

Club Review

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Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Hosted by R.A.O.B. H.Q., Belfast
on Saturday 11th March 2017

The Chairman, John Davidson, opened the meeting by welcoming the visiting delegates representing clubs from throughout the province. Following this, he requested those present to stand and observe a minute's silence in respect of past members.

Continuing, the Chairman paid tribute to the Federation's late Secretary, Bob McGlone, who passed away in 2016 following declining health.

At this point the Treasurer, David Larmour, provided a financial report which was proposed and seconded by Brian McCartney and Jim Crossan, as a true record of the Federation accounts.

A question on advertising was raised by the delegate representing Bready Cricket Club. This was referred to North West delegate Gerry Gallagher, who has been actively engaged in liaising with the manner in which advertising has been addressed by a PSNI officer in the area. The said club delegate had telephoned the Federation Secretary the day prior to the AGM, at which time he was advised that he could advertise, albeit under certain rules.

BSkyB and BT Sport came in for interesting comment. Federation Executive Committee member, Tom McMinn, provided information that he had been provided

with by BT Sport, which was interesting in that they seem to be offering special rates. The Secretary confirmed however, that BT Sport should not be considered as being like for like with BSkyB. He continued to explain that the current news related to a takeover of BSkyB, may provide a pay-for-view arrangement which could well provide better opportunities to save on current tariffs.

The Chairman explained the entertainment license requirements, and how they have been put on hold, despite the fact that all those on the consultation panel, including the Federation, endorsed the implementation of a more streamlined system.

Another question was raised by Bready Cricket Club, as to whether there was a set number of times Council Officers can visit a club. The Chairman explained that we have an excellent association with Belfast City Council. However, given that this question was raised by a delegate in the North West, Gerry Gallagher will provide guidance.

A club rule book was covered in respect to the ability of a club to bar a member for life! The Chairman confirmed that this is not possible without going through proper procedures. If a member re-applies, the committee can say yes or no

continued on page 4



Representatives from Derriaghy Cricket Club, City Hibs, and St Malachy's Old Boys, pictured with Federation Chairman, John Davidson (centre), and Assistant Chairman, Tommy McMinn (left).

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Federation Update



Above: Federation accountant, Lawrence Shearer, with visiting delegates from the West Belfast Sports & Social Club.

Left: Delegates from Ewart's Bowling Club.

at that stage. What a member or committee can or cannot do, is governed by the club constitution/rule book.

It was agreed that we will investigate the rules pertaining to a Royal British Legion Club. This is an area which is rather more complex. We will investigate this on behalf of Royal British Legion Clubs in Northern Ireland, which seem to be having some difficulties against similar clubs in mainland UK.

A PRS and PPL joint license was discussed, with the Secretary, Harry Beckinsale, explaining the potential benefit of this in relation to not-for-profit amateur sports clubs, a category which many clubs in the province fall into.

It was explained that the PPL for many clubs will have already been paid by the company

installing their background music system/juke box.

Trustees of a club is a matter of regular discussion. The Chairman covered in some detail the requirement of this aspect of a club, and the importance of them being indemnified by the management committee. Fred Brady, of the Ulster Maple Leaf Club, confirmed that their club policy does provide cover for their trustees.

The issue of Auto-Enrol pensions was addressed by the Federation accountant, Lawrence Shearer, of O'Hara Shearer, Chartered Accountants. A question was raised by a club which, via their accountant, had signed to the 'NEXT' government scheme. However, Lawrence explained that the system provided through Rollin Insurance representative Gordon Scott,

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provides a comprehensive service for clubs, ensuring they are fully compliant with government rules.

Executive Committee member, Joe Patterson, provided an overview of employment issues, including the importance of utilising the benefits of the cover provided under a club insurance policy. Continuing, he advised that clubs check that their club policy provides such cover. Joe, an experienced former union official and employment tribunal member, further advised that following proper procedures is of the utmost importance in addressing issues.

The Secretary provided an overview of the service provided by MJ Utilities in ascertaining the most cost-effective energy tariff for our member clubs. As an independent, not representing any particular

supplier, they can provide the most cost-effective tariff from the range of suppliers available. Moreover, it was explained that they can sign a club to a tariff, even if their renewal is not due for some months ahead, always providing it is beneficial to do so.

The support of the charity sector was endorsed, with thanks to the club sector for the support of local charities, its importance, and appreciation by all charities for that support.

The Cancer Fund for Children, Cancer Focus, Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, Action Cancer, Clic Sargent, N.I. Chest Heart and Stroke, and other good causes were mentioned as those which we assist where and when possible, through the distribution of information/press releases, but also importantly, the financial support provided



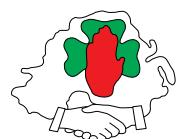
Hugh Stockman, West Belfast HPS, with the Federation's Joe Patterson.

by clubs which regularly host fundraising events.

In conclusion, suppliers who support the Federation were thanked, with a request that where and when possible, members should avail of the services they provide. As a voluntary body, the support provided by these companies is vital, and allows us to maintain membership fees at the same level since inception of the Federation.

This concluded the 2017 AGM. The Chairman thanked the RAOB HQ Club for making their facilities available, and invited club delegates to enjoy the hospitality available.

