



The Referees' Association of England

To: CRA Secretaries and Liaison Representatives in A&SE Region, Berks&Bucks, Northants, Oxford; RAE Board members; and RA Head of Operations.

REPORT OF ANGLIA & SOUTH EAST REGION (A&SE) LIAISON MEETING HELD AT The BLOOMSBURY THISTLE HOTEL, LONDON, ON 1st December 2007

PRESENT

RAE Board: Richard Blackman, Ray Mallery

CRA Representatives: Robin Jagot (AFA), Peter Onion (Beds); Brian Richards (Berks & Bucks); Paul Falvey (Essex); Guy Bispham (Herts); Chris Badcock (Kent); Graham Crane (London); David Griffin (Middx); Brian Gadd (Norfolk); Roy Reddaway (Northants); Ken Leach (Oxford); Brian Lennon (Suffolk); Brian Fish (Surrey); Mark Potter (Sussex); Nigel Owen (Army/Navy/RAF).

Guest : Sid Harrison (Ex RAE Board Member)

Ray & Richard welcomed delegates and in particular Sid Harrison

APOLOGIES

Andy Barks (Hunts).

OBITUARIES

The name of Jesse Lae (Northampton) was incorrectly spelt in the 2006 Liaison meeting report under "obituaries". The correct spelling should have read Jesse Lay, this had now been corrected.

Silent tribute was paid to those from the above Counties who had passed away since the last meeting: Jack Reuben, Peter Holliman, Dennis Whitehall (AFA), Frank McNeil (N. Middx), George Mills (RA Life Member- Reading), Derek Stark (Basildon), Fred Whiting (Epping Forest –Vice President Essex CRA), Ken Mulraney (RA Life Member- Swindon), Robert (Bob) Spicer, Walter Bailey (Guildford), John Kensett (Croydon) Alan Tate (RA Life Member- Slough), Robert (Bob) Harrop (Thanet), John Constable (Bridgnorth) and Reg Paine (Ex FA Referees Secretary).

PRESENTATION

Richard Blackman, on behalf of the members of the RAE Board presented an engraved memento to Sid Harrison in appreciation of his services to the Board. Sid thanked the Board and those present and encouraged members to apply for positions on the RAE Board of Management.

A PowerPoint presentation (compiled by Len Randall) providing news of various RAE and RA matters and a look to the future was shown to an appreciative and attentive audience. Copies of the text would be sent to delegates in order that they could go back to their counties to inform and encourage action where needed.

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

- The timing of the Friday AGM at Conference was questioned. With the success of the Saturday programme of workshops it was accepted that Friday afternoon was the best option because this enabled the Board to continue with the presentation of the LMSA awards in the evening. To hold the AGM in the evening would mean that the awards could not be presented if the current format of Conference weekend is to be retained. It was also noted that travelling on a Friday afternoon can be problematic in some parts of the Country.
- Suggestions for Conference 2008 : More Bar Staff needed : All Life Members to be invited to the Pre Gala dinner drinks reception. Head office to send a pack of booking forms (at least 6) to encourage members to attend and to supply and accept booking forms by e-mail.
- It is understood the Contributory Fitness days may clash with Conference in July and could this be avoided in future ? It should be remembered that our Conference weekend is booked at least a year in advance and any clash of dates results from the event that is arranged second, this is therefore not necessarily within our control.

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- Details of the Insurance Policy was requested by some and this would be dealt with by (Ray Mallery) An incident where a claim was rejected after items were stolen from a locked dressing room had caused concern.
- The FA Referees Committee have recently set up a "Task Force" under the Chairmanship of David Elleray to look into the problems of recruitment and retention of Referees within the game,
- (which is different to the R&R that is undertaken by this Association) Suggestions are welcomed by this Committee and should be sent to Ian.Blanchard@TheFA.com

FEEDBACK ON ITEMS FROM LAST DECEMBER'S ROUND OF MEETINGS

- Conference 2007 did include an informal meeting for County RA Secretaries on the Saturday morning and this years Conference Committee have been asked to again include such a meeting (whilst we have the majority of County RA representatives gathered in one place.)
- 13 Societies have notified Head office about their Centenary and they will all receive an engraved Gavel or Plaque in recognition of this achievement . These are now on going.
- During the year we have requested more RAE content in the joint FA/RA Magazine "Refereeing" and we continue to do so through representatives on the editorial committee and our representative on the FA Council, Arthur Smith.

CRA DISCUSSION POINTS

- Concern was expressed about the future of small Societies.
Some CRA 's fear for the future of smaller Societies , the life blood of all Societies is the constant trickle of new members joining from recently completed training courses for new referees. This is indeed essential for the smaller Societies. Is this a serious threat which could lead to the demise of the smaller Societies ? The new training structure introduced by the FA last year requires a minimum of 12 candidates for a course to be held. There are many small Societies (mostly rural) where this is not possible, consequently they are now unable to run courses.
Counties are now divided into a small number of areas for training purposes. These areas do not necessarily correspond to the traditional Society catchment areas but tend to reflect the (large towns, cities) . Such courses are run by FA training instructors in those areas. So the smaller Societies suffer , they cannot raise 12 candidates to run a course and the candidates that they do have within their locality are directed by the County FA to a course being run in other areas, whose instructors could possibly recruit them into their own Society. If small Societies get smaller then they will eventually die. It was pointed out that some CFA's are running courses with 9 candidates simply because they cannot raise the minimum number.
The main concern is that the RAE will lose more members and continue to decline. It was agreed to send a copy of the Berks & Bucks discussion document "The Future of Small Societies" to the FA "Task Force " that are now looking into all aspects of recruitment & retention.
- 100% membership was discussed again, if Government bodies can do it why not the Referees Association of England. It was suggested that a first years membership fee for the RAE should be included in the cost of the referee training course charged by each County FA .
- Referees' Instructors operate under the jurisdiction of the Football Association so should we expect them to sell the RAE at a training course ? Yes we should because most are also RAE members themselves. it is most important to have an RAE member explaining the benefits of membership to new trainees at some point during a training course.
- Incentive schemes for retention were being operated by some counties Norfolk CFA for example operate a bonus scheme that when a new referee completes 15 officially appointed games in his second season he can claim a £50 bonus which is paid by cheque directly to him. The same applies after he has completed his third season. This has been found to be successful. There are other such incentive schemes and all were to be encouraged.
- Essex were proposing an A3 recruitment poster and were encouraged to obtain a free design. They also send out with the training pack , leaflets encouraging new recruits to join their local ABS.
- It is understood that some members are being asked for £10 to update their Child Protection Validation certificate although this does not appear to be compulsory.
- Concern was expressed as to why the need for multiple CRB checks., enhanced checks carried out on Teachers and Police Officers are not accepted by the FA CRB unit. It was agreed that this needs to be addressed urgently.
- Delegates were reminded that the RA Benevolent Fund is available for those members and their dependants who find themselves in unfortunate circumstances.

Reported by Ray Mallery

The next meeting was provisionally set for 6 Dec 2008.