

Oxfordshire Badminton League–Minutes of the 2021 AGM held on 14 July 2021

The AGM started at 7.30pm and was held virtually due to Covid rules restricting the number of people permitted to gather (we organised the AGM based on the anticipated maximum attendance).

1. Chairman's welcome

The Chairman welcomed club representatives and thanked them for attending the virtual AGM, saying it was lovely seeing them as always. Judy asked that everyone stay on mute whilst we talked through the agenda and to raise hands to ask any questions as we went through the points. This would also give the Secretary time to capture comments.

Attendees were asked to provide their name, the club they were representing and, if there was more than one attendee from a club, the name of the nominated person who would vote on behalf of the club.

2. Attendees and apologies for absence

Fourteen of the twenty one clubs and nine of the ten Committee members attended so the meeting was quorate. Apologies were received from Bicester, The Park and Windrush and Committee member James Fisk.

Club/Committee	Club Attendee(s)	Club vote held by	No. of teams
Abingdon	Peter Browning	Peter Browning	12
Bicester	(apologies from Duncan Soanes)	-	1 (2)
Blewbury	Penny Brassell	Penny Brassell	1
Chilton	-	-	1
Deddington	-	-	3
Evenlode	Louisa Britton	Louisa Britton	14
Feathers	Stuart Quick	Stuart Quick	3
Gosford Hill	Ian Whitehead	Ian Whitehead	6
Harwell Laboratories	Janet Atkins & Dave Bolus	Dave Bolus	4
The Leys	Norman Stewart	Norman Stewart	8
North Abingdon	David Ainsworth	David Ainsworth	7
Oxford	-	-	6
Oxford Academy	Val Pomeroy	Val Pomeroy	1
Oxford Brookes	-	-	2
Oxford University	Pippa Sinclair	Pippa Sinclair	3
The Park	(apologies from Judith Ponsford)	-	2
Pegasus	Laura Huang	Laura Huang	4
St Clements	David Newman	David Newman	3
Thame	Rob Sutton	Rob Sutton	3
Wallingford	Karina Lewis & Charles Malyon	Karina Lewis	5
Windrush	(apologies from Brian Matthews)	-	10 (11)
		36M+18(19)+18(19)L+27,3D	99 (101)
Outgoing Committee			
Chairman (acting)	Judy Bendall	Casting vote only	
Treasurer	Ian Whitehead	N/A	
Secretary	Janet Atkins	N/A	
League Fixtures Secretary	Rosanna Berrows	N/A	
Committee	Peter Browning, Matt Jackson, Karina Lewis, Charles Malyon, Jo Simpson	N/A	

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3. Minutes of the 2020 AGM held on 12 August 2020 and matters arising

The Leys, St Clements and Feathers proposed and seconded (at the same time so have been jointly credited) that the accounts be accepted as a true record of the meeting. The vote was unanimous

Actions taken on the matters arising were:

- a) Some trophies are still outstanding despite contacting clubs so please return them to Peter Browning.
- b) The League Secretary informed clubs of the decision not to start in October and to review at a later date. This and additional updates sent to clubs during the season were placed in the document library of the OBL website.
- c) The Committee responded to the offer from Ian Ross to be co-opted onto the Committee by thanking him but declining the offer as, with minimal league activity anticipated during Covid restrictions it was felt that there was no need to expand the Committee of ten that had just been re-elected.
- d) The Committee sought guidance on governance within sporting bodies, referencing BE (which was mainly at Director level) and Sports England. The guidance for organisations such as OBL consisted of requirements and guidance. It was clear that we demonstrated good compliance (such as maintaining records, having a Constitution and Rules, communicating with member clubs, disclosing any conflict of interest, holding regular elections of Committee members although it was noted that several members had served for more than 9 years. Sports England recognises that at our level many people are volunteers with new volunteers often not being readily forthcoming and that the experience of serving members was in itself valuable). However, areas relating to ensuring we demonstrate compliance with equality and discrimination guidance did warrant further review. It was also agreed to circulate links to the Sports England document to clubs. **Action:** incoming Committee
- e) The League Anniversary event did not happen and is deferred post Covid. **Action:** incoming Comm

4. Chairman's report

"Sadly I have little to report on this season, as we were unable to continue the league from March 2020. Whilst a few clubs were able to play over the summer of 2020 we were unable to run the league for 2020/21. I believe a few clubs have started their summer club this year and are enjoying getting back on the court.

