

Chairman's Introduction, Annual Report 2016/17

The main focus of the club over the last 12 months has been to build on prior recommendations (Chairman's Introduction, 2015/16) that its legal status and constitution be updated in the light of HMRC rule changes in order that the club may remain commercially viable.

Following legal advice, the Main Committee decided that the club would be best to pursue an application via the Charities Commission to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This decision has occasioned much work and discussion on the way in which the club's ethos and, in particular, how its 'multi-sport' commitment may be maintained within such a legal framework.

After consultations with representatives and members of all sports sections, a draft application was submitted to the club's solicitors in March on behalf of the Main Committee. Detailed discussions and revisions are being incorporated into a final application which will be reviewed and submitted by the duly elected Main Committee 2017/18.

It is important to note that the move to charitable status is much more than just a response to a change in HMRC rules. While the club remains unincorporated its liabilities are shared among its members. As a charity, members' financial liabilities will be much better protected while annual liability insurances will continue to protect members against potential claims from third parties.

Of course, along with such improved protection and favourable access to charitable funding come added responsibilities for those in charge of the club. So the 16-member Main Committee 2016/17 took the step of delegating the day-to-day running of the club to a 7-member Executive Committee from the outset, with roles and responsibilities in line with those recommended for the eventual Board of Trustees of the new charity.

This transitional form of governance has given much greater focus to such key areas as Stakeholder Management, Finance, HR, Fundraising, Marketing, Pavilion Bar and Catering Services and Grounds Services while allowing the club to remain true to its 'Blue Book' constitution.

Particular focus has been given to achieving consensus on the club's main building project, the renovation of the pavilion, for which Planning Application is now imminent. A new NPLSC website has been commissioned to help increase social and sports membership of the club and its sections. A constant process of improvement in HR relations and communications with all staff is underway.

A new relationship is being forged with the club's main stakeholder, NPL itself, and with partners such as Zen Bootcamp, the added income from which will help to expand the club's fitness offering to help recruit new members and increase revenue to help club finances.

I would strongly encourage all members to support the new Main Committee 2017/18 in continuing to build upon all the initiatives above from 2016/17.

Peter Taylor

Chairman, 2016/17