Harry Beckinsale
Secretary
N.I. Federation of Clubs



Above: Delegates from the Meadowbank Social Club.

Left: John Davidson with the representative from Portadown Royal British Legion Club.



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Introduction of the new £1 coin

A new £1 coin is being introduced this month and it is important for clubs to be aware of the implications for their existing coin-operated equipment and staff training.

The Royal Mint are claiming that the new £1 coin will be the most secure in the world and it is being introduced because the current coin is vulnerable to counterfeiting; it is estimated that one in thirty £1 coins in circulation today is a counterfeit.

The new £1 coin will have a number of new features:

1. An instantly recognisable distinctive 12 sided shape
2. Bi-metallic like the £2 coin
3. An image like a hologram that changes from a £ symbol to

the number 1 when seen from different angles

4. Micro lettering on the lower inside rim on both sides of the coin
5. Milled edges creating grooves on alternative sides
6. A hidden high security feature to protect it from counterfeiting in the future

The coin will be introduced into circulation at the end of March 2017 and will be in co-circulation with the existing £1 coin until October 2017. At this point the old coin will cease to be legal tender.

The new £1 coin presents a challenge to the gaming and amusement machine industry because it is the primary machine coin. It will require

the upgrading of coin acceptors in all types of equipment, including those in pool tables, quiz machines, juke boxes, cranes and gaming machines.

It is a mammoth task to upgrade all these coin mechanisms, but a crucial one - if machines cannot accept the new coins it will reduce machine income and be a direct hit to the club's income.

Machine operators should be well prepared for this task so if your equipment hasn't been upgraded by April you should contact your supplier.

Introduction of New Polymer Bank Notes

New bank notes are being introduced by the Bank of England. They will have new



designs, printed on polymer, a thin and flexible plastic material which will be cleaner, more secure and more durable than paper notes. The new £5 note has already entered circulation; the £10 will be introduced in Autumn 2017 and the £20 note by 2020. Staff should be extra vigilant for forgeries of existing Bank of England notes, as criminals will try to pass off their 'stock' before the notes they resemble cease to be legal tender (the old £5 note ceases to be legal tender on 5th May 2017).

Further information on bank note security checks can be found at: www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes/Pages/educational

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Do you need an engineering inspection contract?

Some clubs may be unaware of their legal duty to periodically inspect equipment. This will leave you open to regulatory action and even criminal prosecution if something goes wrong.

It is surprising the amount of equipment which can be found in sports and social clubs. But do you know which of these require a regulatory inspection?

Health and safety law requires you to have reasonably practicable inspection and maintenance of certain pieces of equipment. Failure to comply with these laws can attract large fines, and the most serious cases of negligence can lead to imprisonment. Clubs therefore

need to be aware of their duties regarding inspections, and ensure that they have taken appropriate action.

What type of equipment requires inspection?

A critical area of health and safety management is the examination of plant and equipment to comply with various legislation. Equipment found within clubs may require statutory inspections to comply with:

PSSR - Pressure Systems Safety Regulations

LOLER - Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations

EAWR - Electricity at Work Regulations

PUWER - Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations

Typical types of equipment that may be found in a club which require a statutory inspection include:

- Hot water heating/supply systems.
- Passenger/goods lifts.
- General electrical/mechanical plant e.g.: motors, pumps.
- Electrical installations e.g.: fixed wiring
 - in addition to its statutory requirement there may also be an insurance condition which must be adhered to.

The periodicity of the inspection will be dependent on the item of equipment and the legislation that applies to it.



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According to reports filed by engineers, air conditioning is also something that many people overlook. Infrequent inspections can, in extreme cases, lead to serious corrosion and a potential explosion, and depending on the size of the pressure unit, the Pressure Systems Safety Regulation (PSSR) may stipulate how regularly inspections need to be conducted.

Evidence of compliance with health and safety law is very important if customers are to avoid interventions from the regulator. An engineering inspection contract helps demonstrate compliance, independence and impartiality, as well as giving customers an opportunity to identify defects early, before they cause damage or harm.

Defending a claim/prosecution
Even with the most rigorous

inspection and maintenance regimes, accidents can happen. Should someone be injured or lose their life, this may result in a personal injury claim and/or criminal prosecution against the organisation and its directors personally. The Corporate Manslaughter law has also gathered momentum since it came into force in 2008.

With the Crown Prosecution Service bringing new cases to trial each year, it is more important than ever that organisations ensure their health and safety risks are properly managed.

New changes to sentencing and fines are sufficiently substantial to have real economic impact and should bring home to all clubs the need to comply with Health and Safety legislation.

Employ the three 'best practice' social media rules in your club

Useful, good quality content, targeted followers, and relationship-building, are all part of good social media practice. Social media is one of the most powerful marketing tools available to businesses today. And the best part about it? Most of the platforms are free to use, meaning you can spread the word about your club without paying a penny. There's just one problem. If you don't know how to make the most of these online resources, you could be wasting precious time and effort: over promoting your offering can drive followers away, and avoiding questions and/or complaints from members can ruin your reputation.

