

Committee Meeting Minutes

9th March 2011

Present:

Alain Barbasiewicz	(AB)	Chair
Philippe Barbasiewicz	(PB)	Committee Member
Steven Bateman	(SB)	Secretary
Dave Hillier	(DH)	Committee Member

Apologies:

Colin Barbasiewicz	(CB)	Treasurer
Gavin Lyon	(GL)	Committee Member
Will Ross	(WR)	Committee Member

MINUTES

1. Club Finances & Membership

1.1. Review of Finances

Club membership numbers at a level where our base alone can cover the cost of facilities hire, without the extra revenue gained from beginner courses.

1.2. New Membership Forms

New Membership Forms, including member's emergency contact and medical details, have been in circulation for some time. The new form has been updated on all links on the website, and all new members (including beginners) are submitting the updated form, however, there is still a considerable number of existing members who have not yet done so.

It was decided that the Club will continue to communicate the need for the new forms via the website, Facebook, and regular announcements on club nights.

Action 1: Committee members will approach any members with outstanding forms directly, on a rota basis.

Action in progress.

1.3. Pricing Structure

A new 'Services' subscription rate has been introduced and published on the Membership section of the Club website. Serving members of the Armed Services (Army, Navy, Air Force) or Emergency Services (Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade) will be entitled to a discounted annual subscription rate of £125 (and for anyone eligible for the tariff aged over 50, it will be £95pa). The Club has a number of Army personnel already as members, and it was decided that the new tariff will further encourage experienced fencers to us.

2. BFA Membership – encouraging RFC members to apply

The Club and its coaches are all covered by their respective British Fencing licences; however, should any of our members be involved in an accident, they will not be covered for loss/injury unless they have their own individual BFA cover. It was decided that the option of RFC membership including BFA membership, whilst desirable (and common practice in many countries), was not feasible at this time as full membership did not offer enough incentives to the average social fencer. The idea of Social membership to the BFA was discussed, as it is believed to include insurance to enter one (local) competition, which falls in line with one of the Club's priorities.

Action 2: *DH to investigate BFA social membership with a view to encouraging its take-up at RFC. Findings to be discussed at next Committee Meeting.*

Action completed – Social Membership ([link here](#)), includes insurance for fencing at named club in addition to insurance for one local (i.e. County/Regional) competition.

3. Competitions – encouraging RFC members to participate

With Club membership numbers stable (and steadily growing), it has been decided to continue to communicate upcoming competitions to members via the website (from the News and Calendar pages), Facebook, and announcements made at Club training sessions.

It was discussed that the Club needs to remove any barriers that discourage members from competing – improving confidence where necessary and demonstrating that they can be enjoyable – and the club competition was highlighted as a good example of this.

SB mentioned that Mick Johnson, who also coaches at Egham Fencing Club, had mentioned to him the prospect of a local club league – with 'home' and 'away' fixtures – which would help to address the lack of grass roots fencing/competition in the UK. As an interim measure, it was suggested that RFC approach Egham Fencing Club with a view to arranging one Home and

one Away fixture. This would promote interest in the club both internally and possibly externally (i.e. Reading Chronicle).

Action 3: *SB to approach Mick Johnson with a view to arranging match between RFC and Egham Fencing Club.*

Action in progress.

Action 4: *AB to update RFC's Welcome Pack, to include further details about available competitions (i.e. LPJS and Elite Epée for juniors, and BB&O and Southern for everyone).*

Action completed.

4. Juniors

4.1. Junior Development

The Club has a substantial and growing number of junior members, which is excellent. AB sent out a questionnaire to all junior members prior to the meeting, with a summary of the feedback below.

- Positives:
 - o Our juniors enjoy fencing at RFC!
 - o Good social environment.
 - o They enjoy being able to practice with a variety of abilities.
 - o Experienced fencers very supportive of juniors.
- Negatives:
 - o Lack of structure to training, especially relevant to those finishing the beginner courses;
 - o Not enough access to coaching (i.e. one-to-one lessons);
 - o Early bedtimes!

A number of options were discussed with a view to giving access to coaching, and implementing structure and direction to juniors at the Club, and indeed making them feel like part of a 'squad'. The following was decided:

- Club to open from 19:00 on Wednesday's, from April-September, with juniors encouraged to attend at this time.
- From 19:00-20:00 on Wednesday's, a structured footwork and skills session will be run, by a coach, for juniors. The lessons will:
 - o Have a set syllabuses for junior courses, with lessons taking place on consecutive weeks. Dates would need to be confirmed subject to availability of the hall.

