

LONDON FA NORTH EAST REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Minutes of the North East Regional Committee Meeting of the London Football Association held online on Monday 3 October 2022 commencing at 7:30pm

1 Present: Kevin Wilmot (Chair/ Acting Secretary – KW), Ian Yearwood (IY), David Wolff (DW), Yashmin Harun (YHa), Louise Dorling (LD), Bobby Bernini (BB),

2 Apologies: Alf Brown (AB), Marcel Matthew (MM)

Not present: Aroz Miah (AM), Harry Whipple (HW), Imrul Gazi (IG), Karen Greene (KG), Nahimul Islam (NI), Tosin Adeneye (TA), Shahid Malji (SM), Farooq Mohammed (FM), Hocine Tachoukaft (HT), Yasmin Hussain (YHu), James Middlehurst (LFA Chair – JM)

2.1 KW advised that we have lost a member of our group since the last meeting as Louise McGing has left the London FA. KW added that he happened to notice on social media that she had stepped down as the Chair of AFC Leyton Girls and dropped her a note to check everything was okay. Louise explained her reasons for no longer being involved at her club but, worryingly, went on to explain that she had also stepped down as an LFA Council Member as “it wasn’t really clear what the role was”. DW stated that his understanding was that everyone who signs up is told what the role entails as part of the interview process. KW replied that we don’t know exactly how this information is put over and how well the individuals understand it at the time and maybe there is value in the Board looking at how much this is followed up once the individuals are onboard. KW also noted that the majority of the newer cohort of Council Members came on board at a time when we were “in limbo” as the old Divisions had gone and there was still discussion around setting up the current Regions. Now they have been set up, we are still going to be talking tonight about what we want to be doing as a Region so it is understandable that some of our newer members won’t really understand what’s going on or how they can help out.

3 Election of Secretary

3.1 Of the few people present, there were no volunteers to take on the role of Regional Secretary. KW will continue in an acting capacity for the time being. DW felt it was really necessary to encourage some of the newer members to take on some of these roles.

4 Minutes of last meeting

4.1 Agreed as a true record. Proposed by DW, seconded by IY.

5 Matters Arising

5.1 DW had suggested that we contact the Regional Members who were not attending these meetings and JM was going to speak with them by telephone to find out why and, if they are new council members, to give them more information about the purpose of the meetings. KW suggested that, from the lack of feedback, JM probably hasn’t been able to do this yet. KW suggested that he email the people who are not attending and JM can then follow that up with a telephone call, where necessary. LD noted that it is the individual’s choice whether to attend or not but it’s the not knowing whether they are going to attend or why they won’t attend that makes it difficult. KW added that it is particularly important for the face to face meetings when we need to know what size room to book and how many refreshments to order. DW suggested it may be worth seeing what the attendance is like in the other regions as, if it’s not working globally, what’s the point of having the

meetings. BB recalled that it was compulsory to attend these meetings when he first joined Council but it isn't anymore. KW stated that there was more of a purpose to these meetings when we dealt with disciplinary cases as people were actively involved in what was going on whereas, these days, people with busy lives probably don't have the time for what they may see as just a bit of a chit-chat.

5.2 DW asked at the last meeting about getting an update from the other regional meetings and JM agreed to provide feedback as he goes to all of the meetings. KW noted that we can't get that feedback tonight as, unfortunately, JM is not with us. KW is aware that South East Region are meeting on Wednesday evening but no idea what is happening in the other two regions.

5.3 KW had mentioned contact he had received from former Olympic athlete, Dalton Grant. KW followed this up with Paul Bickerton, as per JM's suggestion, but Paul's viewpoint was that what Dalton is offering doesn't fit in with the direction the LFA is taking at this particular time but it is something that we may want to revisit further down the line. YHa stated that she will raise this at an FA meeting later this week and feedback to us.

6 Safeguarding

6.1 KW advised that he has added this as an ongoing agenda item so that we have a space where we can discuss any safeguarding issues that crop up and take them forward as appropriate.

