

Amateur Football Combination
DRAFT Spirit of Football Committee

Minutes of 'clubs' meetings held on 10th and 13th September 2018

10th September – Civil Service Club

1. Present

M Sainsbury (MS) (Chairman), M Armstrong (MA), D Goldman (DG)

2. Apologies for absence

J. Whitmarsh (JW), R Gibbs (RG),

3. Old Tenisonians

- 3.1 Old Tenisonians had been asked to attend the meeting because of the record of their 3rd XI who had finished bottom of the Spirit of Football table in 2017-18 with an average mark of mark of 6.71. The club were represented by Riley Krause (RK), who had played for the 3rd XI last year and will manage the side this year.
- 3.2 RK admitted that the side had problems last year. He felt that the low marks were mainly down to 2 players 'Bez' and his cousin. 'Bez' had captained the side until mid-season when the captaincy was taken off of him. RK said that 'Bez' used to wind-up the opposition and was over aggressive at times. He admitted that this set a bad example to other players.
- 3.3 MA noted that the markings indicated poor behavior in a number of matches during the season. He had played against Old Tenisonians 3rds twice last season and felt that in the first match it was more than just 2 players who showed the wrong attitude. Whilst RK's attitude was exemplary a number of players seem to follow the example of the then captain in being over-aggressive and provoking the opposition. He felt that it was only the restraint of his side that stopped the situation getting totally out of control.
- 3.4 MS asked what action Old Tenisonians were taking to improve Spirit of Football this season. RK said that as far as he was aware 'Bez' and his cousin had left the club and would not be playing this season. He added that he would be managing the side and would take quick action to deal with players he felt were not showing respect to the opposition or referees. Apart from that the committee felt that he did not really offer any other specific examples of action being taken to improve the clubs Spirit of Football marking.
- 3.5 The committee offered RK their best wishes for the season. They confirmed that they would be closely monitoring Old Tenisonians markings and any comments made for signs of improvement.

4. John Fisher Old Boys

- 4.1 John Fisher Old Boys had been asked to attend the meeting because of the record of their 1st XI who had finished third bottom of the Spirit of Football table in 2017-18 with an average mark of mark of 6.82. They had fallen rapidly down the table in the 2nd part of the season.
- 4.2 The club were represented by Tom Holmwood (TH), Fixtures Secretary and Jimmy Creasey (JC), 1st team Manager. Both representatives explained that they had been involved with the club for over 10 years.
- 4.3 TH acknowledged that the side had fallen below the standards that the league required for Spirit of Football last season. He said that the sides poor markings were principally down to the style of leadership and example set by the previous first team manager who had now left the club. This poor attitude fed through to what the players did on the field. TH said that in retrospect the clubs committee should have asked the manager to leave in the spring after he had advised them that he would not be continuing in 2018-19. He regretted letting the manager stay on to the end of the season as this had impacted on the reputation of the club.
- 4.4 MS asked what action the club had taken to ensure that Spirit of Football improved in 2018-19. TH said that as well as the previous manager leaving several players who had joined the club with him and did not have had the right attitude for AFC football had gone too. JC said that as first team manager he would rather play with 10 men and take a player off the field if that 11th players main interest was to antagonize the opposition or show dissent to the referee. TH said that players had been a copy of the letter which called the club to an interview and had been made aware that Spirit of Football must improve. There had been no problems with pre-season matches. TH said that the committee were prepared to act if it looked like the same kind of problems would develop as happened last year.
- 4.5 The committee felt that the club seemed to have put genuine plans in place for improving Spirit of Football this season. They offered their best wishes for the season but advised that they would be closely monitoring John Fisher Old Boys markings for confirmation of improvement.

5. Globe Rangers

- 5.1 Globe Rangers had been asked to attend the meeting because they been in the bottom 10 of the Spirit of Football table all season and finished with an average mark of mark of 7.00. The club were represented by Ged Walker, Secretary. Ben Kotey, club captain had been due to attend but had to drop out at the last minute because of an urgent work issue. An e: mail describing the nature of that situation had been shared with the committee.
- 5.2 GW outlined what he thought Spirit of Football meant and how he marked other clubs. The committee were in broad agreement with his interpretation.
- 5.3 MS asked GW why he thought marks had declined last season. GW did not have a clear reason. He said that most Globe's players came from different, often more difficult, backgrounds to many AFC clubs and had played in leagues that often did not have the same standards as the AFC. Despite the best efforts of himself and club officials to improve the situation, some of these players had found it difficult to adapt to the Respect levels expected in the AFC. DG observed that one of the good things about the AFC was players came from a wide variety of backgrounds but football presented a common purpose to get together and this should be taken.

