

President's Report – AGM January 2020

It seems a long time since the last AGM and it's been an eventful year.

Sadly, we lost number of current and former members in the last year, including Bill Lake from Monmouth, Bernard Bradshaw from Monkstone, Malcolm Beer from Penarth, Peter Westall from Maesteg and Reg Brice from Wenvoe.

I should begin by thanking the other members of the EC for their work and support throughout the year, so a big thank you to Derek, Kon and Tony and to Gareth for the work he did while he was on the committee.

I spoke at the beginning of the year about my thoughts for 2019 and I'd like to take a moment to reflect on those thoughts.

I stated we needed to have more OGMs and we managed to have 3 plus this AGM, so that met my expectations. I also spoke about accessibility and wrote to all Club Secretaries making myself available to attend their meetings if they wished to invite me. Penarth took me at my word and I attended their AGM.

Finally, I talked about improving the transparency of the EC's decision making. Again, I like to think we've managed to achieve that when we've had to take any big decisions.

On the downside, we've not succeeded in running the Umpiring events we wanted to, nor have we improved the coaching situation as much as we wanted to. As such, both of these will be prioritised in 2020. We also had a couple of competitions that didn't go ahead so, hopefully we'll get a full-house of National Competitions in 2020.

In terms of playing-matters, we managed to deliver new WPA playing shirts in time for the team going to the World Singles/Doubles/Mixed-Doubles & Celtic Challenge, and for the PE Inter-Regionals and we must acknowledge the work done by Gareth Spencer in arranging the sponsorship for the former and to Ken Aston for sponsoring the latter. 'Our thanks to both.

We had a solid performance both the Worlds, Celtic Challenge (superbly hosted by Pontyclun) and Inter-Regionals, our strongest performance for years in what turned out to be a very tense Home Nations, played in very difficult conditions at Monkstone PC (who had also done a great job of organising and hosting the Nations Veterans Cup).

We had a greater success with the team that went to Bulgaria for the European Veterans and Men's Triples where, under the most difficult circumstances following the sudden tragic death of Pete Westall, they somehow managed to achieve two outstanding results, culminating in qualification for the Men's World Championships in Switzerland later this year. This was recognised at the 2019 Presentation Evening where the Player of The Year award was given to the whole Team. Also, I believe the members of Maesteg PC are planning to hold a competition in Pete's memory in 2020.

I began the year by explaining that I saw 2019 as being a year of consolidation, following the excellent work done by Derek & Kon in 2018 in ensuring the survival of the WPA. I believe, on balance, we've succeeded in that with 2 new Clubs joining as well as the playing results I've outlined.

So, onwards to 2020. In addition to the Umpiring and Coaching I've already mentioned, we need to look at growing the association now. Not only helping our existing Clubs to try to increase their membership, but also looking to get more Clubs on board. Part of this will be helped by the appointment of a National Coach who should be able to relieve the Director of Development of some of their workload.

We've also begun working on a 4-year plan (based on competition cycles) that outlines our aims and objectives for that period, as well as a "player's charter" aimed at players who qualify for Wales for the first time, which will outline what our expectations are of them and, in turn, what they can expect from us. I hope to publish both of these to the website in the near future. Speaking of the website, that's another thing on the "agenda" for 2020, to try to improve its speed of operation and refresh its appearance.