We had a good meeting on 16th June which was very well attended so thank you to all the clubs for your support and comments – it feels like these virtual meetings have been very successful. We discussed options and listened to the views of the clubs on whether or not we could run a 2021/22 league. We will discuss this later as we also have some updated news on some of the venues and will discuss the possibility of running the league again.

The Committee has still met up virtually over the past year to discuss matters, league structure etc. And again, I would really like to thank the whole of the Committee for all their help, support and dedication, giving up their free time to help support our league. Thank you everyone."

5. Treasurer's report

The accounts for 2020/21 were displayed on screen. The Treasurer advised that these had been reviewed by another Committee member and that with no league being run there were few transactions. Interest of £1.46 was the sole figure in the Profit & Loss account as engraving costs for the 2019/20 winners have not yet been incurred (some trophies have not been returned to Peter). Ian reported that, as at 31 March 2021, the League

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had net funds of £5,263. He advised that he was still anticipating a website set up and ongoing annual admin fee next season. Questions were invited on the accounts: none were forthcoming.

Ian proposed that, should the league run in 2021/22, the entry fees for this season only be nil as recognition of the disruption that Covid has caused and as our funds can currently support this. Abingdon seconded this and the proposal was carried unanimously.

6. League Reports for the 2020/21 season

The League Fixtures Secretary stated there were no league tables due to no league play. Rosie then updated the meeting about the Azolve reporting system: some of the requested improvements had been actioned (with many minor tweaks helping users) but the major changes (eg 3D scores validation) would be longer term and BE resources are limited. Peter suggested we review the continued use of Azolve at the end of this season.

Action: New Committee & clubs

7. Proposals for changes to Rules or Constitution

No proposals were received from clubs and none were proposed by the Committee.

8. 2021/22 season

Judy stated that the informal meeting held virtually with clubs on 16 June had been very helpful to gain an insight into the likely availability of venues and players for the season. At that point, there was uncertainty about when the St Helens sportshall (used by Abingdon, Evenlode and North Abingdon) would be available for any external users. Since then, the clubs have been advised that once they provide requested information then use from September is expected. She was aware that other clubs had also highlighted uncertainty with their venues and asked for an update. St Clements still have no venue and are consulting members, Pegasus are awaiting confirmation that they may book the Leisure Centre as are Windrush re the Witney LC (although they will have use of the school) and Oxford University do not expect clear guidance from the university on acceptable travel limits until term starts.

Judy advised that Badminton England had not updated their guidance for returning to play since the June meeting but that an update was expected after the government update on 19 July. (*Post AGM note – BE welcomed the return to play – more details on BE website*).

Clubs were invited to update the meeting about changes to their venue availability and the views of their members (having hopefully consulted them in more detail, an action from the informal June meeting) on trying to resume competitive badminton. These are shown in Appendix 1. Key points made included:

- An expected lack of ladies, impacting both ladies and mixed teams.
- The possibility some clubs may wish to withdraw a team that is not their lowest team in a discipline.
- Most clubs were anticipating having venues from September.
- The general view was that attempting to start league play in the Autumn (as long as considered safe) would not be unreasonable and further delay may not change the outlook significantly.

