Div 2, not being played. The minimum number of players for entering a team is 12. Some were concerned about players who have turned 18 being able to continue playing in the U18s until the end of the season. **KT** said 1st January is an accepted eligibility date in sport. There are eight applications to enter a team in the ENIHL. Oxford asked why the leagues could not be U10, U12, U14, U17 and U20. This would keep more players in the game and be better for club finances, and having an U17 team would avoid 15-year-olds having to sit out a year. Some thought a change to U11s would improve numbers at the lower end. Bringing in more age groups than already exist is not feasible due to lack of ice time. Also U17s would need longer ice slots than U16s. Clubs are concerned about ice time when planning for the future. For example, Isle of Wight had to abandon plans for an U18 team because they did not have enough

players. They have enough players for an ENIHL team, but if they have this they will not have the ice time for an U18 team in the future. Having an age group higher than U19 could cause conflict with the ENIHL. Solihull said they have 12 players born in 1989 who are not good enough for the ENIHL. Changing to U17s would allow time to make more changes next year when there has been time for more discussion. They wanted the U16s to be changed to U17s for only one season. Others said waiting a year would not make much difference unless most of the players born in 1989 who are not good enough for senior hockey now would be good enough after one more year. Invicta were in favour of the Coventry proposal, because they believed there would be more than 80 players who would not find a place in a senior team; another alternative would be not allowing U16s to play up in the U18s. Coventry are set to lose 15 out of 16 players who won promotion. **KT** said Mike Cowley has told him the new Coventry ENIHL team will be a feeder for the EIHL team. Solent & Gosport said they will lose 10 of their promotion winners.

GH said the decisions had been made. Complaints coming in were nearly always about the person's own club, child or finances, and while he could sympathise with these people he still thought the Board needed to do what seemed best overall. Whatever decisions are made there will be players displaced. Where there are legal issues involved there is very little choice in the matter, which is the case for the U16s in senior hockey and the U18 age group (which is also in line with IIHF recommendations). Billingham said given the proportions of British-trained and non-British-trained players in the ENIHL and EPIHL, they did not think the changes were looking after the interests of British-trained players. Peterborough Islanders said their team for next season will be younger than the current one, and they do not want to tell them they are too old. If they move to rec they will take rec players' places. They would prefer to have a year to prepare. Oxford said there are clubs with not enough players for an U18 team, so not only the players born in 1989 but also the two years below will be put out of the league. Some clubs thought the season was being shortened, but in fact it is being extended. TB said the rec season used to be May to August, but has been steadily compressed over recent years. If the rec teams are left short of ice time there will be conflict, and some rec teams are wealthy enough to outbid the juniors for ice. **BW** said the changes decided on are not particularly radical: only one age group has changed and eligibility for playing up is unchanged below U18. TB said the Board are elected to make decisions on behalf of the members, and the decisions about U16s playing up and U19 becoming U18 had already been made, so that should be the end of the matter.

It was agreed to close the meeting. The meeting ended at 1.00 p.m.

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