

| Softball Ulster Annual General Meeting (October 2021) | | |
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| Meeting Information | | |
| Date | 24/10/2021 | |
| Time | 1330 | |
| Location | Queens Sport Complex, Malone Road, Belfast | |
| Meeting called by | Andrew Craven - Chairperson | |
| SU Council Members Present | Andrew Craven (Chairperson) - AC Jocelyn Horton (Vice Chair) - JH Tim Rankin (Treasurer) - TR Will Gilpin (Secretary) - WG Glenn McKnight (Competitions Officer) - GM Sean Gottschalk (Chief Umpire) – SG | |
| Members Present | Chris Barr Christina Kelly Philip McLoughlin Laura O'Connor Claire Moore Victoria Denstedt | Jay Slevin Danielle Hashemipour Kerry Gottschalk Emma Derleta Michael Derleta Phil Wallace |
| Others Present | Colum Lavery (Softball Ireland President) - CL | |
| Apologies | Elaine Barr Amandine Ledru Casey Purcella Kirsty Briggs David Kelly Caz Walker Martin Taylor Peter Kelly Ross Cassidy | Jasmine Geddis Sean Gibby Gibson Luke Beegan Natalie Beegan Camilla O'Neill Marian Neill Daniel Taylor Christina Taylor Jonathan Craven |

| 1 Apologies & Quorum | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| Presenter | | |
| Discussion | 165 SU players registered in 2021, Quorum is 1/5 (20%) of registered members = 33 registered members. | |
| Conclusions | Apologies read. Quorum not met - 19 registered members in attendance. | |
| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
| Arrange an EGM to progress SU business. | Chairperson | 30/11/2021 |

| 2 Minutes of 2020 AGM & matters arising | | |
|--|--|-----------------|
| Presenter | WG | |
| Discussion | No questions or queries about the minutes of last year's AGM. Unable to agree minutes due to a lack of quorum. | |
| Conclusions | Minutes to be approved at the next EGM if quorum met. | |
| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
| Arrange an EGM to agree minutes. | Chairperson | 30/11/2021 |

| 3 Audited accounts & Treasurer's report | | |
|--|---|-----------------|
| Presenter | TR | |
| Discussion | <p>-Accounts See accounts document.</p> <p>-Treasurer's report See Appendix 1.</p> <p>-Membership fees for 2022 Probable that fees can be reduced, underlying cost for 7 teams £380. Will depend on SI fees* SU aim to have reserves of £2000, with proposed fees likely to be just under that target in 2022.</p> <p>General discussion: Phil Wallace (Brawlers): Suggested SU subsidising new teams next year going forward as 400GBP can be difficult for a new team to find. Andrew Craven: Difficulty of finding the balance of a Team vs player fee to encourage league growth. JH: Restrictions of the grants available to SU can't be used to subsidise teams (used of venue hire etc.) GM: Important for teams to structure their funding to ensure costs are covered with additional monies available for team growth. AC: SU will be looking in conjunction with the SU working group to explore different options to support new team development and the financial burden that goes with a new team.</p> | |
| Conclusions | Softball Ulster Council to consider options for supporting new team growth through the annual budget and team fees. | |
| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
| Agree a budget and team fees for new teams. | SU Council | 1/3/2022 |

| 4 Chief Umpire's report | | |
|--|--|----------|
| Presenter | SG | |
| Discussion | See Appendix 2. | |
| Conclusions | Intention to run an umpiring course in April 2022. | |
| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
| Schedule and promote an umpire course for 2022 season. | Chief Umpire | 1/4/2022 |

| 5 Chairperson's report (including Competitions/Media) | | |
|---|--|----------|
| Presenter | AC | |
| Discussion | <p>See Appendix 3 - Chairperson's report (including Media report).</p> <p>See Appendix 4 - Competition's report.</p> <p>Special thanks to Jocelyn Horton for organising the Home Run Derby at the CT cup raising over £200 for charity.</p> <p>Victoria Denstedt (BSC): query over digital advertising for the SU league (design background)</p> <p>CL: SI development plan has a focus on social media, something that can be looked at to support SU advertising in 2022.</p> <p>JH: Targeted digital campaigns looking at work/ex-pat groups within Ulster.</p> | |
| Conclusions | Victoria Denstedt (BSC) to link up with SU & SI to design and promote the league. | |
| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
| None. | | |

