

# **Birmingham City Netball Club**

## **Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 7:00pm at Selly Oak Methodist Church, Langleys Road, Selly Oak.**

Present: Dianne Barber (Chairman), Jonathan Barber (Secretary), Natalie Hodgkins, Rebecca O'Sullivan, Thomas Kirby and seventeen others.

1. Apologies: Jean Woodall-Llewellyn, Jeannie Burke, Rhiannon Plews, Ellen Dean
2. Matters Arising from AGM on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023:  
There were no matters arising.
3. Head Coach's Report  
Dianne gave a report on the performance of the Club during the 2023-24 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  
Thomas Kirby, treasurer designate, gave highlights of the accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024, which were made available at the meeting. The highlights are:
  - a. The Club's finances are extremely healthy, owing largely to the fact that Dianne and Jean take no remuneration for Coaching and never have done.
  - b. The bank balance at the year- end stood at £38,000 - of which £1,700 was held ring-fenced for the Hardship Fund. Turnover for the year was £52,000
  - c. Subscriptions accounted for around 80% of income, the majority of the remainder being from clothing sales and tour fees.
  - d. The largest expenditure item was hire of facilities at £12,500, followed by clothing purchases and cost of tours.
  - e. The club holds a large stock of kit, including new dry robes valued at £1,500.
  - f. Following questions from the floor by Charly Slater and others, Thomas and Jonathan mentioned initiatives that the Committee was taking to improve financial operation and governance in the Club. These include
    - Exploring the advantages of having a card reader to accept payment for kit
    - Setting up an interest-paying reserve account
    - Exploring the idea of the Club becoming a Registered Charity
  - g. The accounts will be posted on the Club's website.
  - h. Thomas Kirby was thanked for his work on the accounts and for taking over unofficially part way through the year.
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: Thomas Kirby. 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 four Committee members. Current committee members are Ellen Dean, Judith Guidotti, Natalie Hodgkins and Rebecca O'Sullivan. Rebecca has expressed willingness to take over from Rhiannon Plews who is stepping down as Safeguarding Officer. As this is an ex-officio Committee post, there is a vacancy on the Committee. Jonathan said that ideally we would like Year 6 or 7 to be represented on the Committee. Laura Barker volunteered to stand. In the absence of any other nominations, Natalie, Ellen, Judith and Laura were declared elected.

## 7. Proposed change to Rule 5.

- a. The committee has proposed a change to Rule 5 in order to emphasise that as a competitive Club we cannot accommodate members who wish to belong for training only and were unavailable or unwilling to play matches.
- b. The current rule 5 was read out:
  - Players should apply themselves seriously to the game of netball. They should regularly attend training and practice sessions and matches when selected. Players should also engage in activities outside of the Club to promote and maintain their personal fitness.
- c. The Committee's proposed replacement was read out:
  - As a competitive club, playing league matches is a core part of our activity. Players should apply themselves seriously to the game of netball and engage in activities outside of the Club to promote and maintain their personal fitness. They should regularly attend training and normally be available for matches when selected. Players who are unwilling or unable to do so may be asked to leave. The same applies to those who cannot be selected to play in matches because of lack of personal fitness or of ability in netball.
- d. Discussion ensued focusing on the last sentence of the proposed amendment, which some felt was discriminatory against players with disabilities. Jonathan explained that we supported the principle of inclusion. He referred to the following paragraph in the Club's Equality Policy document:
  - Netball is a competitive team sport. The Club caters for players of different abilities, working with them to improve their ability and to realise their potential, but our selection processes have to take ability into account.
- e. An amendment was proposed by Bethan Knight and Pippa Beard to replace the last sentence of the proposal with: "The same applies to those who do not meet the competitive standard required by the Club." This was agreed by common consent.
- f. Thomas Kirby proposed adding at the end: "as determined by the Head Coach." This was also agreed by common consent.
- g. It was agreed by common consent that Rule 5 should now read:
  - As a competitive club, playing league matches is a core part of our activity. Players should apply themselves seriously to the game of netball and engage in activities outside of the Club to promote and maintain their personal fitness. They should regularly attend training and normally be available for matches when selected. Players who are unwilling or unable to do so may be asked to leave. The same applies to those who do not meet the competitive standard required by the Club, as determined by the Head Coach.

