

Birmingham City Netball Club

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 14th October 2023 at 7:00pm at Selly Oak Methodist Church, Langleys Road, Selly Oak.

Present: Dianne Barber (Chairman), Jonathan Barber (Secretary), Patricia Okunnu, Natalie Hodgkins, Ellen Dean, Rebecca O'Sullivan, Jon Coaffee-Moran and eight others.

1. Apologies: Jean Woodall-Llewellyn, Justin Clarke, Lucy Cattell, Barry Hope, Elizabeth Avars, Hollie Wylde, Andrew Frost
2. Secretary's opening remarks
Jonathan welcomed those attending and gave a summary of the context for this meeting. See Appendix for the full text.
3. Head Coach's Report
Dianne gave a report on the performance of the Club during the 2022-23 playing season. See Appendix for the full report.
4. Secretary's Report on membership and committee activity.
Jonathan gave a report: see Appendix for the full report.
5. Presentation of Accounts
In the absence of the Treasurer and lack of formal accounts, Jonathan gave an overview of the Club's finances. See appendix for report.
6. Election of Committee Members.
 - a. Jonathan said that we needed to elect Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. The only nominations that have been received were: Chairman: Dianne Barber; Secretary: Jonathan Barber; and Treasurer: Andy Frost. All these had indicated willingness to stand for election, and were declared elected by common consent.
 - b. Jonathan then said that we need to elect other Committee members. Current committee members Ellen Dean, Natalie Hodgkins and Rebecca O'Sullivan had agreed to stand for election, as had Jon Coffee-Moran. In the absence of any other nominations these four were declared elected.
 - c. Jonathan drew the attention of the meeting that this year was the last one in which Andy Frost had agreed to act as Treasurer. The Club needed to identify a suitable and willing person with the necessary skills to take on this role in the future. Jonathan explained that the way the role had operated until present was more of a bookkeeper/auditor role than Treasurer. Payments are made by internet banking by Jonathan and invoices passed to Andy for accounting purposes. Several present at the meeting suggested possibilities going forward. We use an accounting program (Sage) for which we pay a monthly fee of £16.80. We need to ensure that this is the best option and good value for money.

7. Any Other Business

- a. A question was raised about improving the Club's website. Jonathan said that this was an outstanding item from our successful Communities Grant bid. The intention is to remain with our present web host, Ionos (1&1), and to migrate to a more modern website format using Wordpress. We will proceed with this in the near future.
- b. Naomi Kirby expressed interest in being Team Manager for the year 4 team, and was thanked for this.

8. The meeting concluded at 7:40pm.

Item 2. Secretary's opening remarks

Hello everyone and welcome. For those who don't know me, I am Jonathan Barber. I have been your club secretary since the beginning. Please help yourselves to tea, coffee and biscuits. You might as well: you have paid for them!

This is our second Annual General Meeting. We are hoping to get the business done as quickly as we can, so that we can get on with the Presentation.

Soon we will be electing the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and up to four Committee Members. (Level 2 Coaches and SGO are also ex-officio members of the Committee.) I would like to pay tribute to the three people who joined the committee last year (Ellen, Natalie and Rebecca). They have all proved their worth. We would still like to see new people with new ideas and fresh enthusiasm to help run the club. We particularly look to parents of younger members of the Club to help with running the Club. There are 4 posts up for grabs, but the committee can always co-opt additional members as necessary.

There are also Roles which we do not have at present, but which would benefit the Club. These include things like a Social Secretary, a Publicity Officer and an Auditor. These are not necessarily Committee Roles. Please approach us if you have the skills and time to take on any of these. We also need more parents of older players to act as Team Managers. (We take it as given that you can all work with and organise children! Apart from that, no special skill is needed.)

Item 3. Chief Coach's Report 2021-2022 playing season.

This report covers the playing season September 2022 to July 2023.

We started the year by going to the Nottingham Tournament in the first weekend of September. We took Year 6A, 6B and 7 teams. The 6A and 7 teams got into the Cup competition. The 6Bs did well finishing up as runners-up in the Plate Competition.

We entered the Birmingham Tournament for Years 6 to 10 as a season opener.