So what can you do? Here are three tips to help you make the most of social media:

1. The 80/20 rule - With social media, your focus should be on creating and sharing quality content. But not all of the content you share should be yours. Too often, companies only post things about their business, which can be off-putting. To avoid overselling your club, you should follow a strategy called the 80/20 rule, which dictates that 80% of your content should be non-promotional, such as info graphics, videos, pictures and articles that relate to your sector, but are not overtly sales. The other 20%

of the time, you can toot your own horn and promote things specifically about your club.

2. Location - To get the most out of social media, you need to focus on building a list of targeted followers. If you focus on quality rather than the quantity of your followers, you'll grow a more relevant audience.

Targeting by location is a good start. To find targeted users on Twitter, you can use the Advanced Search feature to filter out posts based on location, and on Facebook, you can also post ads filtered by location.



3. Focus on relationships -

In addition to following the 80/20 rule, clubs should be careful to focus on the "social" aspect and build relationships with users. With the shotgun approach of traditional marketing, you want as many people to see your club ad or flyer as possible, but social media is a much more personalised and participatory marketing channel.

It gives you the ability to engage directly with members and potential members. Bear this in mind, and you'll be inundated with fans!

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Questions & Answers

Q. At the recent AGM the members elected to amend the rules to increase the subscription fee. The Treasurer thinks it will come into force on the 1st January 2017, but the Chairman thinks it needs to go to the next AGM in March 2017 to confirm the amendment. Who is correct?

A. I confirm that your Treasurer is correct. It is not a



requirement for a minute of a meeting to be confirmed at a subsequent meeting in order for an agreed resolution or motion to come into effect. We are asked this question fairly frequently and I think it must be one of those myths which have been established over the years.

Once a decision has been made at a meeting it may be brought into effect immediately, unless of course, the meeting has agreed for action to be taken from a specified date. In the case of your query it has been agreed that subscriptions for next year increase and therefore on 1st January 2017 the subscriptions shall increase.

Q. Could you let us know if we have to release our CCTV

footage if a member requests it? Also, how long should we retain such footage for?

A. A person has the right to request CCTV footage of themselves. If requested, the club must provide it to the person in question within 40 days and can charge up to £10 for doing so. The person must make a request in writing for the CCTV footage and provide the club with a specific date and time along with proof of their identity.

The footage can be edited to protect the identities of other persons in the footage. If the club's CCTV system does not permit copies of footage to be made then the club can comply with this requirement by inviting the person to the club to view the footage in person. You can refuse this request if sharing the footage would place a criminal investigation at risk. If this is a possibility, the Police will be able to advise further regarding this point.

Commonly, CCTV systems do retain footage for 31 days and the Police also recommend this timeframe. However, it is ultimately up to the committee how long you store the CCTV footage that you record.

Q. Our existing rules, which may be out of date, state that we can have either one or two Vice Presidents. Is it the committee who decides if we will hold elections for one or two positions?

A. If the club's rules state that the club will have either one or two Vice Presidents then it is the committee who will decide if the club will have one or two Vice Presidents for the forthcoming year. This decision should be made not only prior to the voting taking place, but also prior to the nominations sheet being placed on the notice board. This will ensure that the members are fully aware of how many positions are being elected in the forthcoming election.

Q. Our Stock Taker agrees the stock-take report with the steward before he issues the report to the committee. Is this normal? We accept that he should agree the final stock quantities but not the overall report.

A. I understand that the stock-taker approves the stock report with the steward and has the steward sign the summary page which shows the overall results and the surplus or deficit for the period. We would suggest that the final stock report should be seen by the committee only and that the stock-taker should be requested not to share the stock report with the steward.

If you have any questions you would like answered, then please send them to us and we'll be happy to help.

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To all club committees

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Imagine for a moment that you personally pay the electric/gas bills for your club. Is it fair to say you would perhaps have a different attitude towards your energy contracts?

MJ Utilities have been working with the NI Federation of Clubs now for over a year and this is what we have found; some clubs look after their energy contracts fairly well, however, the reality is that most do not.

Of all the clubs that have worked with us so far, over 70% of them have had no contracts in place. 2014 and 2015 saw a dip in wholesale energy costs, however 2016 saw prices starting to increase, as you would

perhaps expect, after two years of decreases. Many clubs are also haemorrhaging money unnecessarily. It's time to act...

For those of you that are perhaps thinking 'We have a contract in place so we are alright at the moment', think again. If you have a contract in place for another while, it is very probable that you will not look at pricing again until shortly before your renewal date. The challenge this presents is that price change is constant, so if wholesale prices increase between now and then, it means that you'll be renewing your contract on higher rates than perhaps are available to you now.

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Your club AGM questions answered

Election of Club Officials

The rules of a club should provide the method whereby its officers and committee are elected. Such rules must be strictly adhered to, otherwise the election may be rendered invalid and a fresh ballot has to be taken. What follows should be read and applied subject to anything appearing to the contrary in the club rules-

Nominations

It is the duty of Secretary to post a nomination sheet on the notice board, which records the names of candidates for the committee or other offices. The nomination sheet must remain displayed for the whole period stipulated in club's rules. Day and time when nominations close should be stated on the sheet, even if not definitely fixed by club rules. The proposer and the seconder of any candidate should personally sign their names against the candidate they put forward, having previously ascertained that their nominee is willing to stand and serve if elected. A member may be nominated for any number of offices in the club unless the rules provide otherwise; if elected to more than one office, he can select the one he desires to hold. If the rules say that no candidate shall be nominated for more than one office, it is in order for an officer or committee member who is not due to retire to be nominated for another office without first resigning. If unsuccessful, he would retain his present office.