- 5.4 GW remarked that he couldn't understand why Globe seemed to be marked down on Organisation, Facilities and Hospitality when in his view they had some of the best facilities in the league and always provided a meal on-site. The meeting didn't have access to Globe's other markings but MA observed, from a personal point of view, some clubs may mark down other scores such as hospitality if they had a poor on-the-field experience. He was clear however that this would not work the other way.
- 5.5 MS asked what new actions Globe had taken to improve Spirit of Football this season, GW showed the committee 6 pictures of Respect posters that Globe had put up in changing rooms, dug-outs and common areas at the club. He also showed the committee an e: mail from Ben Kotey outlining proposed measures the club would take to suspend, fine and/or ban players if they were sin-binned for dissent or involved in other unsavoury incidents. (GW later confirmed that these guidelines had been sent to players via the club's WhatsApp group).
- 5.6 The committee felt that the club seemed to have taken some action to improve Spirit of Football this season. They offered their best wishes for the season but advised that they would be closely monitoring Globe Rangers' markings for signs of improvement.

13th September – Dorkinians Club House

6. Mickleham Old Boxhillians

- 6.1 Mickleham Old Boxhillians had been asked to attend the meeting because of the record of their 1st XI who had finished second bottom of the Spirit of Football table in 2017-18 with an average mark of mark of 6.76. Because the club said they could not send relevant people to the meeting on 10th September because of domestic commitments the committee agreed to exceptionally to arrange a local meeting. Mike Sainsbury (MS) and James Whitmarsh (JW) were in attendance. Mickleham Old Boxhillians were represented by Jamie Upfold (JU), Secretary; James Rooke (JR), 1st Team Captain and Matt Baker (MB), 2nd Team Captain. MB thanked the committee for arranging the additional meeting.
- 6.2 MS explained that the club had been invited to the meeting because of their record over the previous season. He had noted however in their 1st match this season on the previous Saturday, they had been given a Spirit of Football mark of 5 by the referee who had also sent one of their players to the sin-bin. In his report the referee noted a general lack of respect from Mickleham players to their opponents and the referee; sarcastic comments behind his back and an undercurrent of complaining about decisions. He reported that a number of Mickleham players were responsible for this. MS also referred to a low marks report given by another experienced referee last season where similar comments were made about constant moaning and challenging of decisions, dissent behind the referees back and being told by the captain (JR) that he was patronizing him when he requested assistance from him to control Mickleham players. MS said that whilst this meeting was not about reviewing individual matches and incidents it was disappointing that there was evidence of a poor start to the season when the club already knew that they were under notice for poor Spirit of Football Marks.
- 6.3 JR replied that, with regard to Saturday's match, his side had got frustrated with the referee because of a mistake he had made and then felt that the referee was not giving them any decisions. He was personally frustrated because the referee was not letting him speak to him

as captain. He also noted that he also substituted a couple of players who he knew were getting out of control.

- 6.3 MS asked why Spirit of Football marks had declined over the past couple of years. JU felt that this was down to having 2 players in the team, Conor Bates and Ahmed Farook, who were very difficult to control. He said that both of these players constantly challenged decisions, wound up the opposition and were responsible for most of the cautions the club had got for dissent. Conor Bates suffered from severe ADHD which made it very difficult to control his own behavior. The club had put a lot of effort into trying to curb the actions of these players on the field and Bates had gone 8 games without being cautioned last season which he felt was an improvement but he admitted that the problem was still there. JW noted that their behavior was very frustrating as he knew both players and off-the-field the behavior of Ahmed, in particular, seemed fine.
- 6.4 In further discussion, JU said that the club committee were regularly reviewing whether Bates and Farook should continue to play for the club, especially as they had been turned away from other clubs in the area, but he felt that it would be unfair to prevent people who loved playing football having the opportunity to play. He also added that unlike neighbouring clubs such as Dorkinians, Mickleham also had less opportunity to turn players away if they wanted to maintain 2 sides. The club had considered whether they should ask these 2 players to leave and possibly move down to one side but were going to see how this went. In the meantime, they had introduced suspensions for dissent cautions, were putting together a code of conduct and would continue to remind players of the need for appropriate behaviour on the field. JR confirmed that the club knew they were being closely monitored and admitted that the behaviour of certain players was having an impact on the club's reputation.
- 6.5 JU asked the committee if there was anything else the club could be doing to improve Spirit of Football. JW suggested that there should be no problem with JU or MR informally talking to referees and opposing captains after the games in hospitality venues to see if they thought there were any problems. MS agreed that he would let JU know if the club received any poor markings or low mark reports.
- 6.6 MS confirmed that the league would be closely monitoring the side's Spirit of Football as a whole this season and expected the club to take action if there was no improvement. He hoped that there would not be any need for any follow-up meetings.

7. Notes for the record

- 7.1 In addition to those called to meetings the following clubs were written to in the summer and advised that although they would not be invited to a meeting an improvement their Spirit of Football markings was expected.

Enfield Old Grammarians re. 1st XI
Old Parmiterians re 5th XI and 2nd XI
Old Minchendenians re 1st XI.

- 7.2 These clubs will be asked to attend a Spirit of Football committee meeting to advise what action they will be taking to improve if the markings of these sides do not improve.