



## **NPUA Executive Committee Meeting**

Date: Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2013  
Venue: The Barns Hotel, Cannock

Apologies: None  
Attendance: Martin Twist (MT), Hannah Sanders (HS), Richard Kirk (RK), Sean Edwards (SE, Minute Taker), Frances Block (FB), Mike Davidson (MD), David Ellcock (DE), Darryl Hoffman (DH), Mark Williams (MW)  
Ex-officio: Paul Box-Grainger (PBG)  
Guests: Richard Glynne-Jones (RGJ)

### **1. Welcome and apologies**

There were no apologies received.

The meeting began with the attendees introducing themselves and explaining what they wished to gain from their time on the Executive Committee.

Richard Glynne-Jones (National Manager - Officiating, EHB) is invited to attend all NPUA Exec meetings.

### **2. How NPUA works**

MT provided an introduction into what the Exec is responsible for and where the boundaries lie. He also talked through some of the ground rules for how the Exec will work.

RK talked through the current financial position, and explained the structure of the NPUA finances. There is an issue regarding the prompt entry of expenses, which makes it difficult to keep the accounts up to date.

**SE to post a news item encouraging the prompt entry of expenses by members.  
RK to email the main offenders encouraging them to enter expenses promptly.  
At the next meeting, Exec to consider changing policy so that expenses not entered within three months of the appointment can be entered as £0.**

SE provided a report on the NPUA shop on behalf of Daran Cass. Some issues have arisen around candidate shirts due to the time taken for embroidery to be completed. It has been decided that candidates should umpire their assessment match in a suitable umpiring shirt, and will be sent NPUA embroidered shirts once they pass their assessment. Regional reserve umpires will use their own shirts during appointments.

**SE to update candidates letter and post a news item.**

The Exec discussed the reporting lines of EHUSP and EHIUSP following the request of the EHIUSP in the minutes of their latest meeting to report direct to the Exec. It was agreed that the EHIUSP will remain a sub-committee of EHUSP.

The indoor marking scheme in use was also reviewed and to aid member understanding of marking, it was agreed that the indoor marking scheme should be brought back in line with the outdoor marking scheme where umpires starting point is the bottom of their panel marking range (and the bottom of their FIH marking range for FIH indoor umpires).

**PBG to communicate to EHIUSP Chairman.**



There was a discussion around Exec roles for this season. FB agreed to take on liaison between Exec and the Coaching Working Group (CWG). MD agreed to take on organisation of the NPUA Conference and fitness development. MW volunteered to lead on development groups and activities. DH will lead on potential online portal and video developments. DE will represent NPUA on the EHL Committee and club liaison.

**SE to investigate if role descriptions can be added to the committee page of NPUA website.**

### **3. NPUA Strategy Group**

It was decided that although the strategy meeting held last season was hugely beneficial, it is important that the Exec owns the strategy of the association. If the Exec hold a strategy day later in the season, it is likely that other key stakeholders will be invited.

In particular, opportunities to align NPUA and EHB strategy should be sought. This will aid funding discussions at EHB Board level. From 2014/15, NPUA should work from a plan (and budget) based on clear strategic objectives agreed with EHB and owned by the Exec. Appropriate deliverables and Key Performance Indicators or measures should be included.

**SE to share minutes from EHB strategy group with Exec.**

**MT to communicate deliverables for 2013/14 to RGJ**

### **4. Selection update**

PBG gave an explanation of the current appointing issues on the women's programme. The Exec agreed to allow EHUSP to continue to appoint men's panel umpires to women's games where appropriate if circumstances dictate. This has previously been outlined in a letter to all members from PBG.

The assessor and coaching appointment process is in line with budget, as is the request of the Exec to balance coach and assessor appointments..

PBG communicated issues with appointing umpires to the under 18 cup matches, which are midweek evenings/afternoons. This will present logistical challenges for the EHUSP.

### **5. Coaching Working Group (CWG")**

A discussion was held around the overall strategy for umpire developers, taking into account the EHB pathways and ideas from NPUA.

EHB are in the process of developing their strategy in this area and RGJ stressed that NPUA and EHB must ensure that they are aligned.

MT, FB and RGJ to discuss the overall strategy for umpire watchers, including their assessment, development and coaching. The aim is to develop a national, holistic approach to umpire support at all levels and look at how to implement at NPUA level in time for next season.

