



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BRITISH SOFTBALL FEDERATION

This is the official Notification and Information Pack for the 2021 British Softball Federation Annual General Meeting, which this year will be held remotely as a video conference meeting due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Venue:

The 2021 AGM will be a virtual meeting using Google Hangout. The formal AGM (see Agenda below) will be the sole business of the meeting, and there will be no workshops or other additional sessions.

A League Heads Forum virtual meeting will be held two weeks before the AGM, on Saturday 13 February 2021.

AGM Date:

Saturday 27 February 2021
2.00-4.00 pm

Meeting Link:

See Joining Instructions below.

Responses to AGM Pack Content:

If there are any matters in this AGM Pack that you wish to raise at the AGM, please communicate this no later than Monday 22 February to BSF Administrator Bob Fromer: bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org.

AGM JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

To join the 2021 BSF AGM, please use the following link: meet.google.com/ppa-inau-nrj

Note: You can test out this link any time in advance. Ideally the link should be pasted into a Chrome browser, which should work particularly well for anyone with a Gmail email account.

Meeting instructions

Due to the challenges of holding this meeting remotely, we ask that during the meeting you remain muted unless and until you wish to speak.

Questions can be raised either by using the 'Raise your Hand' function in Google Meet or by posting questions in the chat function which will be monitored throughout the meeting.

In order to virtually manage voting we will use a Google Form that can be accessed by all through the chat function. By completing this form your vote will remain anonymous to all except the President and the person tabulating the votes.

Patience please!

Please bear with us if we experience technical difficulties or if it is difficult to address all questions and comments during the meeting. Despite the past year's experience of remote meetings, holding a meeting of this size is new to all of us, and we will do our best to manage it as efficiently and painlessly as possible. Any questions that are not responded to at the meeting will be addressed afterwards.

We will be recording the meeting and will be happy to provide a copy on request.

AGM ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Normal AGM attendance requirements that applied in previous years will be suspended for the 2021 AGM.

The only requirement for the 2021 AGM is that all slowpitch leagues affiliated in 2019 will need to have a representative at the meeting in order for any of their teams to take part in Co-ed Slowpitch League National Championships in 2021.

For information on which teams will be eligible for the Co-ed Slowpitch League Nationals in 2021, see the report below from BSF Competitions Officer Liz Graham.

Please note that, in general, a league representative cannot also represent a team at the AGM for voting purposes. However, a League Head who is a genuine registered playing member of a team from that league can represent both the league and that team -- but such a person will only have one vote, not two.

If you are representing both your league and team at the AGM, as in the paragraph above, please let the BSF know beforehand (email Competitions Officer Liz Graham on: liz@softball.org.uk).

BSF AGM 2021: AGENDA

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REPORT FROM THE 2020 BSF AGM

There was a full day of meetings at the 2020 British Softball Federation AGM, held on Saturday 29 February in Manchester, with a League Heads Forum in the morning, a session on NSL rules and regulations at lunchtime and the formal AGM in the afternoon.

This was followed by a meeting of the BSF Executive in the early evening.

Below is a report on the AGM, including the BSF's annual awards for the 2019 season, followed by brief reports on the League Heads Forum and the NSL Workshop.

Around 15 people representing 11 leagues attended the League Heads Forum; around 20 people from 10 NSL teams attended the NSL Workshop session; and 66 people representing around 50 different teams signed in for the AGM.

2020 BSF AGM

BSF President Jenny Fromer opened the AGM by mentioning a number of intentions cited in the Minutes from the 2019 AGM that the Executive had not yet carried out but was still planning to do:

- Publish figures on the difference between what the Federation pays to support National Team players in overseas competitions and what players and/or their families pay.
- Survey slowpitch teams that win their league or a league division and then don't enter the League Nationals to find out why.
- Look into holding National Co-ed Slowpitch Championships, on occasion, at locations other than Farnham Park.
- Develop a single set of rules for Indoor Play.

Jenny also reminded the meeting that BSF Development Grants are available for leagues or teams that want to carry out development projects, and that BSUK can often provide help and support for such projects.

The Minutes from the 2019 BSF AGM were approved.

Executive and National Team reports

Reports from members of the BSF Executive, and a report on national team activities and outcomes in 2019, were published in the 2020 BSF AGM Pack:

<http://www.britishsoftball.org/uploads/documents/Files/2020%20BSF%20AGM%20Pack.pdf>. No questions were raised on these reports.

Jenny Fromer told the meeting that current members of the BSF Executive were all serving the second year of a two-year term and were all re-standing, but that she would be standing down as BSF President at the 2021 AGM and other Officers might be standing down as well.

So the BSF will need people willing to get involved with the sport on a national level -- and if people come forward soon, they will be able to shadow current Officers during 2020 and be more prepared to step into roles in 2021.

Safeguarding and safety session

The next section of the AGM was given over to a short presentation on safeguarding and safety by BSUK Finance and Governance Officer Mark Caress, who leads for the organisation on safeguarding.

Mark described new safeguarding requirements that have come into force over the past couple of years for youth teams and for adult teams with youth players (i.e., teams with three or more players under the age of 18) to bring softball in line with other sports and with practice recommended by the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU).

Such teams must have at least one coach who has undergone safeguarding training, up-to-date DBS checks for all coaches and a nominated Safeguarding Officer – though in some cases, a League Safeguarding Officer can fill this role across a number of teams.

Mark pointed out that BSUK can offer support with all these requirements: DBS checks can be done through BSUK for free and safeguarding training – which now must be face-to-face rather than just online -- can be provided. These requirements, he noted, are not just to protect children involved in the sport, but to protect the responsible adults as well.

A qualification from a safeguarding course lasts for three years and is valid across all sports. After three years, refresher courses can be taken.

“None of this is scary,” Mark told the meeting, “and BSUK is here to help. But safeguarding is something we have to do -- and do well.”

A large amount of information on safeguarding is available on the BSUK website here:

<http://www.baseballsoftballuk.com/safeguarding>.

The Safeguarding section on the BSUK website also contains a template Risk Assessment Form, and Mark suggested that leagues and teams should carry out risk assessments for tournaments and league competition as a matter of common sense – and for defence if anything goes wrong.

All incidents involving injuries during softball play need to be reported, and there are Incident Report Forms on both the BSUK and BSF websites for doing so. These can be completed online or downloaded and submitted as a hard copy.

At the end of this session, a question was raised about the minimum age for a youth player to play on an adult team. Jenny Fromer told the meeting that the BSF does not have a minimum age regulation, but believes the key is a careful assessment by team coaches – not just by a parent – as to whether the young player is capable, physically, emotionally and socially, of taking part at the level of adult competition being considered.

Financial report

BSF Treasurer Laura Burkhardt gave a brief report on BSF spending in 2018-19 and the proposed budget for 2019-20.

With healthy reserves, the BSF budgeted for a deficit of about £11,000 in 2018-19, but in fact wound up more or less breaking even due to underspends in a couple of key areas. One of the main areas of underspend was the BSF contribution to salary and costs for the BSUK/BSF Fastpitch Development Manager, since the current post-holder, Alyson Spinis-Valainis, was hired later than planned.

With reserves now standing at £55,000 (£40,000 is what the BSF hopes to maintain), the 2019-20 budget projects a deficit of just under £20,000. Major areas of increased spending this year will be website re-development, web-streaming from BSF events, increased insurance costs and the costs incurred in attending the recent biennial WBSC Congress in Japan.

There was unanimous approval for the 2019-20 budget as proposed.

Affiliation fees

The meeting was told that affiliation fees will remain the same in 2020 as in 2019, and should be unchanged in 2021.

Any increase in 2022 will be broadly in line with inflation.

BaseballSoftballUK session

The next session of the AGM was a presentation by BaseballSoftballUK's Head of Commercial, Joelle Watkins, who focused on legacy outcomes expected from the second year of the MLB London Series in 2020 as well as new BSUK initiatives for softball.

"The London Series has been the start of a long-lasting relationship between MLB and BSUK," Joelle told the meeting. BSUK's main priorities from this relationship are to establish a recognisable and lasting legacy from the Major League games in London, connect the existing playing community to the London Series with priority on involvement by women and girls, and connect with MLB fans to increase participation in British softball and baseball.

In 2019, one of the key outcomes from the London Series and MLB's involvement was a programme called Fun at Bat that was established in 55 schools in East London, with over 500 sessions involving more than 4000 children. In 2020, the aim is to involve over 200 schools across a wider area of London, and eventually to roll out this programme nationwide.

Also in 2019, coach and player development opportunities associated with the London Series were extended to female coaches and athletes, and this will continue in 2020.

