



Welsh Pétanque Association

WPA Ordinary General Meeting Minutes

Date: 9th May 2024
Time: 19h30
Venue: Monkstone PC and Zoom

The following members were present:

T S Smith, J-Y Robic, S Smith, P McCarthy, C Scott, J Smith, D Lomas, G Attfield, L Babbage, C Parry, K Tomczyk, B Vaughan, G Spencer, S Spencer and K Attfield.

The following affiliated WPA Clubs were represented:

Monkstone PC, SWBRC-PS, Pontyclun PC, Caerleon RFC PC, Cardiff Harlequins PC and Llysfaen PC.

Receive Apologies for Absence – None were received.

President's Report

The president gave an overview of his last CEP Congress as a member of the Board for the past 12 years.

It was stated that there were only several points that would affect the WPA, these being:

A potential increase in the FIPJP fees. For the last few years, since the World Petanque Bowls Federation (WPBF) came into existence, the FIPJP has inferred that the fees the WPA and other member associations and federations pay annually would increase. So far, that increase has not materialised, but it is likely for 2025.

Reverting to mixed teams for the boys and girls for the European Championships Triples. Currently, there is a separate European Championship for boys and Girls. This works well for the larger European Federations; however, for the smaller members, such as us, we cannot qualify for these events.

Congress voted that this would no longer be the case and that mixed boys' and girls' teams would be allowed from 2025. With the current work by the Monkstone PC, we may be able to enter a junior team in 2025.

A report was given at Congress by the CEP Board Member responsible for disability. The term Parapétanque was introduced. From the discussion that took place reviewing a survey undertaken in 2023, it was concluded that the CEP would plan an event for players with mobility disabilities. As a first step, they propose to organise, with the cooperation of

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volunteer federations, a test demonstration of doubles with at least one player with a mobility disability (male or female) at the end of 2024 to give all parties involved (organisers and participants) the necessary preparation time. It was hoped that a doubles competition could be introduced in November this year at the European Cup competition.

The president congratulated the winners of the following competitions:

- President's Cup – Julie Bailey, Ian Bailey and Jean-Yves Robic
- President's Novice Cup – Kym Jeffrey, A Bond and James Frackrell
- 2024 Home Nation's Qualifier – The 31 members who qualified to represent Wales in this year's Home Nations in Jersey were congratulated.
- 2024 Celtic Challenge—Ireland was congratulated on its back-to-back win of the Celtic Challenge, hosted by Careleon RFC PC, which was thanked for its hard work organising the event. Wales-A squad was congratulated on finishing second with 26 wins, only four wins behind Ireland.
Wales B2, comprising Andy Rios-Hall, Daveed Languerand, David Long, and Gareth Coombes, was commended for being Wales's top team for the tournament with nine wins.

Treasurer's Report

Informed OGM that the WPA auditor report had been received and that 2023 accounts had been signed off by the auditor. The quorum required for an AGM was not met. Therefore, the 2023 accounts could not be approved. Hence, this will be an additional item on the agenda in 2024.

The WPA has received a £1,000 donation from a member who wishes to remain anonymous to be used for the development of the sport.

Presentation of the WPA financial position on 22/04/2024 (latest bank statement):

Liquidity at bank: £ 6,417.12
Reserve account: £11,197.94

Income: £8,669.30
Expenditure: £7,251.78
Balance: £1,417.52

Outstanding payments: £1,664.90

Given the expenses incurred for renewing the International WPA kit in 2024 (Celtic Challenge, Home Nations and Inter-Regionals), the level of player support available will be proportionate to the competition entry income. It will likely be less than in previous years.

Secretary's Report - Membership Survey

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The Secretary appealed for clubs to come forward to host these events, as no club had offered its facilities so far. He also asked members to register before the entry deadline, as this helps the competition organiser assess the competition format sooner rather than later, which has become the norm.