Qualifications

Candidates for office, nominators and seconders must be either honorary members, life members, or subscribing members who are

not in arrears with payment of their subscription before the nomination sheet is due to be taken down. Otherwise nominations may be refused. Where a rule provides that a certain period of membership is an essential qualification for office, this must be calculated from the date when the candidate was elected to membership to the last day of nominations. For example, should six months be specified, a person elected to membership on 6 July would first become eligible on the 6 January the following year.

List of Voters

Unless the rules provide otherwise, every member of the club is entitled to vote. It is the duty of the Secretary to prepare a special list of members for this purpose. The list should be handed to scrutineers, together with the precise number of requisite ballot papers if all such members voted.

Ballot Paper

The ballot paper is compiled from the nomination sheet. In preparing the ballot paper, names of candidates for presidency and other offices are usually typed or printed in separate sections on the same sheet as names of candidates for committee. The different sections are nevertheless distinct, and if one section is spoilt by the voter, it does not invalidate other sections.

Names of all candidates should be set out alphabetically on the ballot paper and in uniform type. The 'starring' of ballot papers i.e. putting an asterisk (*) against the names of retiring members seeking re-election or distinguishing them by printing their names in larger or thicker

type is irregular.

Marking the Ballot Paper

If a voter makes some mark other than the customary 'X' against the name of the candidate for whom he wishes to vote, it does not necessarily spoil his paper. The vote is good, if the intention of the voter is clear. Practically the only grounds for the rejection of the paper are -

- Because too many votes have been recorded
- Uncertainty of the voter's intention
- Writing sufficient to identify the voter

If a member spoils a paper he should, on request, be supplied with another, having previously handed back the one spoilt. A member may vote for a fewer number of candidates than there are vacancies—he cannot be compelled to use all his votes - but if he votes for more candidates than there are vacancies, the paper, so far as the particular section is concerned, must be regarded as spoilt.

Taking the Ballot

Unless the rules contain specific instructions on the matter, committees decide how ballot papers are to be distributed - whether sent to members by post or handed to them on request. Where the former method is adopted and the member returns the paper by post or hand, the envelope containing it should be sealed and marked 'ballot.' It should be addressed to the scrutineers, who must deposit it unopened in the ballot box. Where ballot papers are handed to members, the scrutineers should first make sure from the list received from the Secretary that the member is entitled

to vote. When this is done, the member's name should be scored off, thus preventing anyone voting twice.

Close of Ballot

The ballot must remain open the full time stated in the rules. When it is closed, the scrutineers count the votes recorded. The results, signed by them, together with the marked list of members to whom they have handed ballot papers, and also all unused ballot papers, must be handed by them to the Chairman at the Annual General Meeting.

Demand for a Scrutiny

If a majority of the meeting demands a scrutiny, the box containing all the ballot papers should be sealed by the Chairman and arrangements made for a recount in the presence of the scrutineers. Once it has been declared and accepted, a ballot stands no matter what discrepancies a subsequent examination of the papers may reveal. Prior to the signed statement being handed to the Chairman by the scrutineers, a system of checking and double checking should be carried out to ensure absolute accuracy in the matter of the votes recorded.

Preparing for an Annual General Meeting

An AGM is held to transact certain business: the report on the ballot for officers and committee (unless they are elected at the AGM itself); the report on the accounts; the adoption of the accounts, as audited; and other reports as required by a club's own rules.

Firstly it is essential for the AGM to be properly summoned. This usually

involves a notice being placed on the club notice board announcing the date and time of the meeting and requesting motions to be submitted to the Secretary by a certain date.

The rules of most clubs provide that a notice of the AGM shall be exhibited at least twenty-one days before the date of the meeting; and the notice of any motion must be submitted within ten days following the posting of the notice. Rules can also say that the agenda must be posted for a specified number of days before the date of the meeting.

Before the meeting it is essential for whoever is taking the Chair - Club President or Chairman depending on the club's rules - to undertake a careful study of the agenda. This will mean he can conduct the business effectively and also spot any difficult matters that might arise. Preparation is crucial to the success of the meeting.

When the meeting starts, the Chairman should satisfy himself that the requisite quorum is present. Most club rules require a quorum. This is to prevent a small, poorly attended meeting making decisions which affect the whole club.

The meeting must proceed with each item of business taken in the order in which it appears on the agenda. A normal agenda begins with confirmation of the minutes of the previous AGM, any business arising from them, then the Treasurer's report on the accounts, the election of officers, and so on.

The presiding officer, mindful of the need for a well-ordered, good tempered and constructive meeting, must see that the agenda is followed

strictly. Speakers should stand when called by the chairman and, to preserve order, only one person should be on their feet at the same time. When the Chairman rises any other speaker should sit down and this should be insisted upon. Unless this is done, a meeting can degenerate into disarray and chaos.