Longer-term, Great Britain is one of five countries around the world where MLB will support a significant expansion of baseball and softball between now and 2030, and BSUK will work with MLB to create a Baseball/Softball Learning Centre and a residential Elite Academy here.

With regard to the 2020 London Series games at the London Stadium on 13 and 14 June between the Chicago Cubs and St Louis Cardinals, Joelle announced that MLB is making 5000 seats available for

members of baseball and softball communities and across Europe and, as there were last year, volunteer opportunities associated with the games will be available.

Events associated with the games will include an MLB Coach Development Camp on 23-24 May, an MLB Cadet Camp from 25-28 May, an MLB Elite European Development Tournament for young baseball players from 8-12 June, and an MLB Youth Cup Tournament on 5 July, all at Farnham Park.

An MLB Fan Park will be set up in London from 8-12 June, there will be access to the Cubs and Cardinals Workout Day on 12 June and a Watch Party on 13 and 14 June at Farnham Park for those people who can't get tickets for the games.

Joelle Watkins told the meeting that BSUK initiatives for the softball community this year will include:

- A major new co-ed slowpitch tournament, the BSUK Slowpitch Cup, to be played on the weekend of 8-9 May at Farnham Park with Australian "Fully-Loaded" rules.
- The second year of the Slowpitch Academy, with two sold-out sessions scheduled for 14 and 21 March at Farnham Park.
- Slowpitch pitching clinics on 8 March in Manchester and 22 March at Farnham Park.
- Fastpitch taster sessions at existing slowpitch tournaments.
- The opportunity for company teams to enter the softball tournament at the UK Corporate Games on 25-26 July in Lancaster.

Questions and statements

Following the BSUK session, two questions were posed from the floor.

One was whether either BSUK or the BSF could play a role in getting the batting cages at Northwick Park in North London up and running again. The answer is no: the owners have shut down the cages and have no intention of putting in the money that would be required to make them operational.

The second question was about improvements and ongoing maintenance at Farnham Park. The answer is that BSUK has spent time and money over the winter improving the fields and a permanent groundskeeper is about to be hired, so the condition of the fields should be better in future.

At the end of the AGM, Roger Grooms from the East Midlands Softball League and independent team H2O requested that the meeting's disappointment that there will be no Single-Sex Nationals in 2020 be minuted, though the reasons for this were understood.

Constitutional motion

BSF General Officer Mike Jennings talked the AGM through an amendment that the BSF was proposing to its Articles of Association to better define who can be a Director of BSF Ltd.

The change proposes that there should be a minimum of three and a maximum of five Directors, who shall include the President and Treasurer. Additional Directors will be appointed by the Executive from its existing members.

The motion was passed unanimously.

Prize draw

The AGM was attended by representatives from Baseball Outlet, who are now BaseballSoftballUK's official kit suppliers, and who set up an equipment stall and donated a prize of six team tops to be awarded to the holder of a winning raffle ticket.

The winner was Charlotte Stuckes from Nottingham.

Elections

As noted above, all members of the BSF Executive in 2019 will serve the second year of their current two-year term in 2020, and there were no additional nominations for any of these positions.

However, Michael Lott offered to stand for the vacant General Officer position of Coaching Officer and was approved unanimously, as was Chris Moon for the position of Technical Officer, a post he has held for some years through nomination by BASU. From this year forward, however, the Technical Officer will be an elected position.

The BSF Executive for 2020 will be:

President: Jenny Fromer

Treasurer: Laura Burkhardt

Competitions Officer: Liz Graham

National Teams Officer: Alexis Markham-Hill

Technical Officer: Chris Moon

General Officer / Farnham Park Liaison: Steve Getraer

General Officer / Finance: Mike Jennings

General Officer / Coaching: Michael Lott

General Officer / National Championship Support: Lesley Morisetti

National Officer / National Teams Support: Stella Ackrell

Alan MacFarlane serves as the **London Liaison Officer**, appointed by the BSF, and Bob Fromer serves the Executive as a part-time paid **Administrator**.

BSF Awards

The final business of the 2020 BSF AGM was the presentation of BSF's annual awards for the 2019 season.

Jenny Fromer opened this part of the meeting by noting that two awards to members of the softball community had been presented as part of the Coaching Awards at the BSUK's annual Coach Summit on 25 January in Milton Keynes.

The award for **Softball Youth Coach of the Year** went to Paul Archer and the award for **Softball Adult Coach of the Year** was shared by Rachael Watkeys and Jodie Bull.

Full details on why these awards were given can be found here:

<http://www.baseballsoftballuk.com/news/view/2020-british-baseball-and-softball-coaching-award-winners-announced>.

BSF awards are made each year only in categories for which nominations have been received, and the awards for the 2019 season were as follows:

The **Glover Cup** for long-term and/or distinguished service to British softball was awarded to **Kat Macann**.

Kat served for several years as Director of the GLSML (now the London Softball League) and she stepped down at the league's November 2019 AGM leaving a thriving league committee with two new Co-Directors in place, thanks to an efficient process of succession planning.

During her time in office, Kat's leadership of the league was progressive, collaborative and far-sighted. She was instrumental in trialing the new Inclusive Rules developed by the LGBT Panel that addressed non-binary player inclusion, helped to overhaul league tournaments to enable more even competition, established clear player conduct protocols and led the re-branding of the league and the launch of its new website. In her relatively short tenure, Kat left a significant and positive mark on the development of the league.

The **President's Team Award** for outstanding development work and/or performance by a club or team was awarded to the **Windsor Knights**, and especially to **Lucy Binding** and **Colin Stone**. Knights' captain Anna Wareing wrote:

"Lucy and Colin have been leading members of the GB softball community and in particular the Knights for the last 15 years before taking the difficult decision to step down as Knights' captains and managers after finishing third at the NSL1 Nationals in 2018 to allow them to focus on playing.

"After being a very successful B-grade and league team under Lucy and Colin, winning the B-grade Nationals and multiple league titles, the Windsor Knights made the difficult decision to join NSL1 and move up to A-grade. Lucy and Colin knew this would be challenging and that it would take time to build a squad that could compete at the highest level, but they were determined to do this.

"Early years in the NSL were developmental ones, with Windsor Knights finishing towards the bottom of NSL1, and wins were treasured. But steadily, the Knights moved up the table. During this time Lucy and Colin built the bones of the squad that won the NSL1 Nationals in 2019 by recruiting and developing young, talented players who would go on to star for Great Britain. These players complemented the skill and knowledge of the more experienced Knights and formed the core of the successful Knights team.

"It is testament to Lucy and Colin's passion, knowledge and standing within the game that they attracted this calibre of player to the Knights, mentored and developed them into the players they are today, and retained them as the team moved up the NSL tables.

"Another visionary moment was Lucy recognising a new force in slowpitch Softball and recruiting Max Zerhusen and Wolfgang Walther to play for the Knights, which in turn supported the development of slowpitch softball in Germany.

“Colin and Lucy have been friends, mentors and champions for everyone on the Knights, and we would not have won the Nationals without their careful building of the team, nurturing of players and tactical know-how. Knitting together a group of talented individual players and building us into a team has not been quick or easy but they have done it with grace and made many lifelong friends along the way.”

The **Team Glover Cup** was awarded to the **GB Women’s Fastpitch Team**, and Assistant Coach Liz Knight accepted the award on behalf of the team.

In 2019, the GB Women’s Team narrowly missed out on claiming a place at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. In the Europe/Africa Qualifier in July 2019, they stormed through the tournament, including wins over the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, to take an unbeaten record into the final against Italy. While the final outcome – an Italian win -- was devastating for the team and its many supporters, it was a magnificent performance to win silver at the Olympic Qualifier and bronze at the earlier European Women’s Championship.

The **Youth Team of the Year Award** went to the **GB Cubs**, GB Softball’s Under-13 Girls’ Team.

Though the GB Cubs won the Youth Team of the Year Award at last year’s AGM after coming a best-ever fifth in the competitive Sport Division at the European Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy in 2018, they surpassed that achievement in 2019 by reaching the final, beating Italian and Russian teams for the first time ever along the way.

The **Tournament of the Year Award** went to the **Softball World Series Tournament**.

The Softball World Series has been one of the most popular events on the softball calendar for over 20 years, giving players a unique opportunity to play on teams based on nationality. With the added feature of teams participating from other countries across Europe, it is a complex tournament to run, but has always been superbly organised and has generated a fantastic atmosphere year on year. In a year that marks the end of its time at the well-loved Imperial College Heston Venue (formerly the BA Concorde Club), it is a fitting time to finally recognise this event.

The **Betsy Holden Award** for a young person who has made an outstanding contribution to their team or to the promotion of softball was given to GB Cubs player **Shinju Phalon**. GB Cubs Team Manager Julie Spittle wrote:

“In every practice Shinju attended she worked hard and did her best to improve on her natural ability. Her sheer dedication and passion for softball at such a young age was amazing to witness and it makes her the great player she is becoming. She would work with us in training and then go away and work on her own or with her Dad, and we believe doing that has accelerated her development.