8. Any Other Business

- a. Following discussion it was agreed that further efforts would be made to publicise the Hardship Fund to ensure that it was used to the maximum extent within the agreed framework.
- b. Helen Wilson raised questions about the Club's website and suggested looking at another Club's website. Jonathan said that we had engaged freelance designer Nigel Linton to craft a new website for us using Wordpress. This will give us the professional look, functionality and flexibility that we require, including an e-commerce platform. We are in the process of migrating the website from our current web host IONOS (who had let us down so badly over the last year) to Hostinger. The costs would be considerably lower.
- c. Liz Somerville raised the question of getting additional coaching into the club. Considerations include:
  - Continuing to encourage senior club members to get coaching qualifications at Club expense (as we have done for Maddie McKeever). The downside of this is that we can lose them when they go away to University and find it hard to get them back afterwards, as their priority is then whichever adult club they play for.
  - In the medium term we need to find additional help and in the longer term replacements for Dianne and Jean to ensure the continuity of the Club.
  - finding good coaches who are prepared to make BCNC their main coaching activity. The Committee has agreed in principle to pay the going rate for their services (on a self-employed basis) and our financial surplus means that we could do this for a year or two without having to raise subscriptions. However in the longer term subscriptions would have to rise substantially.
  - It was agreed that the committee would focus on this matter at our next meeting and would advertise for new Coaches by a number of suitable avenues.

9. The meeting concluded at 7:45pm.

### Item 3. Chief Coach's Report by Dianne Barber

This report covers last season, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

As usual the year started with the Nottingham Tournament held in the first week of September. We have been going to this Tournament for well over 20 years. This was the third venue and it proved very unsatisfactory for cars with many supporters being given parking tickets because there was insufficient parking on site. We took three teams to this very tough tournament: Under 11, Under 12 and Under 13. The Under 11s won the Plate and the Under 13s were runners up in the Shield. Things were not going well for the organisers, and we came away with the wrong medals and none at all for the Under 13s. Thankfully we have medals for them now and the right trophy for the Under 11s.

Our U14 and U16 Regional Qualifying squads played at Nechells in the Autumn term, with the U16s finishing third and just failed to qualify.

We entered the Erdington Development League to give match practice to girls in Year 4 to Year 7 during the Autumn Term. Seven teams were entered and we played well despite coming up against national standard Sutton Giants in most sections.

We entered four teams into the adult Birmingham Netball League from our U15s to U18s. City 1 played their last year with the Club and carried on their winning ways, finishing as runners-up in Div 7. City 2 struggled, having lost four strong players who had won them promotion the year before. Some of them inert on to Linden as the team split up. City 3 and 4 (our year 10s, new to the BNL) did very well: City 3 winning Div 14 and City 4 finishing third in Div 16.

Three teams were entered into the Walsall Netball League (an adult winter league). The year 9As came up against girls three or four years older and tough club teams. The 9B team found the competition too much and suffered from lack of consistency in the make-up of the team. The year 8s finished a creditable fourth in their Division and learned a lot from the experience of playing older, faster players.

The Birmingham Intermediate League started in February but had the use of only five courts instead of ten at Birmingham University for half of the season. This meant that to start with matches were once a month instead of most weekends, as they were at the end. Instead of the usual pre-season Tournament, coaches were allowed to grade their teams. This resulted in our teams being in appropriate sections on ability, unlike previous years which were based on age group irrespective of ability. We entered ten teams (year 5 up to year 10). Four of them finished top of their divisions: U14A, U14B, U11 and U10. Four finished runners-up: U13, U12A, U12B and U11B and the other two (U15B and U15A) finished third. All teams played well and lost games were due to being against older/taller teams in their section. Poor umpiring was also a factor. The U15A were in a division with Regional Qualifying teams and did very well to finish third.

In Birmingham Summer League we entered only two teams as girls were doing GCSEs and A Levels. Our U15A finished second in Div 9 to an adult Sutton Town team. The U15B finished third in their division and really improved their play over the season.

Owing to the increased number of teams I found last year was the most stressful yet. Parents pushed for more leagues and tournaments to enter, causing impossible demands given our current resources and commitments. Tuesday training was extended with a session for Years 3 and 4, leaving Mondays free for Years 5 and 6. This was necessary with two teams in each year apart from Year 3.

