



**Berkshire Netball**  
**Minutes of Annual General Meeting**  
**Held on Thursday 31 August 2023**  
**St. Annes Manor Wokingham**

**Present:** Sarah Feast (Chair) BNMB, Julie Arnold (Secretary) BNMB, Mary Stanley (Umpiring Secretary) BNMB, Kate Maxfield (Competitions), Debbie Spindlow (Berkshire NDO), Toni Brunsdon (Woodley), Sue Garrett, Jane Bedwell (Charters Triple SSS NL), Michelle Benson (BDNL), Sarah Blake (Magnet), Karen Bossom (Woodley), Vicky Bowyer (Wokingham), Jacqui Cossar (Rushmoor), Maria D'amaro (Eagles), Helen Gates (Wokingham), Sarah Lane (Finchampstead), David Lyons (Laurel Park), Vicky McLaughlin (RDNL), Su Oliver (Elements), Tracey Woods (BDNL), Zoe Wright (Newbury Juniors), Claire Yeoman (Royals), Louise Gelhardt (Maidenhead DNL), Tracey Carter (BPNL)

**1. Apologies:** Debbie Horn (BNMB Publicity), Kerry Grundy (BNMB Coaching), Charlotte Maxfield (BNMB Treasurer), Sandra McCarthy, Andrea Ford, Ali Stamp, Zoe Perks

**2. Minutes of Last AGM (040922):**

The AGM minutes from 040922 were accepted as a true record of proceedings.

Proposed: Claire Yeomans

Seconded: Jane Bedwell

**3. Matters Arising:**

There were no matters arising.

**4. Officers Reports:**

**a) Chair's Report - Sarah Feast**

SF reported welcomed everyone to the meeting and commented that it was great to meet face-to-face for the first time since the pandemic.

Netball seems to have continued to go from strength to strength this season and SF thanked everyone who has worked so hard to support the game we all love and to make it such a success.

Berkshire Netball has continued to provide great opportunities for our junior netballers through our very successful Junior League which is the envy of many other counties and has seen more out-of-county teams join this year. Not only do we run a Winter League but also a friendly Summer League to provide continued competition throughout the year. Thanks to our Competition Secretary, Kate Maxfield, and her sub-committee for the incredible amount of work that goes into ensuring that the league runs smoothly and thanks also to all the clubs who support it.

Berkshire clubs and schools were once again very well represented at the National Finals in their respective competitions with Eagles going through from the Netball South competition in both U14 and U16 age groups, finishing runners up in the U14 competition which was a huge achievement. Wellington College and The Marist reached the finals of the National Schools competition at U19 and U16 age groups respectively having qualified through the county and then regional rounds.

Congratulations also to Eagles Netball Club's first team on gaining promotion from Division 3 to Division 2 in their first season in the National Premier League. Congratulations also to Eagles' coach Lisa Wayman who won the award for Coach of the Year – Juniors at the Netball South One Awards and will go on to represent the region at the national finals. We wish her well.

Berkshire's Umpiring Secretary, Mary Stanley, continued to oversee the development of many umpires within the county supported by a dedicated team of mentors and assessors. This resulted in a significant number of new Into Officiating and C award umpires gaining their qualifications during the 2022/23 season. Many of them gained experience and were mentored at the Berkshire Junior Netball League matches during the winter and summer as well as at local league matches. Congratulations to Mary who very deservedly won the Officiating Award at the Netball South One Awards and will go on to represent the region at the national finals. Good luck Mary.

Technical Officials from Berkshire have once again been heavily involved with Superleague and Roses fixtures this season. Congratulations to all those that have been selected to officiate. It's very reassuring to see familiar faces helping to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

England Netball's Development Officer for Berkshire, Debbie Spindlow, has continued to deliver her EN work programme within Berkshire with her usual infectious enthusiasm and passion. Amongst other things Debbie organised the Berkshire Schools Games finals, oversaw the delivery of various Back to Netball, Walking Netball and Netball Now sessions and was a fountain of knowledge for all things netball! She also organised some very popular Watch Parties for the recently Netball World Cup held in South Africa, which were enjoyed by many local fans. Debbie has also provided an enormous amount of support to help leagues within the county to negotiate their way through some challenging issues. She has provided much-needed support to me over the season and is always ready with a listening ear and some sound advice whenever I need it. Thank you Debbie.

