



**Minutes of IHUA AGM
Taylors Three Rock, Dublin
30th April 2017 at 10.30 hrs**

Present: HI President – Ivy Dennis (ID), Chairperson - Warren McCully (WM), Robert Johnston (RJ), Peter Murphy (PM), Tom Goode (TG), Jamie Aiken (JA), Gillian Johnson (GJ), Geoff Conn (GC), Graham Hohn (GH), Tara Browne (TB), Eamonn McFerran (EMcF), Dave Kenna (DK), Rob Abbott (RAb), Rob Argent (RAr), Carol Metchette (CM), Gillian Garrett (GG), Gill Hohn (GiH), Fiona Davitt (FD), Christine Reid (CR), Malcolm Coombes (MC), Russell Donaldson (RD), Louise Daly (LD), Alison Keogh (AK),

Apologies: David Acheson, Aisling Keogh, Kevin McGinley, Bruce Bale, Julie Beamish, Adare Brady, Liz Clifford, Linda Johnston, Zenia Howe, Finbarr Kelleher, Richard Kendrick, Claire Oliphant, George Redpath, Sean Murtagh, Simon O'Connor (SOC) and Joe Connolly.

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **Confirmation of the minutes of the last AGM** - The minutes were accepted as an accurate reflection of the 2016 AGM. Proposed by GJ; Seconded by JA.
2. **Correspondence** - No correspondence received
3. **Chairperson's Report** - (Warren McCully)

Good morning everyone and thank you for your attendance

I would like to welcome back Hockey Ireland President, Ivy Dennis and thank her for kindly accepting our invitation to Chair today's meeting. It's very much appreciated.

As an Association, I believe we go from strength to strength and I would like to begin by thanking everyone on the Executive Committee for your commitment and the huge work you have given over the course of the season. Thank you to Tara Browne for stepping into the role as Secretary and to Graham Hohn for this continued excellent work looking after our accounts. The appointment of umpires to various national competitions over the season remains very challenging due to the lack of numbers but I would like to thank Tom Goode and Jamie Aiken for their dedication to the role. Robert Johnston took over the role of the Assessment and Coaching Co-ordinator; I would like to thank him for all his hard work which ensured that we met all our targets. Tara will fill you in on the all facts and figures.

Last year, I informed everyone here that we had made a number of umpiring recommendations to Hockey Ireland and the Provincial Associations in relation to specific areas of umpiring to address the current crisis and to help increase the number of umpires at provincial level. The number of people remains in decline and will remain in decline until fundamental changes take

place. In fact, I said our recommendations would be very uncomfortable and challenging for both Hockey Ireland and the Provincial Associations but they needed rise to the challenge and help shape a sustainable future for umpiring.

I am saddened to say that 12 months on very little has changed. However, I will repeat that IHUA and the Umpire Associations cannot fix the problems alone – it takes Hockey Ireland and the Provinces to make the fundamental changes to solve the problems. Our recommendations ensure that there is a foundation from which to build from and should the foundations not be put in place, everything else will undoubtedly crumble!

In the next couple of weeks we will publish our 4 Year Plan which re-emphasises these recommendations and why they are crucial to the foundations for umpiring and moving things forward. We have now called for a round table forum involving all key stakeholders throughout the country to highlight the problems from lowest to the highest level. This will take place next week but opportunities to fix the problems are fast running out.

My final words are taken from the Honorary Secretary's Report of the Irish Umpires Association on 20th September 1987. 'At this point I would like to thank everyone for their time and effort during the year. I, more than most, realise that umpiring is not a bed of roses. I often wonder what motivates us to carry on even when things are going badly. One thing is certain, we cannot as a player might, stay on the fringe until things improve, we cannot opt out during a match when we know we have one of those days but we can be sure that no mistake goes unnoticed, and in spite of this we turn up, week in week out.'

Make no mistake, you are the people who make the games happen, you are the people who do the hardest thing of all each week, you are the people who give us the time and commitment we require, you are the people you are the people who make this Association, and for this we really do appreciate it.

4. Honorary Secretary's Report – (Tara Browne)

The Executive Committee met on four occasions during the season with attendance either in person or via Skype/conference call in an attempt to keep costs as low as possible. These meetings normally lasted around 3 hours given the number of important issues regularly discussed. Regular issues included umpire development such as umpire training, assessor and coaching courses, young umpire courses and high performance requirements, and the number of women who participate in umpiring. Of course there are many, many other issues that arise on a weekly basis and need dealt with.