| 6 Motions & amendments | |
|------------------------|--|
| Presenter | AC |
| Discussion | <p>-Bylaws - none received</p> <p>-Constitution - addition of dissolution clause proposed by SU council - AC Jocelyn Horton: Important for funding opportunities, proper constitution including a dissolution statement ensuring that no benefits go to the members/council but that we operate like a charity.</p> <p>Colum Lavery: restrictions on what an EGM can do regarding constitutional changes.</p> <p>AC: Will need to examine options.</p> |
| Conclusions | The SU Council will examine options ahead of SU EGM. |

| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
|--|--------------------|------------|
| Confirm if clause can be incorporated at SU EGM. | SU council | 30/11/2021 |

7 Elections

| Presenter | AC |
|-------------|--|
| Discussion | <p>As quorum has not been met all nominees will be co-opted by SU council at the next SU council meeting.</p> <p>-Consider nominations for Vice Chair *Victoria (BSC), seconded by Jay Slevin</p> <p>-Consider nominations for Secretary *Laura O'Connor, seconded Andrew Craven</p> <p>-Consider nominations for Treasurer *No nominations received</p> <p>-Consider nominations for Media Officer *Casey Purcella, seconded Andrew Craven</p> <p>-Ratify Sean Gottschalk as Chief Umpire for 2022 season</p> <p>Suggestion to look at Volunteer Now for an independent Treasurer for SU.</p> |
| Conclusions | Various individuals to be co-opted at the next SU council meeting. |

| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
|---|--------------------|-----------|
| Co-opt nominees at SU council meeting and find a Treasurer. | SU Council | 1/11/2021 |

8 Appointments

| Presenter | AC |
|-------------|--|
| Discussion | <p>Consider nominations for representative to Softball IreInd - Andrew Craven, seconded by Will Gilpin</p> <p>Consider Nominations for representatives to Softball Ireland AGM - Andrew Craven, seconded by Will Gilpin</p> <p>Consider nominations for Auditors for 2022 season - Jay Slevin, seconded by Andrew Craven</p> |
| Conclusions | None. |

| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
|--------------|--------------------|----------|
| None. | | |

| 9 Complaints in 2021 season | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Presenter | WG | |
| Discussion | None received | |
| Conclusions | n/a | |
| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
| n/a | | |

| 10 Format of Softball Ulster League(s) in 2022 | | |
|--|---|-----------------|
| Presenter | AC/GM | |
| Discussion | <p>Suggestion of a possible way forward to split the SU league into 2 divisions in 2022 to accommodate the growth of player numbers & Teams in SU.</p> <p>Initial thoughts are to split the league into 2. Div. 1 to consist of the top 4 teams from the 2021 league. All other teams to start in Div. 2. opportunity for promotion/demotion (loser div 1 plays div 2 winner for a place in Div. 1)</p> <p>Intra tournament (FA Cup style) exposes Div. 2 teams to Div. 1 outside of the standard league.</p> <p>Player Eligibility to be decided, desire for a fair way to arrange (avoid an imbalance of skill/ability in the div2 teams).</p> <p>CL: suggested the option of a round robin tournament then split into 2 divisions mid-season.</p> <p>JH: Optics are important Div. 1&2 not experienced and development.</p> <p>Continual restriction on Softball is the cost of pitch hire</p> <p>Clare Moore (Hawks): How does fundraising work within SU, responsibility of Teams or SU council?</p> <p>GM: Bat raffles/team raffles have been good for BBSC.</p> <p>JH: Seeding grants for new teams. Listed several grant opportunities and requests team reps speak with her for further information.</p> <p>Civic Dollars - park access across Ireland. Online raffles are now a legal option.</p> | |
| Conclusions | <p>Need to consider how to make Softball an all-year sport.</p> <p>Members can approach JH for guidance on how to attract funding.</p> <p>GM keen to stress that it is a work in progress and final format will depend on the number of SU teams in 2022.</p> | |
| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline |
| Determine 2022 league format. | SU Council | March 2022 |