Julie Arnold from Berkshire Netball Management Board has continued to represent Berkshire Netball on the Netball South Regional Management Board. Toni Brunson who is also based in the county sits on the NSRMB as Vice Chair and Carly Reeve sits on the Competitions Technical Support Group, so Berkshire is well-represented.

Berkshire Netball's U13 and U15 Player Development Programmes (formally known as Satellite and County Academies) ran successfully again this season with a number of athletes being selected for franchise programmes and the Surrey Storm U15 School Games squad. Berkshire continued to be represented on the Surrey Storm Talent Management Group by myself.

Berkshire Netball has continued to provide financial assistance through its bursaries for coaches, officials, players and clubs to help support development within the county.

The leagues in Berkshire were once again very active, not only providing playing opportunities but also supporting umpire development through mentoring and assessing at league matches. My thanks goes to all the committee members who work tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of these leagues.

In addition to the Berkshire winners at the Netball South One Awards already mentioned, it was great to see Liz Creighton pick up the award for Coach of the Year – Adults and Christina Turton-Berenger and Kate Maxfield picking up Long Service Awards. There were also numerous nominees from Berkshire who were shortlisted for awards so congratulations to everyone whose volunteering was recognised at the regional event.

Finally another BIG thank you to the Board and to everyone involved with netball in Berkshire – leagues, clubs, parents, volunteers - all the amazing people behind the scenes who help to make netball happen. Let's hope we have another successful season 2023/24.

KM thanked all the Coaches who had worked tirelessly to help facilitate Junior netball in Berkshire. The Junior League has continued to thrive offering competitive matches for 91 Junior teams and with the introduction of an U19 League we have 20 more teams participating than last season. Berkshire are very proud to promote and financially support this League for the benefit of development our grass root Junior players and continue to offer a competitive platform within a safe environment for players between the ages of 10 – 19. This is ever more crucial with the continuing rise of women's football. Many venues have increased their costs, some substantially and to ensure netball continues to be accessible for all, supporting the Junior League will remain a priority.

Congratulations to all the teams that participated and particular to those who medalled. The U19 League winners were Bs who went on to secure a Regional U19 place. The U19 League will continue to be the entry route for any Berkshire based Club that wishes to enter the Regional League.

2021 - 2022 – 3 venues – 24 weekends – 76 teams (from U11 to U16) = 400+ fixtures, 760+players

2022 - 2023 – 5 venues – 25 weekends – 91 teams (U11 to U19) = 518 fixtures, 900+ players

2023 - 2024 – 7 venues – 25 weekends – 99 teams (U11 to U19) = 700 fixtures, 1000+ players

Listing to Club requests, we will be using 2 new venues for the forthcoming season, one in Newbury and one in Maidenhead. Whilst we will facilitate junior netball to the highest standard possible, we will encourage the development of players, coaches and umpires, but also never losing sight of the game-changing effect sport brings to our lives.

We will have new teams next season, joining from other Counties:

5 Ways (Sussex), Surrey Heath (Surrey), Tadley (Hampshire), Poole (Dorset)

I would like to thank Debbie Horn for her continued support all things technical, and Kerry Oliver who has taken the job as Junior League Umpiring Secretary, with a view to supporting and developing our younger umpires, under the guidance of Mary Stanley.

We have run a successful friendly league over the summer using St Neots, The Holt (Wokingham, a new venue with new courts) and Bishopsgate School, with very favourable and positive feedback.