**MT and FB to coordinate discussion with RGJ**

CWG will be asked to continue their work on coach competencies and development for the season. Following this, a wider discussion (aligned to the strategy developed with EHB) will be required to establish ways in which coaching and assessing can be supported in the future.

Specific areas of focus for the CWG will include:

- The communication and implementation of the coaching tiles,
- Trialling the appointment of coaches to a small group of umpires on a regular basis to allow development over a period of time
- Review of the coaching feedback form.



**FB to report back to CWG.**

**MT to approach Dawn Bonner to lead on CWG for the 2013/14 season.**

## **6. Priority areas for focus**

### **6.1 Club Liaison & EHL Committee**

DE provided an update from the EHL Committee and on technical regulations. He emphasised that it is important for umpires to know the regulations as well as the rules. Going forward, links to update papers will be added to the NPUA website.

HS proposed the production of an 'Umpires Briefing' on the website, which includes key interpretations, rules and regulations. There would be an indoor and outdoor versions which would be updated regularly. Opportunities to develop this online with video will also be examined.

**HS to draft outdoor briefing and circulate to Exec for review.**

**HS to approach someone suitable to draft indoor briefing.**

### **6.2 Radios**

MT explained that funding has been secured from EHB to purchase radios for all members. NPUA has two tested solutions approved for use in the National Programme; a radio based solution and a Bluetooth option. A discussion was held regarding the pros and cons of each device and associated maintenance requirements.

NPUA hope to distribute radios in time for the second half of the season. EHB will retain ownership of the radios. One radio unit will be given to each full outdoor member and this can be paired with any other colleague on arrival at games. NPUA have reviewed maintenance and support options and are investigating belt clip options for ladies radios. The radios will not be insured and members will be asked to ensure they are properly looked after.

A range of headset options are being investigated. A boom mic option is likely to be offered as standard, Members will have the opportunity to order bespoke headsets (moulded to the ear) at additional cost to themselves (estimated at £35).

DH declared an interest as one of the suppliers being considered to source and input the radios, and left the room ahead of the voting. The remainder of the Executive Committee held three separate votes:

- Whether the Exec had sufficient information to make a decision today – all in favour
- A vote on which technology to use – 6 in favour of the radio units, 1 in favour of the Bluetooth units
- Whether the Exec were happy to nominate MT and RK to complete further enquiries on specification, price and due diligence checks on devices and suppliers, on behalf of NPUA – all in favour

The Exec also agreed that any shortfall between the EHB funds available and the cost of radios for all members should be met from NPUA funds.

The Exec agreed to fund repair of the existing NPUA radios. These will be retained for use at end of season tournaments and for the indoor programme. During the season, sets of three can be made available to umpire coaches to assist in umpire development. Tim Benford has agreed to continue to manage these radios.

**MT to communicate the outcome to all involved.**

**MT and RK to progress the topic on behalf of the Exec.**



### 6.3 Website

HS provided an update on the individual website updates, which are falling behind schedule.

**HS to liaise with Webmaster and Tex Solutions.**

### 6.4 Fitness

The Exec was briefed on the outcomes of the EHUSP meeting held on 31 August 2013 which concerned an umpire failing their fitness test at a European tournament.

FIH have introduced a new procedure for measuring fitness of umpires at international level. There will be no fitness tests at tournaments in the future, but national associations must certify and report the fitness of all FIH umpires on a quarterly basis.

**It was agreed that funding will be identified by EHB and NPUA to support travel for fitness testing for all FIH umpires.** Options to extend testing to Premier Panels and Promising Groups will be explored.

IDGs will be asked to consider the options for development activities that could be delivered alongside these fitness sessions to maximise the efficient use of funding.

It was confirmed that from the 2014/15 season, a valid fitness test will be mandatory to retain active Level 3 umpire status. . PBG introduced an idea of incorporating monthly regional fitness training. A weekly fitness challenge programme is being run in the women's programme and is proving popular and effective.

Other options include using GPS and heart rate monitors and requiring members at A\* level and above to submit regular fitness results.

