

## Chairman's Annual Report to Comets JBC 26 June 2022

### Introduction

A big thank you to everyone who has made Comets JBC an enjoyable and successful club this difficult year, these include:

- the member players, without whom there would be no club, and you have all tried hard, behaved well and, it looked as though were thoroughly enjoying yourselves
- the parents, without whom the members wouldn't be able to attend Comets sessions and events
- our coaches, without whom there would be no coaching sessions and events: Gill Bartlett, Ku, Kahlid, Oliver and Dillan Bartlett, Lisa Morgan, Sheenagh McKillop, and Micky Mahbubani
- our excellent badminton facilities, Herts Sports Village, and Queenswood School.

### Comets JBC Administration

The pandemic had a large but reduced impact on all of us in the club this season and we are grateful for members and coaches for their help and patience. We continued to follow the Government and Badminton England, Herts Sports Village (HSV) covid-19 regulations and advice: Gill Bartlett continued as our designated Covid Officer and maintained awareness of our Risk Assessment (published on our website). HSV maintained their stringent management practices until Christmas: these required waiting outside until asked to enter – which made it difficult when members arrived late - , the wearing of masks when not in the hall, and no parents able to watch. Fortunately, the restrictions eased off as the season progressed.

There was a surge of interest in the club from the beginning of the season and it had been full with a few on the waiting list each term most of whom we were eventually able to accommodate.

We were able to hold 43 Sunday sessions this season unlike last season when we lost 19 sessions due to the pandemic. As in previous years we have had courts from 6-8pm: 8 courts for the first hour mainly for coaching, and 4 courts for the second hour mainly for games: this is contrary to the expectation in my last season's AGM report that we would have all 8 courts for 2 hours. We continually ask HSV and look elsewhere for 8 courts for 2 hours. To ensure everyone has an enjoyable experience we restrict the membership to a maximum of 6 per court each hour: this is in keeping with Badminton England (BE) standards for Premier club status.

Because of 'higher priority' bookings at HSV we had 5 sessions at Queenswood school, an excellent facility, at prices that allow us to have all their 8 courts for 2 hours with little increase in costs. With all the changes, some at short notice, we have still managed to remain a viable club: we apologise to a couple of members who we failed to copy the change to on 2 occasions.

At the end of this summer term we have 45 members: several of our spring term 16-18 year olds decided not to return for the summer term owing to examinations. Throughout the season, 12 Autumn members and 11 Spring members did not return. The club affiliation fee to BE (that provides insurance and support) was waived until October 22, similarly for individual BE membership (that provides individual insurance and support). Individuals can come for 6 sessions, with insurance cover, without being registered as members.

Gill, who despite health complications, has continued to maintain some of the club administration functions, and coaching at least for the first hour. However, it became necessary during the autumn term for the chairman to manage the registration and finances (see the agenda item the Treasurer's Report).

We have kept our website updated including updating our Constitution following last AGM's approval. Several members have purchased club shirts through our Merchandise website link.

### Herts Junior Badminton Association, Schools, and Community Engagement

With the relaxation of covid restrictions several of our members have been able to engage in a few events this year.

Summer Camp, August 2021: we ran a successful 5 day, 2 hours per day Summer Camp, for 23 participants, some of whom were our club members. Thanks go to the coaches, the Bartletts – Gill, Dillan, Oliver (and myself).

Unfortunately, we do not have the coaches to run a Summer Camp this August.

HJBA tournaments: many of our members participated in one or more of the HJBA 17 organised tournaments each season. All said they enjoyed the events and some came in the top 3 with medals.

HJBA Inter-club tournament, in March: we were able to enter 2 teams of 2 boys and 2 girls and they did very well, particularly the boys. So close were the matches that one of our teams lost by one point in one game that meant that instead of coming first in the first round they came 4<sup>th</sup>. Several members entered the Stevenage SMASHIT tournament, in April, and the U15 section was won by our Ben Gardener, with Niyam Patel second.

This Girl Can: we were invited by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council to participate in this national promotion of sport to encourage more women and girls to play sport. The badminton sessions, 1 hour for U18s, 1 for U18+ were held at Monks Walk School and we provided 4 coaches (Gill, Sarah, Oliver Bartlett, and myself) with some remuneration provided from the council. Some 20 girls most of whom had never played before enjoyed the sessions and took away leaflets of where to continue.

County Trials 8 June: several of our members were already county squad members, and at the trials this year 4 more became county squad members. Congratulations to them!

### **Coaching and Coaches' Courses**

We are very grateful to our coaches without whom there would be no aspirational club. We aspire to provide enjoyable sessions for all members and help them improve to their maximum ability. L1 coaches Oliver Youell and Dillan Bartlett who had qualified at BE 'Foundation' Level 1 (L1) and coached with us, left for university at the end of last season. So, we needed to call on other coaches. Parents, Sheenagh and Lisa, who passed the L1 course last season, have been coaching this season, but sadly Sheenagh had to drop out in the autumn: Ku and Khalid who coach every session took the BE Level 2 finals in December, Khalid passed completely, Ku needs to retake a module, both also coach elsewhere. To take the Level 1 course participants need to be 16+. The Level 2 is open to those 18+ who have completed their L1. It is very pleasing that over the years we have been able to help several of our members or their parents become coaches and they in turn have stayed to coach the club and several members have used the qualification during their time at university: for example, Oliver Bartlett, who qualified and coached with us, has been at Leicester University now for 3 years (and plays for their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> team, and was club treasurer last year): he has returned to help coach at our club 7 times this season. But generally, we don't see students again. Several members have completed their Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) award with us this year with our help, and others have had the GCSE PE sessions videoed and logged.

### **New Season September 2022-23**

We restart next season Sunday 4 September at the usual times. Unfortunately, HSV Management have already notified us of 9 cancellations out of 43 sessions for next season. We have put in a request to Queenswood school to use their excellent facilities on these occasions. And, as mentioned, we continually look for suitable alternatives.

As well as HJBA, HBA, and Badminton England our club also belongs to Welwyn Hatfield Community Badminton Network (WHCBN). I have been in discussion with the local (WH) School Partnership Officer explaining that we are keen to interact with local schools.

### **We start back Next Season, Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September 6-8pm**

Please confirm to Gill that you wish to re-join and whether for 1 or 2 hours.

We hope you have an enjoyable summer.

If you want badminton over the summer:

- 'Family badminton' is available at the Hatfield Leisure Centre, every Wednesdays between 5.00pm to 6.30pm either with Ku and Khalid
- see the HJBA website right side, for details.
- For those 16+, there are 'No Strings', Turn-Up-and-Play sessions at HSV Tuesday and Thursdays, 10-12pm, and Thursday evenings 5-7pm, £3 pr session.



Dave Bartlett, Chairman and Head Coach, Comets Junior Badminton Club