

Stockton Hockey Club

Honorary Secretary Report, AGM April 2022

Firstly, let me start by extending my apologies for non- attendance.

I'll keep this brief. On reflection, I have now undertaken this position for approaching 20 years, potentially the longest ever continuously serving, and should anyone wish to take over please feel free, but at some point I'll want to step aside. I will continue, if wanted, for a number of very serious challenges and reasons, which I am not entirely sure Members truly appreciate.

The impact of COVID, England Hockey restructure and various other challenges around pitches, cost and player attraction continue, and are directly affecting our Club, and will do, for some time, all these have extremely serious ramifications for our survival, the next few seasons will be tough, and revenue and cash flow are a serious concern. We are in the process of being fortunate to have a new pitch, which has not been an easy path, and many will not realise that this was very close to not happening at all and leaving us in a very uneasy predicament. The relationship with Egglecliffe School is pivotal to our survival. Dave Yule has done an incredible job here, has unbelievably managed to negotiate a huge discount and get exclusivity for the immediate future. We have now developed a really good relationship with Yarm School, thanks again to Dave and Gary Ferguson, indeed Yarm Schools support through the last year was significant in our ability to get to this point

England Hockey has changed the structure for all and there is a long way to go before this settles and is anyway productive, I'm not convinced it will ever work in the North, and I fear that many Clubs will struggle to survive and Hockey is on a decline. Our own Junior set up is working fantastically, but I despair of how England Hockey are approaching Juniors.

To get to this position, the amount of dedicated time required over the past years to continue to successfully run and administer our Club is significant, and without this commitment things just simply would not have happened, and I repeat, frankly, this Club would not have survived. Dave Yule has been instrumental here and is owed a great deal of thanks and appreciation, which I put on record. This has placed the Club in the best possible position to survive and prosper, given all the challenges, faced and to be faced. We are by no means out of the woods yet, sorry if this paints a non to rosy picture, but that is exactly how it stands.

A couple of reflections, there have been too many behavioural issues that the Committee have had to deal with over the last year, I'll spare the detail, but there should be none. We need to improve. We need more people to step up and contribute, especially supporting Senior Men and Women recruitment.

Mike Lakinski