The County Round of National Schools was held at Theale Green School and my thanks go to the Board Members who assisted with a smooth running of the competition. Congratulations to the Schools, who then went on to represent Berkshire at the Regional Schools Round:

U14 Winners – Wellington - Runners Up – The Marist

U16 Winners – The Marist - Runners Up – Wellington

U19 Winners – Wellington - Runners Up – The Marist

U16 The Marist and U19 Wellington teams progressed through the Regional round and were represented at the National Schools Finals.

The 2023/24 County Round of National Schools is scheduled for Saturday 7 October at Theale Green School. Mary Stanley is sourcing Umpires and Mentors. The top 2 will then progress to the Regional Round scheduled for the 4 February 2024. The National Finals are scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

Finally, the Board took the decision to support Berkshire Premier Netball League programme, and I am currently sourcing venues and fixtures. Sarah Feast and I have worked with them to revise the Rules and Regulations and it has been agreed that BNMB will facilitate a Berkshire Clubs qualifying tournament at Wellington on Saturday 21 April, with the subsequent winner representing Berkshire at the Regional Play Offs.

#### c) **Coaching Report – Kerry Grundy**

In the absence of KG, JA reported that Berkshire have now supported a number of coaches through the Bursary Scheme that is available. This has helped Clubs and projects increase their coaching staff. If any budding coaches would like to apply for assistance through a Bursary application, the required form to complete is available on the Berkshire Netball website.

#### d) **Officiating – Mary Stanley**

MS reported that the 2022/23 season has been fantastic season with regards to Officiating with a record number of candidates taking assessments and passing.

### **Into Officiating.**

All courses are now online and have been well attended by Berkshire candidates. These candidates completed the 2-part course and have been picked up by their leagues and have followed on with mentoring sessions. This has been so successful that this season alone we now have 83 new Into Officiating umpires. My grateful thanks go to Bracknell, Charters, Reading, Newbury Leagues, Teams Laurel Park, Wokingham and B's for helping these new umpires get on to the Umpiring pathway.

I have recently heard that the fee for these online courses is increasing by £5.00 to £50.00 per candidate.

### **New Assessors**

Following from last season's mentoring workshop run by Gary Burgess, a group of volunteers signed up for the training to take the qualification to become an EN Assessor.

With support from the County I am very pleased to say that Toni Brunsdon and Clare Van Spall are now qualified Into Officiating Assessors. This will add so much support to the Assessors we already have. 2 further candidates are in the pipeline to qualify this coming season.

### **C Award**

Our volunteers in the leagues and clubs have also been very busy supporting the candidates who wished to progress to the C award qualification. Once the C award course is attended, Learners gain practice on leagues or training matches. They are then required to take an online question paper and keep a Log book of matches umpired. As a result of this support network we have 27 new C awards in the County.

### **New Assessor**

As a result of all the assessments conducted it has been possible to support Toni Brunsdon in her aim to be a C award Assessor which she gained at the end of the season.

### **Progression to B and A award**

Berkshire are always keen to support any umpire wishing to progress along the Officiating Pathway to a higher level. B award courses are held online plus a one day face to face workshop. All to be booked through EnGage with a C award pass and current membership.

The support for the written paper is also online as a virtual course run by Jane Kelloe.

With this help I am very pleased to advise you that all the candidates taking the paper In June 2023 obtained an A pass. Many congratulations to Clare Van Spall, Diane Blagg, Diane Long, Mary Kimani and Rebecca Bole.

### **National Schools**

Many Berkshire Umpires are always available for this competition. Every round they are given support by Mentors, from the County Round through to the National Event.

Congratulations to Helen Turton who umpired one of the Finals at the National event.

This date for this year is Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October at Theale Green School. I have received many positive replies to my requests for umpires and the numbers look good to manage all the courts on the day. If anyone has not replied and would like to be involved, please let me know.

### **World Cup**

Some of our Board Members managed to get out to South Africa to watch the matches. To be second in the World is a great result.