Following the updates from clubs there was agreement to attempt to run the leagues in 2021/22. There was then much discussion about when the fixture arrangement process should start due to uncertainty with players/venues. Peter asked when clubs wanted details of the divisions their teams were in to enable them to arrange fixtures as this would impact when entries were required by and when the Committee met to allocate teams to divisions. Views detailed in Appendix 2, of which the main points made included:

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- There is always some uncertainty. Will a few weeks delay make much difference in reality ie proceed with arranging fixtures and amend (with requested goodwill) if early season adjustments are required.
- Whenever the league starts, a club does not have to arrange fixtures at the start of that period.
- Smaller leagues might help with scheduling, especially if there were some delay to starting play.
- Would reverting to an in person fixtures meeting (traditionally late August) be helpful as then fixtures could be “done & dusted” on the same night. However, this would not be a Covid risk reducing action.
- In previous seasons, clubs have managed to arrange fixtures pre season when not all players have confirmed membership. Whilst this season there are added unknowns re some venues, will it make much practical difference if entries/arranging fixtures were delayed (by 2-3 weeks or maybe more)?

After listening to the views expressed by clubs, Peter asked “why not 31 July?” for team entries. It was eventually agreed (unanimously) that team entries will be requested by 31 July and that the season will operate as per our Rules ie from 1 October (or earlier if both clubs agree) to 31 March. **Action:** clubs

Consequently, the Committee will meet to allocate teams to divisions and notify clubs so that they can independently arrange fixtures. These would then be validated and published by early September.

Action: Committee

9. Election of the Committee for 2020/21

The OBL Constitution requires a minimum of 8 and maximum of 10 members, including Chair, League Secretary and Treasurer, with the Committee able to co-opt additional members. The acting Chairman passed control of the meeting to the Treasurer. Ian proposed Judy as Chair and she was unanimously re-elected.

Judy said that sadly both James Fisk and Jo Simpson had decided to step down and that Ian Ross had volunteered to stand for election. HLBC supported and Gosford Hill seconded Ian. Rosie wished to take a small break from being Fixtures Secretary for personal reasons but was happy to continue on the Committee and Charles had offered to step into the role. All other Committee members were willing to stand for re-election and so, if there were no more volunteers, Judy suggested that members be voted on en masse. Blewbury proposed and The Leys seconded. The Committee for 2021/22 is Chair Judy Bendall, Treasurer Ian Whitehead, League Secretary Janet Atkins, League Fixtures Secretary Charles Malyon with General members of Rosie Berrows, Peter Browning (also Website Administrator), Matt Jackson, Karina Lewis and Ian Ross.

Judy said she wished to record thanks to Jo and James from herself and the whole of the Committee for the support, hard work and dedication they have given to us over many years. They have both been a huge support and very valuable members of the Committee. She offered a small gift and so asked the clubs to show their support by clapping hands. Several clubs echoed the thanks and Jo said she had enjoyed her time helping on the Committee and wished the league well.

10. Any Other Business

The Secretary mentioned that Windrush had suggested (in a call from Brian to her) that clubs consider stating their Covid compliance measures on the team entry form. A box will be provided for clubs to do this. St Clements asked that, especially if there should be lots of self isolation during the season, that all clubs try to be more understanding when requests for rearranging fixtures arise. Clubs were reminded to leave capacity in March (maybe more than usual) to aid any rescheduling. Janet mentioned a comment from a recent Committee meeting that clubs will be asked to err on the cautious side when deciding how many and the mix of teams to enter for the coming season.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the AGM and for their helpful input and also Charles for organising the Zoom link and facilitating the meeting. Several attendees expressed their thanks to the

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Committee for keeping them informed during the season. Judy advised that the Committee would now discuss the date of their virtual meeting and immediate actions arising from the AGM.

The meeting finished at 8.50pm.

Janet Atkins

League Secretary, Oxfordshire Badminton League

5 August 2021

Appendix 1 - views about the 2021/22 season on behalf of clubs (listed alphabetically by club)

Abingdon – play at St Helens & hope to enter similar teams to before.

Bicester – not present , no further update received since view at June meeting (run summer club & play in September).

Blewbury – pleased to have use of refurbished village hall. September play anticipated.

Chilton –not present & no update provided.

Deddington – not present but email on 16/6 advised anticipate mens team viable but possibly not ladies or mixed.

Evenlode –play at St Helens. Think mixed, mens & 3D ok but lacking ladies & may ideally wish to withdraw higher team.

