

# BSF EXECUTIVE MEETING REPORT:

## 6 JUNE 2023

The BSF Executive held its latest monthly videoconference meeting on the evening of Tuesday 6 June. Below is a report on the main discussions and decisions.

### Attendance

**Present:** Lesley Morisetti (Interim President), Laura Burkhardt (Treasurer), Liz Graham (Competitions and Membership Officer), Pete Saunders (Technical Officer), Stella Ackrell (Safeguarding Officer), George Stamets and Nicola-Jane Dyson (General Officers), Bob Fromer (Administrator).

**Apologies:** None.

**Guest:** John Boyd (BSUK).

### Financial matters

**Donation to BSUK.** The Executive approved a request from BSUK for help to defray the cost of social events around the London Series involving baseball and softball volunteers, and £300 was awarded.

**BSF Accounts.** Treasurer Laura Burkhardt reported that the BSF's 2021-22 accounts, previous approved by the Executive, are currently being filed with Companies House.

### Motion to clarify BSF Articles

A clause in the BSF's Articles of Association stipulates that a minimum of three and a maximum of five Executive Officers will be Directors of the Company, one of whom will automatically be the BSF President along with other named Officer roles.

The Executive approved a proposal to clarify this clause so that the meaning of "President" includes "Interim President". This will allow current Interim President Lesley Morisetti to be registered as a Director with Companies House and brings the current number of Directors up to the minimum requirement of three.

### Reports from Working Groups

Brief reports were given from the various BSF-BSUK Working Groups that have been established this year.

**Concussion Working Group.** This group, chaired by BSUK's Head of Operations Erica Barrett, has largely completed its work, with materials and protocols on concussion now distributed to leagues and tournament organisers, and a new page on Concussion Protocols created on the BSF website (<https://www.britishsoftball.org/concussion>). However, the group will continue to look for materials from other sports that might be useful.

**Euros 2026 Working Group.** This group is now chaired by BSF General Officer Nicola-Jane Dyson, and a memorandum on the various areas of work that will be involved in hosting the 2026 European Co-ed Slowpitch Championship at Farnham Park has been developed. BSUK CEO John Boyd has agreed to develop a draft budget for the event, but only after the MLB London Series is over, so the group will get properly under way in July.

**Player Registration Working Group.** This group is looking at ways to achieve a higher level of individual player registration so that the Federation has a database that will allow it to communicate, when necessary, with all its members. BSF Competitions and Membership Officer Liz Graham and Erica Barrett from BSUK have been considering the possibilities of a sports management software package called Sport:80, which could create a database reflecting the complexities of British softball. If this was to be adopted by the BSF, BSUK would provide some subsidy. This will be revisited in the autumn.

### Progress with university softball

A long-standing issue that has concerned the BSF Executive is getting more university softball players – there are currently around 1600 of them! -- to transition to playing in BSF leagues and teams.

University softball programmes are supported by BSUK, and there have been recent conversations about BSUK providing more information to university players – especially those about to graduate – on mainstream softball opportunities.

BSUK has responded, and thanks to a special dispensation by BUCS (British Universities and Colleges Sport), comprehensive information on BSF softball has now been sent to all university softball players.

BSUK plans to track those players who join BSF teams and leagues so the success of this improved communication can be monitored.

### Insurance provision

The Executive has agreed – and BSUK has no objection – that Stephen Shearer, who now manages insurance matters on behalf of the Executive, should talk directly to the brokers, Howden, rather than go through BSUK.

Stephen is an insurance expert, and he feels that our current costs are too high, so the hope is that he can use his expertise to negotiate a better deal. John Boyd requested that BSUK be involved in discussions that Stephen sets up with Howden.

## **National Championships update**

BSF Competitions Officer Liz Graham told the Executive that plans for the League Nationals in August (probably 19-22 teams) are in hand, while planning for the NSL Nationals in September is also under way.

According to Liz, the fact that this year's Single-Sex Nationals were on the same date as a Great Britain Fastpitch League (GBFL) weekend reduced entry to the tournament. The clash is unfortunate – but with more and more slowpitch events on the calendar and the MLB London Series removing a weekend from the Calendar this year, the GBFL has really struggled to find dates.

## **Proposed changes to National Softball League in 2024**

Due in part to continued restrictions on the availability of grass fields at Farnham Park, but also for a variety of positive reasons, Liz Graham put a proposal to the Executive for a change in the plans to start a fourth NSL division next year, and the proposal was approved.

The original plan for 2024 was to introduce an eight-team NSL4 to complete the growth and expansion of the National Softball League, adding to the three current 12-team divisions: NSL1, NSL2 and NSL3.

This would require the availability of two additional grass fields at Farnham Park, which is looking unlikely to happen. But if the BSF can secure one additional grass field – and only if that can happen -- the plan is that an eight-team NSL4 will be created from the bottom four teams in this year's NSL3 plus four new teams (yet to be decided, but there are plenty of applicants).

The result will be an NSL with 40 teams – 12 teams each in NSL1 and NSL2, plus eight teams each in NSL3 and NSL4. This will complete the NSL divisions and no further expansion is planned.

As with the current NSL divisions, NSL4 will play a league schedule over three weekends in May, June and July to determine promotion and relegation.

The advantage of having two groups of equal size for NSL3 and NSL4 is that a game on/game off schedule can be provided, as with NSL1 and NSL2.

A further element of the proposal – if the teams involved are interested -- is that there would be a combined NSL3/NSL4 Nationals after the league season, involving the top four teams from each division.

If pitches can be obtained, this will be held alongside the NSL1 and NSL2 Nationals at Farnham Park in September; otherwise, another date will be found.

Having an NSL3/NSL4 Nationals will mean teams will need to qualify enough players: holding a Nationals with teams asking for multiple player dispensations will not be viable.

The hope is that decisions from Buckinghamshire Council on the availability of grass pitches for 2024 will be made soon so the plans described above can be finalised.

## Next meeting

The next BSF Executive monthly videoconference meeting will be held on the evening of Thursday 20 July.

Anyone from the Executive or the softball community who wants to add an item to the Agenda should contact BSF Administrator Bob Fromer ([bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org](mailto:bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org)).