



Sussex County Archery Association Executive Committee

Chairman's Meeting Digest January 2018

The first Meeting of the new County Executive was held on 15th January, with four new members sitting down with seven of the ten continuing members.

The theme wasn't 'Business as Usual'. Total membership of Sussex Archery Clubs is running at over 1200, close to its highest ever - and that includes a realistic number of active Juniors now that they all have to pay a full Archery GB Fee - but the proportion of those 1200+ members with any interest in events outside their home clubs has dropped right away, to the point that SCAA hasn't got the human resources to run a County Championships. Does this mean SCAA is no longer needed?

We focussed on finding ways to increase participation by all members – without which the County Association doesn't seem relevant and may not survive. Participation isn't only a concern for SCAA, it's vital for Clubs too, they need members who will support Archery and stay long enough to learn skills which they will eventually pass on, and also be prepared to take on Club management jobs and continue with them for a number of years.

There's still a hard core of archers and supporters who enter competitions and perform to a very high standard, but there are far fewer 'grass-roots' types in the mix. And not enough of the experienced or talented Archers continue to support the Sport at Club and County level once they slip down the Rankings. We need more people prepared to put some time in to keep this great activity going in all its variations – right now! Do it, enjoy it, put something back!

OFFICERS REPORTS - Points Worth Noting:

TREASURER: Membership Fees have been received from all Clubs, and Numbers appear to be up on 2017. Due to the change of Accounting date it's difficult to compare figures exactly with last year, but SCAA did spend more of our reserves last year to improve resources and reduce the surplus, however income from membership and the Outdoor Tournament was greater than in the previous period so the balance is a bit bigger than expected.

FIELD OFFICER: It seems likely that two Sussex Archers may qualify for the World Field Championships later in 2018.

TEAM MANAGER: The Sussex County Team was the overall winner of the 4-way Inter-County Indoor match arranged by Kent in November. And more recently Nathan Thomas and Mark Charlesworth were part of the England Team that won the Home International Match at the Junior National Indoor Championships in December, and Bryony Pitman was top lady recurve archer in Senior Nationals. Sussex Archers and Sussex Teams clocked up some great performances in 2017 – look on the **SCAA Website** for more details and pictures: <http://www.sussex-archery.org.uk>

JUNIOR INDOOR LEAGUE: Unlike other years the League Secretary wasn't able to mass-mail all the Clubs and former Entrants back in October, and very few Juniors have entered so far. There's still time to enter and put in enough scores, and she will accept scores from November and December.

GENERAL DECISIONS were:

TO HOLD MEETINGS regularly at two-month intervals instead of every six or seven weeks, and to do more business between meetings by email conferencing. This had already started after the AGM, and when the committee met up we'd already discussed and started work on several topics.

TO CALL A ROUND-TABLE MEETING for all clubs to send two or more Officers / delegates to, probably towards the end of March, to find out whether Members have any interest in County Activities, and if so, what the Clubs need in the way of support to raise levels of participation in Club and County Events, and to work together to give a larger portion of the membership the support and the kind of activities they would take part in.

NOT TO HOLD AN OUTDOOR COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS this year as nobody has come forward to act as Tournament Officer for the second year running; instead there will be new events and activities attempting to promote the various Archery Disciplines available around Sussex and to help Novice and Intermediate Club Archers gain the confidence to enjoy Archery Events and meet other Archers outside their Home Clubs.

TO FOLLOW UP OPTIONS for an Indoor Championships, but unlikely to be held before the Autumn, and more likely in March 2019. Sussex and Brighton University Archery Clubs have been very active in trying to bring on a shoot to replace the K2 Championships, but things move slowly in Higher Education, and although we have been investigating the Brighton University Sports Hall as an excellent new Venue, there are plenty more steps to be taken before we get a definite go-ahead. And another problem with this slow process is the short time the Students stay at the Universities – the current club Officers who've been so helpful will be graduating soon, and anyway none of the Students have any experience at organising County-Level Events, so on top of technicalities around using the Hall, the Event won't go ahead without a County-Provided Organiser. We know from the level of participation at the K2 Indoor Events that many more Sussex Archers enjoy the Indoor Championships than turn out for the Outdoor Championships – so how is it that nobody wants to help keep this popular event alive?

ACCEPT PROPOSALS for a Field Archery Championships, and if possible a 3-D Championships too; and to hold a Clout Championships. Dates – same weekends as in 2017. Field Events kindly hosted by The High Weald A.C. Additional helpers from other clubs needed for all these events please.

IT'S HOPED The Martlets Coaching Guild will be able hold Personal Development Workshops before the Summer Season, and that these will help Intermediate Archers of all ages to move upwards and maybe into the selection zone for County Teams.

TO AWARD RECOGNITION BADGES to all archers of all disciplines representing Sussex County in National, Regional and County Match Level competitions. Up to now only Target Archers have been recognised.

CONFIRM PROPOSAL TO SUBSIDISE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CLUBS discussed at the AGM: SCAA will refund Sussex Physically Handicapped Clubs for costs incurred in affiliating their members to Archery GB over and above the £50 previously charged for any number of members.

FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS of the Sussex Field Archery Awards scheme, which is to be taken over by Archery GB as a proper National Scheme, the Committee will be considering a Badge Award scheme to recognise participation and development by Novices as they take on longer distances and higher-status Rounds.

TO CONTINUE WITH THE SUMMER LEAGUE FORMAT as finally agreed last year, but then try to open up discussion at the planned Round Table meeting to find a formula (which might include more than one Summer Competition) that will broaden the appeal of the league.

CONTACT CLUBS about IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS with membership, and compliance with the NEW GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

OTHER DISCUSSION INCLUDED...

- Trans-gender Issues arising in the context of Record Scores and Tournament Results – to be discussed further with the SCAS Region Officer dealing this is, and with Archery GB who are due to give guidance.
- County Team Selection Policy for 2018 and beyond – sub-committee taking further.
- Alternative Venues for County Events due to conflicts with Club Events at Crawley.
- Summer League Options.
- Ideas for Events to encourage more participation and a more adventurous attitude in Novices.

The next Meeting will be on Monday 12th March at Brighton.

WE NEED HELP!

The Executive is not up to strength, and is not going to repeat the stress of trying to run a County Championship with insufficient staff and very little help from Clubs – even though the 2017 Championships were the most successful for many years.

We would really welcome some more people to take on some of the roles and fill the vacant posts. We may not be holding Indoor or Outdoor Tournaments in the next twelve months, but it would be very good to have new organisers in place now, as we are planning several new and much simpler events, which would be good experience for a new organiser.

You could say the Requirement of new Officers is the **3 "C"s**

= Constructive, Co-operative, Continuing

or (like the Spanish Inquisition) it may be four things – add “Competent” to the list - but anyone starting from scratch will be given advice, help and in some cases mountains of notes.

Four existing posts are still vacant (Outdoor Tournament, Equipment, Indoor Tournament, and Communications / News) , **two new posts** (Minutes Secretary and Membership Secretary) are planned because of the increase in member numbers in recent years, and one other is going to become vacant during the year, as the County Secretary has been gradually reducing day to day involvement in administration

SOMETHING ELSE TO READ THAT YOU PROBABLY MISSED...

November 2017 Annual General Meeting Draft Minutes (sent with this Digest).

(“Draft” because these usually get published just before the next AGM, when it’s not very relevant)

It’s quite a hefty document, but we know most of you didn’t go to the meeting, so please have a look to see what the County Association does. There’s plenty going on, but it seems only a few of the 1200 members took part in the activities. Back at the 2016 AGM the Chairman, Peter Probert, showed a presentation that included a list of all the shoots and events Sussex Clubs and County hosts every year, amounting to about 28 days of shooting, one a week through the Outdoor Season, but from what was said at this year’s AGM it seems some clubs are still unaware of all this activity and think nothing’s on offer. Many of these events are designed to suit youngsters and intermediate

and inexperienced Archers – which accounts for quite a large part of our membership – so it should be worthwhile checking through the list, which is in the Appendix section of the Draft Minutes.

The County Executive is going to try to encourage more people to enter these Shoots, because this is really what Archery is about, not just practising at the Home Club. And if we can show Novices there is more than Club shooting, it will help the Sussex Clubs (Eastbourne, Friars Gate, The High Weald, Hastings, Newhaven, Crawley, Six Villages, Arundown, Ditchling, and SCAA) to carry on, and put on even better events.

Something that is having an even more negative effect on SCAA is the poor support given by most Clubs when it comes to helping run County Events. The 2017 County Tournament was a great success in terms of numbers of entrants and gross takings and net surplus but in other respects there were some real problems. The biggest problem was the very poor helper turnout from all but one of the Helper clubs. Three other clubs sent one helper each for one day, and all those helpers worked extremely effectively, but we were horrendously under strength overall, putting a huge strain on the Executive and the Local Club. And another issue was that in spite of the enhanced Record Status of the Shoot (World Record instead of UK National) the number of Sussex Archers was literally only a handful more than in 2016, while the number of visitors tripled, outnumbering our archers.

There's nothing new about the feeling the members are not interested in supporting the County Association Events, the falling level of participation and numbers of helpers at Events has been a concern since before 1990, and using figures produced in 2002, 'poor' participation in County events in 2002 translated to 123 (18% of the then membership) Sussex Archers at the County Champs, compared with 67 (6% of membership) in 2017. There were also two to three times more helpers in 2002, but still felt to be unsatisfactory.

The situation now is a whole lot worse. We have twice as many members, but about half the participation, a maximum of 6% of the members are taking part in the outdoor championship events, yet 12% turn out for the indoor championships (and plenty of excellent helpers).

This may mean that the County Association just isn't relevant any more – it was probably set up with the main objective of providing an Outdoor County Championship (that's how both Archery GB and the Southern Counties Archery Society started). So we are hoping to get some discussion going before the Summer season to find out what it is the Club Members need, and whether SCAA can adapt or find a new direction for Sussex Archers – or just gracefully bow out.

Rod Brown
SCAA Chair 2018