

## **Berkshire Netball Chair's Report 2025/26**

It's been another year with so many different opportunities for people to get involved with netball in a variety of ways - as players, officials, coaches, team managers and other volunteering roles. There really is something for everyone! Berkshire Netball is pleased to support the clubs, leagues and other netball communities to deliver the sport we all love within the county.

A few things to mention from the past year:-

- Berkshire Junior Netball League enjoyed another successful year with teams from across Berkshire and beyond enjoying regular matches at various venues across the county. Once again Kate Maxfield and her band of helpers worked tirelessly to provide competitive opportunities for young players either in the winter or summer league.
- Berkshire Netball continued to run 2 x U13 and 2 x U15 Player Development Programmes as part of the England Netball Player Pathway as well as additional non-pathway training sessions for U13, U15 and U11 athletes. We welcomed Chloe Phillips to the coaching team. A number of Berkshire athletes were successful in gaining places with franchises either in NPL or PDP programmes as well as in U15 Academies.
- Berkshire Netball continued to provide financial support to clubs and individuals with a number of bursaries awarded during the year, particularly for new coaches being supported with the cost of their courses as well as financial support for clubs going to National Finals.
- Berkshire's Officiating Lead, Mary Stanley, together with her team of mentors and assessors, oversaw the development of many umpires within the county at all levels which has resulted in many new umpires gaining their qualifications this year
- Berkshire's NDO, Debbie Spindlow, has once again provided excellent support and advice to the Board as well as delivering her own extensive work programme within the county. We are very grateful to her for all her hard work and enthusiasm and unwavering support for Netball in Berkshire.
- Berkshire clubs were well-represented in the Netball South regional leagues again this season with Eagles, Royals, Athena Bs, Woodley Bs, Magnet and Finchampstead all competing in various age groups. Eagles qualified for National Clubs Finals in both U14 and U16 age groups and Royals qualified at U16s. Eagles U14s finished 6<sup>th</sup> and their U16s finished 5<sup>th</sup>. Royals U16s finished 9<sup>th</sup>. Berkshire Netball were delighted to provide bursaries to help with the cost of attending the finals. In the Regional Open League Royals finished top of Division 1 and qualified to go to National Premier League play-offs where they were successful in gaining a placing for 2026/27 in Division 3 so many congratulations to them.
- Wellington College U19s qualified through the county and regional rounds to go on to play at the National Schools Finals in Sheffield to represent Berkshire and Netball South.
- Berkshire officials have once again been heavily involved with the NSL this season fulfilling roles as technical officials/umpires etc. and more recently have been volunteering at the Commonwealth Games, with Toni Brunsdon chosen as one of the Technical Officials for the final.
- Our Safeguarding Officer, Christina Turton-Berenger, has been busy keeping everyone up to date and supporting all our teams/leagues to ensure they are compliant with EN requirements.
- Last but not least, in England Netball's Centenary year, Berkshire Netball supported two teams to represent the county at the England Netball Masters Tournament which took place over the weekend of 11/12 July in Brighton. We entered an Over 40s and an Over 50s team made up of players from all over the county. They had a fantastic weekend of netball and fun and new friendships made. The Over 40s finished 9<sup>th</sup> out of 17 teams and the Over 50s were victorious in the final to become champions with Board member Debbie Horn as part of their squad.

Berkshire Netball was pleased to be able to keep its fees at £0 for 2025/26 which was agreed by the members at the AGM and we intend to do the same for 2026/27.

Thank you to everyone on the Board and to everyone involved with netball in Berkshire and to all the amazing people who help to make all of this happen. The dedication and hard work of all those who help to deliver netball in the county is undoubtedly appreciated by all of those that benefit from it.