The BSF Executive held its latest conference call meeting on the evening of Thursday 19 March. Below is a journalistic account of the main discussions and decisions.

**Attendance**

**Present:** Jenny Fromer (President), Laura Burkhardt (Treasurer), Alexis Markham-Hill (National Teams Officer), Liz Graham (Competitions Officer), Michael Lott (Coaching Officer), Chris Moon (Technical Officer), Mike Jennings, Stella Ackrell and Steve Getraer (General Officers), Bob Fromer (Administrator).

**Apologies:** None.

**New GBMC Treasurer**

Mike Jennings has been in touch with new GBMC/National Teams Treasurer Lars Looijen, who is based in the Netherlands, to give him a briefing on the various accounts he’ll be responsible for, and Mike and BSF Treasurer Laura Burkhardt have arranged for new signatories to be set up for these accounts.

Lars was due to visit the UK shortly to finalise these arrangements, but whether that trip will be possible in the current conditions is uncertain.

Mike, Laura and Bob Fromer will meet by conference call shortly to agree on signatories and procedures for running these accounts.

**Covid-19 considerations**

The rest of the meeting was given over to various aspects of the situation caused by the Covid-19 epidemic, and the main topic was the BSF’s finances for 2019-20.

The discussion was based on a worst-case scenario of no domestic softball play or development activity during the coming season, which would almost certainly mean no membership fee income for the BSF in 2020 and no GB Affiliation Fee income for the GB Management Committee (GBMC).

For purposes of the discussion, GBMC funds were considered as part of the BSF’s assets.

While the BSF began the current financial year with reserves of £55,420 (now down to about £35,000), the more important element is cash flow. On the date of the meeting, cash available in the BSF account stood at £26,359, or close to £28,400 if GBMC funds were included.
Further commitments already made include payments of £7,921 to BSUK for various services and £1,880 to the Bulgarian Softball Federation to support the European Slowpitch Cup (though this amount should be returned if the competition is cancelled).

Further non-discretionary spending that the BSF will or may need to make during the year includes:

- Database registration fees (this may reduce if fewer teams register).
- Annual support payments to national teams through the National Teams Levy (these may not need to be paid if international competitions are cancelled).
- Service Level Agreement (SLA) fees to BSUK.
- Salary and costs support for the BSUK/BSF Fastpitch Development Manager.
- Fees for BSF administration.
- Website costs.
- Audit fees and associated costs.
- Financial system costs.

If all these costs had to be paid in full, the BSF would end the year with a cash flow deficit of just over £12,000.

Money is likely to be recovered from Softball Europe through reimbursement of entry fees if European competitions involving British national and club teams are cancelled, which would help to ease the situation. But it’s clear that if there is no softball season in 2020, the BSF will end the year in a very difficult position.

Should a partial season be possible, with the BSF able to ask for some level of membership fees, the position would change for the better. But whether any kind of season will be possible in 2020 is unknowable at this point in time.

It is very likely that the BSF will need to increase membership fees in 2021, despite an AGM pledge not to do so, to make up for losses in 2020 and to start re-building reserves.

As Jenny Fromer pointed out, we are part of an ecosystem that includes the BSF, BSUK, Softball Europe, our leagues and members and many others. We are all in this situation together, and we want to help and support each other to get through it.

The BSF issued a public statement on the crisis on 22 March (http://www.britishsoftball.org/news/view/covid-19-statement-from-the-bsf), but the truth is that there is not much guidance the BSF can provide at this point apart from urging people to follow government regulations and to avoid making financial commitments. We do not intend to be prescriptive about what leagues or tournament organisers should do, and it would be fruitless to predict the future in a rapidly-evolving landscape.

Next meeting

The BSF Executive will hold its next conference call meeting on the evening of Thursday 9 April.
Anyone with items to bring to the meeting should contact BSF Administrator Bob Fromer [bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org].