

Chairman's Report 2017 – 2018

We have only gone and done it! Yes, WBHC finally breaks through the 15 team barrier with our 6th ladies team taking the field in September 2017, making us one of the biggest Clubs in the country. Well done to the Junior development squad, the coaches and the experienced ladies who have made this possible. Our next focus will be on increasing the standard of hockey and fitness, so that we can move our teams up through the Leagues, and I do mean that for ALL our teams.

Last season was tricky for the Captains especially on the Mens side of the Club. It was a weekly struggle to maintain a strong side when so many players were unavailable each week. That would be manageable but for the fact that it was always a different lot unavailable for the next week, so teams were rarely settled, and the best laid plans for league improvement were frequently scuppered by late team changes. Having said that, the players who moved up to fill gaps frequently did very well and didn't return, so there were some winners, but it wasn't league performance which was probably one of the worst for our Mens teams in a long while.

Maybe times are changing and people are not prepared to commit to regular hockey on every Saturday in the season? If that is the case then we are in trouble, because we put out too many scratch sides last season and lost to teams that we should have beaten, especially early season. Hopefully this season will be better, but that is down to all of us making hockey a priority over shopping!

The elephant in the room which I cannot continue to ignore is of course the medium to long term future of the Club. It is a sad indictment of the state of Sport in the UK that one of its biggest Hockey Clubs has no firm future that is under its control. Our future is under attack from decisions which will be made by others. Already a number of Schools in Notts are relaying hockey pitches to 3G, and we of course use 2 pitches that we have no control over, so we are at the mercy of their decisions concerning fees and the relaying or otherwise of pitches when they need it. The WB School pitch is a case in point. Our current lease for the Clubhouse runs out in 2023 and the pitch will need relaying before that. We have no idea whether either event will take place, so we have no security going forward. This is of course untenable, as is the continuing lack of facilities at the school pitch. How we have managed up until now without toilets has always amazed me.

We are in the process of considering options to make the Club masters of its' own destiny going forward. This may involve a total move to a new facility, the building of new pitches and Clubhouse, and the development of new links with other Sports Clubs and possibly educational establishments. At the time of writing I cannot say any more than that, and please don't take this as anything other than an initial statement of intent to move the Club into a new era, where we can control our own future. A small team are currently engaged in the initial "OPTIONS" stage of discussions, and we will be calling on members to get involved when we have a need of your support, and of course some plans and proposals for you to look at. Please keep any discussion of this within the Club membership please.

So – difficult times, but change comes from adversity, so, along with planning for the future we will continue to do what we do best, enjoy our hockey and enjoy all the special "Bridgy" things such as the social side which will continue unabated next season. Get involved it is YOUR CLUB.

If we are serious about improving on-pitch performance next season we need to be fitter and better at hockey, so get down to training, and maybe get in some extra physical activity as well so that you are ready to go when the Leagues start. I have been swimming every morning for the last 4 months and have never felt better, so maybe the old hockey stick will come out of the corner of the garage? Don't tell Jo.

Training gets underway in August, and the first social events are booked so break out the diary and ink those in. Availability for the full season is on your Members page of the web site, so please let us know your availabilities as far ahead as possible. Subs can be paid online, or by BAKS with our new account number so get that sorted ASAP. Let's have a great season. Again.....

Geoff Bail
Chairman August 2017