A proposal for discussion is a 'motion' and when it is accepted it becomes a 'resolution'. Before discussion begins, a motion must be proposed and seconded. A motion that is proposed, but finds no seconder, lapses and the meeting proceeds to next business. When a motion is proposed and seconded it is open for discussion. No speaker should be allowed to address the meeting more than once on each motion, except for the proposer, who may reply to the debate. A motion may be ultra vires - that is, outside the scope of the meeting - and should immediately be ruled out of order by the chairman.

An amendment is a proposal to alter the wording of a motion and may be moved at any time during the discussion of the original motion. Special care must be taken over this if the meeting is not to be allowed to become confused. The proposal requires a proposer and seconder before it can be considered by the meeting. The chairman should present an amendment to the meeting, once it has been properly proposed and seconded, in terms such as: 'To the motion before the meeting the following amendment has been duly proposed and seconded, that...' The wording of the amendment then follows and the immediate discussion must be confined to the subject of the amendment. Some bodies permit amendments

to be moved to amendments but it is NOT recommended for clubs. If it is allowed it can prolong discussion and make for a complicated passage of business. In practice the proposer of the main amendment may incorporate in it what he considers best in suggestions for further amendments, if he accepts they will improve his proposal. No amendment may be a direct negative to the main motion for this would merely duplicate the need to vote on a particular proposition. An amendment must be disposed of before the meeting can proceed to a further amendment. If an amendment is accepted it becomes part of the original motion; it is then called the substantive motion. Further amendments may be considered in turn until all have been dealt with. Then, discussions may continue on the substantive motion until it is put to the vote. Before the vote on each amendment the chairman should repeat its wording so that there is a clear understanding of the matter on which a vote is being taken.

Similarly the substantive motion should be read out again before the vote. When those 'for' and 'against' in each vote have been counted, the chairman should announce the result. If a large number of people are voting, the President

should appoint two 'tellers' to count the votes. The tellers should both count the 'yes' and 'no' votes. If there is any disagreement the vote MUST be taken again. When an issue is controversial a close vote may be disputed so it is useful to be prepared for a written vote.

One further possible motion is 'That this meeting do now adjourn.' This takes precedence over all other business and may be moved at any time during a meeting. The Chairman should not accept such a motion if he thinks it is being moved with the intention of disrupting the meeting. The decision is made on the vote of the meeting, on a motion proposed and seconded, and without lengthy discussion. Amendments are possible but only to set, limit or extend the period of the adjournment.

The correct conduct of a meeting is not an easy skill to master, but many difficulties can be avoided if the presiding officer follows the procedures set out here. However, even this will not guarantee that meetings are without problems. Some issues will so divide the membership that heated, and sometimes irresolvable, exchanges are inevitable. Nevertheless, a basic knowledge of tried, and accepted, procedures will help ensure that most meetings are managed efficiently.

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The importance of “Keep Off” signs

A recent case in England is an important reminder to clubs that the club's land must be protected from unauthorised use. If unauthorised persons are allowed to consistently use club land then they may gain a legal right to permanently use it. We advise that where there is open land, such as a club's car park, that signs are erected and are clear and visible to everyone using the land.

The signs should state that the land is private and is for use by Club Members only. Court of Appeal judge Lord Justice Richards said that he "rejected the notion that it is necessary for the owner, having made his protest clear, to take further steps of confronting the wrongdoers orally or in writing,

still less to go to the expense and trouble of legal proceedings. Many millions of people in this country own property. Most people do not seek confrontation, whether orally or in writing, and in many cases they may be concerned or even frightened of doing so. Most people do not have the means to bring legal proceedings. There is a social cost to confrontation and, unless absolutely necessary, the law of property should not require confrontation in order for people to retain and defend what is theirs. The erection and maintenance of an appropriate sign is a peaceful and in-expensive means of making clear that property is private and not to be used by others.

"I do not see why those who choose to ignore such signs should thereby be entitled to obtain legal rights over the land."

The case revolved around land formerly owned by a private members club which had subsequently been acquired by new owners. Whilst the club was in operation, the next door chip shop had consistently used the club's car park. When the building was sold, the owners of the fish & chip shop attempted to argue that the new owners had to respect their right to use the car park.

There was no dispute that suppliers and customers of the fish & chip shop had used the car park since the shop opened in 1987, right up until access to the space was blocked by the new owners. However, they did so while ignoring several signs that stated "private car park, for the use of club patrons only".

Lord Justice Richards said that the presence of the signs was enough to make the use of the car park "contentious". The signs "clearly indicated the owner's continuing objection to unauthorised parking" and were a proportionate form of protest.

The meaning of the signs was clear and persons other than club patrons would be aware that they were not authorised to use the car park. The Court rejected that the club had to continually protest against the use of the car park by the chip shop owners.

We advise all clubs, which have land easily accessible by the public, to clearly display signs advising that it is private and can only be used by club members and their guests.