6.2 KW asked if anyone wished to raise any issues. DW queried whether referees have to have a DBS check even if they are solely dealing with adult football. KW noted that adult football can still involve under 18s. DW believes he was informed by Neil Twitchett that it is going to become mandatory from next season and feels we need some clarification on this. KW advised that there is a Referees Committee meeting next week and suggested that BB raises the question there. IY's understanding is that, in the current season, you only need a DBS if you are officiating in youth football.

7 Regional Update

7.1 KW gave JM details of contacts from some of the local authorities that he has the details for so he could pursue the matter of availability of pitches and training venues. Talking with JM last week he acknowledged receipt but suggested that he was taking a slightly different approach but he is unfortunately not here to explain this in more detail.

7.2 FM had spoken at the last meeting about us as a Region marketing ourselves more so that the communities we serve know who we are, what we do and how to get in touch with us. KW reemphasised his point from the last meeting that, before we can start doing any of this, the Board need to determine where the boundaries are between the four regions. Whilst the Thames is a natural barrier between north and south, there is currently no definition of where the North East Region ends and the North West Region starts and, without this, our target audience is not clear. YHa suggested contacting Anita Poulman to see if she has something as she did a lot of work around setting the regions up. If not, then YHa will raise it at Board level.

7.3 Prior to the meeting, KW circulated the paper from Paul Bickerton around the purpose of the Regions that was produced from the working group meetings and asked if anyone had any comments. IY noted that there has been a discussion around whether the meetings should be mandatory or optional and asked what was the main rationale behind choosing to make them optional. LD replied that it was generally felt that making it mandatory may put people off as they have limited time on top of their working life and football activities. IY noted that there is less to do

now than there was in the past so what makes people think they don't have time to attend. LD responded that people's lifestyles have changed and they don't have time to fit in another meeting. YHa suggested that varying the days of this meeting may make it easier for some members to attend. KW stated that we can look at this but added that he did survey all the members to find out which days suited them best and there was a strong majority for Monday evenings therefore, in a way, there is an element of trying to suit the minority by moving the meeting day but, on the other hand, it may be worth a try in the spirit of offering equal opportunities.

8 LFA/Board Update

8.1 YHa stated that the Board are really pushing hard for the Football Foundation to give us more access to facilities and pushing this via both the FA and local authorities. The FA will be represented at the next Board meeting to discuss their strategy around this. YHa will provide us with an update on that. There is an agreement, in principal, to add a second hybrid pitch in Regents Park and we are waiting to see how that develops. JM is pushing for more of these in areas such as Hackney Marshes and Wanstead Flats.

8.2 DW is not convinced that the FA's Pitch Register is up to date. There are clubs in DW's league that say their pitch is certified but it doesn't appear on the register. DW is concerned about what would happen if there is an accident on one of these pitches. YHa will bring that up at an FA National Game representative meeting later this week and feedback any response.

9 Correspondence

9.1 KW advised that this meeting has already discussed the two items of correspondence he has received, the note from Paul Bickerton around the purpose of the Regions and the email exchange with Louise McGing regarding her stepping down from her club and the LFA.

10 Standing Committee Reports

10.1 KW reported on behalf of the Cups Committee to say that the cup competitions are all underway and going well. KW expressed surprise at the lack of entry numbers in our Girls competitions given the expected rise in popularity following the recent Women's European Championship and England's success. Not sure if there are affiliation issues or it is just a timing issue or simply the issue we have previously discussed about them not having anywhere to train/play but KW has noted that the U18 and U17 girls' cups only have 8 entries each and the highest entry number in any age group is only around 17 clubs. DW added that all the cups, apart from the Senior Cup and Senior Trophy, have been regionalised north and south. Jamaal Horned regionalise some of the first round draws still further to NW, Ne, SW and SE but and this has resulted in criticism from a couple of leagues and the Committee have requested that Jamaal reverts to a straight north and south format from the second round onwards. KW also advised that regionalisation was introduced for this season due to the increasing costs in fuel, the extension of the congestion charge hours and the ULEZ zone and this will be reviewed again at the end of the season. DW also felt it was sad that there have been a number of walkovers already due to clubs withdrawing. KW advised that some League's rules don't make it easy for their clubs to enter multiple competitions.