IHUA purchased new video software which enables us to do a variety of things with videos that we received for umpire training sessions and individual development.

A lot of work has gone into seeking sponsorship for the IHUA, and as you have probably seen we have secured a deal for the EYHL finals with shirts and other kit being provided by EY, So Hockey/TK. Talks are ongoing in relation to a possible sponsorship deal for the association and we hope to have it finalised for the start of the coming season. We will keep you updated.

In November, Ray O'Connor was awarded the FIH Guust Lathouwers Award. The award is given to an individual that has given outstanding service to the development and promotion of

Umpiring. This award honours not only Ray's achievements on the field, but the immense work he does for hockey off the field.

Umpire Assessing & Coaching 2016/17 – (TB gave this report on behalf of RJ)

- Objective to have every EYHL Panel umpire assessed at least twice during the season – ACHIEVED (for those who umpired EYHL regularly)
- Focused assessment and coaching was prioritised at certain points during the season for those umpires who had major FIH/EHF appointments;
- Conducted 125 assessments and coachings at National and Provincial level which is remarkable considering we usually only have 1 or 2 assessors/coaches available most weeks;
- A further 18 assessments are due by end of season so 143 in total;
- Now that everyone has been assessed in their current Panel, next season we will focus more on coaching with assessments only done on those umpires ready to move up a Panel.

Seven new Umpire Assessors were accredited during the season:-

Gail Taylor, Adare Brady, PJ Whyte, Alex Treacy, Kris Cholewa, Alison Keogh, Fiona Davitt

Five umpires promoted at National level during the season: -

Christine Reid to Ladies' National Panel following award of her FIH badge

Julie Beamish to Ladies' National Development Panel

Linda Coughlan to Ladies' National Development Panel

Malcolm Coombes to Men's National Development Panel

Russell Donaldson to Men's National Development Panel (* - to be announced at AGM)

Robert would like to pass on his thanks to all of the following people who gave up their time to complete assessments, coaching or acted as UM at national tournaments throughout the season:

Richard Kendrick, Tom Goode, Ray O'Connor, Peter Murphy, Chris McConkey, Karen Eppel, Gail Taylor, Billy Stewart, Eamon McFerran, Zenia Howe, Julie Beamish, Warren McCully, Jamie Aiken And Robert Johnston.

5. Honorary Treasurer's Report - (Graham Hohn)

To be added once the Accounts are Audited

GH advised that the IHUA now had two accounts – sterling and euro – which should make processing payments easier.

6. National Men's Umpire Co-ordinator's Report - (Tom Goode)

My annual rant, so why disappoint anyone and change it!!

Again this season, I have tried to give as even a spread of appointments as possible to everyone and I hope that you all enjoyed new umpiring experiences, be it with new colleagues or different locations. To those of you appointed to the various IHA tournaments & finals, many congratulations and well done on your performances. I do realise that there is also some

disappointment among some of you but, unfortunately, it is not possible to accommodate everyone.

An issue that is becoming an increasing problem is late cry-offs. People who do this do not seem to be aware of the knock-on effects this can have and I will be looking at this very closely next season....if elected!

Our umpires continue to perform very well on the international stage and this brings me to my first “moan”. Increasingly umpiring is being marginalised when it comes to international preparation. It is quite evident now where we stand in the greater scheme of things. When it comes to travelling abroad to play friendlies, no umpires are being asked. This is a stream of development that is being denied us. Cost is always the excuse, yet cost does not appear to be an issue sending players, coaches, managers, assistant managers, video operators, assistant video operators, assistant to the assistant video operators (joke!), sports psychologists.....I think you get my drift! Friendly internationals in the UK, Germany & the USA and not an Irish umpire in sight! Umpiring is what I now term the 3rd class citizens in Irish Hockey.....

Unfortunately, umpire abuse continues to be a problem. This is probably the greatest deterrent to people who may show an interest in umpiring. Last season, at the EYHL finals, there were serious instances of verbal and physical abuse levelled at umpires and an umpire manager. The subsequent disciplinary shambles that ensued showed huge defects in Hockey Ireland’s disciplinary procedures, which we were assured would be rectified for the next season. I don’t think this has happened. A case in point – this season, an umpire was subjected to the vilest verbal abuse by a coach. The matter was reported and it took almost 2 months to deal with. The fact that the coach involved was an assistant coach to the men’s senior team who were involved in the world league raises questions. When finally dealt with, a risible 3 game ban was imposed. Hockey Ireland has a duty of care to all stakeholders in our sport but is failing in its duty of care to umpiring. What’s going on? It may seem strange that I’m talking about this in my report, but I appoint these guys!! I shouldn’t have to worry about which umpires I have to appoint to certain games, but I do!!

