

A word from the Chair

Hello and welcome to the Durham County Hockey Association's Annual General Meeting and for those who don't know me I'm the Chair Mike Trubshaw.

Before going through the main items on the agenda, I would like to say a few words. The County continues to function in the support of hockey clubs within Durham particularly the provision of high quality junior hockey. But we are also here to help clubs increase participation.

Clubs continue to participate throughout the England Hockey leagues with varying successes. However we continue to lose clubs and clubs are reducing the number of teams. An area that we need to address.

I would like to thank all those involved in the running of Durham County Hockey Association in particular the coaches, umpires and organisers of the County juniors, which continues to produce some very good players.

Junior Hockey/schools - Junior hockey continues to thrive throughout the County with varying degrees of success. I think most clubs now have a junior section. It maybe that we as a County need to consider assisting in providing a more linked up approach possibly with the provision of a juniors County cup.

A cause of concern for all clubs has been England Hockeys membership increase. Whilst I understand the need for contributions to ensure the continuation of the provision of club and international hockey will it also result in more clubs going to the wall? I'm not convinced what exactly those Associations in the outer reaches get from it - apart from priority access to international tickets for games in the south. Would it possible for some international games to be played further north? As was proven with the European games at Maiden Castle.

Umpires is an area of concern for most clubs. There needs to be greater encouragement to get more involved at the same time the challenging of player behaviour which may contribute to the reluctance to umpire.

As some of you may be aware we lost John Sale towards the end of 2025. He was a member of Norton Hockey Club and former President of Durham County Hockey Association. John was a well known personality in North East hockey. More so in later years his contribution to umpiring. I personally knew John for a number of decades he was always around for a friendly chat or to offer an opinion. But people may not be aware that John was also a very competent player being a member of the County Championship winning side of 1964

Finally good luck to all clubs this season and hopefully we will continue to see you all in the future.