

BSF Executive Meeting Report: Monday 27 November 2017

The BSF Executive held its most recent conference call meeting on the evening of Monday 27 November. Below is a journalistic report on the main discussions and decisions.

Attendance

Present: Jenny Fromer (President), Laura Burkhardt (Treasurer), Liz Graham (Competitions Director), Mike Jennings (General Officer), Steve Getraer (General Officer), Chris Moon (BASU Representative).

Apologies: Stella Ackrell (Administrator), Jana McCaskill (National Teams Officer).

Guest: Bob Fromer (BSUK).

Finance

BSF Treasurer Laura Burkhardt told the meeting that accounts for 2016-17 are almost complete and ready to go to the auditor, so the next task will be drawing up the budget for 2017-18 for approval by the Executive and then by the AGM in February.

Because the BSF's financial year runs from October 1 to September 30, there is a gap of almost five months between the start of a new financial year and final approval of the budget for that year by the AGM. As this gap falls during the off-season, it doesn't have much effect on general BSF spending, but the GB Management Committee, which submits a budget request each year for national team support, does have expenditures it needs to make during the winter months. GBMC Treasurer Simon Mortimer has asked whether he is able to spend against the GBMC's request before the BSF budget has been formally approved.

As the GBMC request was discussed and provisionally approved by the BSF Executive at its face-to-face meeting in October, Simon has been told that he can proceed with spending that falls within that request.

Insurance

The BSF is in the process of renewing its Civil and Public Liability Insurance for the next 12 months, and General Officer Mike Jennings told the Executive that the premium will be slightly lower next year because, from the point of view of the insurers, the number of member teams has reduced.

This does not, in fact, reflect a drop in the number of member teams, but rather that single-sex slowpitch teams and the teams that form once a year to play in the Softball World Series no longer need

to be insured as separate teams when they are composed entirely of players registered to other affiliated teams.

The BSF is seeking clarity with the insurers, however, on where liability rests with regard to property damage – specifically broken car windscreens – incurred by cars parked in proximity to BSF-sanctioned softball play. It may be that the BSF will need to circulate and post notices at venues in future advising people about the risk, or even ban car parking in certain areas.

The BSF will also be renewing its accident and medical insurance policy on behalf of those leagues that subscribe to it, but a new provider for this insurance has been recommended and the premium is not yet clear.

Contribution to Coach Summit

The BSF will again make a contribution in 2018 to BaseballSoftballUK's third annual Coach Summit, scheduled for Saturday 27 January in Milton Keynes (see several articles on the www.baseballsoftuk.com Home Page for more details).

The BSF will make money available to provide free places at the Summit for four leading softball coaches, and will contribute towards trophies that will be awarded at the Summit to the Softball Adult Team Coach of the Year and the Softball Youth Team Coach of the Year.

In addition, the BSF may help to subsidise the cost of attending the summit for some University Softball Officers.

National Championships

BSF President Jenny Fromer will submit booking requests for BSF Co-ed Slowpitch League and NSL National Championships at Farnham Park next year to BaseballSoftballUK to ensure that there are no conflicts on these dates with British Baseball Federation events.

The decisions that the BSF Executive has made at recent meetings about how 2018 National Championships and the National Softball League will be run will be posted on the BSF website soon as a headline article, and will also be posted under the "Nationals" tab on the website.

National Teams

The GB Management Committee (GBMC) was constituted in 2008 as a semi-autonomous arm of the British Softball Federation, charged with supporting and overseeing all GB National Team programmes. The GBMC is chaired by the BSF National Teams Officer, and its remit has grown along with the complexity and sophistication of national team programmes and the international environment in which they operate.

During the GBMC's existence, however, the GB Slowpitch National Team programme has engaged with it only intermittently, and hardly at all over the past few years. The BSF Executive would like this to change, in large part to ensure that the GB Slowpitch Team has the support it needs off the field, and will support efforts on the part of the GBMC to bring GB Slowpitch under its remit. A significant amount of the money the BSF allocates to support national teams goes to the GB Slowpitch Team programme in one way or another, and the BSF needs to ensure that this spending is effective.