| 11 Softball Ireland update from SI President Colum Lavery | |
|---|---|
| Presenter | CL |
| Discussion | <p>Word of thanks to the SU members & Council on the league success and growth in 2021.</p> <p>Great to see good Umpiring coverage with SU games.</p> <p>Thanks for the adherence to the RTPP given the evolving Covid situation and difference in restrictions North & South.</p> <p>Thanks to Andrew & Melanie for their work on the SI Medical committee. One of the first sport RTPP that were approved by the Irish Government with no Covid transmissions because of Softball.</p> <p>Special mention for Massimo - SI Treasurer, who sadly passed away this year.</p> <p>Great to see SU female recruitment at 55%, help to push towards 5&5 split as what Softball should be.</p> <p>Desire to see Softball in Ulster expand to the 9 counties of Ulster and not just the greater Belfast area.</p> <p>SI 2021 - 3 tournaments run this year, great to see increased SU participation.</p> <p>SNICC - 1 team from: Leinster, Ulster & Connacht/Munster</p> <p>Great job by Tim for balancing the SU finances.</p> <p>There will be an increase in SI tournament fees in 2022 to support the growth of the sport.</p> <p>Great turnout by the Girls in Sport event.</p> <p>Softball Development Plan, special thanks to Andrew & Will. Focus on retention ahead of growth to ensure that teams are growing and not just replacing players. Teams to examine why players are leaving the sport.</p> <p>Buy-in and resources important to ensure growth of the sport.</p> <p>Trial of JoyMo (pay per view online streaming service).</p> |

| | | | |
|---------------------|--|-----------------|--|
| | <p>Proposed SI constitution has been sent out with EGM notice, key part of the BSI merger to ensure access to funding by making SI an incorporated entity. No impact on regions and how they operate.</p> <p>Discussions have been held with SportNI about Softball recognition, application to go in the day after SI constitution approval.</p> <p>The Development Plan is vital for the continued survival of the sport in Ireland. The GAA are putting a lot of money into Rounders, need to ensure that SI and all teams take advantage of this situation to attract players to Softball.</p> | | |
| Conclusions | None | | |
| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline | |
| None | | | |

| 12 A.O.B. | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|--|
| Presenter | AC | | |
| Discussion | <p>Phil Wallace (Brawlers): Communications sub-par this year. BSC unaware they had qualified for an SI tournament until a week before.</p> <p>CL: Softball Ireland put their hands up for this issue. Communication will be improved in 2022 season.</p> <p>Phil Wallace (Brawlers): No benefit for Clubs with more than 1 team, need for financial incentives to be addressed for Clubs to have more than 1 team.</p> <p>AC: As outlined in the chairperson's report, Softball Ulster are going to look at the options for promoting new team development and larger clubs splitting into multiple teams. A priority for 2022 season is league and constitutional reform to promote growth.</p> <p>Chris Barr (Cubs): End of season celebration?</p> <p>TR: Yes, there is a plan, just needs to be finalised.</p> | | |
| Conclusions | SU Council to carry out a constitutional and league review and consider the options for promoting league growth. | | |
| Action Items | Person Responsible | Deadline | |
| Organise and promote SU EOS Awards Night. | SU Council | 14/11/2021 | |

| X | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Meeting Information | |
| Meeting concluded at | 3:30pm |
| Minutes completed by | Will Gilpin (Secretary) |
| Minutes approved by | Andrew Craven (Chair) |
| Date of next meeting | EGM - To be determined |

Appendix 1: Softball Ulster Treasurer's Report 2021

Softball Ulster have had a very positive year from a financial point of view. This year SU made a surplus of £2,971.26. However, this figure from the accounts gives a slightly inflated view due to the fact that we received grants from Belfast City Council, Community Foundation, and Arnold Clark in the past 12 months, all of which have contributed greatly to our financial position. The SU Council also took the decision to spend the remaining WPFG legacy fund and DCAL grant and transfer any funds left over to general funds.