“Shinju is always willing to help the team’s coaches and other players. She was always encouraging her teammates and she very much took on a leadership role within the team. She is a player who is full of team spirit and works hard at spreading the word about GB Softball to friends and other players. She truly loves the game.

“Shinju remained positive when injury prevented her playing in the last two games of our 2019 tournament. She continued to cheer on her teammates and get behind them as they brought home the

silver medal. She was a pleasure to have as an Under-13 player and we wish her the best of luck as she steps up to the next level in the GB Softball programme.”

The **Umpire of the Year Award** was given for achievements in both fastpitch and slowpitch umpiring. The fastpitch award went to **Jana McCaskill** and the slowpitch award to **Jason Smith**.

Jana McCaskill has been a long-time contributor to British softball, having served as a very active and engaged National Teams Officer and regularly umpiring in the Great Britain Fastpitch League and at London Cup tournaments as well as representing Britain as an umpire at European and World competitions. In 2019 Jana umpired for the second time at the WBSC Under-19 Women’s World Championship and was given the honour of being the plate umpire at the US v Japan final.

Jason Smith has been a qualified BASU umpire for about 10 years. He has attended two Advanced Courses and was the first name on the BASU list to attend the ESF Slowpitch Clinic in 2020. He is also the Umpire-in-Chief for East Midlands Softball League and is very proactive in his support of local umpiring, having introduced a mentoring scheme for newly-qualified umpires in the East Midlands.

Jason has always been willing to travel extensively to umpire at tournaments across the UK, and he is helping to deliver two BASU Qualifying Courses this year with a view to becoming one of BASU’s official trainers next year.

The 2020 BSF AGM closed on time, just before 4.00 pm.

BSF LEAGUE HEADS FORUM

The BSF’s annual League Heads Forum meeting for slowpitch League Heads and Committee members from around the country was the first meeting to be held on the day of the BSF AGM, starting just after 10.00 am.

Representatives from the following leagues attended: Bristol, East Midlands, Edinburgh, Leeds, Liverpool, London (formerly the GLSML), Manchester, Milton Keynes, Oxford, Solent, and Windsor.

Softball calendar

The meeting began with a discussion about the ever-more-crowded outdoor softball calendar, and the question was posed as to whether the BSF should do more to manage the calendar rather than simply compile it.

This year, with two normal competition weekends taken out by a late Easter in April and by the MLB London Series in June, compiling the calendar on the basis of dates supplied by tournament organisers wound up with no weekend available for the BSF to hold the Single-Sex Slowpitch Nationals, which has been suspended for 2020 but will hopefully resume in 2021.

One suggestion was that the BSF should lock in dates for all its National Championships over a five-year period, with other tournaments having to work around them.

But the issue with some National Championships, particularly the Single-Sex and Co-ed League Nationals, is that volunteers are needed to help the BSF run them: the Single-Sex Nationals suffered this year not just from lack of a date but also from lack of an organiser.

It is also becoming clear that there are increasing conflicts at the start of the outdoor season between some Firstball tournaments and the Great Britain Fastpitch League, which is forced to schedule most of its dates early in the year before major slowpitch tournaments get under way.

While there was no conclusion about whether the BSF should try to impose more logic on the calendar, there was a call for the developing calendar to be circulated more frequently to tournament organisers during the autumn and winter, before dates are finalised and put on the BSF website Events list.

How can we get more league umpires to umpire nationally?

This is a perennial question, but one that has become more urgent as the number of tournaments increases.

There was a consensus that league umpires and new BASU umpires are often discouraged by hostility from players, and while there are sanctions that can be used against abusive behaviour from players, new and inexperienced umpires are often reluctant to apply them.

In Australia, new umpires are given different and distinctive shirts to wear that advertise their status, and severe penalties are applied to players or teams that have a go at them. Could this system be adopted by BASU?

Solutions put forward included more and better “buddy systems” for new umpires, more communication from BASU about assessment and mentoring procedures, more BASU Qualification Courses run at league level – and raising per-game fees for umpires.

How can we train more slowpitch coaches?

There was a consensus at the meeting on the need for more trained and qualified slowpitch coaches, and for more player clinics run by qualified coaches.

There needs to be more publicity about the Level 2 qualification course and the short modular courses run by BaseballSoftballUK, and the hope is, now that the BSF has a Coaching Officer (Michael Lott was elected to fill this hitherto vacant position at the AGM), there can be better coordination with BSUK around slowpitch softball’s needs.

The fact that BSUK’s Slowpitch Academy sessions scheduled for March have been sold out, with up to 60 people due to attend, is another positive sign.

Support for hosting European slowpitch tournaments in the UK

Over the weeks before the AGM, the BSF had been considering whether it might need to bid to host the 2020 European Slowpitch Super Cup, with three British teams entered, to prevent the tournament from being cancelled for lack of a host. The total cost of hosting the tournament would have been close to £20,000 and the BSF was considering adding a one-off levy to team affiliation fees this year to help support the costs.

In the event, Bulgaria will host the tournament and we don't have to. But the BSF was keen to find out from League Heads how such a levy might be viewed to determine whether it could bid to host European tournaments in future. Is the softball community as a whole willing to support this?

Feedback suggested that the community was likely to be more willing to support a European Slowpitch Championship (Co-ed or Men), with GB players coming from all over the country, rather than a European Slowpitch Cup where just two or three NSL teams, probably southern-based, would be involved.

But any call for community support through a fee levy, it was suggested, would need a lot of prior publicity and persuasion.

Another suggestion was that the BSF could add a barely perceptible couple of pounds to team fees each year, ringfence the money, and build up a reserve over several years to help with hosting a European tournament.

Insurance

BSF teams have gotten better at reporting injuries that occur during play through the Incident Report Forms on the BSF and BSUK websites, but BSF General Officer Mike Jennings told the League Heads that this has become a double-edged sword: the BSF's insurers have started treating all of these reports as potential claims and have raised the premium accordingly.

Currently, incident reports go direct to the insurers; in future, BSF may be a gateway for these reports and eliminate those that are minor and are never likely to result in claims.

Batting helmets

The BSF was recently asked by a League Head whether batting helmets have a shelf life.

The answer is that they do, though how long this is varies with different manufacturers and types of helmets. Some helmets have date stamps based on date of manufacture; others don't.

Although umpires should inspect helmets, as they do bats, for physical defects, the main issue is the state of the foam or sponge that cushions the wearer against impacts. Leagues that have made helmets mandatory for all players (or where the BSF requires their use by under-18 players) should make sure helmets are checked regularly and replaced periodically.

Community Interest Companies

London Softball League representatives told the meeting that the league is changing its legal status to become a Community Interest Company (CIC), which offers legal protections, eligibility for grants and other benefits.

Other leagues may want to consider this. More information is available here:

<https://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/club-planning/club-structure/incorporated-organisations/>.

AGM WORKSHOP SESSIONS

The BSF's plan for the AGM was to follow the League Heads Forum meeting with three concurrent workshop sessions on NSL Rules and Regulations, Safeguarding and Safety, and Inclusive Rules.

In the event, a survey prior to the AGM indicated that there would be little attendance at the latter two workshops. So the session on Safeguarding and Safety was held within the formal AGM and the workshop on Inclusive Rules for non-binary players and Transgender Rules (which BSUK's LGBT Panel is currently working on) may be offered as a Webinar or WebEx later in the year.

NSL WORKSHOP

The NSL Workshop did go ahead, with around 20 people attending, and there was constructive discussion of a number of topics relating to NSL play in 2020.

BSF President Jenny Fromer, who chaired the session, stressed that this would be an open discussion but that any decisions would be made at a later date by the BSF Executive rather than at the meeting. She also said that the BSF wanted any changes made to apply to all teams across NSL1 and NSL2.

The underlying theme of the meeting, and the rationale for several items discussed, was a desire to speed up NSL games to get more innings played, based on the idea that the closer games can get to seven innings, the fairer the result is likely to be.

Last year, the BSF had canvassed NSL teams on three proposed changes in NSL play for the 2020 season:

- **When an over-the-fence home run is hit, the batter and all baserunners simply leave the field rather than circle the bases.** This was overwhelmingly approved in the survey and is likely to be implemented in the NSL in 2020.
- **A limit on over-the-fence home runs should be imposed in NSL games.** In the survey, opinion on this was almost evenly divided. But discussion at the Workshop revealed a lack of enthusiasm on the grounds that relatively few games are dominated by home runs, and the BSF will take this into account in making a decision.
- **NSL games should use a 1-and-1 count with "one to waste".** This was overwhelmingly rejected in last year's survey, but discussion at the Workshop suggested that there may be some sympathy for the idea as a way to significantly speed up games. One suggestion, which the BSF will look at, is to trial the system at a tournament this year to determine the positive and negative outcomes.