We entered three teams into the Birmingham (winter) Netball League which is open to Year 10 up to adult. Our City 1 Team (Year 12) won Division 9 and City 2 (Year 10A) won Division 12. City 3 (Year 10B) finished mid-table in their division.

Our 9A team played in the Walsall Netball League at Phoenix Collegiate. They made a very impressive improvement, such that they were unbeaten in the second half of the season, and finished 3rd in the division overall.

We entered the Erdington Development League, a new league organised around Sutton Coldfield schools. This involved our Year 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 teams with forty minute games on Sundays. The Year 4 were runners-up. Other teams played well and gained experience.

The Birmingham Intermediate League holds a tournament in February each year to decide which divisions teams play in for the League that runs from March to June. In my view mixing teams of widely different ages in a tournament to decide placings (as was done this year) gives no clear evidence of ability between teams of a similar age. When it was formed, the groups of the Intermediate League were mainly age based, though some very good teams were allowed to play in the age group above. Because of the change from this principle, this year's season and games were bitty, with no regular play to help develop skills. We are classed as a 'stronger' club, so we ended up with all the top teams in our groups, which proved a big challenge. It can be demoralising for our older and second teams in a year group. Nevertheless in the Intermediate League our 6A and 7 teams won their sections, and the 5A and 6B teams finished as runners-up.

In June this year our 8, 9A and 9B teams went to Keele University for a weekend away. Inspirational talks by Serena Guthrie and other top players, coaching sessions and a tournament made for a very full weekend. Jean and I walked around 24,000 steps in one day, as we crossed the large campus! Still, it was a good netball experience for our teams. It was also good in that transport by coach was included in the price – this is a big issue and cost associated with any trip.

The Little League was set up in the Spring Term and ran very successfully during the summer. As usual our School Year 9 and 10 girls did us proud in managing teams and umpiring. Some do this as an introduction, preparing them for umpiring or coaching qualifications; some do it for Duke of Edinburgh awards and others because they enjoy giving back to their sport, whilst gaining good organisational and people management skills.

We could not enter the Dudley Summer League this year, as all their matches are now on Monday or Tuesday, with none on Wednesdays when we used to play in the League. Despite this we may enter the League this year if we can get parents to act as team managers for games at George Salter Academy on a Monday or Tuesday. We did not have time to make such arrangements last year.

We entered two teams in the Birmingham Summer League (again an adult league). Our City 1 Year 12) team continued their winning run and won Division 8.

We finished the year in July by entering the Yendys Tournament, which is always a challenging one. Our girls did their best against tough opposition.

I would like to thank my coaching team: Jean who coaches on Monday and Friday, and who goes to a lot of games on a weekend, allowing more girls to play netball; Patricia who coaches on Fridays and manages teams on Sundays in the Intermediate League; Liz who has helped coach her daughter's team on Mondays and at fixtures; Maddy McKeever, Megan Plews and Megan Knight who have assisted with coaching on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Because of the number of leagues we now we enter, parent Team Managers have become a necessity. Thank you to Vicky (9B), Paul (10B), Alex and Beth (10A)

Lindsey (5 and 6); Mairead (7A) and Kelly (7B). Without these volunteers the club just could not function. Thank you!

Item 4. Secretary's Report on Membership and the Work of the Committee

Overall club membership numbers have held fairly constant throughout the year at around 180.

Our general aim for membership is to have two squads in each year, This equates to around 20 players, maybe one or two more, but not too many, of which we would have slightly more than half in the B squad so we can play players up to cover absences in the A squad.

The breakdown of players year by year is very uneven.

Year 3 – less than 10, but increasing

Year 4 – around 15

Year 5 – around 15

Year 6 – approaching 25

Year 7 – heavily oversubscribed at well over 30, despite having lost several key players to rival clubs. We are struggling with running three teams in this year

Year 8 – less than 20: we could do with a few more to make two credible squads

Year 9 – over 20

Year 10 – around 20

Year 11 and above – around 20

We are looking to take on players in Years 3 to 5 and year 8. We have had to make the decision that we cannot take on beginners in years 5 and 6, and that these years will now have to be subject to selective trials, as we have been operating for Years 7 and above for many years.