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McEnaney's, Belfast

Auto-Enrol pensions - time is running out

We have had many queries from clubs wanting to know the latest regarding auto-enrol pensions. This legislation affects all employers, no matter how big or small. Below we explain as clearly as possible the ins and outs for you to consider.

Whether an employer has one employee, or 1,000, a Workplace Pension Scheme now has to be offered to all workers. (*There are three types of worker, that have to be categorised on every payroll*).

This new legislation will affect thousands of businesses over the next two and a half years, and will mean a huge strain will be placed on the providers of Auto-Enrolment to accommodate everyone within a set time limit, known as the Employer's Staging Date.

If ignored, or delayed, there are strict penalties and fines imposed on all Employers who disregard this legislation.

These penalties start at £400 initially and £50 to £500 per day until put right, depending on the number of employees at the place of employment.

The majority of fines that have been imposed have been levied, not because employers are ignoring their duties, but because they assume their obligations have been completed, when they have not. Many employers decide to

arrange their own scheme, which can turn out to be a false economy, as they may not have the knowledge or experience to complete all of their duties, set out by the Pensions Regulator.

To ensure that you do not fall foul of the rules, a potential solution could be to use a company specialising in assisting an employer with their duties.

However, the main problem identified by the Pensions Regulator with using an outside source is who actually does what?

Of a proportion of the excuses used to appeal the 6,779 cases of a fixed penalty notice being served to September 2016, none of the following were deemed to be a 'reasonable' excuse for not complying with the rules:

- You relied on someone and they let you down
- You found the online system too difficult to use
- You didn't get a reminder
- You made a mistake
- You or a member of staff were ill

We have heard of a case, highlighted last year, of a club in England who missed their Staging Date by three months and were facing fines of up to £45,000, jeopardising the entire business.

You may also have heard of another club who decided to arrange a scheme via NEST, and, when they contacted

them for assistance, instead of receiving help, resulted in them being reported to The Pensions Regulator, as per the legislation, for a breach in the rules.

All of this could have been avoided by using a professional contact. There is plenty of information and support available

to help get through this process, both through the Pensions Regulator and also the Federation's approved insurance company, Rollins Club Insurance.

You can contact Gordon Smith for a no obligation consultation on 028 9042 3555, or e-mail gordon@rbfp.co.uk



Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke

A photograph of a woman with long dark hair, smiling and running towards the camera. She is wearing a red tank top with the words "Run to Remember" and "Chest Heart & Stroke" printed on it. In the background, there is a banner with the same text and a quote: "I'm running for Dad" - Gillian Abraham from Lurgan. The banner also features the "Run to Remember" logo.

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Make Boodles your first choice

Boodles is a quintessential proper British gin, made with labour and patience. A perfectly balanced London Dry gin with a unique botanical make-up delivering a clean, crisp and herbaceous taste. Boodles Gin is distinctive in that it contains no citrus, obtaining its unique flavour from nine botanicals. The absence of citrus enables you to add any citrus garnish to a Boodles Gin & Tonic, tailoring it to your personal tastes; a personal favourite of the Boodles Butler being grapefruit.

The new Boodles Mulberry is inspired by the traditional sloe gin, combining delicate mulberries with notes of raspberry and currant to create a sweet and subtle medley, perfect

for sipping both warm and cold. It's the perfect complement to Boodles British Gin's unique botanicals of rosemary, nutmeg and sage, creating the proper balance and complexity of flavour.

Boodles Mulberry Cocktails:

Boodles Royale

- 1 part Boodles Mulberry Gin
- 3 parts champagne/prosecco
- Garnish with lemon twist and serve in a champagne flute.

Boodles Mediterranean

Gin and Tonic

- 50ml Boodles
- 170ml Mediterranean Tonic
- 1 sprig Rosemary
- 1 Lemon wedge
- Build over cubed ice in a 350ml highball glass, stir and garnish with a lemon wedge and sprig of rosemary.



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Smithwick's hosts a celebration of Irish ale

On Tuesday 28th February, Smithwick's welcomed over 150 customers from across the country to St George's Market, Belfast, to celebrate Smithwick's Ale and the ongoing ale renaissance in Northern Ireland.

Beer in Northern Ireland is in healthy growth again and ale is the growth engine with an estimated 10.1 million serves per year. Ale fits perfectly into the new beers of taste category and new crafted ales are appealing to younger drinkers with 1 in 2 ale drinkers aged between 25-44 years.

The event was an opportunity to focus on Smithwick's and how, as an Irish brand with heritage, it is set up and ready to support

the ale trend in the on-trade in Northern Ireland.

Not only has Smithwick's a range of ales to appeal to all consumers in both draught and bottle formats, but the brand has invested in a new advertising campaign on TV, outdoor and radio - 'We're in it, for the love of it' - as well as new glassware, taps and ceramic counter mounts.

The Smithwick's Homebrew Challenge is also open for budding brewers who think they have what it takes to produce a winning summer fruit ale - a session ale made with any fruit or combination of fruits. The deadline is 21st April and more information can be found at www.smithwicks.com/homebrew.



Above (Lr): Jorge Lopes, Niamh Everard and Mark Mulholland, Diageo.

Right (back Lr): Norman Beattie and Colin Bell, Diageo, with representatives of H&W Welders FSC.