Other suggestions for speeding up NSL games included outlawing throwing the ball around the infield between innings, umpires making sure players hustle on and off the field and teams ensuring that they have line-ups ready when a game is due to start.

Another topic discussed was the fact that scheduling the NSL3 National Championship tournament alongside the BSF League Nationals on the weekend of 8-9 August might force some teams and/or players to choose between one tournament or the other. The BSF has allowed for this and has regulations in place that might allow players to play in both tournaments to some extent, but the consensus was that it would be better if this clash could be avoided.

With regard to the long-term aim of converting NSL3 to a league format, the question has always been how many teams at that level would commit to the necessary number of tournaments. However, the fact that more than 20 Rec teams have signed up for all three Diamond tournaments in 2020 suggests that this could be an opportunity in future to make an NSL3 league a reality.

Two more topics were discussed at the NSL Workshop before time ran out.

The first was the increasing number of players being imported onto NSL teams – particularly in NSL1 – from US bases or from Europe. On the one hand, this is increasing the quality of play in the NSL (there is a clear parallel here with Premier League football) and helping the development of slowpitch in Europe. But the concern is that imported players should be spread evenly for the sake of competitive balance, so does the BSF need to create regulations around this, perhaps by limiting the number of import players per team?

The second topic was the fact that the dates for the European Men's Slowpitch Championship (16-20 June) mean that a number of top male players will be absent from their club teams for NSL competition at Diamond Series 2. Unfortunately, there is little that can be done about this, but the question is whether teams that need to borrow players can only borrow them from a grade below, or whether they can borrow players from the same grade. The BSF Executive will consider this at its next meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Jenny Fromer

In looking back on 2020, I am going to try avoiding terms like “unprecedented,” “remote,” “the new normal” and “uncertainty” as much as possible. We have all just lived through the same year, we are all aware of the impact, and I appreciate that none of you need your sport’s governing body to spell this out.

It was a tough year. Obviously, I have no awareness of the specific version of “tough” that each of you has gone through. Sadly, I know it may well have included death, sickness, loss of employment, loss of income, distance from friends and family. What I do know is that it will have included almost no softball and reduced contact with members of your community within softball.

My job is to tell what it looked like from an NGB point of view. This time last year we were preparing for the AGM in Manchester. The AGM went ahead, and from my perspective, it felt like one of our more productive meetings. It began with a well-attended League Heads Forum followed by a NSL Workshop with genuinely productive discussions. The AGM itself included an interactive BSUK session led by Joelle Watkins and included our usual celebration of accomplishments and award winners. At the time we were gearing up for just another season and were wrestling with issues like fixture congestion and lack of hosts for international competitions.

It was literally only a few weeks later that most of what we had talked about became moot. Like everyone else the BSF had to pivot from talking about business as usual to the realities of no business at all. Quite quickly we had to grapple with the reality of no play and therefore no membership fees. With a financial year that starts in October, by the time the AGM rolled around we already had significant sunk costs. We also had on-going non-discretionary expenditure and the cumulative effect was that we were going to eat through our reserves and likely be in a position of debt. We were fortunate to be invited to apply for assistance from Sport England and to be awarded the lifeline of a £20,000 grant. The net result has been a year that adversely impacted our reserves by £23,000.

Now, a year further on, we are not much clearer what 2021 will look like in softball terms. The fact that the 2021 AGM will be an online meeting while we are all quite likely still in lockdown is indicative of this lack of clarity. We therefore have to make plans for everything from a full season to no season at all -- and all gradations in between. During 2020, we regularly communicated to the membership that in 2021 we would need to increase fees in order to operate fully and begin the process of rebuilding reserves. Having reflected on this further, we do not think 2021 is the year to add this burden to our members, and so our fees will remain unchanged. But we do need to be transparent about the fact that we are, by necessity, kicking this can down the road to 2022.

For this AGM, we are presenting a budget that assumes a full playing season, but only an 80% return of membership. It rolls over the 2019 membership fees. This is, we hope, a conservative guess. We know there will be impact on our sport from the events of 2020, but have no real idea what this will mean. Again, by necessity, the 2021 budget strips out much discretionary spend. This will be a tough budget to work to, and will mean that some projects we would readily have supported in the past cannot be paid for.

Meanwhile, the elephant in the room is the possibility of no playing season, or a severely curtailed one. Either version may have a devastating effect on the BSF’s financial position. At the time of writing, we have no idea if similar help may be extended this year from the DCMS via Sport England as it was last year.

When I was re-elected for my second term in 2019 I announced that this would be my last term, and so my time as BSF President will come to an end at this AGM. Knowing that this would be the case I laid out two

objectives in my report last year: 1) to lessen the ancillary workload of the President; and 2) to identify a successor. I am pleased, and more than a little relieved, to say that I think that both objectives have been met.

In respect of ancillary workload, I referred specifically to the demands of representing softball on the BSUK Board and an extended period when we did not have a National Teams Officer and so had to cover this role. As many of you will know, 2020 saw significant changes for BSUK as the British Baseball Federation (BBF) was removed as a member, leaving the BSF, for the time being, as the sole member. While this is the context that a new BSF President will inherit, and sounds more labour-intensive than ever, I have offered to remain as an additional BSF-nominated Director on the BSUK Board in order to shoulder much of this load.

I am also thrilled to note that not only do we now have a National Teams Officer in Alexis Markham-Hill, but she has taken on this role with enthusiasm, strategic purpose, thoughtfulness and a huge work ethic. This is an important area of BSF's work that I think is in very good hands.

With regard to my successor, I couldn't be more pleased to report that someone has put his hat into the ring. A few months ago we were contacted by Ieuan Gale to express his interest in the position of BSF President. Ieuan has introduced himself in this AGM Pack, but I will note that he may be known to some of you from his roles in fastpitch, slowpitch and baseball. Obviously Ieuan's appointment is subject to the vote at the AGM, and because he has not previously served on a league or on this national body (as per our Constitution) he has agreed to effectively work as 'President in waiting' for his first months.

However, I do need to say that since Ieuan first contacted us he has worked tirelessly to engage with the role and bring himself up to speed. He has attended all BSF meetings and various GBMC meetings as well as meeting with BSUK and holding regular calls with me. I personally think it is only positive that someone new to the national scene (except as a player) has the interest, energy and commitment to step forward. He has already made valuable contributions over the past few months and absorbed all the information being thrown at him. I am very excited to see the positive changes that may come from his election.

Before signing off it is probably appropriate that I offer some brief summation of the past four years. Many big things have happened for softball in that time. We have seen a new, fourth, softball and baseball field added at Farnham Park. Home Plate opened to provide dedicated catering to our community as well as recreation facilities and events. More resources were directed to National Championships, including web-streaming our premiere events. In 2018 we introduced a new, simplified affiliation model and revamped our AGM format to include an external presenter who delivered an informative concussion seminar. Despite a shrinking committee we found people to help ensure we could continue to deliver events such as the World Series and Single-Sex Nationals. We continued to provide support and direction for our many national teams and to advocate for them internationally. We have worked closely with BSUK to launch a new BSF website (spoiler), to hire a new Fastpitch Development Manager in Alyson Spinns-Vilainis and to help navigate the complexities of disengaging from the British Baseball Federation.

In 2019 the softball community was front and centre when MLB staged the London Series featuring two regular-season games between the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox at the Olympic Stadium in London. Our national team players were among the clubhouse and on-field staff for the events and our members were the backbone of the volunteer workforce.

It would be remiss to not mention that there was also a short list of plans that did not get completed during my tenure. Chief among them, for me, was the plan to make our Articles fit for purpose and to put Standing Orders in place to formalise how the BSF functions. We have been fortunate in that we are able to operate appropriately without these, but this may not always be the case, and so I hope this is work that will be picked up going forward.

Finally, I would like to say a few well-deserved, thank yous: to Laura Burkhardt for keeping on top of our finances; to Liz Graham for quietly and efficiently managing National Championships, membership queries and the organising of all formal meetings; and to Mike Jennings for managing our insurance provision and his valuable insight on international matters. I would also like to thank Alexis Markham-Hill for stepping up and getting to grips with leading our National Teams work. I would like to thank Chris Moon for his years of contribution to the BSF. And finally, a very personal thank you to Bob Fromer who literally keeps us all on track with every aspect of our work, handles all our communications work and brings years of experience and knowledge to every matter we deal with. I am extremely grateful to have had such a strong team to work with.