10.2 BB advised that the last Referees Committee didn't happen because only 3 people turned up at The Guildhall on the evening. KW stated that there were 5 people, including himself, who had given their apologies and maybe there should have been a review of whether it was still worth trying to proceed with the meeting and, whilst admittedly a couple of people just didn't turn up without

saying anything, it did seem clear in advance that it was going to be a low turnout. The next meeting is on Wednesday of next week.

10.3 LD advised from the Judicial Committee that it was noted the number of appeals rose sharply last season, both appeals heard by LFA but, more so, the number of serious case appeals heard by the FA. Carl Long is saying that it is taking up a lot of staff time dealing with frivolous appeals which appear to be being lodged just for the sake of it. Suki has left and Jordan has joined the Investigation Team. KW noted that there have already been a couple of abandonments in cup matches this season and it's important that we don't have the delays in hearing these cases that we suffered last season. The guideline is for cases to be heard within 28 days but, ideally, cup matches should be prioritised as much as possible to prevent the cup competitions getting delayed due to matches in following rounds not being able to be played on time. Louise advised that there is a new timescale for abandoned matches but, roughly speaking, everything still needs to be dealt with within 28 days. LD added that serious cases that go to the FA have to be dealt with by the LFA as a priority. DW sits on Commissions and feels it is very time consuming and frustrating to have to go through large amounts of duplicated paperwork and there are cases where he receives 40 pages of information that could easily be presented in 5 or 10 pages. Louise understands the frustration but replied that there is a set format dictated by the FA and sometimes it is about the way that the paperwork comes into them but the point has been made. KW noted that LD raised concerns at the last meeting about the demographic of the South East Regional Panel. LD reported that, so far, the fears that were raised haven't materialised. Next Judicial Committee meeting is next week.

10.4 No report from Rules & Sanctions Committee as AM is not present at the meeting. Although not directly involving the LFA, KW noted that has been an issue where a club name change was sanctioned by the Essex FA this summer when there was already an existing club in Middlesex with the exact same name. KW was going to ask AM if the Committee could look at whether there was a process in place to prevent this sort of thing happening again.

10.5 KW noted that the IAG had discussed the Race Equality Plan which was about to be produced at the time of our last regional meeting. YHa advised that this is now on the London FA website and that the staff are doing quite a lot of work on the plan behind the scenes and it is going really well.

11 Any Other Business

11.1 IY asked if the new Wembley offices overlook the pitch. DW joked that, as IY is a West Ham supporter, it is irrelevant!! YHa advised that she hasn't been there yet but there is a Board meeting in November and they are going in early to have a look around the offices so she can report back after that.

11.2 IY asked how HW is doing. LD and DW stated that he was okay as far as they are aware. LD added that George Dorling still sees him at football.

11.3 KW has received complaints from a number of clubs about not being able to get hold of the LFA by telephone. Paul Bickerton has advised that the LFA are using the Freshdesk email system in operation and it is preferred that people make contact by email although the phone lines are manned on Mondays and Tuesdays for emergencies from the weekend fixtures.

11.4 IY raised a query about a player getting sent off for a club that folds before they have served their suspension. KW advised that the suspension is served when the player joins their next club.

12 Date of next meeting

12.1 KW advised that, traditionally, the December meeting has been a Christmas get together where the meeting is followed up by a meal and asked the group if they want to do this again. Those present were happy to do this again. YHa asked if it could be held centrally. KW suggested we could have something in or near the Ilford area. KW will work with BB to find a suitable venue and offer everyone a choice of dates.

Meeting closed at 8:22pm