Also the Youth Commonwealth Games were held in Tobago with two umpires involved from the UK. Over the Summer months applications have come in for assessing at Into and C award level, so it is encouraging even when the leagues are not playing that candidates are still thinking about taking an umpire award.

Thank you for all the support everyone has given to me to make the 2022/23 season so successful.

### **e) Development Report – Sarah Feast**

SF reported that once again we have had a successful year running two U13 Player Development Programmes and two U15 Player Development Programmes as part of England Netball Player Development Pathway.

The two U13 PDPs were held at St Neot's School on Thursday evenings with Tina Turton-Berenger and Tina Wood taking one group and Kate Maxfield and Marina Bignell taking the other on alternate weeks. There was some movement of athletes between the two groups over the course of the programme as athletes progressed at different rates so we could ensure that athletes were training with others of a similar ability. As part of the programme there was an opportunity for some of the athletes to participate in Play Days against other PDPs from other counties which provides a good benchmark for how the athletes compare to their peers within the Surrey Storm feeder counties.

The two U15 PDPs ran weekly at Wellington Health & Fitness Club on Thursday evenings coached by Georgie Maxfield, Kate Maxfield and myself with support from Tina Wood every other week. In January we nominated 13 of our U15 PDP athletes to attend trials for Surrey Storm's U15 Academy of which 11 were offered places which was a great result. 1 decided not to accept her place but the other 10 enjoyed monthly training before the training group was whittled down to the final competition squad which I'm delighted to say included not only two of this year's cohort but a significant number of last year's cohort who were selected into Surrey Storm's U17 and PDP programmes at their trials last September.

In April we took one U13 and one U15 squad to the Bedfordshire Invitational Tournament which was attended by 16 squads in each age group from PDPs across the country. This was a great test for our athletes and provided the opportunity for them to compete against a variety of styles of play. The U15 squad finished 3<sup>rd</sup> overall and the U13 squad ended up in the top 8.

We also took two U15 squads to the Surrey Storm Play Day at Surrey Sports Park on 1<sup>st</sup> May. This was attended by PDP teams from Sussex, Hampshire and Surrey as well as coaches from Surrey Storm who were on the lookout for talented athletes to attend their U17 trials. Berkshire's Tobi Adejuwon was selected as the Player of the Tournament and won a Mikki Austin signed dress and her team were the overall winners of the Play Day.

The selection process for the 2023/24 U15 PDP has already begun. Supported by selectors from Surrey Storm (including Director of Netball, Mikki Austin) a screening event was held on 29<sup>th</sup> June. The purpose of this was not only to identify athletes to progress to the next stage of the selection process for Berkshire but also to identify athletes to be invited to trial for Surrey Storm U17 in September. It was hoped that by holding this screening event it would reduce the number of county eligible athletes applying directly to Surrey Storm for their U17 trials. Over 90 athletes were in attendance and a number were asked to apply for trials for Surrey Storm and a number were selected to attend the final Berkshire trial on 28<sup>th</sup> September. Trials for the U13 PDP are taking place on 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> September.

I have continued to be part of Surrey Storm's Talent Management Group along with representatives from other counties that are aligned to Surrey Storm. This is a forum for us to share ideas and to be kept informed about plans that are being put together by the franchise that will impact on the County programmes. We are also there to check and challenge decisions and actions being taken and to try to influence and change some of the processes in place to ensure a fair and equitable pathway for all athletes.

Finally, it was fantastic to see a number of former Berkshire academy athletes featured in the Roses squad at the Netball World Cup and in the England and Scotland Fast 5 teams at the Commonwealth Youth Games in Trinidad and Tobago. Hopefully they will have inspired the next generation of talented youngsters to work hard to achieve their dreams.

Our programmes are looking good and we have some exciting athletes coming through who we hope to see racing up the performance pathway in the next few years.