One outstanding issue that needs to be clarified over the next couple of weeks is whether the GB Slowpitch Team programme intends to enter a team in the first European Men's Slowpitch Championship, scheduled for 12-16 June in the Czech Republic.

The BSF is also arranging a meeting with BaseballSoftballUK Fastpitch Development Manager Johanna Malisani, whose post is partly supported by BSF funding, to discuss her development work and to get her take on the current make-up of GB Fastpitch National Teams.

BSF Board

With the BSF AGM three months away, the BSF Executive reviewed where its current officers stand with regard to their terms and their intentions to continue in post.

BSF Executive Officers (Board members) now serve two-year terms, with a limit of three such terms. Most of the serving Officers are in the first year of their current term and intend to carry on in their positions.

However, there will be three vacancies that the BSF will want to fill with people qualified to take on these roles:

- **BSF National Teams Officer.** Jana McCaskill will reluctantly step down from this post after the BSF AGM in February because the requirements of a new job mean that she cannot carry out the role as effectively as she would like. The National Teams Officer is also the Chair of the GB Management Committee. Jana is developing a role description that the BSF will publish shortly.
- **Communications, Marketing & Registration Officer.** This role has been unfilled for the past three years, but is regarded as important for the effective operation of the Federation and the exploration of additional income streams. Again, a role description will be published shortly.
- **Slowpitch Coaching & Clinics Officer.** This role is being conceived as someone who will work with BSUK to help create more of a coaching culture in slowpitch softball and to plan and run more slowpitch coaching courses and modules and especially more player clinics aimed at different levels within the slowpitch community. A role description will be forthcoming soon.

The BSF will be happy to receive nominations for these positions, but will also be proactive in trying to recruit suitable candidates.

BSF AGM

Over the next couple of months, the BSF Executive will put together a comprehensive Pack for the 2018 BSF AGM, to be sent to members at the beginning of February, and will also circulate revised Articles for approval at the AGM.

The 2018 AGM will be held on Saturday 24 February at the Hough End Centre, Mauldeth Road West, Chorlton, Manchester M21 7SX. The Executive has yet to decide whether there will be any workshop or discussion sessions, but a central feature of the day will be a ceremony to honour the recipients of BSF annual awards and induct new members into the BSF Hall of Fame.

Information on how to make nominations for the awards and the Hall of Fame can be found here -- <http://www.britishsoftball.org/news/view/bsf-asks-for-awards-and-hall-nominations>. The deadline for nominations is 22 December.

Lightning policy

The BSF is formulating a policy and guidance for teams, leagues and tournament organisers on what to do in weather conditions which produce – or threaten to produce – thunder and lightning, and the issue will be discussed at the BSF AGM.

The document produced by the BSF will be an amalgamation of research and advice from scientific organisations in the UK and abroad, including RoSPA, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

BaseballSoftballUK Committees

Members of the BSF Executive attend meetings of the various BaseballSoftballUK Committees, and reports from these meetings are a standing item on the agenda at BSF Executive meetings.

Finance Committee. Mike Jennings attended a recent meeting of the BaseballSoftballUK Finance Committee, and reported that the three main items under discussion were:

- Financial results for 2017 from Farnham Park.
- Cash flow issues arising for BaseballSoftballUK because Sport England has changed its payment system.
- The need for BaseballSoftballUK to demonstrate to Sport England that it is developing additional income streams.

Ball deal

BSF's deal with Ransome Sporting Goods to supply softballs (part of a three-way deal involving BaseballSoftballUK and the BBF) is coming to a close, and the BSF will enter negotiations to see if we want to set up a new deal with Ransome or another supplier.

General Officer Lesley Morisetti has volunteered to take on this task.

Next meeting

The next BSF conference call meeting will be on Thursday 11 January 2018.

Anyone with items to bring to the meeting should contact BSF Administrator Stella Ackrell (stella.ackrell@britishsoftball.org).

At this meeting, the BSF Executive will decide the winners of its 2017 Annual Awards and who will be the new inductees to the British Softball Hall of Fame.