We were unable to book netball weekends away last year because of other commitments, or to enter the Dudley Summer League which, after a change of weekday, clashed with our training sessions.

We had intended to finish the year with the Yendys Tournament in the first week of July; however the new Intermediate League rules did not allow us to say when we were not available, or to rearrange matches. To play in Yendys we would have had to forfeit ten matches that day and jeopardise the league position of all of our well-performing teams.

We have always prided ourselves in developing our girls in ways beyond just playing netball. Many of our senior girls have developed skills in coaching, umpiring and team managing by being Team Managers in the Little league, along with ex-BCNC players and parents. We are very grateful for all the work that our LL Team Managers have done for us this year, enabling us to introduce 100 girls to netball.

I would also like to thank my coaching team: Jean, Jeannie, Maddie, Liz, Charly and Judith, helped by Sophie and Megan. Also the Club Team Managers without whom we would not have been able to provide girls with the wide variety of matches: Thanks to Alex, Pippa, Vicky, Jennine, Kelly and Kiri.

#### **Item 4. Secretary's Report by Jonathan Barber**

My report will cover membership, the work of the Committee and some admin matters.

##### Membership

Overall club membership numbers have held fairly constant throughout the year at around 175.

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. This enables us to have two squads in each year.

We have between 19 and 22 players in all years with the following exceptions:.  
Year 3 – very few as is normal for this time of year, but increasing  
Year 7 – oversubscribed at around 25,

Year 12-13 – under 10 who fit in to cover absences in lower years.

We are looking to take on players in especially in Year 3, though we can take on really good players in any year up to 11.

The Little League had 100 members last year out of a maximum 100 (ten teams of ten players), and this was achieved without advertising. The Little League for 2025 has already 88 players on the books, counting players returning from last year and new applicants. There may be some fall-off from these numbers, but we expect that the majority who played last year will be playing again next year. This leaves us little scope to take on additional players especially in the older years. Most of our vacancies will be in year 3.

### Committee

Your committee has been effective and productive in furthering the activities of the Club. It has met five times since the last AGM. In addition one meeting had to be cancelled and business was handled by correspondence instead.

Highlights of the Committee's activities:

- co-opted Judith Guidotti to the committee to replace Jon Coaffee who resigned
- appointed committee members Natalie Hodgkins to be Kit Secretary and Ellen Dean to be Social Secretary
- appointed Thomas Kirby to be Treasurer-designate to take over from Andy Frost subject to the wishes of this AGM
- dealt robustly with problems concerning non production of Certificates for DBS and Coaching awards.
- appointed parent Team Managers for almost all teams
- clarified the roles of Coaches and Team Managers to ensure a consistent and professional approach and that everyone understood their remit within the Club. Role descriptions are on the website.
- engaged in a long-running struggle with our web host IONOS over the design of a new website. This has now been resolved. the one positive outcome is that we have a lovely new Club Logo designed by a freelance designer in Sri Lanka
- decided on and arranged an away netball weekend Condoover that took place last weekend
- decided on awards for this presentation evening
- revised a programme for Transforming the Club and taken some initial steps.
- consumed many scones, flapjacks and biscuits with large amounts of tea and coffee.

standing for election:

Chairman: Dianne Barber

Secretary: Jonathan Barber

Treasurer: Our current Treasurer Andy Frost has decided to step down at the AGM. We are very grateful for all the work he has done during his tenure. Thomas Kirby

has volunteered to stand for election as our new Treasurer. He has been working with Andy over the year and has produced the accounts for 2023/24.

#### SGO

Rhiannon Plews has been our SGO for many years and has done a very good job in the role. She has decided to stand down this year. We have identified a very suitable and willing volunteer to take on the role. This is Committee member Rebeca O'Sullivan, who will be an ex-officio Committee member from now on.

Committee members: Ellen Dean, Natalie Hodgkins, Judith Guidotti. There is one vacancy on the committee with Rebecca's appointment as SGO.

#### Admin matters

- supported five members through the Hardship Fund with a total of £680.00. we have a new web host and a new designer. We hope to have a new website this year.

#### **Item 5. Financial report by Thomas Kirby**

The Accounts are available as a separate document.