The underlying surplus for the season when the grants and transfers from general funds are removed and the grant expenditure is also removed, is £837.78, which means that SU has made back the loss of last year's season. This is much more quickly than was intended when we budgeted for the season ahead. At the time the budget was set we did not know how the season would pan out and whether tournaments would be allowed this season. The tournaments have been the main source of this profit.

Going forward it would be possible for the team registration fees to be reduced, the entry fees for tournaments could be reduced, or potentially a combination of the two. This a decision for the next Council.

Thank you to all the clubs paying their fees relatively promptly this season with minimal chasing on my part. It should also be noted that the Sliders and the Buccaneers have both paid their outstanding fees since 30 September 2021.

I must pay tribute to the hard work done by Jocelyn Horton, Vice-Chair, in SU being successful in obtaining funding from Belfast City Council Covid19 Recovery Fund, Community Foundation Made by Sport Fund and Arnold Clark Community Fund, as this funding constituted more than half of our income for the year.

The Belfast City Council grant is what made the Autumn League financially viable. I would hope that more funding may be found for this to enable it to be run again next season.

The Community Foundation, Arnold Clark and WPFG Legacy Fund were used to purchase new equipment to assist with the setting up of the Hawks. There is still a relatively substantial sum left unspent from these grants which will be spent in the coming financial year.

I have very much enjoyed my second stint on the SU Council, and I would like to thank Will, Glenn, Jocelyn, Sean, and Andrew for their assistance over the past couple of years. In particular to Andrew for helping me get the accounts to balance. I hope that I have left SU on as sound a footing as my predecessor did for me.

Appendix 2: Softball Ulster Chief Umpire's Report 2021

Introduction

Umpiring got off to a bit of a rocky start at the beginning of the season. Partly because of Covid restrictions and partly there being no permanent Chief Umpire at the beginning of the season, the usual pre-league annual umpire training session did not happen. With several new umpires in the mix this season, this wasn't ideal, and it's something that very much should happen next season.

I became Chief Umpire about half-way through the season, taking the reins from Tim, who had been doing it before then in addition to his other council duties.

Umpire Numbers

There were 12 active umpires in the league this season. This is about 2 per team, roughly about the same as previous seasons. We had a couple of new umpires in the mix, and a couple of others made their first appearances as plate umpires instead of field umpires, and on the whole things went well. At the end of the season, 10 of these 12 umpires have had experience at the plate, which is an excellent achievement.

As ever, we would love for more people to become umpires. There is a minimum of two from each team excluding rookie teams, but more than that are always welcome. It's an excellent way to learn more about the game and to give something back, and I've never regretted first putting myself forward to be an umpire.

Game Officiating

As far as I'm aware, all SU league games this year had at least one umpire. There may have been a couple of development games that ended up being self-umpired though, due to limited umpire availability. I would like to ensure in future that these are also umpired – it improves the experience for those involved in those games and provides an excellent opportunity for umpire development.

While all league games had at least a plate umpire, not all had a field umpire as well. It remains a goal of SU that all league games have two umpires, and if we can swell the umpire ranks a bit further, this is very achievable.

The average number of games assigned to any umpire in the year was just under 4, and the most assigned to any game was 5.

Personal Notes



As the game continues to develop in Ulster, it's only natural that players get emotionally invested in it. When things get competitive, sometimes players can take their frustration out on umpires. This has never been as much a problem in Ulster as elsewhere, and I hope it remains that way. I would just like to remind members that the people umpiring their games are volunteers, giving up their time and transport costs to facilitate others' enjoyment, and to continue to bear this in mind when you disagree with a call.