COMPETITIONS OFFICER'S REPORT AND NSL OVERVIEW

Liz Graham

Very little organised softball was able to take place in 2020, and there was no NSL play or BSF National Championships.

While we are hoping that both can take place in 2021, it's still too early to tell.

Assuming that we have something close to a normal season this year, planned dates for 2021 National Championships – including the return of the Single-Sex Slowpitch Nationals – are below. But the BSF cannot guarantee that any of these events will go ahead as this will be dependent on government guidelines and local venue hire regulations.

BSF Single-Sex Slowpitch Nationals (Organiser: Matt Tebb)

Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze

26-27 June at Moor Lane Sports Ground, Perry Barr, Birmingham

Note: No dogs will be permitted on the site.

Co-Ed Slowpitch League Nationals

Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze

7-8 August at Farnham Park

NSL1 and NSL2 Nationals

4-5 September at Farnham Park

Because there was no softball league play in 2020, teams that will be invited to the 2021 Co-ed Slowpitch League Nationals are those that qualified through their results in 2019 and attended the 2020 AGM.

NSL Overview

We are hoping that all NSL1 and NSL2 teams will return in 2021 if the NSL season goes ahead.

The two new teams that will join NSL2 in 2021 are those promoted after the NSL3 Nationals in 2019: the Spittin' Camels (Manchester) and Fuzzy Ducks (London).

In 2021, for the first time, we will move to two-up, two-down promotion and relegation between NSL2 and NSL1.

The BSF still hopes to move eventually to league play for NSL3, but how and when this will happen remains to be decided.

NSL Rule Changes

A workshop on playing rules for the National Softball League (NSL) was held at the 2020 BSF AGM, and a number of recommendations were made for the BSF Executive to discuss and decide on.

The following decisions have now been made regarding play in both NSL1 and NSL2 in 2021:

- 1) When an over-the-fence home run is hit, the batter and all baserunners will simply leave the field rather than circle the bases. This is designed to speed up play with the aim of more innings being played in time-limited games. In order to save even more time, the BSF would like to discourage (but is not banning) the practice where all players leave the dugout to high-five the home run hitter.
- 2) There will be no limit on the number of over-the-fence home runs in NSL games. This will be kept under review and may be re-considered if home runs are seen to dominate too many games.
- 3) **Provided that a substantial majority of NSL captains are in favour after being canvassed**, a 1-and-1 count with “one to waste” will be trialled during a day or weekend of NSL play in 2021 to see whether it has a significant effect in speeding up play and increasing innings. Following such a trial, the BSF will make a decision on whether to implement this rule for 2022.
- 4) For the time being, the BSF does not plan to introduce any regulation on players who are imported from Europe or US bases to play on NSL teams. However, this situation will also be kept under review for the sake of maintaining competitive balance.
- 5) Other measures to speed up games that the BSF would like to encourage are no infield warm-ups between innings, players hustling on and off the field between innings and teams ensuring that they have line-ups ready before a game is due to start.

NATIONAL TEAMS REPORT

Alexis Markham-Hill

No international competitions were held in 2020 by Softball Europe, and very few tournaments were held by the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC).

As a result, no GB National Teams took part in official or unofficial tournaments last year.

Currently, there are hopes for a “normal” season in 2021, and the calendar of European competitions is particularly full, with some Championships postponed in 2020 joining those already scheduled for 2021.

Official competitions in 2021

The following GB National Teams are scheduled to compete in Softball Europe Championships in 2021 (Covid permitting), though none of our teams will be competing in WBSC tournaments this year.

The **GB Co-ed Slowpitch Team** will compete in the 13th European Co-ed Slowpitch Championship in Colorno, Italy from 15-19 June, and will look to defend the title it regained in 2019 in Hungary. The team had hoped that the first-ever WBSC Slowpitch World Cup, a world championship tournament for national teams, would take place in the autumn of 2021, but the first edition of this landmark slowpitch event is now more likely to take place in 2022.

The **GB Women’s Fastpitch Team** will compete in the 22nd European Women’s Championship, postponed in 2020 and now scheduled to take place in the Friuli-Venezia region in northeast Italy from 27 June-3 July. The team will need to win the tournament to qualify for a special eight-team WBSC World Championship taking place as part of the World Games in the United States in 2022.

The **GB Men’s Fastpitch Team** will compete in the 15th European Men’s Fastpitch Championship, postponed in 2020 and now scheduled for Ledence, in the Czech Republic, from 21-26 June. The team will be hoping to better its fourth-place finish in 2018 and qualify for the WBSC Men’s Fastpitch World Cup in 2022.

The newly-formed **GB Under-23 Men’s Fastpitch Team** was to have competed in the first European tournament at this age level, an Under-23 Men’s Qualifier in the Czech Republic. But the European Softball Federation has now cancelled this event.

The **GB Under-18 Men’s Fastpitch Team** will compete in the 11th European Under-18 Men’s Fastpitch Championship being held from 12-17 July in Havlickuv Brod, Czech Republic.

The **GB Under-18 Women’s Fastpitch Team** will play in the 16th European Under-18 Women’s Championship, scheduled for 19-24 July in Prague, Czech Republic.

The **GB Under-13 Girls Fastpitch Team**, the GB Cubs, will compete in the ESF’s 9th annual Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy competition, to be played from 11-14 August in Collecchio, near Parma in Italy.

Great Britain will also have a number of club teams playing in European Cup competitions in 2021 if these tournaments go ahead.

The **Windsor** Knights, the **Chromies**, and the **Pioneers** (as defending champions) will compete in the 10th European Co-ed Slowpitch Super Cup from 2-7 August in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The Mix, a British fastpitch club team that won the silver medal at the European Women's Cup in 2019, will return to the tournament this year from 16-21 August in Dupnitsa, Bulgaria.

A composite British club team calling itself the **Free Agents**, whose exact make-up has yet to be determined, has entered the European Cup Winners Cup tournament, to be held from 16-21 August in Saronno, Italy.

Finally, the **Meteors Men's Team**, including a number of young GB players, will enter the 9th European Men's Super Cup from 23-28 August in Prague, Czech Republic.

GB National Teams outlook

After an incredibly challenging 2020, where softball was all but cancelled due to the global pandemic, our national teams are aiming to make the most of every opportunity they have for development and competitive play this season. Covid permitting, the majority of our national teams will be competing in official tournaments across Europe, while those that do not have official tournaments will be attending a variety of international tournaments or events to provide their athletes with high-level training, coaching and competitive opportunities.

Over the next few months, we expect to see all 10 GB Softball teams open up their athlete application lists, take COVID-secure steps to hold trials (many will be done via video/data submission only), make team roster selections, and roll out training plans to ensure athletes are ready to compete after a year away from the sport.

Every year the BSF, the GB Management Committee (GBMC) and GB National team staff reflect on the previous season, taking stock of successes and exploring areas for improvement. From individual athlete development and team growth to possible Olympic qualification, we are constantly trying to anticipate the direction each team and programme needs to take to maximise the benefits from any changes made.

Moving forward, we believe that athlete development needs to be GB Softball's priority as we look to the 2021 season and beyond. Across the GB Softball fastpitch and slowpitch programmes, we are in the process of creating and implementing ambitious plans to increase participation, training, development, and competitive play opportunities for UK-based athletes and coaches alike.

This renewed focus on athlete development, especially within our fastpitch programmes, has been motivated in part by a recent application completed by BSUK and the BSF for additional external funding from UK Sport. The application outlines extensive plans to increase female fastpitch softball development across the UK and clarifies the GB Women Fastpitch Programme's ambitious vision and focus for all five teams for the next eight years, with the Senior Women's Team's sights being set on the podium at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028 after finishing one win short of qualifying for Tokyo 2020.

Under the newly-designed system, the vision for GB Women's Fastpitch is now being driven by a deliberate and structured approach to develop a world class athlete-focused talent system that will ultimately benefit all female fastpitch athletes across the UK, from the grassroots to national teams. The system outlines a cohesive process designed to build up cohorts of athletes to Academy standards by 2024 and establishes a strategy for long-term sustainable talent development and success. This will include the phased growth of player development programmes, the implementation of tracking and talent ID systems, increased support for participation in international competitions, a revamped domestic pathway, the establishment of tiered

talent development hubs within the UK, and much more. Clear structures have been identified to ensure a balance between efficient flow through the Talent Pathway and maintaining quality and consistency throughout the system. This will be evaluated regularly, consolidated, and developed further to make the most of every opportunity there is for continued improvement and growth.

Despite the fact that the funding application to UK Sport has been only partially successful – we will be getting some money but not as much as we had hoped – we believe fastpitch softball will be able to move forward and successfully grow with these new structures, strategies and plans in place.