Feathers – venue ok & expect to enter same teams. Keen to resume play. FYI-Banbury league talking to clubs, expecting fewer teams & may not start until early October.

Gosford Hill – venue ok, Committee meeting next week, possible may pull 1 of 3 mens teams.

Harwell Laboratories – venue ok, hope similar teams but ladies may be a struggle (again).

The Leys – venue ok. Have 30 men & 14 ladies playing at summer club (with rotation & other Covid compliances) & hope similar teams to before.

North Abingdon – play at St Helens. Good response from members so hope similar teams..

Oxford – not present, no further update received since view at June meeting.

Oxford Academy – will not be entering their ladies team. Hope will be possible to participate in league socials? (Yes!).

Oxford Brookes – not present, no update received.

Oxford University – hopeful of usual venues & teams but awaiting Uni clearance re permitted play. As discussed at June meeting, will enter teams in expectation of all being well so please accept apologies if need to withdraw.

The Park – not present, no further update received since view at June meeting.

Pegasus – hope to start September as members keen to play, awaiting confirmation from venue re booking. Anticipate probably entering fewer teams (eg 1 mens, ladies & 3D).

St Clements – hope to have somewhere to play, will have more information in the next few weeks. Anticipate entering mens but not ladies or 3D.

Thame –venue ok (playing during summer operating an online booking system), likely to drop 1 of 3 mens teams

Wallingford –venue ok (first night of summer club this week, members only atm but hope to expand later, abiding by school Covid rules with masks etc,are progressing use of a QR code for booking in). Hope 1 mens, 1 ladies & 2 x 3D teams

Windrush – not present but Secretary summarised conversation with Brian. Has use of school (summer club is running with sanitiser/wipes provided by school) but not heard back from LC yet (hopes will after 19/7 when hopefully gym equipment is moved out of main sportshall). Several of higher division players will not be available this season & may struggle with ladies. Vijay asked members if they wish to play in September, more replies expected soon. Some players no longer in the area but those that are said keen to resume play. Do when advised “safe to do so”.

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Appendix 2 - views on the timing of the fixtures process for the 2021/22 season (views grouped by club and are not necessarily in chronological order if made several comments were made)

Abingdon: if league structure were released by 3rd/4th week of August then there should be scope to do. Possible alternative-consider start in November with an extension into April? One Abingdon delegate echoes the suggestion from some other clubs of having a fixtures meeting to “get it done” whereas the other said that was inappropriate as we are trying to reduce the risk of spreading Covid.

Evenlode: most of their members have been at summer club so could work with mid August.

Gosford Hill: how much will actually change if entries were delayed until late August? In normal times, arrange fixtures pre season when not all players have confirmed membership. If were to do in September, this may lead to short notice requests for rescheduling the initial matches which could be disruptive (also costly?) for clubs. Ian said some clubs are in a better position than others with what they know about venues and players-need to provide a balance for all clubs and a delay of 2-3 weeks may help those that are awaiting clarification.

HLBC: 2-3 weeks to arrange fixtures should be manageable as long as outside main holiday period (to avoid bottlenecks when waiting for responses to emails from fixtures secretaries).

The Leys: if time to arrange fixtures is, as it appears, limited then maybe consider reverting to a physical meeting. Norman wished to discuss with captains to assess their views. Rosie wondered about moving any fixtures meeting to nearer the start of the playing period, possibly widening the time period between arranging fixtures and playing matches.

Pegasus: as club starts in September their team entry will be speculative so now v late August makes no practical difference to their entry. Noted court bookings are dependent on teams.

St Clements: suggested smaller leagues might help with scheduling. He won't know players until 31/8 so first week of September would be helpful. David acknowledged larger clubs may need more time to sort all fixtures and so he would be willing to slot into remaining gaps.

Thame: that, whenever the league starts, a club does not have to arrange fixtures at the start of that period. Would like a 3 week window to organise. Maybe consider re-introducing the fixtures meeting.

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