



THE REFEREES' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Board Meeting
Sunday 26th November 2006 9:15 a.m. to 1.40 p.m.
Head Office, Coventry

90 Present

Richard Blackman (Chairman) Neville Cathcart Nigel Genner John Harden
Pedr McMullen Alan Poulain Len Randall

91. Chairman's Opening Remarks.

The distribution of written reports worked well at the last Board meeting. Members were thanked for circulating written reports before the meeting which it was hoped would enable the Board to complete today's business efficiently.

Some members of the National Associations still do not understand the different roles undertaken by the Referees' Association and the three National Referees' Associations.

RA Conference 2003 voted for the establishment of 3 separate National Referees' Associations and a separate administrative organisation. The new Associations assumed responsibility for the affairs of the Association during 2004.

The National Referees' Associations are the membership organisations, managed by elected Officers and which are responsible for issues affecting members within their Association which do not affect members of another National Association such as

- the support, guidance and welfare of members
- the protection of members from injustice and unfair treatment in matters related to refereeing
- the representation of the interests of members to and on their parent National FA

The Referees' Association is an administrative organisation which is managed by a Board of seven nominated representatives from the three National Associations, which operates from our Coventry Head Office and which is responsible for the operation of matters of interest to the members of all National Associations such as

- Annual Conference weekend / Benevolent fund / Grand draw / Head Office - Fixed Assets & Personnel / Group personal Accident Insurance policy / Magazine & Other Publications / Quiz Final / Supplies / Website / Marketing & Member benefits / Overseas Members

92. Apologies.

Arthur Smith, Head of Operations, due to illness

93. Obituaries

Members of the board observed a period of silence in remembrance of Alan Veal a Life Member from Wales; also in our thoughts were his family and friends

94. Minutes of the RA Board Meeting of 3rd September 2006.

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true and correct record.

95. Matters Arising

Minute 87.1 Emergency Contact Details have yet to be completed but is in hand by Nigel Genner

Minute 87.3 The wearing of a taped wedding band. A letter has been sent to all County FAs' from Neale Barry confirming this amendment to FIFA law. Copy of letter to be sent to Pedr McMullen

Minute 86.5 The Eve of Final Rally. Pedr McMullen suggested that sponsorship of this RAE event should be sought from the sponsors of the FA Cup **E.ON**. The venue for the Eve of Final rally if held in London is Great Hall in the old City of London School in the City of London

96. Treasurers Report

- All of the significant anomalies in the accounting system accumulated over many years have now been identified and have been eliminated. Our new accountants have been extremely helpful evaluating and resolving problems and have given Arthur Smith the necessary retraining in accounting processes.
- The last significant scrutiny was into VAT accounting. HMRCs 'partial exemption' rules are complex and have not been previously applied causing an under declaration of our VAT liability. Our accountants have negotiated with HMRC to correct the deficiency for the past three financial years only, resulting in a tax liability of over £7000. Ongoing professional advice will be required to ensure that our liability is correctly calculated.
- Membership subscription income is roughly on budget (down 4%) while the sales and net profit on supplies is ahead of budget.
- Board and head office operational costs are being strictly controlled; they are below budget and are significantly less than the spending levels of three years ago.
- The current financial position is stable and the balance sheet indicates a break even for year end. The VAT liability is an additional burden that has to be endured and will prevent any significant surplus on the year being declared.
- Further repayments against the RAE loan will be made as soon as practical.

The monthly spreadsheet issued to Board members by the Treasurer is being revised to show the current financial situation with month and cumulative totals.

A discussion took place regarding subscription levels and decisions will be made during the coming months.

Pedr McMullen raised concerns about the under declaration of our VAT liability and observed that he did not think the accountants were working for us but the VAT office. Other members of the board, although not happy about the consequence of past errors were relieved that it has been resolved at less than it could have cost.

97. Report of the Head of Operations

- It was agreed that the Office will close for the Christmas holidays on Friday 22nd December at midday and reopen on Tuesday 2nd January 2007. Royal Mail to be advised.
- Arrangements for staff Christmas bonus was discussed and agreed
- Grand Draw tickets available for board members to distribute
- Head of Operations requested clarification on the claiming of expenses while representing the Association at events. It was agreed that the Treasurer would revise the guidelines
- Salary awards for all head office staff will be reviewed at the usual time and in accordance with contracts of employments for each member.