While the UK Sport application had to focus on female fastpitch development because of the Olympic connection, it provided the BSF, the GBMC and GB Softball staff with additional perspectives as we reviewed all of the GB Softball teams/programmes: Women's and Men's Fastpitch and Men's and Co-Ed Slowpitch.

Over the last few months, we have embraced this opportunity to assess each national team's strengths, goals and aims through a fresh lens and have made some changes to increase athlete development within the programmes.

As an example, the GB Men's Fastpitch Programme is moving into 2021 with a renewed emphasis on increasing opportunities for training, development and high-level game play for UK-based athletes. Over the last few years, we have seen the GB Under-18 Men and the new GB Under-23 Men develop into stronger and much more viable teams with a clear talent development pathway attached to them. With this ever-growing cohort of UK-based male fastpitch players in mind, and given changes to qualification structures for WBSC World Cups, the BSF identified 2021 as a natural year for the Men's Fastpitch Programme to make the change to providing increased opportunities for home-based athletes. The goal is to develop a strong group of skilled UK-based adult men's fastpitch players and, with continued development, athletes that can be just as competitive as their overseas-based teammates and opponents.

GB Softball will always want to be competitive, and medalling will remain an aspiration for coaches and athletes alike, but this does not need to be their only goal or measure of success. We are excited to see the GB Men's Fastpitch Programme use this time to invest in developing more UK-based athletes and seeing where this can take the programme in the future.

When BSUK's Strategy 2020-2024 was launched in 2020, it identified key areas that will grow, strengthen, and sustain the sports across the UK over the next four years, based on further investment that will allow ambitious plans to become reality. The Strategy sets out plans to build a talent identification and development pathway by:

- Enabling and supporting home-grown talent from all communities, removing financial barriers that prevent talent from blossoming.
- Developing and communicating clear performance pathways that map grassroots to elite.
- Providing regular high-quality coaching, facilities and services.

The BSF and GB Softball believe this Strategy can support and benefit the long-term development of all our GB Softball programmes. And as GB Softball continues to grow its systems for athlete development, our hope is to make it as accessible to UK-based athletes as possible. We want a clear 'GB Softball Way' that underpins team culture, coaching philosophy, game strategy and skill development, so that these standards can be applied consistently to each level and format of the GB Softball programme.

We also hope that with continued improvements to our team structures, aims, cultures and opportunities, we will see more UK-based athletes coming into our national fastpitch team programmes. We hope that better talent ID and talent transfer, along with the continued inclusion of overseas-based passport-holding

athletes, will allow GB Softball staff to continue to upskill and challenge our UK-based athletes while enhancing their playing experience, mental performance techniques, and the overall standards of fastpitch play in the UK.

We hope that much of this outlook and many of these systems can be applied to GB Slowpitch as well as GB Fastpitch. While the GB Slowpitch programme has been incredibly successful on a European level since official European slowpitch competition began in 1998, GB Slowpitch has been less successful on the world stage, and the hope is that the ultimate challenge of a slowpitch World Championship competition – the WBSC’s Co-ed Slowpitch World Cup for national teams – will finally be able to be staged in 2022 and regularly thereafter.

GB Management Committee 2021

With the GB Management Committee having been re-established at the end of 2020 and with clearer pathways being created for softball development across the UK and within GB Softball, the GBMC will hope to support all GB Softball national teams to operate to the highest standards by following GB/BSF policies, procedures, and safeguarding measures appropriately and with transparency. We believe that working in this way will create a stronger, more positive, development-focused environment in which all our GB Softball teams can grow.

The 2021 GBMC is made up of six members, each with a specific role to help support different aspects of the GB Softball programme while acting as a decision-making committee on GB Softball matters for the BSF. The National Teams Officer also sits on the BSF Executive board and acts as a link between the GBMC, GB Softball programmes, and the BSF. Below are the GBMC members along with their roles and contact details:

- **BSF National Teams Officer:** Alexis Markham-Hill (nto@britishsoftball.org)
- **Treasurer:** Lars Looijen (larslooijen@hotmail.com)
- **BSF Fastpitch Development Manager:** Alyson Spinis-Valainis (alyson.spinis-valainis@bsuk.com)
- **GB Slowpitch Head Representative:** Kellie Whitaker (kellie.whitaker@britishsoftball.org)
- **GB Men’s Fastpitch Head Representative:** Jill Russell (jill.russell@britishsoftball.org)
- **GB Women’s Fastpitch Head Representative:** Kim Hannessen (kim.hannessen@britishsoftball.org)

The full GBMC can be contacted by emailing: gbmc@britishsoftball.org.

The three GB ‘Head Reps’ will be representing all of the teams within their respective groups. However, to ensure all 10 national teams within the GB Softball programme have clear representation within the GBMC, each national team has also elected a ‘Team Rep’ to act as the primary contact point for their ‘Head Rep’ to communicate and share information with. This will allow Team Reps to share information efficiently with their team’s staff. The 2021 GB Team Reps are:

GB Slowpitch Head Rep: Kellie Whitaker

- **Co-Ed Slowpitch Team Rep:** Kellie Whitaker (kellie.whitaker@britishsoftball.org)
- **Men's Slowpitch Team Rep:** Steve Patterson (servpatt2004@hotmail.com)

GB Men’s Fastpitch Head Rep: Jill Russell

- **Under-18 Men's Fastpitch Team Rep:** Jill Russell (jill.russell@britishsoftball.org)
- **Under-23 Men's Fastpitch Team Rep:** Ian Tomlin (ian.tomlin@britishsoftball.org)
- **Senior Men's Fastpitch Team Rep:** TBA

GB Women's Fastpitch Head Rep: Kim Hannessen

- **Under-13 Girls Fastpitch Team Rep:** Julie Spittle (julie.spittle@britishsoftball.org)
- **Under-15 Women's Fastpitch Team Rep:** Mary Murray (mary.murray@britishsoftball.org)
- **Under-18 Women's Fastpitch Team Rep:** Kathleen Laster (kathleen.laster@britishsoftball.org)
- **Under-22 Women's Fastpitch Team Rep:** Jo Malisani (jo.malisani@britishsoftball.org)
- **Senior Women's Fastpitch Team Rep:** Liz Knight (liz.knight@britishsoftball.org)

BSF ACCOUNTS & BUDGET

BSF Accounts: year ended 30/9/20 + Budget 2021 proposed

Year-ended 30 Sept	2019		2020		2021	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
Fees	62,780	58,576	59,000	-	46,984	
Nationals	25,325	27,313	18,930	-	18,200	
Insurance	2,500	2,460	2,240	-	2,240	
Other income - Grant			-	20,000		
TOTAL INCOME	90,605	88,349	80,170	20,000	67,424	
Nationals	28,000	31,897	20,500	128	18,669	
NTL Out	4,000	4,000	4,000	-	3,000	
Insurance	5,500	6,249	6,919	6,919	6,919	
BSUK Service fee	7,000	6,161	7,000	3,000	3,000	
Development	5,775	4,050	4,000	2,033	2,250	
GBR teams	26,850	15,015	28,950	13,485	21,650	
Marketing / Events	9,700	5,322	11,100	5,543	6,900	
Meetings / Travel	7,200	3,710	9,700	6,639	-	
Financial costs	7,270	7,321	7,350	7,283	8,350	
TOTAL COSTS	101,295	83,725	99,519	45,029	70,738	
RESULT FOR YEAR	- 10,690	4,624	- 19,349	- 25,029	- 3,314	

BALANCE SHEETS	Forecast	Actual
	2019	
Assets		78,571
Liabilities		- 24,184
Net Assets		54,387
Reserves b/f	50,796	50,796
Profit / -Loss	- 10,690	4,624
Reserves c/f	40,106	55,419

Forecast	Actual
2020	
	44,098
	- 13,708
	30,390
55,419	55,419
- 19,349	- 25,029
36,070	30,390

Forecast	Actual
2021	
30,390	
-	3,314
27,076	

BSF TEAM AFFILIATION FEES: 2021

The BSF had no membership income whatsoever in 2020 but a considerable amount of non-discretionary expenditure (see Accounts above), and the result was to reduce the BSF's reserves to a dangerously low level.

Initially, the thinking was that fees would have to be raised in 2021 to begin building back reserves and to ensure that 2021 was not completely a year of "austerity" with regard to Federation spending.

However, a £20,000 grant from Sport England, secured with the help of BaseballSoftballUK, kept the Federation in the black, and the BSF Executive has decided that fees will **not be raised** in 2021 (assuming there is a season) because we know that many people are struggling financially as a result of the pandemic.

But the BSF will have to reduce expenditure this year and will need to raise fees in future to restore our reserves over time. In judging whether there will be a full season in 2021 with regard to levying full or partial fees, a full season will be assumed if all NSL league competition is able to take place.

