

Softball Ireland AGM

17 November 2018 / 12.00-2.00pm / ALSAA

Board Attendees

Colum Lavery (President - CL), Olwyn Barrett (Treasurer - OB), Conor Sayles (Secretary - CS), Erin Brown (ind. - EB), Melanie Lavery (FP - ML), Jay Slevin (SU - JA)

Apologies

Jonathan Spielberg (SL - JS), Galway Softball Club

Notes

- **Opening**
 - CS confirmed that a quorum of members was present (50% of fully paid up teams). CL noted adoption of the standing orders.
 - CL asked for comment on the 2017 minutes, none received. Adrian Foster proposed the minutes and Massimo Lepri seconded.
- **President's report**
 - CL noted that the Presidents report was circulated in advance of the meeting and opened the floor to questions. None received.
 - CL offered further congratulations to Dodder Dynamoes and Belfast Sliders as the Leinster and Ulster league winners respectively. He also congratulated TNT, Dodder, Maarten Blanken and Massimo Lepri for their participation in the slowpitch, club Euros. Finally CL noted the medal winning success of the U19 and U22 Women's fastpitch teams at the 2018 European Championships.
- **Baseball Softball Merger**
 - CL briefly summarised the history of IBSA/IBSF, and recent discussions on the merger to enable Sport Ireland membership. He outlined the board structure - the executive officers (i.e. president, treasurer & secretary) from SI and BI plus an independent chair with a casting vote.
 - Ruth Brady asked about child protection. CL and ML confirmed that BI have Garda vetting for Little League. ML and Grace Kearney are similarly Garda vetted for fastpitch. CL confirmed that SI will liaise with BI to ensure that appropriate policies are in place when SI launches its underage programmes. CL noted that slowpitch clubs with underage players were required to have a Child Protection Officer and to comply with the SI Age Grade Policy.
 - Ruth Brady queried how conflicts around Sport Ireland funding would be handled with BI. CL explained that applications must be project specific e.g. build a softball diamond or upgrade a baseball facility. He also noted that the

purpose of the independent chair on the board would be to resolve such potential disputes.

- CL noted the importance of progressing plans for a centralized venue for slowpitch softball, given the FAI decision to move kids' soccer to the summer months from 2020.
- CL noted that he registered SI for tax purposes.
- Ruth Brady asked if the AGM needs to approve the merger with BI, CL confirmed that the merger was previously proposed and merged at an AGM, it is included in our constitution.
- **President's report (cont.)**
 - Paddy Donnelly asked if SI would consider buying all equipment centrally, CL confirmed this to be an option to reduce costs (VAT).
 - Ken McCarthy asked if the current Board structure has the capacity required to cover such equipment purchase (as an example). CL agreed that the SI Board is under resourced and volunteers were required. CL pointed to the appointment of Julie Walsh who successfully ran the Indoor Softball as an example of the intended approach. He noted that more volunteers are required such as the unfilled SI Competitions Officer role, which was advertised recently.
 - CL outlined the approach to delegate individual tasks to volunteers. Not all about joining the board, but what you can do to help. He noted that the SL board is short members.
 - Massimo Lepri highlighted membership concerns around communications to the SI Board. He also suggested that the BI merger MOU be shared. CL confirmed that it would be circulated to team contacts after it is signed, but it wouldn't be appropriate to place on the SI website.
 - CL noted that SI considered hosting the 2019 co-ed slowpitch Euros, but that the prohibitive cost outweighed the promotional possibilities. Now likely that the competition will be held in Hungary or Germany. Brian Connolly noted that BI attracted 500+ spectators every day and 1000+ on one day. SI will consider possibility of hosting in 2021.
 - CL noted that JS, the head coach of the men's national slowpitch team, has been added to the coaching staff for the coed team. He also confirmed there would be coed slowpitch national team trials in 2019. Finally CL noted that a "proper" World Cup was in development and that European qualifiers would be the top 3 finishers in next year's Euros.
 - CL and ML noted that the BSUK coaching programme would be rolled out from mid-Jan. All clubs will be required in future to have a Level 1 coach, Leinster Prem & Ulster teams will be required to have a Level 2 coach and national team coaches must be at Level 3. Roll out will take 3-4 years. Potential to get into schools programmes will follow.
 - CL outlined the Olympic qualification process for the fastpitch national team, and noted that the U19 will compete in the 2019 World Cup as a result of their

medal finish at the Euros. ML hopes to base the team in Ireland in advance and to engage with schools to promote interest. CL noted the Olympic Council very strict requirements on selection policy - proven & evidenced to be the best Irish qualified players available.

