

GLOUCESTERSHIRE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Chair report for GHA 2021 – 22 AGM on Thursday 19th May 2022

This will most likely be my last report as President although not because I am stepping down, but due to the proposed adoption of a new Constitution which replaces this role with that of Chair. However, more on that topic later in this report.

The 2021 – 22 season has seen an almost full hockey programme since the curtailed season of 2019 – 20 when the Covid pandemic first struck. It has been great to see the Player Pathway in operation again with DCs and ACs taking place and county teams playing other counties. The season has also seen a full set of schools tournaments as well as clubs Festivals for the U8s, U10s and U12s as well as the Gloucestershire rounds of the EH In2Hockey competition for U10s and U12s. Seeing all the young players back on the pitches with the enthusiasm they bring has been wonderful and uplifting. Mind you Covid has still impacted us from time to time, in my case when I was due to run the U10s In2Hockey, so my thanks to Sara Thompson of Lansdown and Liz of Waltham Cheltenham Juniors who stepped in at the last minute.

At the other end of the age range the Gloucestershire Masters A and B teams entered the EH over 60s cup and the A team reached the semi-finals of the Plate. So it was great to see the county spanning the spectrum of hockey in England.

This season has also been the first with the new EH governance structure in place, something which has taken away any responsibility for league, umpiring and discipline (I will not comment on GMS!) from the counties and moved this to the West Area. This has not been a huge change for Gloucestershire as league and the detailed umpire organisations were already separate and with Mike Sheppard still a committee member there has been a flow of information about officiating.

However, the organisational changes have had an impact as the flow of more general information from West has been rather restricted with the only involvement for GHA being to have representatives on the West Junior Competitions Committee and the West Masters Committee. However, it is understood that this is going to change once the new constitution is adopted though in what form is yet unclear.

In respect of the GHA Committee there has been drafted a new complaints procedure the need for which was highlighted by an issue that arose during the season and which was eventually resolved after a long and difficult process. There have been 3 committee meetings to maintain the oversight process, but generally it has been quite quiet.

On a wider front as part of the EH activities to restructure the county organisations GHA (primarily myself) has been participating in the County Standing Committee National Working Group, which has initially been focused on drafting the new standard model constitution for counties. Gloucestershire has had a useful input to the document and a final version was issued and approved by the EH board in February. However, when this was then distributed more broadly to all the counties a number of

concerns were raised. These were minor, but a further revision was then released and it is this one that is proposed for adoption.

There has also been an activity centred on deciding into which Areas and Counties clubs would be placed. A list of clubs has been completed and some of the county representatives have commented on the county assignments. Eventually EH will decide to which Counties Clubs will be allocated and in the case of Gloucestershire this will likely see the men's clubs in the south of the county that had been affiliated to Gloucestershire move to Avon.

Once this is all complete counties will be integrated into the contact management system so they have the links to the Clubs within their remit. The Working Group is now looking at Officer roles and responsibilities, self-employment guidance (expenses and remuneration) and the creation of a county handbook.

Looking to the future EH are already working on new objectives around ED&I, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and counties will have a major role in delivering this with a focus on schools and state schools in particular. Counties are also seen as having a significant role in the Talent Strategy and the development of Masters hockey so there is much to do and we clearly are going to need more volunteers to undertake all this. So if you know someone who might like to get involved please let us know.

Finally my thanks to all those on the Committee who have contributed this season and particularly Shaun Cullimore for keeping the finances straight; James Doughty and Helen Jefferies for the Player Pathway, Lisa Lundie for the schools tournaments and my eternal thanks to Andrew Hopcraft for volunteering to become Secretary.

Ian Harvey
Gloucestershire HA President
16th May 2022

(See next page for the new constitution)

Adoption of new constitution.

England Hockey has issued a new county constitution template for all counties to adopt or to amend subject to approval by EH.

As part of the AGM process this year, county representatives had to commit to adopting that new constitution so they could then be approved to vote at the AGM. This GHA duly did and a representative (myself) then attended the EH AGM on 15th March.

GHA now needs to adopt this constitution as it will be a condition of affiliation to England Hockey that counties have a constitution that is in line with the issued document.

In many ways this is timely as it had been identified several seasons ago that the old constitution needed updating. The new constitution brings a number of changes, principally:

- Adds to the objectives the need to deliver as practical the aims of EH delegated to the counties
- Includes the commitment to compliance with EH policies and procedures
- Adds the elements of equality, fairness and respect
- Redefines membership so that only clubs can vote
- Reduces the list of Officers and separates these from the committee members.
- Limits Officers to holding the same position continuously for no more than 9 years.
- Defines the make-up of the General Committee and the recommended positions aligned to the new structure with the Area.
- Introduces a number of administrative requirements and updates the language associated with those that are not changing.
- Ends honorariums for committee members except by resolution of a General Meeting

These changes are seen by the committee as positive and will align Gloucestershire with the other counties in England. Over time this will likely evolve as the impact of the new responsibilities becomes clear. It is therefore proposed that this be adopted.

It should also be noted that due to the last item in the bullet points above on remuneration GHA has paid all outstanding honorariums this season up to date. Going forwards though it is clear that compensation for the time involved in many of these roles will remain appropriate, but the opportunity for anyone to benefit should be made available. As a result there is a resolution included in this AGM that would allow Officers to take on tasks that would receive remuneration. The tasks and levels of remuneration are defined and will be advertised. The roles will be open to any applicants including Officers and Committee members. Selection based upon suitability for the role with preference being given to applicants from those outside of the Officers and Committee and a Sub-committee (3 people) of those with no conflict of interest to make selection.

Ian Harvey
16th May 2022