I would like to finish off by thanking all the people who have given their time to umpire this season, without whom, the league as we know it would not be possible.

Sean Gottschalk,
Chief Umpire

Appendix 3: Softball Ulster Chairperson's Report 2021

Last year was a difficult year for sport and it was great to see a near-normal return to softball in the 2021 season. Despite COVID-19 remaining a significant threat to us, the softball community in Ulster was able to turn this threat into an opportunity for our sport in 2021. The highlights this year included: the return of tournaments; the introduction of the Lisburn Hawks; the return of the Belfast Angels; the Cubs being first-time league winners; and a significant increase in the Ulster membership.

Regular League

Congratulations to the Belfast Cubs for their long-overdue Softball Ulster League win, breaking the Brawler's five-year streak at the top. Only three points separated first, second and third places this year, meaning that any one of the top teams could have realistically taken home the trophy. It is positive to see that the Softball Ulster League remains competitive, with the teams continually challenging themselves and improving year-on-year.

The 2021 Softball Ulster League consisted of five teams: Bangor Bucs, Belfast Angels, Belfast Cubs, Belfast Sliders, and the Brawlers. The final standings saw the Cubs in the top spot, followed by the Brawlers, Aces, Sliders and the Bucs taking home the wooden spoon.

Introductory League

For the last number of years, the Softball Ulster Council has wanted to run an Introductory League in the Lisburn region, as the Sports Development Plan identified this as a potential area for expansion and development. COVID-19 provided Softball Ulster with an opportunity to capture some of those people exiting lockdown with a hunger for social interaction and physical activity. Glenn McKnight (Competitions Officer) took the lead in the delivery of a Lisburn Introductory League, which was without a doubt a major success for Softball Ulster. Not only are we now able to add the Lisburn Hawks to our growing softball community, but Softball Ulster has now expanded outside of the Belfast area for only the second time since it was established in 2008 (the first team being the Bangor Bucs in 2014).

Development League / Fixtures

It was pleasing to see the Belfast Angels return to the Ulster region in 2021, albeit in a more informal capacity than previous years. Following discussions with the Angels and commissioning a working group to focus on the issues of recruitment and development, the Softball Ulster Council agreed to schedule development fixtures throughout the season. These fixtures were to benefit all teams, providing extra game time to train



new players and give the Angels a low-pressure re-introduction to the Softball Ulster League. The hope is that in the 2022 season we can further develop these fixtures into a full league, although this will be a significant body of work that Glenn McKnight (Competitions Officer) and I will consider in the off-season.

Tournaments

A welcome return to the 2021 schedule were the Softball Ulster Tournaments. Unfortunately, due to ongoing restrictions at the beginning of the season, we were unable to run the Start of Season Tournament. As restrictions eased, we were able to deliver a modified Carrie Trundle Cup in June, and the End of Season and Autumn Series tournaments in September. Congratulations go to Belfast Softball Club who made a clean sweep of the silverware at all Softball Ulster tournaments this year. It is intended that 2022 will see a full return of the tournament calendar, with considerations being given to additional tournaments, such as the Autumn series, in the off-season.

Governance

One of the biggest tasks I undertook this year was to start modernising our governance documents. To be recognised by organisations like Sport Northern Ireland, Softball Ulster requires certain policies and documents to be in place. Without these, funding opportunities will be missed. In 2021 the new 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity' policy helped Softball Ulster successfully obtain a £2021 grant from Made by Sport. In the future these policies, which act as evidence of good governance, will only become more important to our ability to apply for funding, access facilities and develop our sport.

Policies that Softball Ulster have introduced in 2021 have included:

- Privacy Policy (Updated – Andrew Craven)
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity Policy (New – Andrew Craven)
- Social Media Policy (New – Andrew Craven)
- Sponsorship Policy (Updated – Jocelyn Horton)
- Field Suitability Policy (New – Sean Gottschalk)

Members can access all of these Softball Ulster policies, and more, on the Softball Ulster website (www.softballulster.com) under 'Resources >>> Policies & Guidelines'.