#### f) **Financial Report – Charlotte Maxfield**

In the absence of CM, SF presented the draft accounts for the 2022/2023 Season. It was agreed that for the 2023/2024 season, the Membership would be waived. Karen Bossom asked if this applied to all Clubs participating the Berkshire or whether the Clubs joining from outside the County would pay anything additional. All Clubs would be pay the same with no additional costs. Sue Garratt asked when would the Accounts are audited for this year and if there could be an approximation of expenditure breakdown made available – i.e. what is to come and for what.

**Action: C Maxfield**

No issues with the 2021/2022 Accounts and they were approved by Woodways Accountancy.

**g) Publicity Report – Debbie Horn**

In the absence of DH, JA presented her report.

Berkshire Netball website continues to host information about netball in the County. Social media continues to be a great medium of communication for up-to-date news and information, with our most popular posts often about umpiring success! Thanks to KM and SF for updating Twitter (now X) and Facebook. Our Facebook group for Berkshire Netball Umpires has proved invaluable for clubs to find umpires for netball fixtures for all leagues in Berkshire. It's a forum for sharing information about umpiring courses and umpiring questions, teams can post if they need an umpire or if they are an umpire looking for games. Please follow or like our social media accounts so that information reaches as many people as possible. [www.berkshirenetball.co.uk](http://www.berkshirenetball.co.uk)

[www.twitter.com/BerksNetball](https://www.twitter.com/BerksNetball) - Up 12% to 1,462 followers

[www.facebook.com/BerkshireNetball](https://www.facebook.com/BerkshireNetball) - Up 19% to 468 followers

[www/facebook.com/groups/berkshirenetballumpires/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/berkshirenetballumpires/) - 384 members

[www.instagram.com/berkshirenetball/](https://www.instagram.com/berkshirenetball/) - Up 60% to 550 followers

[www.threads.net/@berkshirenetball](https://www.threads.net/@berkshirenetball) - 52 followers

Thank you to Clubs, Schools and Committee Members who have contributed.

If your school, club, league has any news, forthcoming events or interesting information, along with photos that you would like us to publish on the social media sites please contact me at [berkshirenetballpublicity@gmail.com](mailto:berkshirenetballpublicity@gmail.com).

**h) Berkshire Netball Development Officer Report – Debbie Spindlow**

DS reported on her achievements throughout the season. Highlighting her Objectives: Attract and Aspire Participants into Programmes; Income Generation and Target Areas of High Deprivation.

781 Participants involved in Back To Netball, Netball Now, Walking Netball and Netball Youth Camps

333 New participants who had not played any netball in the last 12 months.

£7595 made from events, camps and coaching sessions, which goes back to EN.

2 new projects have been established in 2 high deprivation areas, i.e. Slough and Reading. Over 50 people have attended with 2 now working on their Level 2 Coaching.

Other Highlights – DS has been doing various radio interviews, following the success of the Commonwealth Games. World Cup Netball watch parties were held in the Walkabout in Reading. U12 Social Festival was held with the support of DH, KG and others. Netball Camps have gone well with good attendance. I delivered a Walking Netball Host Festival and have continued to support local leagues with any concerns they have.

Toni Brunson thanked DS for her continued enthusiasm in promoting netball within the County where she does an amazing job.

The Reports were then accepted by all Members present.

**5. League Reports:**

All Berkshire League Reports are available on the Berkshire Netball Website for those who wish to read them.

The Reports were then accepted by all Members present.

**6. Accounts:** The Accounts were adopted. Woodways Accountancy were appointed as our Auditors. There was a proposal to leave the Berkshire County Membership Fee at Zero for the 2024/2025 season.

All the above were accepted by all Members present.

**7. Election of Officers:**

All current Officers were happy to restand:

Chair: Sarah Feast  
Secretary: Julie Arnold  
Treasurer: Charlotte Maxfield  
Competitions: Kate Maxfield  
Umpiring: Mary Stanley  
Coaching: Kerry Grundy  
Development: Sarah Feast  
Publicity: Debbie Horn

The Reports were then accepted by all Members present.

**SF Closed the meeting at 8.45pm**