98. Committee reports and proposals – Areas of responsibility and business activities.

• Head Office

- The building is leasehold with the City of Coventry owning the freehold. The lease was drawn up and the transaction registered with four members named as joint leaseholders. Two of these have now passed away and we are discussing with the Land Registry and with the City of Coventry to replace these two names with those of two current members of the RA Board.
- The terms of the lease that our colleagues negotiated in 1990 were attractive – almost as good as a freehold. Nevertheless, the RA owning the building freehold would be even better and an approach has been made to the City of Coventry to ask it to consider negotiating for a transfer of the freehold.
- We have invested money improving the building over the past 5 years and this will be reflected in its current value, well in excess of the original lease purchase price.
- Work has been completed to create a better working environment and to make space for meetings to save the costs of room hire. Despite these improvements, it is still not ideal for all of the uses to which it is put so consideration will be given to further remodelling or to seeking alternative, more suitable accommodation.
- Health and Safety still is regarded as a continuing problem with the staircase being the main issue. Fire exit signs and fire doors need to be updated and the fire exit signs were approved by the Board

- There has been a reduction in staffing at Head Office with 1 member of staff leaving due to falling revenue to sustain staffing levels. The member of staff accepted redundancy which is the subject of ongoing negotiations
- Due to our current financial circumstances there has been a reduction of staff at Head Office.
- **Insurance**
 - Our brokers have made a generous donation of £1,000 to the RA reflecting the excellent relationship we have with them aided by Bill Hudson's involvement.
 - Negotiating the premium stage payments from July to December has been of very significant benefit to the cash-flow position.
 - Next year's premium and benefits are currently being negotiated, a decision will be made by the end of January 2007 and ABSs will be notified as soon as possible
 - The brokers website is not yet available due to legal complications, as soon as it is a link will be made from our new website
- **Magazine and Publications**

Refereeing: The first of the new joint FA/RA publication was delivered to all English officials on the FAMOA database in early September. A supply of this magazine was sent to RAW & NIRA ABS Secretaries. High profile articles from both organisations made for extremely interesting reading and very favourable comments were received. The next issue is due for distribution in December and should be delivered in time for Christmas. RAW and NIRA are asked to confirm their requests for additional copies of the magazine.

It was agreed that a Conference programme will be produced and circulated to all ABS Secretaries.

- **Quiz**

The quiz final will take place on Sunday 29th April 2007 at Stonebridge Manor Hotel, Coventry. John Harden will compile operating guidelines for consideration at the next Board meeting.

A new trophy will be purchased, suitably inscribed.

- **RA Grand Draw**

Following the completion of the 2006 draw a breakdown of ABS sales was compiled and sent to CRA Secs on 25th July together with proposals for the 2007 distribution. CRA Secretaries were requested to advise Head Office by 1st November if a different quantity was required for ABSs within their County. Requests had been received from 17 out of 46 RAE CRAs by 1st November, with 1 request being received from a CRA Secretary after that date.

Members of Head Office staff have bundled up approximately 110,000 tickets for distribution to CRAs. The balance of approx 20,000 tickets or 5,000 books is being retained at Head Office for additional requests from ABSs and for Conference sales.

The Board approved a counterfoil return form for distribution with the minutes of this meeting. ABSs are requested to complete and to return this form with counterfoils and money because this will assist the Promoter to keep an accurate record of sales. **ABSs are reminded that Counterfoils and money returned to the Promoter without the appropriate form will not be eligible for the 50% cash back due on the ticket sale.**

It was reported at the last Board meeting that 91 out of 306 (approx 30%) ABSs did not participate in the 2006 draw. The promoter sent a letter to those ABSs that did not participate in the 2006 draw with the minutes of the September Board meeting seeking to encourage them to participate in the 2007 draw. ABSs are encouraged to participate in this fund raising activity which not only raises much needed funds for this Association but also, through the 50% cash back scheme, is a cheap and easy way of ABSs raising money for their own funds.

- **Supplies**

- Turnover and net profit are ahead of budget with a noted increase in sales to the FA. This element does not achieve full margin but neither does it incur the same level of operational cost for us and so it is very worthwhile business that helps to cement the working relationship with the FA.
- Stock levels are being constantly monitored to ensure that we have sufficient supplies to meet demand. The head office stock control system is producing useful data.
- A new 2006-2007 sales brochure has been printed.
- Referees' uniforms are a fashion item. Following suggestions from members, our range of products is being developed to ensure that we maintain our strong position in the market.

