

Chairman's Report 2018 – 2019

We have been working hard on plans for the medium to long term future of the Club, and I was delighted with the response to our new plans from the Club members at the AGM. We could so easily sit back and do nothing and wait for others to control our future, but the positive feedback and offers of help when needed have given us a mandate to go for a very exciting new facility knowing that the Club is fully behind it.

As I outlined last year, 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.

The good news is that we have been offered land by the Wheatcroft family and have already started the process of planning a way forward towards a new future which hopefully will provide us with a sustainable new home. There are of course considerable problems not excluding the fact that the land is green belt, and therefore will present significant planning problems and understandable local concern. However I believe that we have a compelling case so I am very optimistic for a positive outcome. This has recently been enhanced as there is requirement for more school places in the area so I am in consultation with the County Council and the TAG Multi Academy Trust to extend our plans to include a new school. This could help to fund the pitches and smooth the planning issues. Exciting times?

So – difficult but exciting 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.

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!

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 2018