

HAMPSTEAD HOCKEY CLUB

To: General Committee Members

From: Colin Greenhalgh.

Date: 4th July, 1973.

HORNSEY AGREEMENT

The President suggested it would be useful to circulate a note, before the next Committee meeting, of the items raised when Richard and I met Hornsey to discuss our tenancy agreement. (This, as you know, has been awaiting signature by Hornsey for something like two years). These are the items which proved to be at all contentious and the outcome of the negotiations:

1. Three years ago we agreed a 5-year term (seasons 1970/71 to 1974/75) at a fixed rent (£400 p.a.), followed by a further 5 years (1975/76 to 1979/80) at an increased rent. Because of the time-lag over the pitches and the agreement, Richard had drafted 2 years (1970/71 to 1976/77) at £400 p.a. - of which we have already had 3 - into the agreement, followed then by 5 years (which now become 1977/78 to 1981/82) at an increased rent. Hornsey tried to revert to the original 5 followed by 5, but we managed to hold out on Richard's draft.
2. In the course of the last agreement we managed to get an extension of the season to include the first Saturday in April. Because of repairs to the goal areas etc. Hornsey wanted to revert to the last Saturday in March. We got agreement on the last Saturday in March except when that is Easter, when we can have the first in April instead. (This probably means we'll generally play Teddington on shale - as they do at their ground).
3. We conceded that the pitches need not necessarily have 15 hours per week of the groundsman's time and need not necessarily be fertilised every Spring and Autumn. But we retained a specific mention that the groundsman's time and the fertilisation must be such as to provide pitches of an appropriate standard.
4. On one fairly fundamental point we did not reach agreement. It was always understood, three years ago, that the rent increase between the first 5-year spell and subsequent years would be linked to any increase in Hornsey's subscription income from their own members. (In other words we would pay more for the ground to the extent that Hornsey's own members pay more). But we have been waiting ever since for an explicit proposal as to what the formula should be.

They have now proposed the way of doing the sums and Richard and I are quite happy about that. (Briefly we shall take the cricketers' sub plus the squash players' sub plus the tennis players' sub, plus a cricketers' match fees (excluding teas) if he played a fixed number of games per season plus a squash players' court fees if he played a fixed number of games per season - this number of games for cricketers and squash players being based on the number currently played in a year by their 'average' member).

But where we do have disagreement is on the 'base year' for the rent increase calculations. Richard had proposed 1976/77 - the last year of our 7-year fixed rent term. Hornsey countered with 1970/71 - the first year of this term. As you can see, the difference could become dramatic by the time our rent is reviewed in 1977/78. It wouldn't be surprising if Hornsey's subs. and match fees increased by (say) 50% between the two alternative base years - the difference in our rent in 1977/78 and every year thereafter could, therefore, easily be 50% of £400 i.e. £200 p.a. I think, frankly, Richard and I would have considered ourselves lucky to get away with 1976/77 as the base year, but we really don't want to concede 1970/71 if we can help it because of this substantial increase which would quite possibly result. Our argument for not accepting 1970/71 was two-fold:

- a) that £400 was an inflated rent for 1970/71, and it was designed to be inflated because it was negotiated as a rent for the next 5 years; therefore any long-term review based on 1970/71 would automatically be inflated.
- b) that, in any case, we have had very poor value for the first 4 years (at least) of this 7-year term - only one grass pitch and a remote, inferior shale pitch; therefore any long-term review based on 1970/71 would be considered very poor value by our playing members.

A chink was opened up when one of the Hornsey representatives hinted that the base could be taken as the average of this current 7 years, when we are on the fixed rent. They did not pick up this hint with any enthusiasm but Richard and I suggested ('without prejudice') that 'we might be able to persuade our Committee to look favourably on such a suggestion'. It would, after all, represent a substantial improvement on the 1970/71 formula and (depending on what happens to inflation between now and 1977) very probably halve (at least) the rent increase we would be faced with for 1977/78 et seq.

The calculation of the 'base year' Hornsey subs. would then be exactly as above, except that the figures would be collected for each of the 7 years from 1970 to 1976 and a simple arithmetical average of them taken as the base.

I think our view is that such a formula would be eminently fair and probably the best we could realistically hope for and that, therefore, we should put this to Hornsey as a firm proposition.