**MD to research and produce proposals for NPUA membership fitness in 2014/15 season.  
MT to refresh and finalise the NPUA fitness policy and publish to the membership.**

### 6.5 IDG

Liz Pelling submitted a Womens IDG/Promising Group proposal to the Exec for review. The Exec were highly supportive of the content of the proposal. RK requested that in future IDG proposals are submitted by February to allow any funding requirements to be fed into the EHB budget request. After discussion, the decision was taken that the IDG must stick to its budget across the genders. The IDG should consider re-drafting some proposals to be delivered alongside fitness testing sessions detailed in 6.3 above. Exec will review any additional proposals for extra funding.

**PBG / RK to communicate to Liz and the women's IDG group.**

### 6.6 Women's Umpiring

A discussion was held around the women's umpiring strategy for the future, given the lack of female umpires in our membership. There is a real gap in our membership of female umpires aged 25-50. NPUA and EHB need to consider opportunities to attract former senior players into umpiring to add a second stream of recruitment to the successful NYUPL channel. RGJ is keen on improving numbers in this age and gender demographic across the umpiring spectrum.

**SE to add EHB umpiring video to NPUA website.**

**SE to liaise with MH over adding recruitment page to the website encouraging new umpires.**



## 6.7 Online development portal

The Exec discussed the potential for an online portal, which would revive the understanding and consensus video produced previously. This could include general guidance on interpretation, but also “members only” panel spaces to allow discussion of other areas.. RGJ explained that EHB have launched their online, rules based website and there is the possibility for some shared functionality.

**DH will lead this on behalf of the Exec and produce proposals for review. Target date is 1<sup>st</sup> December.**

## 6.8 Development Groups

It was agreed that Development Groups should be re-launched and organised on a funded basis, with the principle that NPUA fund accommodation and possibly tickets, with members funding their travel.

MW suggested The World Cup in The Hague in June 2014, men’s and women’s playoffs and possibly cup finals as development group opportunities. An idea was also suggested for an indoor development group. Early communication of dates is seen as crucial for attendance.

**MW to research and produce proposals for review by Exec by 1<sup>st</sup> December.**

## 7. Social media policy

It was felt that there is a need for NPUA to produce a social media policy, in line with EHB and other similar associations.

**DE to draft a document and circulate to Exec for approval.**

## 8. Update on watcher convergence session

There are around 25 people due to attend the session at Cannock next weekend, with 15 watchers unavailable. It is shaping up to be a very productive event. The Exec noted their thanks to Jo Pennycook for organising the event.

## 9. NPUA Conference Update

MD provided a review of the 2013 conference and suggestions for improvements for this year. The conference was felt to be successful and had run at a small surplus. One area of feedback was around venue and the Exec agreed to review options for 2014.

**MD to produce proposal of options for 2014, for circulation to Exec by 1<sup>st</sup> December.**

**Post meeting note: The date of the 2014 NPUA Conference was agreed as 6 & 7 September.**

## 10. AOB

FB asked about how the award winners at the conference were chosen. SE explained the rationale behind the awards and the information used to decide winners, which are based solely on club scores for umpires who have umpired more than nine games in a season. It was explained that these were designed to be inclusive of the whole membership, but also reflect the fact that they are awards for exceptional performance. SE explained that the Exec are open to any new awards, or more accurate/fair ways to decide on award winners.

Liz Pelling submitted a query about the names of umpiring panels, and the difference indoor and outdoor. It was agreed that indoor should align to outdoor – Premier Panel, A\* Panel, A Panel, B\* Panel, B Panel, Candidates, Reserves. Unlike outdoor, the indoor A\* panel carries no guarantee of appointment to the Premier League.

**SE to update website.**



Several members have raised concerns that the dates that appointments are physically published on the website, do not match the target dates listed. PBG queried whether the published target dates are accurate as EHUSP has moved to publishing smaller batches more frequently.

**SE to investigate and update the dates on the website.**

MW suggested the idea of assigning an Exec member to each umpiring panel, like a panel selector, to act as a communication channel from members to the Exec. It was agreed that this was a good idea.

**DE to produce list of names from Exec responsible for individual panels.**

**SE to update the website and Exec Org charts accordingly.**

Following the request at conference, no NPUA members have come forward as volunteers to assist in the management of the Graham Nash fund.

**RK to approach Hamish Jamson to lead the fund and propose some ideas.**

#### **11. Date of next meeting**

Next meeting to be held 1 February 2014 in the London area (ahead of the indoor finals on 2 February). A conference call will also be held in early December.

**There being no other matters, the meeting closed at 5.30pm.**