The fees for 2021, shown below, are the same as in 2019:

Full-Member League Teams: £200

Associate Member Teams: £100

Associate members include:

- Independent tournament teams with no league affiliation.
- Scottish league teams.
- Great Britain Fastpitch League teams.
- New league teams* for the first two years of their existence.
- BASU as an organisation.

** New teams that have joined leagues in the past three years and are in the previous fee structure that involved a three-year progression to full-member rates will continue in that progression but will pay £200 when they reach the full-member rate.*

Junior Members: £75

- Under-18 teams (50% of rostered players must be under-18).
- University teams playing in BSF leagues.

Special Membership: £75

- A one-off team membership to allow entry to one specific competition.

GB National Teams: £25

- This fee is to provide Civil and Public Liability insurance for GB National Teams when they train and play in the UK.

University Teams not in BSF Leagues: No fee

As has been the case since 2017, teams that enter the BSF Single-Sex Slowpitch National Championships or the Softball World Series will not be required to pay an additional affiliation fee for insurance purposes provided that all members of the team are rostered with co-ed slowpitch teams or fastpitch teams affiliated to the BSF. This will continue to be the case in 2021.

BSF ANNUAL AWARDS

None of the BSF's normal Annual Awards will be made for the 2020 season, since there was no play or achievements on which to base them.

A ceremony to induct new members into the BSF Hall of Fame, which was due to take place at the 2021 AGM, has been postponed to 2022

BSUK COACH & VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Softball and baseball coaching and volunteer awards for achievements in 2020 have been announced by BSUK in conjunction with their annual Coach Summit, which was held remotely at the end of January. The softball awards presented were:

Softball Youth Coach of the Year Award

Given to an outstanding contributor to coaching young people in softball in Great Britain in 2020.

Winner: Kim Roberts, Horsham Broncos Softball Club

Other nominees: Holly Ireland (RBI Wales) and the GB Under-15 Women's Team staff

Kim Roberts has been a stalwart at Horsham Broncos Softball Club, having been involved for the past four years and as Head Coach for the last two. After completing her Level 2 Coaching Certificate with BSUK, Kim has delivered weekly coaching sessions for girls at Millais School in Horsham to help grow the game. During the pandemic, Kim recorded and distributed a series of half-hour training videos for her players, enabling them to continue softball activity at home.

Softball Adult Coach of the Year Award

Given to an outstanding contributor to adult softball coaching in Great Britain in 2020.

Winner: Whitney Hollis, London Softball League

Other nominees: Ryan Turtill (London Softball League) and Paul Vernon (Bracknell Baseball & Softball Club)

Following the cancellation of the London Softball League's season due to Covid-19, Whitney Hollis sprang into action, organising online weekly training and a continuation of the LSL 101 beginners' programme in a modified format. Her engaging, fun, and informative style kept attendance high at the online sessions, and eventually Covid-secure training outdoors. Whitney's dedication and drive kept the London Softball League strong and prepared for the return of game action.

Baseball Awards

Winners of baseball coaching awards were:

Baseball Youth Coach of the Year: Casey Mackenzie from Aberdeen Baseball Club

Baseball Adult Coach of the Year: Greg Gillette from the London Mets Baseball & Softball Club

General Awards

This year, general awards were all won by people from the baseball community.

The **Young Coach of the Year Award**, given to an outstanding young coach under the age of 25 who has contributed to baseball or softball coaching in Great Britain in 2020, was won by **Andreas Fopp** from the University of East Anglia Blue Sox and Norwich Icenis Baseball Club.

The award for **Services to Coaching**, for the individual who best personifies what it means to be a baseball or softball coach over a long period of time, was won by **Barry Marshall** from GB Baseball.

Volunteer of the Year. This award, for a volunteer in a non-coaching role who has given up a substantial amount of time to support their local club, team or league and who has made a significant impact on the development of our sports, was won by **Alan Binns** from the Newcastle Nighthawks.

ELECTION OF BSF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

People standing for office on the BSF Executive are elected for two-year terms.

BSF President Jenny Fromer will complete her second two-year term in February 2021 and is stepping down. Ieuan Gale has been nominated to fill this role (see a statement from Ieuan Gale below).

Three of the Directors shown below – the Treasurer, Competitions Officer and National Teams Officer -- completed the second year of their current term in 2020 and are standing for a further term, but this does not preclude nominations being made for these positions.

The General Officer/Coaching shown below completed the first year of a two-year term in 2020, so nominations cannot be made for this position until 2022.

The Technical Officer, Chris Moon, stepped down from his position at the end of 2020 for health reasons and the BSF co-opted Pete Saunders to serve out the rest of the year. Pete is standing for a two-year term in his own right at the AGM, but other nominations for the position can be made.

The remaining General Officers shown below – currently assigned by the Executive to serve as Farnham Park Liaison, Finance Support, National Championship Support and National Team Support – completed the second year of their current term in 2020 and are standing for a further term, but this does not preclude nominations being made for these positions.

The position of Safeguarding Officer and one General Officer position assigned to Communications and Marketing are currently vacant.

Candidates currently serving and/or standing for positions at the 2021 AGM are shown below.

DIRECTORS:

Role	Standing	Serving
President	Ieuan Gale	
Treasurer	Laura Burkhardt	
Competitions Officer	Liz Graham	
National Teams Officer	Alexis Markham-Hill	

OTHER ROLES:

Technical Officer	Pete Saunders
Safeguarding Officer	Currently vacant

GENERAL OFFICERS (up to six specific Officer roles can be created by the Executive):

Role	Standing	Serving
General Officer / Farnham Park Liaison	Steve Getraer	
General Officer / Finance	Mike Jennings	
General Officer / National Championship Support	Lesley Morisetti	
General Officer / National Teams Support	Stella Ackrell	
General Officer / Coaching		Michael Lott
General Officer / Communications & Marketing	<i>Currently vacant</i>	

APPOINTED OFFICERS:

Role	Appointee	Appointed By
London Liaison Officer	Alan MacFarlane	BSF

BSF STAFF:

The BSF Administrator – a position currently held by Bob Fromer – is a part-time paid position and is not subject to election.

The BSF/BSUK Fastpitch Development Manager – a position currently held by Alyson Spinis-Valainis – is a full-time paid role shared between the BSF and BaseballSoftballUK and appointed by a joint panel made up of members from both organisations.

STATEMENT FROM PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IEUAN GALE

My background

It was during a dull GCSE music class that my friend said I should tag along to the new after-school club. A new sports club had been started by one of the physics teachers, and after a little convincing I decided to have a look.

When the ball smacked into that big weird glove on my hand for the first time, I immediately fell in love with this strange new sport. Soon I had signed up to the team, we had joined the Bristol League, competed in the Edinburgh Festiball tournament and we had some shocking red baseball pants to go along with our nice new Monmouth Rockets shirts. Not long afterwards myself and a few others from the school were trying out for GB fastpitch teams.

Eight years on -- one Under-19 European Championship, two Men's European Championships and a Men's World Championship later -- my life revolves around the softball season, the pre-season winter Academy and playing tournaments on as many weekends as I can.

Why I applied for the Presidency

As much as I love playing the game, over the last few years I have become increasingly interested in all that takes place outside the diamond. Having spent much of the last few years coaching players, managing teams and developing the sport, I have come to realise that British Softball is in a great place, but it could be so much better. I saw that there was more that could be done to allow British Softball to reach its full potential for all its members, whether they be National Softball League players or those just stepping up to the plate for the first time. Slowpitch or fastpitch, young or old, we are all part of the British Softball community and I want to help lead the way for British softball to become the best it can be.

My goals if elected

Great Britain is renowned across Europe for its prowess at slowpitch softball. Players travel from across the continent to compete in our National Softball League, the best slowpitch league in Europe. And in the lower grades, slowpitch is going from strength to strength. Slowpitch softball is at the top of its game in the UK and it is my hope to further this development by supporting those at the top of our game but particularly those in lower grades.

British fastpitch is also at an exciting point. With the GB Women's Team having come so close to qualifying for the Olympics, we have positioned ourselves as one of Europe's top nations in the women's game, with players coming from all over the world to be part of our programme. We now have a wonderful opportunity to build on this performance, with the aim of going one better next time.

With our new Fastpitch Development Manager now firmly established in her role, we are poised to begin the long but incredibly exciting task of building for the future. This will begin at the lowest level, with an increased effort to develop fastpitch for everyone -- not at the expense of slowpitch but alongside it -- through growing the Great Britain Fastpitch league and other fastpitch competition opportunities. At the top level, our national teams have an opportunity to really invest in youth and create a development

system allowing all fastpitch players, both male and female, to start playing at a young age and develop into world class athletes.

