

BSF EXECUTIVE MEETING REPORT: 6 JANUARY 2022

The BSF Executive held its first monthly videoconference meeting of 2022 on the evening of Thursday 6 January. Below is a report on the main discussions and decisions.

Attendance

Present: Ieuan Gale (President), Laura Burkhardt (Treasurer), Liz Graham (Competitions and Membership Officer), Pete Saunders (Technical Officer), Simon Mortimer (Communications and Marketing Officer), Mike Jennings and Lesley Morisetti (General Officers), Bob Fromer (Administrator).

Apologies: Mike Lott (Coaching Officer), Stella Ackrell (General Officer).

Guest: John Boyd (BaseballSoftballUK).

Financial matters

BSF Treasurer Laura Burkhardt reported that accounts for the BSF's 2020-21 financial year have been completed, are now with the auditors and should be available to be posted on the BSF website before the AGM on 26 February. The final result for the year that ended on 30 September 2021 was a surplus of just over £13,000, which has helped to bring the BSF's reserves back to a healthier level following a year (2019-20) in which the BSF had no membership income due to the pandemic.

The Executive then spent time going through the proposed budget for the current financial year, 2021-22, which will be signed off by the Executive at its next monthly meeting at the beginning of February and then brought to the AGM for approval. Some parts of the budget are still fluid, but at the end of the discussion, the projection was for a deficit of around £16,000, which would bring reserves down to something over £25,000.

The aim is to have at least 80% of annual fee income in reserve, and based on income in 2020-21, when the number of teams declined due to the pandemic, the current goal for reserves is around £32,000. Before the pandemic took hold, however, BSF reserves were historically higher: between £50,000 and £60,000.

BSF affiliation fees for 2022

In a move designed to continue to restore reserves while allowing the BSF to avoid cutting important spending obligations -- and to cope with rising inflation -- the Executive has decided, as indicated at the 2021 AGM, that fees for 2022 will be raised by £10 per team for teams paying full fees and £5 per team for teams paying one of various concessionary fees.

Such a rise amounts to less than £1 per player per team per year and will raise something approaching an additional £3,000 for the BSF.

Details of fee changes will be set out in the AGM Pack that will be published and distributed at the beginning of February.

Support for Congress attendance

BaseballSoftballUK CEO John Boyd confirmed to the meeting that some support from a UK Sport International Representation grant to baseball and softball would be available to help with the cost of BSF President Ieuan Gale's attendance at the WBSC Europe Extraordinary Congress in Rome last November and the upcoming annual WBSC Europe Congress in Ljubljana, Slovenia, this February.

In addition, some support will be available to help with Ieuan's attendance at the postponed WBSC biennial Congress, now re-scheduled for April in Taipei. While the support from UK Sport is very welcome, the BSF will have to pay a share of the costs, with the exact amount to be determined.

Registration

Once the exact schedule of team affiliation fees for 2022 is determined, based on the decision referenced above to raise fees, BSF Competitions and Membership Officer Liz Graham will start sending registration information and forms to leagues and independent teams.

Other topics

Discussions on succession planning for the BSF, national teams and the GBMC, and on the theoretical possibility of putting someone forward from softball for the New Year Honours List, have been postponed to a future BSF Executive meeting.

Mike Jennings reported to the Executive that there has been no announcement over the holiday period, as expected, about a further meeting of the WBSC Slowpitch Working Group, which will hopefully confirm details for the 2023 WBSC Co-ed Slowpitch World Cup. Mike will speak to WBSC Chief Executive Michael Schmidt about calling such a meeting.

BASU

Technical Officer Pete Saunders told the meeting that work has almost been completed on uploading the new BASU online umpire training course to a platform that provides a wealth of interactive features. The course will be going live very soon.

In future, BASU will look at whether it makes sense to organise online courses on a league basis, as with in-person courses, or whether they could simply be open to individuals on a first-come, first-served basis.

Next meeting

The next BSF Executive videoconference meeting will be held on Thursday 3 February 2022.

Anyone from the BSF Executive or the softball community who wants to bring an item for consideration at the meeting should contact BSF Administrator Bob Fromer (bob.fromer@britishsoftball.org).