The Chairman has covered most aspect of the Little League in her report. I would just add that the year by year split going forward to the 2024 Little League is far from ideal:

Year 6 – 36

Year 5 – 29

Year 4 and 3 – 22

For this year we have had to put an embargo on new players from Years 5 and 6 as we really need to build up our year 3 and 4 membership so that we can achieve a good mix of ages year on year.

We have had new elected Committee members for the first time and this is been very beneficial and productive. Your committee has met six times since that last AGM.

Highlights of the Committee's activities:

- devised and conducted a Membership Survey
- reviewed subscriptions and decided no increase was necessary

- ran an exercise to renew codes of conduct (still ongoing)
- set up and managed the Hardship Fund
- purchased an iPad to record practice matches and use the recording as a training aid. Also YouTube Coaching Videos.
- decided on and arranged away netball weekends at Keele University and Conover
- decided on awards for this presentation evening
- consumed many scones, flapjacks and biscuits with large amounts of tea and coffee.

All Committee members except Emma McKeever have agreed to remain on the committee, subject to the wishes of this meeting. Emma was one of the founding members of the Committee, and we would like to record our thanks to her for her work on the committee over the last five years.

We have a volunteer to take Emma's place. Jon Coaffee-Moran.

Two committee members have indicated that they will not be continuing on the committee after next year' AGM. They are our Treasurer Andy Frost and our Safeguarding Officer (SGO) Rhiannon Plews. The SGO is a committee-nominated post, and we already have a volunteer to take over from Rhiannon. During the coming months Rebecca O'Sullivan will complete the necessary training and understudy Rhiannon. We will be actively looking for a new Treasurer from this point onwards. There must be people among our parents who have the necessary skills and time to take on this role.

Item 5. Financial Statement from the Secretary

I very much regret that we are unable to produce accounts for the 2022-23 financial year in time for this AGM. This is owing to the indisposition of the Treasurer. Meanwhile I can offer this overview.

The Club continues to be on a very sound footing. The bank balance at 31.08.2023 was £29,182.75 of which £2,340.50 is held in the Club's Hardship Fund.

For comparison, the bank balance at 31.08.2022 was £16,064.78 of which £1,700.00 was held in the Hardship Fund.

The reasons for our improved finances over the 2022-23 year are:

- Increase in membership from 160 to 180 in round figures (giving us an estimated £400 per month extra income).
- We increased fees to their present levels in September 2022, expecting a substantial increase in Sports Hall fees from Sept 2022 on account of the energy crisis. For reasons we have chosen not to enquire into, this increase did not materialise. We suspect that the School would have been embarrassed to put up the hire fees while the floor of the Sports Hall when there had been complaints from users (ourselves and others) about the condition of the floor which caused safety concerns.

The present healthy balance does not take account of start of season liabilities:

- hire of Sports Hall for the Autumn Term is now expected to be more expensive. The UOB School has now had the Sports Hall resurfaced at a cost of many thousands of pounds. An increase in fees is expected and would be justified. we do not yet know the hourly cost as we have not yet received an invoice.
- league entry fees for 2023-24 had not yet been paid. These amount to several thousands of pounds.
- trophies for this presentation evening had to be purchased at costs increased from last year.
- the committee has decided that at long last coaches' travelling expenses should be paid. This will not be a trivial expense. We will be following the HMRC standard of allowing 45p per mile.

We have been able to hold the fees for this year at the present level, and will keep them at this level for as long as possible, given the Club's surplus.

I am disappointed that the Hardship Fund, which we took a lot of effort to set up, has not been more utilised. We have made a few small grants and are supporting a limited number of members with part of their subscriptions. When parents have (for whatever reason) built up arrears of subs, we make them aware of the Hardship Fund as a means of helping them to get their membership onto a good standing, but few seem willing to avail themselves of this resource. Whilst we are determined that the Fund should not be abused, we do want to see it used where it is needed.

That concludes the limited information that I have.

Once again an apology for the lack of formal accounts. The Accounts for the 2022-2023 financial year will be posted on the club's website as soon as they are available.

[The accounts are now available on the Documents page.]