

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Those of us that were here for last year's agm will remember that the prevailing word of the report was 'apathy', not just for the 07/08 season that had just passed but for the culture of the section: we had slipped over recent years into an apathetic section operating well below its potential both off and on the pitch. Whilst it's difficult to say at what point a section has reached and is operating at its potential, it had nevertheless become clear to many of us, not least last year's Chairman that our section was clearly below its potential and that members' apathy was to blame.

The report detailed apathy towards attendance of social events, towards touring, towards training, towards the involvement and volunteering of established players as well as those within their four-year commitment, a lack of interest & involvement outside one's own team and an apathy of support for the big matches. That report was written just 12 months ago and it called for a change in the prevailing culture.

Well, I am glad to report back that it's my belief that we have, through our collective efforts, moved the section a significant distance from that low point described just 12 short months ago. As with all things to do with people it can be maddeningly intangible to identify what causes a group to flip from negative to positive, from apathy to action. Perhaps if I try to identify who constitutes the 'we' that I believe have created the momentum in today's section then you can choose yourselves to highlight one over the other or simply to recognize that like any group of people operating effectively, the whole should always be greater than the sum of the parts.

We are the tourists who toured Malaysia, Singapore, Bangkok and Jakarta. We are the supporters of the men's and ladies A-team in the hockey stadium for their big matches which have very often been thoroughly entertaining. We are all those who so assiduously attended Ladies and Men's section training on Tuesdays, Thursdays and even that standing Friday slot that the section has underutilized for far too long. We are the people that continued to train right up to the end of the season and help their teams to some very respectable and improved league positions. We are those that attended the quiz nights at the Sportsman's bar with such enthusiasm. We are all those that contributed to team reports for the website and the magazine. We are the parents of the mini hockey players under 6s, under 8s and under 10s that have turned up each Saturday morning to build something that now looks like a real family hockey club meeting after a tough week at work with many Dads helping to coach the youngsters and catch up with each other; indeed 'we' are also those mini Saturday hockey players as well as the youth players who turn out for our programs after school on Mondays and Fridays who, in not too many years hence, will be starring in our senior teams if we keep this momentum going in this important area of the section. We are an incredibly motivated & enthusiastic series of captains throughout the wide range of abilities that this section hosts; a very effective group of leaders at the team level emerged this year and testament to that is the speed with which a new set of captains has stepped up for the coming season on the back of the fun they've had this season. We are people that sign up early and often for matches, for socials, for tours, for umpiring courses and any other activity that another member has taken the personal risk to organise be he or her a captain, coach or player. We are the committee who in some cases continued for one more year, or were new this season, to lead the section

through the apathy and emerge to view what's been accomplished this year with satisfaction.

And so I believe we are in a demonstrably better place than 12 months ago, however, there remains much to be done to nurture this new confidence. During every year we need leaders to step up to lead every facet of the section's life, if for even just one year there is a collective failure to step up to the tasks ahead then this confidence vanishes and we will be back to apathy. Anyone that does not recognize themselves in the collective described above should understand that they owe it to their fellow section members to pull their weight because increasingly you stand out as free rider astride another member's efforts; it simply isn't enough only to turn up for your weekend match and call yourself a member of this section. If you think you're one of these people then you should look for a way to contribute before we come knocking on your door, which we will do because as you can imagine it's not that difficult to go through the 337 hockey subscriptions to work out who's turning up to training, who's touring, who's a captain, who is umpiring, who is coaching, who is a committee member, who's developing the youth, and who has sat for far too long on their dusty laurels earned too many years ago. If you truly believe you cannot contribute then you should consider leaving the section as there are always keen and energetic people looking to fill your place.