Arthur Smith and Len Randall had visited the RA shirt manufacturer to discuss a new design. A sample was shown and a discussion took place about the piping. Further alterations have been suggested to the pockets with the flap being removed and a Velcro fastening added. It is thought that members could be offered single or double pockets depending on badge orders.

- **RA Website, Marketing & Member benefits**

Following the Board's approval to develop a new enhanced site during the financial year 2006-2007, UK Shop Online Limited was instructed to proceed with the necessary work and the new site went live on 1st November 2006, we thank all of those who helped to upload information and particularly Simon Campbell our new Webmaster and Julian Carosi.

An email informing ABSs about the new website was sent to those ABS Secretaries with an email address on 26th October, with a copy being sent to those CRA Secretaries with an email address. The Board approved a letter to be sent to ABS & CRA Secretaries with the minutes of this meeting.

We are confident that visitors to our new site will find it to be informative and easy to navigate around.

We wish to ensure that the website remains current and relevant to all visitors and have incorporated a feature that will enable visitors to the site to locate their local RA and to easily gain access to their details and be directed to their website. We therefore wish to encourage all ABSs to have their own web site, whether using the standard RA site template or a site of their own design.

There is a new section titled "Find your local RA" which will enable a visitor to search for a society. ABS Secretaries are requested to enter society details in this section and to ensure that the details remain current because the information that is entered will not only update the website but will also update ABS details at Head Office, which will ensure that correspondence is never again sent to the wrong people.

There is a members' only area where members can download minutes of RA & NRA Board meetings, pages of the Manual of Guidance and various forms.

The job of maintaining the site will be ongoing and we will be pleased to hear from

- Those members who are interested in joining the website editorial team
- Those members who have suggestions for improving the content or the operation of the site

- **Overseas and Associate Members**

Len Randall advised the Board that there were 27 members affiliated as overseas members and that he would shortly be sending a further newsletter.

99. Annual Conference Weekend

Arrangements for the 2007 Annual Conference Weekend which will be held at the Warwick Hilton Hotel on Saturday 9th June are in hand.

100. Benevolent Fund

The fund stood at £143,505.10 The Chairman reminded members to be mindful of the needs of those members and families less fortunate than ourselves.

101. Strategic Plan

Board Members were requested to submit any observations and amendments to Alan Poulain.

102. RA Centenary – 2008

- **Centenary Committee**

RAE Honorary President David Ellery had offered to serve on the Centenary Committee and it was agreed approaches will be made to David, details of the Centenary Committee will be announced in due course.

- **Commemorative badge**

Quotations and samples to be reviewed by the Board.

- **Centenary Publication**

The Chairman has contacted Julian Carosi who has volunteered to edit this publication. The Board in conjunction with Julian will consider the format and whether this will be sold or supplied free to members.

ABS Members are asked to forward suggestions to Head Office.

- **Centenary Conference Venue**

It was agreed that Wembley Stadium would be an ideal venue for the Centenary Conference, if it is available. The Head of Operations will make enquiries regarding hotel accommodation etc.

- **First Day Issue**

It has been suggested that we could offer commemorative first day covers for sale through our supplies operation. A reply had been received from Royal Mail advising that it is unlikely that there will be any special stamps available to use. Philomena Sheridan is to be contacted to ask if she would be able to assist the RA with this venture. A quotation for approximately 500 covers will be sought by the Head of Operations.

- **Other issues**

Our franking machine supplier is to be contacted by the Head of Operations to design a special dye for our centenary year.

103. AOB

All business items covered in main reports

104. Date Time And Venue Of Next Meetings

It was agreed that future meetings will be held on Sunday 4th February 2007, Saturday 28th April 2007, Sunday 2nd September 2007 and Sunday 25th November 2007.

105. Close of Meeting

The Chairman observed that the submission of written reports to Board members prior to the meeting had improved the efficiency of this and the past 2 Board meetings and requested that written reports should be circulated by the respective committees at least 7 days in advance of all future Board meetings. Members were thanked for their participation in the meeting and wished a safe journey home. The Chairman concluded the meeting by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Signed: (Chairman)

Date:

Attach website letter.