Through my role as the Softball Ulster Representative to the Softball Ireland Board, I have also been involved in writing and approving the following policies that also apply to the Ulster region:

- Safeguarding Policy (New – Amanda Ní Ghabhann)
- Gender Inclusion Policy (New – Amanda Ní Ghabhann)

- First Aid Policy (New – Andrew Craven / Melanie Lavery – due to be published soon)

Members can access all of these Softball Ireland policies, and more, on the Softball Ireland website (www.softball.ie) under 'Resources >>> Policies & Guidelines'.

Finances

In the 2020 season Softball Ulster had an overall deficit of £662 as the Council used the unrestricted reserves to support teams through the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. These reserves, agreed at £2000, exist to help Softball Ulster, and its teams, weather extraordinary events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the tasks the Softball Ulster Council had in 2021 was to prevent further depletion of these reserves and increase them where possible.

One measure we introduced to avoid an ongoing year-on-year loss to Softball Ulster was to increase the team fees. This was a necessary, if unpopular, move to ensure the financial stability of Softball Ulster. We had originally budgeted a team fee of £435 for the year, but after consultation with the teams we were able to bring this down to £420. Moving forward, preparing, and circulating a proposed budget for the season ahead would improve transparency around the decision-making process for team fees and other financial decisions undertaken by the Softball Ulster Council.

Jocelyn Horton (Vice Chair) has worked hard this season with Council members to secure several funding opportunities, subject to some restrictions. These include:

- Belfast City Council COVID Recovery Fund £986.00
- Made By Sport Covid Grant £2021.00
- Arnold Clarke Community Fund £1000.00

Examples of how we have spent some of this money include:

- Subsidising the Autumn Series indoor-style tournament at Colin Glenn
- Running costs for the Lisburn Introductory League
- Purchasing training equipment that can be loaned to the teams
 - Batting net x1
 - Batting tees x2
- Purchasing balls for the Ulster teams (awaiting stock)
- Purchasing starter pack equipment that can be loaned to prospective new teams

If any members have suggestions for how restricted funding can be further spent, please email Softball Ulster and we will consider your requests. It is hoped that funding will continue to promote development and to subsidise events in 2022, in line with the restrictions put upon us by the grant funders.

Social Media

Softball Ulster have continued to use social media to promote the sport of softball, and share content uploaded by the Ulster teams. In March Jocelyn Horton (Vice Chair) coordinated a successful International Women's Day campaign, helping to promote the important contributions women make to our sport. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the campaign, sharing their personal stories, and promoting female participation in softball to the masses.

The Softball Ulster Council has published a Social Media Policy in 2021. This policy is designed to guide current and future Council members on their use of social media while volunteering for Softball Ulster. Teams are welcome to take this policy and adapt it for their own use.

Development Plan Progress

Significant progress has been made with the Softball Ulster Development Plan in the 2021 season. As is evidenced from the new Key Performance Indicator chart, the Ulster League has expanded significantly this year. Considering each of the Key Objectives from the Development Plan in turn, we can see the progress that has been made:

Key Objective 1: 10% net growth in membership of Softball Ulster per year.

- 2021 membership growth: 83% (32% on pre-covid membership) – a massive success

Key Objective 2: minimum of 50% new Softball Ulster registrations to be female.

- 2021 new female membership: 55% - on target for the first time

Key Objective 3: At least one new team outside of the Belfast area to be registered with Softball Ulster over the next five years.

- Lisburn Hawks now established in the Lisburn area – objective completed

Key Objective 4: Support existing teams in the Ulster region so that they can expand and develop themselves over the next five years.

- Teams' membership numbers expanding
- Belfast Angels return to the Ulster region, following targeted support
- Equipment purchased by Softball Ulster to loan to teams e.g., batting net, tees etc.

