

GLOUCESTERSHIRE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Chair report for GHA 2022 – 23 AGM on Wednesday 17th May 2023

Firstly I would like to thank all the Committee members for their efforts throughout the season, without the support and commitment of everyone involved none of the hockey activities we deliver would be possible.

The 2022 – 23 season has been a complete one which has been great following all the disruptions from Covid over the last few years. It has been wonderful to see the County Hockey (Player Pathway) in full operation again with DCs and ACs taking place and county teams playing other counties. My thanks to the Administrators James Doughty and Helen Jefferies for their efforts and of course all the coaches who ran the training sessions and matches.

The season has also seen a full set of schools tournaments as well as Clubs Festivals which are of course close to my heart for the U8s, U10s and U12s. In addition, the Gloucestershire rounds of the EH In2Hockey competition for U10s and U12s. Seeing all the young players on the pitches with the enthusiasm they bring has been wonderful and uplifting. My thanks to all the clubs volunteers who stepped forwards to run the Festivals and assist me with the In2Hockey.

At the other end of the age range the Gloucestershire Masters players, both Women and Men, have been very active in Clubs and the associated competitions as well as in the Area and National sides (see Women's Masters report on the website). In the Women's Masters there have been no Gloucestershire teams fixtures, most of the players still being heavily involved in their Club teams. In the Men, the Masters Over 60s A and B teams entered the EH cup with rather mixed success. If you have seen the report on this, it expresses a rather pessimistic view of the potential to grow Masters hockey. However, it is a priority for England Hockey for Counties, please see more later in this report.

So it is great to see the county spanning the full age spectrum of hockey in England.

GMS has once again been the subject of much activity and comment. It seems to be progressing slowly, but the lack of an overarching IT strategy from England Hockey suggests the current issues more broadly are not going away any time soon. The latest example being a new system, Club Buzz to replace the Player Pathway system for County Hockey. In my role on the County Standing Committee National Working Group (CSC NWG) I have raised this, but as often happens they simply nodded to it!

The flow of more general information from West to Counties has continued to be rather restricted with the only involvement for GHA being to have representatives on the West Junior Competitions Committee and the West Masters Committee. Most of everything else either goes direct to Clubs and Schools from West or else down from EH.

In respect of the GHA Committee there has been one complaint to which there is reference in the Welfare Officer report; this was resolved, please see detailed report for more information. As regards Committee Meetings, there have 4 during the year to maintain the oversight process and the most

recent one led to a number of important discussions. These related very much to the EH objectives for Counties as well as a recognition of the financial and other pressures facing Players, Parents of Junior Players, Schools and Clubs.

This has led to the Committee formulating a draft Grants and Awards Policy to set targets and budgets for key areas of support. Specifically a hardship fund for Talent Academy players, grants for Schools and Clubs for nationally important competition entry fees, grants for coaches development in Clubs and Schools and covering the mandatory costs for County Hockey coaches. The exact figures for each fund are still under consideration taking into account the annual income from affiliation fees and the level of the reserves

In addition, EH want to see counties develop state school hockey, masters provision and ED&I (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion). Just before Covid there was an attempt by GHA to sponsor coaches to go into state schools, but the pandemic put an end to this initiative and since then attempts to find someone to take this forwards have failed. Similarly expanding Masters hockey and ED&I is something of an unknown. The demand though is clear even if the detail is missing and these would likely require seed-corn expenditure the costs of which are unknown.

As a result, the Committee needs to decide the overall strategy for the funding of existing activities such as County Hockey, Festivals and In2Hockey compared with implementing the new initiatives. This combined with determining how to recruit the volunteers to take forwards these new elements which must be the key objectives for next season and future years.

Beyond the GHA Committee I have been involved in the CSC NWG and have personally supported the development of the EH Membership Policy document as well as supporting a number of the forums organised for Counties.

The element of membership has proven particularly challenging for Gloucestershire because of the number of Clubs moving to adjacent counties. The lack of a final list with contacts was the main reason for the delay in requesting affiliation fees, which did eventually happen at the eleventh hour. Looking forwards the counties will be integrated into the contact management system so they have the links to the Clubs within their remit. The Working Group continues to look at Officer roles and responsibilities, self-employment guidance (expenses and remuneration) and the creation of a county handbook.

Looking beyond the immediate demands, EH are already working on new objectives around ED&I; counties will have a major role in delivering this with a focus on schools and state schools in particular. 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, Lindsay Ferguson and Nigel Sherwood for Mens Masters and Sally Privett for Women's and West Masters Committee membership, Graham Wayland for his work on Communications and of course Bob Moxom for his general support. Lastly, my eternal thanks to Andrew Hopcraft for being Secretary and chairing some of the sub-committees.

Ian Harvey
Gloucestershire Chair
15th May 2023