Slowpitch and fastpitch softball are part of one large community, and it is my hope, as British slowpitch softball continues to go from strength to strength, that fastpitch can begin to accelerate its development to catch up with and join its more established cousin.

I know that is a bold goal, but in these difficult times we are all currently facing, we have all seen what our community is capable of. British Softball is at its best when we all work together, not divided between fastpitch and slowpitch, or NSL and non-NSL, but when we are all part of one larger community. I see a future where British Softball is united and prosperous and I hope you will all join me in my efforts to make this aspiration become a reality.

CONSTITUTIONAL MOTIONS TO THE 2021 BSF AGM

From the BSF Executive

No Constitutional motions are being presented to the 2021 BSF AGM.

MOTIONS OR PROPOSALS TO THE 2021 BSF AGM

*There were no motions or proposals to the AGM this year
from the BSF or from members.*



BASU REPORT

Pete Saunders
BSF Technical Officer

In response to the pandemic, BASU spent much of 2020 creating modules for an online umpire training course.

The course currently being produced consists of a series of videos combined with course work. Trainees can watch the videos and complete the online course work in their own time.

However, the content is designed to be used alongside on-field practice sessions and classroom instruction: you can't become an umpire by watching the videos alone!

Ideally, BASU will run a Zoom-type tutorial the week before any in-person training this year to answer questions and clarify any issues.

The course is not yet complete, but what is there can be made available to anyone. Please contact BASUSec@gmail.com for further information.

If you would be interested in helping BASU produce training materials or would like to be part of a trial group for online materials, please contact BASUSec@gmail.com.

No significant rule changes have been made for 2021; a new Rulebook is due out in 2022.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY REGULATIONS PUBLISHED BY THE WBSC

The World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) has recently published additional Regulations relating to game procedures and safety for youth players which will be applied at specific WBSC Fastpitch World Cups in 2021 and beyond, though these Regulations do not yet appear in the WBSC's Fastpitch Rulebook.

The BSF plans to adopt these regulations going forward for youth players in these age groups, and Softball Europe may do the same. The new Regulations are:

For Under-15 Fastpitch:

- Bats: no restriction on the bat length and weight.
- Balls: 12-inch softball.
- No metal cleats allowed.
- Helmets must include guard/mask to protect face.

The BSF is adding to the above:

- Gumshields must be worn by all infielders, including the pitcher.

Under-12 Mixed Fastpitch:

- Bats: No restriction on the bat length and weight.
- Balls: 12-inch softballs.
- Each team shall have at least four (4) females and four (4) males on the field of play at any one time, with a batting line-up alternating five (5) females and five (5) male players.
- No metal cleats allowed.
- Helmets must include guard/mask to protect face.
- A facemask on defense is mandatory for all athletes (male and female) playing third base, first base or pitcher.

The BSF is adding to the above:

- Gumshields must be worn by all infielders, including the pitcher.

2021 SOFTBALL CALENDAR

(as of 5 February 2021)

Slowpitch = Black

Fastpitch = Red

Baseball = Green

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	ORGANISER
Jan 2-3			
Jan 9-10			
Jan 16-17			
Jan 23-24			
Jan 30-31	2021 BSUK Coach Summit	Remote meeting	Chris Rawlings
Feb 16-7			
Feb 13-14	2021 Softball League Heads Forum	Remote meeting	Jenny Fromer
Feb 20-21			
Feb 27 Feb 28	2021 BSF AGM	Remote meeting	Jenny Fromer
Mar 6-7			
Mar 13-14			
Mar 20-21			
Mar 27-28			
Apr 3-4	EASTER WEEKEND		
Apr 10 Apr 11	East Midlands First Ball	Nottingham	Phil Kielthy
Apr 17 Apr 18 Apr 24-25	North West Series 1 – Rec North West Series 1 – Comp BUCS National Baseball Finals Manchester First Ball Tournament	Manchester Manchester Farnham Park Manchester	Luis Arrebillagas Luis Arrebillagas Patrick Knock Paul Fagan

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	ORGANISER
May 1-2			
May 8	Great Britain Fastpitch League 1	Farnham Park	David Morris
May 9	Chicks with Sticks and Let the Boys Play Tournament 1	Farnham Park	Alan Le Marquand
May 15-16	Diamond Series 1 + NSL	Farnham Park	Craig Moran
May 22	Great Britain Fastpitch League 2	Farnham Park	David Morris
May 23			
May 29-30	Liverpool Tournament	Widnes	Stephen Shearer
May 29	Bristol DD Cup	Clifton College, Bristol	Jo Newton
	Manchester LGBTQ+ Tournament	Manchester	Luis Arrebillagas
Jun 5-6	Diamond Series 2 + NSL Diffodill Tournament	Farnham Park Cardiff	Craig Moran Dave McCarthy
Jun 12-13	Leeds Tournament	Wetherby	Daniel Simpson
Jun 12	Great Britain Fastpitch League 3	Farnham Park	David Morris
Jun 13	Chicks with Sticks and Let the Boys Play Tournament 2	Farnham Park	Alan Le Marquand
Jun 15-19	European Co-ed Slowpitch Championship	Colorno, Italy	Kellie Whitaker
Jun 19-20	BSUK Slowpitch Cup	Farnham Park	Sam Haslam
Jun 19	North West Series 2 – Rec	Manchester	Luis Arrebillagas
Jun 20	North West Series 2 -- Comp	Manchester	Luis Arrebillagas
Jun 21-26	European Men's Fastpitch Championship	Ledenice, CZ	Wes Knapp
Jun 26-27	BSF Single-Sex Slowpitch National Championships	Birmingham	Liz Graham
Jun 26	Great Britain Fastpitch League 4	Farnham Park	David Morris
Jun 27-Jul 3	European Women's Fastpitch Championship	Friuli Region, Italy	Simon Mortimer
Jul 3-4	Bristol Somerball	Bristol	Neil Butterfield
Jul 10-11	Windsor Tournament	Farnham Park	Debbie Moores
Jul 10	Glasgow Tartan Tournament	Glasgow	Jenny Helget
Jul 10	Alex Hall Memorial Tournament	Manchester	Mike Connolly
Jul 12-17	European U-18 Men's Fastpitch Championship	Havlickuv Brod, CZ	Jill Russell
Jul 17-18	Diamond Series 3 + NSL	Farnham Park	Craig Moran
Jul 19-24	European U-18 Women's Fastpitch Championship	Prague, CZ	David Morris

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	ORGANISER
Jul 24-25	East Midlands Labor Day Tournament Great Britain Fastpitch League 5/6	Notts/Leicester Farnham Park	Phil Kielthy David Morris
Jul 31-Aug 1	Manchester Main Tournament Solent Lastball	Manchester Eastleigh	Paul Fagan Matt Tebb
Aug 2-7	European Co-ed Slowpitch Super Cup	Sofia, Bulgaria	Various
Aug 7-8	BSF Co-ed Slowpitch League National Championships	Farnham Park	Liz Graham
Aug 11-14	European Massimo Romeo Youth Trophy	Collecchio, Italy	Julie Spittle
Aug 14-15 Aug 16-21	Bristol wREck Tournament European Women's Cup Winners Cup European Women's Cup	Bristol Saronno, Italy Dupnitsa, Bulgaria	Neil Butterfield Alexis Markham-Hill Sian Wigington
Aug 21 Aug 22	North West Series 3 – Rec North West Series 3 -- Comp Chicks with Sticks and Let the Boys Play Tournament 3	Manchester Manchester Farnham Park	Luis Arrewillagas Luis Arrewillagas Alan Le Marquand
Aug 23-28 Aug 28-29	European Men's Super Cup 30 th Anniversary Edinburgh Festiball	Prague, Cz Edinburgh	Ian Tomlin Liz Graham
Sep 4-5	BSF Co-ed Slowpitch <u>NSL</u> National Championships	Farnham Park	Liz Graham
Sep 11-12	All-Star Tournament for Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, East Midlands Leagues Great Britain Fastpitch League 7/8 Baseball National Chps	TBC Farnham Park Farnham Park	Daniel Simpson David Morris BBF
Sep 12	Hit and Run Tournament 8	Maidenhead	Alan Le Marquand
Sep 18-19	Softball World Series	Farnham Park	Bob Fromer
Sep 25-26			
Oct 2-3			
Oct 9-10			
Oct 16-17			
Oct 23-24			
Oct 30-31			

DATE **EVENT** **VENUE** **ORGANISER**

Nov 6-7

Nov 13-14

Nov 20-21

Nov 27-28

Dec 4-5

Dec 11

Dec 12

Not Jingle Balls Tournament 4

Rickmansworth

Alan Le Marquand

Dec 18-19

Dec 25-26