As always, I welcome any feedback and I am always prepared to listen to anything you have to say, be it positive or critical. Finally, to you the umpires, a big thank you for your help and co-operation, especially when called upon at the last minute to replace a colleague or to go to a different venue.

PM commented that there seemed to be a lack of support from HI in relation to these issues, commenting that it took two months for one sanction to be implemented. ID suggested that the issues being faced by umpires should be brought to the HI Board and that she would be happy to represent this to the board at the next meeting.

A number of members also expressed similar annoyance at the current lack of support from HI and the lack of commitment to the development of umpires at all levels and in particular those with aspirations to progress to international level and beyond.

7. National Ladies Umpire Co-ordinator’s Report – (Jamie Aiken)

I feel that the first thing that I must say is that, I owe a massive thanks to the 12 umpires that make up the ladies EYHL panel. The ladies have been fantastic, they have worked hard to cover each other, to make themselves available as much as physically possible, kept me informed of

their availability well in advance, survived my mad swaps at the last minute, and helped me out as much as they could given the size of the panel. Corny as it sounds I just could not have done it without them and their support. Thank you all for all your help this season it has been very much appreciated

Working with such a small number of people to cover 5 matches each week is both challenging and rewarding at the same time. It has been difficult at times and without the support of a number of the men's panel we just could not have covered all the games throughout the season so thanks to them as well.

My sincerest thanks to Tom and Warren for their advice, support, help with using the appointments system, and for also just letting me get on with it yet being there to bounce things off or to help with decisions.

Whilst the EYHL has been the major focus of my year in post I cannot forget the help of all the other umpires that have been appointed to Irish Cup games throughout the season and from all corners of the four provinces. Without these dedicated individuals, some travelling long distances or doing games at short notice we could not have covered as many games as we did. Allied to that has been the support of the four provincial appointments secretaries who have also been very helpful throughout the year.

I'd especially like to thank Linda Ingram and Gareth Heron who have released umpires to cover both Irish and EYHL games sometimes at very short notice, again many thanks to them for all their support and, now what's the correct word, guidance during the season.

This year I tried my best to keep peoples travel to a minimum yet to give the panel as much variety as possible in terms of teams and colleagues, I know that this didn't always work but hope I didn't annoy the ladies too much. Our two umpires from Connacht, Ais and Tara, have had to travel long distances each week and it was pretty much the same for Julie and Liz from Munster. Next year it will be a similar picture for Ulster who are now down to three teams in the league so it will require more planning in advance to try to ensure as much equality as possible for the umpires.

One of my failings this season has been not to appoint early enough, especially coming towards the end of the season when nearly every game was important for different reasons, I was trying to just get the balance of the right pairings for the right match and whilst it didn't always impact on the umpires it did on the provincial selectors and for this I can only apologise to them.

EHF/FIH appointments 2016/17

Liz Clifford	Outdoor Women's EuroHockey5s Future Heroes Cup A – Prague Outdoor Women's EuroHockey Club Challenge III @ Porto	
Tara Browne	Outdoor Women's EuroHockey U18 Championship II @ Glasgow Indoor Women's EuroHockey Indoor Club Trophy @ Siauliai	
Fiona Davitt	Outdoor Women's EuroHockey U18 Championship @ Cork	
Linda Coughlan	Outdoor Women's EuroHockey Club Challenge I @ Siauliai	
Gillian Garrett	Outdoor Women's EuroHockey Club Challenge II @ Vienna Ais Keogh	Outdoor Women's EuroHockey5s U16 Championship @ Wattignies
Ellie Duffy	Outdoor Women's 6 Nations U16 and U18 Girls Invitational @ Terrassa	
Christine Reid	World League 2 – Kuala Lumpur	