- **2019 priorities**

- Ruth Brady asked how the fastpitch efforts sit alongside the stated goal to prioritise slowpitch. CL explained that fastpitch is ML's role similar to the regions for slowpitch, and that his contribution to fastpitch is as husband/supporter, not as SI President.
- CL noted that SI is 30 years established in 2019 and that he plans to celebrate the anniversary, including setting up a hall of fame and tracking national team caps.
- Massimo Lepri asked about a "grand slam" club. CL responded that once again something of that nature would require volunteers.
- USA women's team coach will visit next year for the Brian Walshe Cup (start of season) weekend. There will be a Friday night event, Saturday events at the tournament and Sunday with the national squad.
- Ruth Brady asked about how it will be made real. CL explained that KPIs will be agreed for each of the priorities circulated in advance of the AGM, and RAG status will be recorded monthly. The board will hold themselves accountable and report on progress at the next AGM. Ruth suggested in response that volunteers could then be sought to take on individual tasks.
- CL and ML noted that communication is a two way street. Massimo Lepri complimented the comprehensive AGM pack, but made clear that the momentum needed to be maintained.
- Massimo Lepri asked about adding a priority around umpire development. Muireann O'Farrell raised concern about requiring Leinster Div 2 teams to have umpires. CS noted this would be a regional decision for SL to pick up on before the new season, CL was simply stating the SI position.
- Jordan Sylver asked about the intervarsities. CL pointed to players in a number of colleges, focus on restarting a structured competition and direct engagement with colleges.
- Jordan Sylver complimented the recent open day, and asked about whether more were on the way. CL responded that SI hope to run an indoor open day in the new year plus an event in Galway.

- **Finances**

- CL recognised the contribution of OB as treasurer over the last 4 years.
- OB circulated updated accounts at the meeting, she took the attendees through the key points and notes.
- OB explained that €1800 is available for next year's IOST following UL dates issue this year and a refund of the ground hire cost. Paddy Donnelly asked

about the 2017 figures compared to 2018, OB acknowledged the point but decided not to restate last years accounts.

- Massimo Lepri proposed the accounts and Adrian Forster seconded (subject to auditors).
- The 2019 budget was circulated at the meeting. CL pointed to the marketing budget and the website improvements.
- CL also explained the team fee approach for 2019. He noted the “development investment from reserve” balancing figure. He finally noted the merger costs contingency and budget for the additional open days. ML expressed hope that sponsorship will enable refund of the fastpitch grant.

- **Election of SI Board**

- No objection to the nomination of Conor Sayles to a two-year term secretary.
- No nominations have been received for treasurer, even after the additional time allowed. No nominations were received at the meeting. SI will advertise the role again.
- The regional representatives, JS, JA and ML, were ratified. EB was ratified as the independent board member.
- CL noted that EB is leading a good governance group. Massimo Lepri asked what level and CL confirmed A level is the goal.

- **Constitutional Amendments**

- 6 amendments were proposed by the SL committee as set out as **APPENDIX TWO**. #1 was merged into #2 following feedback from the SI Board.
- #2 was passed unanimously with one abstention. #3 and #4 were both passed unanimously.
- Some discussion was had on #5. It was unanimously agreed to amend the wording to “ratified at SI meeting” and the amended version was passed unanimously.
- CL noted that #6 was not constitutional, but that as previously communicated that an IOST committee is already in place for 2019.
- After detailed consideration, the constitutional amendments as set out in **APPENDIX THREE** were approved.
- The AGM noted that in additions to the previously circulated amendments, Revenue will require SI to make amendments in order to avail of the tax exemption, the AGM **AGREED** to approve any such amendments as obligated by the Revenue Commissioner.

- **AOB**

- Jordan Sylver asked about progress with the proposed development working group. CL explained that SI are still waiting on nominations from SL to partake. SU have confirmed there nominations, and an external volunteer Katie Sadlier

has agreed to facilitate. The working group role is to develop a plan and hold SI accountable for implementation.

Colum Lavery
President

November 17, 2018

Action Items for SI Board

1. Review child protection policy in light of merger with Baseball Ireland.
2. Circulate SI-BI merger MOU to team contacts after it is signed.
3. Provide details of 2019 coed slowpitch national team trials.
4. Roll out BSUK coaching programme in January 2019.
5. Celebrate SI 30 year anniversary, including hall of fame and national team caps.
6. Agree on KPIs for each priority, report RAG monthly to membership.
7. Indoor open day in Dublin and open day in Galway.
8. Update constitution on SI website following amendments agreed.
9. Advertise the vacant SI Treasurer position again.
10. Setup a development working group and implement agreed plan.