Communication via Facebook and WhatsApp Groups was reported. It was confirmed that all WPA/Club/Other competitions are advertised on the platform, as it is important to promote the sport as much as possible. He also reminded the members present to let him know of any event happening so that it can be advertised.

Several WhatsApp groups have been established and grouped in a community to allow members to communicate with each other and give feedback to the executive. One group that was especially mentioned was Playing Partners Needed.

Finally, the Secretary reviewed the responses from the 2023 Survey and responded to questions from the members, including a comment from Kon Tomczyk about not responding promptly to his suggestions.

Competitions

Members were reminded that the following competitions are published on the playing calendar.

- Doubles – Men, Women & Mixed
- Precision Shooting
- Peter Westall Cup & Novice Cup.
- Welsh Cup

The members present were reminded that if no venues were forthcoming, the competition would be cancelled.

Discussion

Pontyclun PC requested that adequate lighting for league matches be discussed. Representing Pontyclun PC, Graham Attfield opened the discussion by outlining his concerns that some clubs playing in the league do not have adequate lighting or none at all. He described the difficulties and worries of several disabled members of their club.

Members discussed ways to improve disability accessibility in league matches, emphasising lighting conditions, affordable options, and accessible facilities. Specific points stressed safety and proactive measures from both teams, not just the home team. It was also suggested that an audit of each venue's accessibility features was conducted. It was highlighted that a player who stopped playing due to poor lighting on grounds of health should not be penalised.

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Lighting Issues

- Graham Attfield is concerned about player safety, especially in low light conditions (April game at 10 pm at SWBRC-PS).
- Speakers discuss accessibility concerns for players with disabilities in league matches.
- Several members shared personal experiences of playing with inadequate lighting, emphasising the need for proper illumination.
- Tony Smith highlights the importance of adequate lighting for league games, emphasising that low-level lighting can potentially cause adverse effects on players and spectators.
- Speakers discuss the challenges of finding suitable lighting solutions for league venues, with some suggesting that higher lighting levels are necessary for optimal gameplay.
- Tony Smith suggests using a smartphone light meter app to check light levels during league matches.

Potential solutions.

- Kon Tomczyk stated that lighting and surface concerns (Pontyclun PC) for teams in the league may have to consider alternative dates for their matches.
- Graham Attfield suggests playing in the afternoon to avoid using lights, citing health and safety concerns.
- Jean-Yves Robic suggests that clubs should inform each other about players' specific disabilities to ensure appropriate accommodations can be made.
- Jean-Yves Robic emphasises workers' right to withdraw if safety conditions are not met (building site analogy)

Potential improvements.

- Sean Smith proposes conducting an audit for each venue to ensure compliance with health and safety standards.
- Tony Smith suggests providing a data sheet for each team with information on physical and other disabilities that could affect play.
- Clubs may need to research and implement health and safety measures at their clubs to ensure safe play.

Accessibility and accommodations for players with disabilities

- Speakers discuss accessibility concerns for players with disabilities in league matches.
- Lyn Babbage emphasises the importance of accessible toilet facilities for players with disabilities, particularly for those who are diabetic and need to go to the toilet frequently.

Action items

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- Create a survey to audit facilities and accessibility criteria at each club venue.
- Develop Club Datasheets with details of facilities available at each club venue.
- Clubs will provide players with medical/disability details in advance to schedule matches considering individual needs.
- Research minimum lighting level standards for different sports to establish criteria/cutoff levels.
- Form a working group to help develop the accessibility and inclusion criteria for clubs/leagues.

Any Other Business

Under any other business, one item was umpiring courses and a shortage of qualified umpires in the WPA.

Tony Smith discussed the lack of umpires in Wales, especially the difficulty of finding volunteers to undertake the training, which ultimately involves taking Petanque England's Umpiring Exam, the certification recognised by all home associations in the United Kingdom. An introductory course can be arranged if members want to become an umpire.

Tony Smith
President