Kim Collins	Outdoor Women's 6 Nations U16 and U18 Girls Invitational @ Terrassa
Alison Keogh	Outdoor Women's EuroHockey Junior Championship @ Valencia
	Outdoor Women's EuroHockey Championship III @ Sveti Ivan Zelina
	2016 8th Women's Hockey Junior World Cup
	4 Nations Invitational (W) Dublin (IRL)
	Outdoor Women's EuroHockey Championship @ Amsterdam
Carol Metchette	2017 Women Hockey World League Final - Auckland (NZL)
	2016 Olympic Games (Women)
	2017 Women's Hockey World League Semi-Final (RSA)
	Outdoor Women's EuroHockey Championship @ Amsterdam

Congratulations to Christine Reid on getting her FIH badge, Linda Coughlan who has moved onto the national development panel, and Gill Hohn who was promoted to the Provincial A panel. I taught them each all I know and thankfully they chose to ignore it!!!

There will always be discussions and arguments about lack of umpires and remuneration for those that decide to swap the stick for a whistle. Yes, I believe we have crisis in terms of the number of bodies we have, yes I think we need to be better treated, but that's not what my report is about.

This is my chance to thank you all for the work that you have done this season on and off the pitch, for the support you have given me. I'm no masochist there have been times it has not been easy, those couple of weeks when you have six of the panel missing and you are not entirely sure what to do other than maybe clone a few ladies, but we got by and we got all the games covered and I believe that the level and quality of the umpires and umpiring has increased.

Thanks to you all for a great season of hockey and my best wishes for next season.

13. Notices of Motions received in accordance with Constitution

The proposed amended Constitution was sent out to all members in advance of the meeting, including the proposed amendments and changes.

It was agreed to move this item up the agenda as it would affect the election of officers. All amendments to the Constitution were agreed. Proposed by PM; Seconded by RAb.

8. Election of Officers

Chairperson – WM agreed to stay on as Chairperson for one more year until the 2018 AGM.

Vice Chairperson – it was agreed that the Executive Committee would elect a Vice Chairperson after the AGM as there were no nominations.

Secretary – Eamonn McFerran. Proposed by WM; Seconded by TG and he accepted the position.

Treasurer – Graham Hohn agreed to stay for another year, proposed by EMcF, seconded by TG

9. Election of Executive Committee

Robert Johnston, Geoff Conn, Peter Murphy, Kevin McGinley – Proposed by TG; Seconded by FD.

10. Election of National Men's Umpire Co-ordinator

Tom Goode agreed to stay on for another year. Proposed by ID; Seconded by GH

11. Election of National Ladies Umpire Co-ordinator

Jamie Aiken agreed to stay on for another year. Proposed by PM; Seconded by RAb

12. To fix and agree membership fees

It was agreed that fees would remain the same for 2017/18 season at €27/£25

14. Appointment of Auditors

It was agreed that Crawford Tipping would act as Auditor

15. General business

Committee Connection to Provincial Committees –

DK felt that there was a disconnect between the IHUA Executive Committee and the Provinces Committees. WM advised that it was important that members of Provincial Committees put themselves forward to the IHUA Executive Committee but that it would be important for them to recognise that they would be expected to conduct work in accordance with our strategic objectives. WM also advised that he was happy to organise meetings with Provincial Committee's, where necessary.

Four Year Plan –

DK advised that he felt the time frame for responding to the Four Year Plan was not sufficient. WM accepted this and advised that additional time would be allowed for responses.

Match Fees –

FD commented that match fees were a big issue as umpires could get up to €75 to umpire a match through Need a Whistler and that if umpiring a local match an EYHL umpire would receive nothing. WM advised that this issue would be dealt with in the Four Year Plan. PM advised that he had put together a comparison of fees from other sports.

AK commented that clubs have told her they are willing to pay. WM commented that HI do not want to ask clubs to pay. TG commented that if HI refuse we may be forced to take action. ID advised that she would make HI aware of the situation.

Concussion –

GH queried what the umpires responsibilities are in relation to concussion on the field of play. WM advised that there was a Concussion policy available on the website and that our responsibility was to advise a coach/manager that we believed a person may be suffering from concussion but that the responsibility is then passed to the coach/manager. FD thought that HI needed to advise clubs of this. ID advised that HI should look into the issue of responsibility.

There being no further business Ivy Dennis closed the meeting and thanked all the umpires for their work throughout the year. WM presented ID with a bouquet of flowers to thank her for chairing the meeting.

Tara Browne

Notes prepared by

Tara Browne

30th April 2017