- Each lesson to include a warm-up, footwork session, and blade-work session targeting specific skills to encourage and develop junior's fencing.
 - Juniors will still be encouraged to attend training on Monday's. Any juniors who attend the club later (for example, after junior lesson has started) will be encouraged to continue as usual, setting up pistes and free fencing etc.
 - Costs: prices to be confirmed, but would need to cover additional hire of sport hall and cost of coaching. Suggested that juniors are encouraged to pay upfront, with a slightly higher fee if paying ad-hoc. Cost would need to be competitive with a one-to-one lesson, which cost £5 for only 20-30 minutes.
 - At the end of each course, juniors will be encouraged to take a British Fencing Achievement Award examination.
 - Achievement Award certificates to be paid for separately, at cost price of certificate (£4 each).
 - Adults will be encouraged to attend the club and fence as usual.
 - Dates of earlier opening times and junior courses will be publicised to juniors and their parents via Club announcements, notices on the website and Facebook.
 - Earlier opening times, and the junior courses, will run subject to a trial period and will continue/cease according to attendance and feedback.
- The subject of a junior-only piste was also discussed. Implemented not long ago as a result of parent feedback, the idea was considered to be beneficial to junior development but lacking in clarity. It was decided that there would not be feasible on Monday evenings when the beginner courses were running, due to limited space, however there would be on Wednesday's until 21:00. To help, it was suggested that "Juniors Only" signs would be placed on the relevant pistes.

Action 5: *PB to approach Reading Blue Coat School with a view to hiring the sports hall from April 'til September.*

Action in progress.

Action 6: *AB write job description for Club Coach (including availability to coach, requirement to submit Membership Form, and exemption from subscription fees). Once agreed at the next meeting, club coaches will be asked to submit a Membership Form and details of their qualifications, insurance, and CRB.*

Action completed.

Action 7: *AB to devise a structured coaching programmed for juniors, to include two 10-week syllabuses.*

Action completed.

Action 8: AB/DH to publish details of proposed junior course dates and details on RFC website and Facebook page.

Action completed.

4.2. Junior Representative

In line with junior development, and also RFC's Clubmark application, it was decided that two Junior Representatives be elected, as well as a Welfare Officer. Job descriptions for both positions would be required, with applications then invited from senior club members and junior parents and elections to follow at the Club AGM.

Action 9: AB to write Junior Representative and Welfare Officer job descriptions.

Action completed.

5. Clubmark

Review of document prepared by AB, listing all documents prepared so far by himself with a view to RFC obtaining Clubmark status. Any outstanding evidence required was assigned to committee members as appropriate. All completed/outstanding evidence listed below, under the four sections:

- 1. The playing programme:
 - a) "The club provides a structured coaching programme for junior members".
→ In hand, as discussed in section 4.1. of the meeting.
 - b) "The club uses relevant BFA skills or performance awards any any other coaching resources of the BFA to enhance its coaching and assessment programme".
→ In hand, as discussed in section 4.1. of the meeting.
 - c) "The performer:coach ratio for coaching/training sessions is in accordance with BFA guidelines".
→ Action 10 (below).
 - d) "The club provides suitable intra and/or inter club competition according to BFA guidelines".
→ Internal, monthly club competition already run (by SB). Information about competitions given on website (Calendar, News and Welcome Pack). In addition, Action 3 (above) will promote inter-club competition. SB to review BAF guidelines (Action 11, below).
 - e) "The club uses qualified coaches who are registered with England Fencing".
→ Already raised in Action 6 (above).

- f) “The coaches and volunteers responsible for the junior programme have job descriptions with clear roles and responsibilities”.
→ Already raised in Action 6 (above).
 - g) “The coaches responsible for the junior programme hold appropriate professional indemnity and/or public liability insurance”.
→ Already raised in Action 6 (above).
 - h) “The club uses safe venues and equipment for all coaching and competition sessions”.
→ Club ‘Risk Assessment’ prepared by AB – to be published on Resources page of website.
- 2. Duty of care and safeguarding & protecting children and young people:
- a) “The club had receipt of the BFA child protection policy and is compliant with the procedures laid down”.
→ To be discussed at first AGM (Action 12, below), along with official election of Welfare Officer (Action 9, above).
Copy of these committee meeting minutes, signed, adopting the BFA policy.
Also prepared by AB is a ‘Duty of Care & Child Protection Policy’ (to be published on Resources page of website, along with copy of minutes).
 - b) “At least two members of the club, one of whom is a coach, have attended Clubmark-recognised child protection training”.
→ DH has attended. AB to identify others (Action 13, below).
 - c) “The club ensures that any unregistered coach and anyone in a supervisory role have obtained CRB clearance via British Fencing”.
→ Already raised in Action 6 (above).
 - d) “The club has adopted codes of conduct for all coaches, officials and volunteers working with young people and children”.
→ ‘Codes of Conduct’ prepared by AB – to be published on Resources page of website.
 - e) “The club has access to first aid equipment at all coaching and competition sessions”.
→ Two first aid boxes available for use: the club’s own (kept in its equipment cupboards, looked after by committee members), and Reading Blue Coat School’s (located in the school gym upstairs, looked after by the school).
 - f) “The club has emergency procedures for dealing with serious injuries/accidents, including ensuring telephone/radio contact with the emergency services”.

