



**Minutes of the Ad Hoc Committee on Governance, Organisation and League Development
The GOLD Committee held online on 24th August 2020 at 6:30 pm**

Members

1. Norman McDonald - President
2. Martin Armstrong - Vice-Chairman
3. Neill Johnstone – Club Representatives Committee member
4. Sean Smith – Chairman, Referees Committee
5. Ian Andrews - Secretary
6. Bart O’Toole – Chairman, Rules Revision Committee

1. **Persons Present** – all Committee members, no apologies.

BOT apologised for mistakenly circulating EC Members observations on Saturday 22 August to IA intended for members of two teams IA was proposed to serve on including elements of criticism. IA had read the observations and submitted his resignation to the Chairman that afternoon with effect from 30 September. BOT offered to resign from the Committee but was willing to continue. Committee members noted the error, accepted the apology and indicated he should continue serving.

2. **Reasons for and principles of the Committee; transparency; confidentiality**

BOT said the original reason for the Committee being formed was to address uncertainty on the Roles of League Officers, Committee Chairmen and Executive Committee members. It had arisen because EC members and Committee members were busy, uncertain of their responsibilities, and/or content to leave matters to the Secretary to sweep up league administration, rather the undertaking the work themselves, and the Secretary had been willing to take on tasks where officers did not appear to be acting. The Secretary was undertaking far more work for the League than when he began in Office, often working under pressure, receiving hundreds of emails demanding replies, some simple requests for information, some inquiries about policies, procedures and decisions and some challenging his judgement. Occasionally communications within the League betrayed signs of stress, and some responses were equally stressed. Some decisions were not being widely circulated.

Within the Executive Committee there had been unhappiness, which should not be present amongst EC members giving time voluntarily for the league and the enjoyment of our football, players, club members and league participants. It was necessary to review the Terms of Reference of Committees, Job Definitions and Officers including the Secretary, and the Secretary’s contract. We need better, more sympathetic communication. Initial inquiries had led to wider concerns encompassing the Strategy and Direction of the League, the Structure of the Executive and a Succession Plan, plus other discreet areas including conflicts of interest, relationships with the AFA and other AFA-affiliated Leagues.

The Executive Committee had approved draft terms of Reference for the Ad Hoc Committee at its meeting on 19 August to Review AFC Operations, Organisation and Development/ Planning by 31.12.20, identifying 8 separate areas for discussion.

BOT had circulated files on subject areas to team members for each topic. An allocation of work was suggested for Committee members serving on teams of 3 on each of the 8 topics, the first named person in each case leading that team.

The principle of confidentiality was discussed. Reports and files circulated within the committee are not to be circulated outside of the Committee. Minutes of the Committee will be made available to the Executive. It was suggested that transparency is needed of decision-making on the league, which can be reflected in the communication protocols.

3. Committee members' Views

Each member of the Committee expressed individual views on the reason for the Committee's existence. There was general agreement that better communications and strategies were needed. Reference was made to the many different roles now exercised by the Secretary and the potential for splitting some of the roles. Comparisons were drawn with the Southern Amateur Football League. Concern was expressed that we might not be able to complete this exercise by 31st December, which has been suggested. On the other hand the aim should be to state the main principles and protocols, setting out any necessary detail as appendices.

4. Committee Name

It was agreed that the Committee would be known as the Ad Hoc Committee on Governance, Organisation and League Development, or the '**GOLD Committee**', an acronym SS suggested.

5. Terms of Reference

To Review AFC Operations, Organisation and Development/Planning by 31.12.20 for Recommendation and Approval by the Executive Committee.

6. Subject areas for review by teams within the Committee

No	Topic	Team responsible
1	Terms of Reference of League Committees'	Sean, Norman and Martin
2	Job Definitions of Officers	Sean, Norman and Martin
3	Roles and Responsibilities of EC Members'	Norman, Sean and Bart
4	Secretary: Contract and Role/Job Definition	Neil, Bart and Ian
5	Communications with League participants and within the EC: Zoom, face to face meetings, emails, minutes	Bart, Martin and Ian
6	Conflicts of interest, relationship with AFA & Leagues	Bart, Sean and Neill
7	Strategic Plan, Executive Structure	Martin, Neill and Bart
8	Succession Plan	Neill, Martin and Norman

7. Action plan

- (1) Teams of three, led by the first person named in the list, to meet over next 5 weeks – 28 September and prepare interim written reports for a meeting on that date, on the basis:
 - a. 'less is more'
 - b. aim for not more than 2 sides
 - c. deal with main principles of the topic area, rather than excessive detail
 - d. liaise with EC members as they see fit
 - e. set out a plan for drafting full documents for each group
- (2) Interim reports to be debated in a longer meeting on 28 September
- (3) Sub-groups then to meet over a further 6 weeks, then return with final reports and draft documents, structural changes, protocols, terms of reference, job definitions for each of our areas – to be circulated by 9 November
- (4) Full committee to meet around 16 November to discuss the proposed changes
- (5) Sub-group team leaders to make final adjustments within 2 weeks and circulate proposals to Gold Committee members by 30 November
- (6) Each member to vote to approve or oppose final reports, with any provisos, ideally, we will all feel able to agree to support all final reports.
- (7) There will be variations on this timetable for two of the teams:
 - a. The Team reviewing the Secretary's contract will need to close matters earlier in view of IA's intention to leave office by 30 September, and will need to liaise with the Charman and the Executive Committee
 - b. The Team on the Strategic Plan will embark on its exercise but, having regard to the discussion at the EC meeting on 19 August, will decide whether it needs longer to conclude the exercise.
- (8) Publish final reports and votes to the EC by 7 December
- (9) EC to consider final proposals at its next following meeting after 7 December
- (10) During January – February put in place further arrangements for the AGM 2021:
 - a. Committee for Strategic Plan, if needed
 - b. Revised Committee structure and Executive Committee for the EC if desired
 - c. Succession plan
 - d. Rule changes

8. Date of next online meeting

For interim reports – 28 September 2020.

9. AOB

- (1) It was agreed that additional members for the Gold committee were not needed at this stage, but the 8 teams were free to consult more widely with EC members. The position will be reviewed at the meeting on 28 September.
- (2) It was agreed that the Committee should review how to release its proposals to EC members and when at some point after issuing this minute.