The biggest administrative change this year has been my agreement with the Club's management to allow the committee to dictate the terms of employment for the Hockey Development and Senior Coaching Officer for the direct benefit of the hockey section. This is a prototype role for the Club and it has one more year to run from October 09. As I understand it if Simon Chapman is successful in his role as measured on the Club's terms, which should incorporate some measure of feedback from the hockey section, then the Club may look to establish this prototype role for the other sections. In terms of judging the success or otherwise of his role, it will be a huge credit to all of us if the Club's mgt decides to role out this model to other sections as it will show that we have utilized Simon effectively for our members. In the coming year we must continue to support Simon's role. This does not mean transferring all administration to him in lieu of members volunteering their services, it means that we continue to work TOGETHER to enhance our hockey. Today we vote to maintain Simon Chapman as our Development & Senior Coaching Officer and that is our message to the Club's management that we a) approve of the position, b) that Simon is the correct person to fill this position, and c) that we (which is all of you and the committee) support Simon to make his role a success for our mutual benefit.

This brings me to Committee dynamics and the management of it over the season. I asked the social secretaries and the mini & youth section to be self-financing this year and by and large they have done this. The mini & youth section still has some kit to sell, which they will do and this will cover the cost of that kit. The new sponsorship deals fund the coaching by paying for Sportslab and a portion of the HDSCO's salary. Without the sponsorship we would not be able to afford this coaching and I must single out and thank Peter Murphy and Malcolm Pratt who have been the driving force behind the commitments from HFW and Links Moving. Off the back of this I am glad to announce that there is no need to increase senior subs this year!

Increasing the activity of the section has shown me that we need to improve and re-enforce our controls. Our byelaws, which are on the website, are dated May 2002. In particular our committee has no-one to organise it. The basic committee secretary role is simply described as part of the men's section captain role and mentions only the need to take and distribute minutes; we have no requirement to deliver pro-forma accounts mid-season to help the committee know its finances, either projected or actual; some of the committee roles remain either undefined or poorly defined; and we have no explicit controls over how much and who may sign off for hockey expenses. We need scheduled meetings, we need enforcement in between meetings of items to be delivered, and of course we need to update the bye-laws. We need explicit descriptions of committee roles and we need explicit mention of expense limits. I plan to make as much of this happen as possible over the coming year.

Other major areas of focus for my committee this coming season will be to continue to grow the mini and youth hockey numbers, to revamp the kit ordering process, to continue to promote the use of the website as an information and administration tool, to encourage social interaction through the section, to encourage umpiring, to work out how to hold a more ambitious Easter tournament, to win leagues, to increase participation on tours and to improve the image of HKFC on the pitch. This last point is controversial. However if you haven't already realized it then you should do very soon because whether you like it or not the onus is upon us to hold ourselves to a higher standard of conduct on the pitch than any other team in the league. We must not give our detractors excuses to feed their entrenched views. We can debate the quality of the associations all we like however it will not get us anywhere any time soon; however, what we can change, is our own conduct.

Earlier in this report I mentioned the quality of some of the people that have continued to serve on the committee this year. We continue to be very fortunate in having Fergus McCoig serve as our General Committee rep where he is now one of the longest serving GC reps and is respected (and I think liked!) by the Club's mgt. The section should understand that this is an important part of our credibility and from that flows the ability to get things done by the Club for the hockey section. Today we vote to approve Fergus as our GC rep for another year at the Club's AGM and with many thanks to you Fergus for everything that you have done.

In Kim Roberts and Chris Grossick we have very fortunately had, is it 3 consecutive years each now, of service to the section of the highest dedication. Their ability to communicate easily across all their teams to support their captains and their willingness to roll up their sleeves to get things done, often themselves if necessary, and then to deliver timely & quality work under occasionally very trying circumstances has made them effective section captains who are well liked and highly respected by all of us. I am also really impressed that they didn't let up over the 3 years and that they have contributed just as energetically in each of their years of service. I will miss them on the committee and our members will miss them. It is for all these reasons that I wish to award them both jointly the Chris Watson award for services to the hockey section.

That concludes my report.