At the event, customers were invited to tour the 4 'pods' that had been set up in the market including:

Sampling

Each guest had the opportunity to sample the full range of Smithwick's ale including Smithwick's Red Ale, Smithwick's Blonde Ale and Smithwick's Pale Ale, with tasting notes provided by Padraig Mcoughlin, the Smithwick's beer ambassador.

Smithwick's Food Pairings

- Mount Charles provided the food which had been carefully paired to accentuate the ales on offer.
- Smithwick's Red Ale with roasted marinated pork belly with red ale jus and creamy mash.
- Smithwick's Blonde Ale with chicken, parma ham, garlic and bacon pizza.

• Smithwick's Pale Ale with Walter's Mussels cooked in Smithwick's Pale Ale with smoked bacon, scallions and cream.

Heritage & History

Simon Walsh from the Smithwick's Experience Centre in Kilkenny offered an insight into the journey of the brand over the last 300 years.

Category story

An opportunity to hear all the good news about the growing NI Ale category and the rationale behind Smithwick's great variants.

The evening closed with a few words from Jorge Lopes, Country Director, and Mark Mulholland, Sales Manager, Diageo NI, followed by food and entertainment.

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Sky Sports presents a summer extravaganza



Jonathan Sexton of the Lions is tackled by James O'Connor during the International Test match against the Australian Wallabies on 6 July, 2013.

(Photo by David Rogers/Getty Images)

Sky Sports clubs can look forward to a bumper summer of action in 2017 with a range of events taking place, giving lots of opportunities to drive trade and encourage customers into venues across the country.

Football fans will look forward to cheering on the Home Nations in the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers in June as the home teams look to secure a place in the Finals in Russia in 2018.

International football is the perfect sport to watch in a club, with members looking to enjoy the company of like-minded fans in front of a big screen.

In Rugby Union, the British & Irish Lions Tour kicks off in June, exclusively on Sky Sports. The first Test of the 2013 competition pulled in 900,000 out of home viewers into venues across the UK and this year, Sky Sports will bring clubs all the action.

Formula One fans can look forward to the British Grand

Prix on July 16th with Sky Sports showing all the trackside action live from Silverstone. Lewis Hamilton will be hoping to repeat his victory of last year in front of a home crowd in one of the most famous races on the circuit.

There's also plenty of cricketing action in 2017 across all formats of the game. The ICC Champions Trophy will take place on English and Welsh soil as the top 8 teams battle it out to reign supreme in one day cricket. There's also lots of Test cricket to keep club members happy as England host South Africa and the West Indies during the summer. Sky Sports venues can also look forward to showing a host of T20 clashes.

Sky Sports will bring golf fans exclusive coverage of The Open, live from Royal Birkdale. Over four days, viewers will be able to catch all the action down at their local club as the world's best players attempt to take the title of Britain's most famous golf competition.



The Lions celebrate their victory during the International Test match between the Australian Wallabies and British & Irish Lions at ANZ Stadium on July 6, 2013 in Sydney, Australia. (Photo by David Rogers/Getty Images)

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UGAAWA Monthly Merit Award winners

by Tony McGee

The ambitions of St Mary's University, when entering the Sigerson Cup this year, were pretty modest. Get to the semi-finals was the main focus and take it from there was the feeling in the camp. The 'Ranchers' did take it from there, and went all the way.

It is history that St Mary's swept to ultimate success last month after a highly exciting final victory over favourites UCD and, for that reason the Quinn Building Contracts-UGAAWA Monthly Merit Award for February goes to winning coach, Paddy Tally, who has been the driving force behind the college teams for many years.

"That's a fabulous honour," enthused Paddy, "and I'm delighted with it. We have been close for many years but never managed to get past the quarter-finals, so we were determined to do that this time. We knew that anything less than top performances, all the way, would do. The lads produced those performances and kept the best to the final."

"Beating DCU in the quarter-finals by a point was a highlight. We were then in bonus territory and the lads made the very best of that. Some of the other teams have a couple of hundred players to choose from, we were working on a panel of 32. It is fair to say that we punched well above our weight," says the Galbally man.

Many times the high hopes of the Falls Road undergraduates have been deflated, but not this time, as the silverware returned to St Mary's for the first time since 1989.



John Campbell, UGAAWA; Damien Lee, Quinn Building Products Sales Representative in Fermanagh and North Leitrim; and John Martin, Chairman UGAAWA with Paddy Tally, St. Mary's University Coach and winner of the Ulster GAA Writers February Monthly Merit Award. Pic by Peadar McMahon

Hurling doesn't often figure in our Monthly Merit Awards, but Antrim goalkeeper, Chris O'Connell, made camán fans sit up and take notice with his spectacular displays in the Walsh Cup, particularly his stunning half-dozen saves against Westmeath.

Chris was delighted to be honoured with the UGAAWA Merit Award for January. On receiving his award he said, "It is a great honour for myself and my family, is much appreciated, and gives me great confidence. It's a good boost at the start of the league. We got off to a winning start against London but we will take one game at a time, as the saying goes, but we won't fear anybody."