Key Objective 5: Introduce a youth programme for the sport of softball in the region of



Ulster within the next five years.

- No youth programme introduced yet
- Safeguarding policies published by Softball Ireland
- Need to liaise with Softball Ireland on youth programme development, with a coordinated response
- Consider appointing a youth programme lead for Ulster

Softball Ulster Council & Volunteers

The running of Softball Ulster is a team effort, and I would like to thank each member of the Council for their hard work and dedication over the last year:

- Jocelyn Horton (Vice Chair) for pushing us all to do our best, seeking out and applying for funding opportunities, being actively involved in updating policies, organising, and running the Autumn Series, and actively promoting the important role of women in the sport of softball (both on and off the field).
- Timothy Rankin (Treasurer) for keeping us on the financial straight and narrow.
- Will Gilpin (Secretary) for keeping contemporaneous documentation of all our meetings, managing the player registration documents, and participating in the Softball Ireland Development Working Group on Ulster's behalf.
- Glenn McKnight (Competitions Officer) for successfully organising the regular league, two tournaments and taking one hell of a risk that paid off with the creation of the Lisburn Hawks Softball Club.
- Sean Gottschalk (Chief Umpire) for stepping up to help us out when nobody else would, organising the umpires, and for helping to write new policy this season.

Many more people have contributed to the success of the Softball Ulster League this year, including:

- The umpires, who give up their free time to officiate games
- The scorers, at events such as the Autumn Series
- The volunteers who help set up and dismantle the diamonds at tournaments
- Adam Grant and Jonny Craven, who both spent short periods of time on the SU council as Media Officer and Chief Umpire, respectively
- The Working Group members, who advised the SU Council this year and have helped shape the vision for the league in 2022 and beyond
- The membership, for participating in the league and tournaments, which helped turn 2021 into a successful season

2022 and Beyond

Looking forward to 2022, Softball Ulster has several goals:



- To nurture and develop new team development in the Ulster region, with a focus on supporting larger clubs splitting into multiple teams
- Continue to use the 2021 funding opportunities to subsidise events and support the existing seven Ulster teams
- Continue to develop the calendar of fixtures, to include another Home Run Derby and indoor-style (or indoor) tournaments
- Reconfigure the Ulster League, with a commitment to splitting the league into two divisions with the simultaneous goals of promoting excellence and developing new teams
- Continuing to review our governance documents, with the goals of:
 - Reviewing and updating the Softball Ulster Constitution
 - Reviewing and updating the Softball Ulster Bylaws and League Rules
 - Reviewing and updating the Softball Ulster Disciplinary Procedures
 - Introducing Codes of Conduct for all members, officials, and council members

Yours Sincerely,

Andrew Craven
Softball Ulster Chairperson



Appendix 4: Softball Ulster Competitions Report 2021

SU League 2021

2021 was a fantastic season, and while we still only had 5 teams in the Ulster League, it was great to welcome back the Belfast Angels in a development capacity. 2021 also saw the creation of the Lisburn Hawks in the latter end of our season, and while they didn't get to play in the league proper, they played their own intro league and had a promising start at the End of Season Blitz and the Indoor Competition.

In yet another year affected by Covid 19 we managed yet another full season - minus a Start of Season Blitz - and again we managed to not have a single case of coronavirus connected to us. Let's hope this is the final year we'll play under such a strict Return to Play Protocol.

Well done to all the teams and everyone involved, and a big congratulations to the Belfast Cubs for their first Softball Ulster Champions title. The Belfast Softball Club and its two teams remain a formidable combination, having taken the win at all our tournaments this year.

A big thanks from all of us to Jocelyn for her work this year in securing additional funding, which allowed us to hold our first Autumn Series. Based on the success of this two-morning event, we will look at holding additional events in 2022.

2022 looks to be the biggest year yet for Softball Ulster, with the potential for several new teams to emerge.

Let's keep at it in 2022 and continue to grow the sport.

Glenn McKnight,
Softball Ulster Competitions Officer