→ 'Accident & Emergency Procedures' prepared by AB – to be published on Resources page of website.

- g) "The club has the contact details of parents/carers and emergency/alternative contacts".

→ Club's Membership Form is now compliant. Action 1 (above) still in progress to update details for existing members.

- h) "The club has information on any medical conditions of young people at the club and informs club personnel where appropriate".

→ Club's Membership Form is now compliant. Action 1 (above) still in progress to update details for existing members. Any relevant medical conditions communicated to club coaches as appropriate.

- 3. Sports Equity & Ethics:

- a) "The club has adopted an equal opportunities/sports equity policy".

→ 'Equity & Diversity Policy' prepared by AB – to be published on Resources page of website.

- b) "The club has an action plan identifying how it will recruit and retain members for its community".

→ Action 14 (below).

- c) "One coach has attended a sports coach UK 'Equity in your Coaching' workshop".

→ Action 15 (below).

- d) "The club has an open/non-discriminatory constitution".

→ Constitution prepared by AB – referring to open membership in Section 5 of the document – to be published on Resources page and voted at next AGM (Action 16, below).

- e) "The club has codes of conduct for parents/carers and other supporters".

→ 'Equity & Diversity Policy' prepared by AB and adopted at meeting – to be published on Resources page of website.

- f) "The club has a set of rules for children and young people".

→ Already completed as per Section 2d of Clubmark application.

- 4. Club Management:

- a) "The club has Public Liability Insurance".

→ Included as part of club's BFA membership.

- b) "The club is affiliated to a NGB".

→ British Fencing Association membership number: 4261.

- c) "The club communicates regularly with parents/carers".

→ RFC communicates with all members via its website (the News and Juniors pages in specific), Facebook, and also by making announcements at training sessions. All new members to the, regardless of age, are directed to its Welcome Pack, which refers to the Rules of the Club (and can available be found on the Club website in numerous locations).

d) “The club has a specific membership category and pricing policy for children and young people”.

→ Already established, with all details available on the Membership page of the Club website. Relevant categories include Under 17, Under 20, and Family.

e) “The club has contact with at least one local school/youth organisation”.

→ RFC cohabits with Reading Blue Coat School. In addition, many of the Club’s coaches teach at local schools and sports camps in a professional capacity.

f) “The club has contact with the Local Authority, County Sports Partnership and NGB”.

→ RFC in contact with all of the above. SB to further relations with Reading Borough Council (Action 17, below)

g) “The club shows commitment to further development and outreach work”.

→ All relevant documents to be completed by AB (Action 18, below).

Action 10: *DH to investigate BFA guidelines regarding performer:coach ratio (Clubmark 1c).*

Action completed – it is 12:1.

Action 11: *SB to investigate BFA guidelines regarding intra/inter club competitions (Clubmark 1d).*

Action in progress.

Action 12: *AB to include ‘Implementation of BFA Child Protection Policy’ as an agenda item for the Club’s first AGM (Clubmark 2a).*

Action completed.

Action 13: *AB to enquire if active coaches have attended child protection training course, and obtain copies of attendance certificates (Clubmark 2b).*

Action in progress.

Action 14: *PB to prepare an Equity Action Plan in readiness for next committee meeting (Clubmark 3b).*

Action in progress.

Action 15: *AB to enquire if active coaches have attended a scUK Coach Education Programme, and obtain certificates if available (Clubmark 3c).*

Action 16: *AB to include ‘Ratification of Club Constitution’ as an agenda item*

for the Club's first AGM (Clubmark 3d).

Action completed.

Action 17: *SB to further contact with Reading Borough Council (Clubmark 4f).*

Action in progress.

Action 18: *AB to prepare/finalise: Development/Action Plan, to incorporate details of Playing Programme, Duty of Care, Sports Equity & Ethics, and Club Management (Clubmark 4g).*

Action in progress.

6. Website

Discussion deferred until next Committee meeting.

7. Elections/AGM

Committee decided to hold the Club's first AGM and elections at 19:30, 1 June 2011.

8. AOB

None.

Date & time of next committee meeting: 19:30, Wednesday 23rd March