January Merit Winner Chris O'Connell displaying the Belleek Living Vase, which is part of his award. Picture by John McIlwaine.

February NIFWA Awards



David Jeffrey is the NIFWA Manager of the Month for February.

The Ballymena United FC boss, who led the Sky Blues to League Cup glory at the expense of Carrick Rangers, picks up the monthly gong for the 34th time in his career.

On receiving the award he explained that "these awards are massive. The older you get, the more it means, as there is a greater appreciation for it.

"The reality is, the manager will get the plaudits even though the players have to do it on the pitch and I suppose that is OK,

because if the players don't do well, it's the manager who gets it in the ear.

"This wasn't just won by me though. Bryan McLoughlin, and my goalkeeping coach Alan Simpson, have made an immense contribution, as has Paul McAreavey, and I could go on about people throughout the club."

In February the Braidmen also progressed past H&W Welders in the Irish Cup and edged out Ballinamallard in the league, with a narrow loss to league-leaders Crusaders, the only minor blot during a successful few weeks for the club.

Ballymena Utd enjoyed a clean sweep of the top honours in February when Tony Kane was named NIFWA Player of the Month.

The 29 year old impressed throughout the month, scoring twice to take his tally for the season to 18 goals.

"I've been playing consistently for two and a half years but my game has moved up a level

and I feel more valuable to the team. People say if you score goals you will get recognised and that's the case. But I just want to win games, I don't care who scores."

As well as collecting his first honour from the Football Writers', Kane also played his part in making history for Ballymena as the Sky Blues won the League Cup for the first time.



The NI Football Writers' Association's Manager of the Month for February is Ballymena Utd manager, David Jeffrey. David is pictured above holding aloft the League Cup, having defeated Carrick Rangers in the final.

Reflecting on their success he said, "The celebrations showed how much it meant to everyone at the club. I felt we thoroughly deserved to beat Carrick Rangers in the final and the lads are proud of what was achieved.

Our objective at the start of the season was to make the top six and win a trophy and

we have managed to do that. After fearing relegation last season, we have come a long way, and the manager, David Jeffrey, and his assistant Bryan McLoughlin, have really been able to get every ounce out of the players. They are great motivators and I'm delighted, because this season things have really clicked for me."



Tony Kane is pictured celebrating with his pupils at Holy Cross Boys' Primary School.

Harland and Wolff Welders forward Davy Rainey is the NIFWA Championship Player of the Month for February.

The striker notched up an impressive 5 goals in 4 games for the Welders during the month, as they recorded 3 successive league wins following their Irish Cup exit at the hands of Ballymena United following extra time.



Davy Rainey is pictured receiving his Award from the BBC's Stephen Watson.

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Laker's Perfect 10



Jim Laker strides off Old Trafford after taking 19 wickets for only 90 runs.

It is impossible to utter the name Jim Laker without thinking of the 19 wickets he took, in what became known as 'Laker's Test' against Australia at Old Trafford in 1956.

Laker, arguably the finest off-spinner in history, took nine for 37 in the first innings and followed it up with all 10 - for just 53 - in the second, as England claimed a memorable victory. Laker finished with match figures of 19 for 90, and to this day they remain the best figures in a first-class match.

Remarkably, Laker had also taken all 10 wickets in an innings for Surrey against the same Australian tourists earlier in the season. Australian wickets had at this time become so unresponsive to finger spin that sides became almost entirely reliant on pace and wrist spin. On a dry turner, this could explain their susceptibility to Laker, but it should be remembered that Tony Lock - an equal of Laker as a finger spinner - was bowling at the other end and collected just one wicket in the match. Laker's achievement of taking 10 wickets in an innings has been repeated only once in Tests, by Anil Kumble in 1999.

Devon Loch's Mystery Fall



With the Grand National on the horizon, here's a timely reminder that anything can happen in the big race as can be seen in this picture of Devon Loch, inexplicably falling with only 50 yards to the finishing line.

Devon Loch was not favourite for the 1956 Grand National, but nevertheless the horse was well fancied by his connections, as he had already won two races earlier that year.

The confidence in him seemed well placed, as their horse coped comfortably with the mammoth obstacles, his only nervous moment coming when another runner fell in front of him. Victory seemed certain as Devon Loch went clear in the home straight. But with just 50 yards to go, and with the crowd cheering in anticipation, disaster struck. Suddenly the horse, ridden by Dick Francis, jumped into the air for no apparent reason and collapsed on to his stomach. Although he climbed to his feet immediately, there was nothing Francis could do to prevent second-placed ESP from racing past and claiming an amazing victory.

Many theories have been proposed as to what happened, including that the horse had been frightened by the roar of the crowd, he stumbled on uneven ground, or the shadow of a fence spooked him and caused him to jump. The real reason will never be known, but when checked at the stable afterwards Devon Loch was found to be in good health and never showed any sign of an abnormality.

It happened in 1956...

Football - Manchester Utd win the 1st Division title from Stanley Matthews' Blackpool by 11 points.

Golf - Australian, Peter Thompson, won the third of his five Open Championship titles by three strokes at Royal Liverpool, and in doing so, he became the only man to win the tournament for three consecutive years in the 20th century.

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