

Oxfordshire Badminton League–Minutes of the 2020 AGM held on 12 August 2020

The AGM started at 7.30pm and was held virtually and at a later date than usual due to Covid-19.

1. Chairman’s welcome

The Chairman welcomed club representatives and thanked them for attending our first ever Zoom AGM. Judy said that before continuing with business she would like to outline the protocol to help make this an easier and successful AGM. As we go through the agenda she would be handing over the different sections to the relevant people. Please would everyone press mute on their computer to avoid getting get any background noise. If attendees would like to comment or ask a question please can they use the chat area to type in their question and we will try to respond as we go along rather than everyone chatting at the same time. The intention is to take longer pauses so we can answer people’s questions so, if you need to talk, please unmute so we can invite you to speak. At the end of the AGM please could everyone unmute so she can take questions and also ask everyone for their 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. These details were recorded by Peter Browning who would also be administering the session (including sharing documents on screen to support the agenda items) in the absence of Charles Malyon who had set up the meeting.

2. Attendees and apologies for absence

Nineteen of the twenty one clubs and seven of the ten Committee members attended. Apologies were received from Committee members Charles Malyon, James Fisk and Matt Jackson.

Club/Committee	Club Attendee(s)	Club vote held by	No. of teams
Abingdon	Peter Browning	Peter Browning	12
Bicester	Anthony Lyle	Anthony Lyle	1 (2)
Blewbury	-	-	1
Chilton	Ian Ross	Ian Ross	1
Deddington	Ian Cartledge	Ian Cartledge	3
Evenlode	Stella Ackrell	Stella Ackrell	14
Feathers	Stuart Quick	Stuart Quick	3
Gosford Hill	Ian Whitehead & Somesh Sharma	Ian Whitehead	6
Harwell Laboratories	Janet Atkins	Janet Atkins	4
The Leys	Norman Stewart & Mark Flinders	Norman Stewart	8
North Abingdon	David Rowles	David Rowles	7
Oxford	Neil Clarke & Tom Hager	Neil Clarke	6
Oxford Academy	Laura Clarke & Val Pomeroy	Laura Clarke	1
Oxford Brookes	-	-	2
Oxford University	Matt Brint	Matt Brint	3
The Park	Steve Chown	Steve Chown	2
Pegasus	Laura Huang	Laura Huang	4
St Clements	David Newman	David Newman	3
Thame	Rob Sutton	Rob Sutton	3
Wallingford	Karina Lewis	Karina Lewis	5
Wantage	(Invited as a guest, may rejoin)	N/A	0
Windrush	Vijay Desor	Vijay Desor	11
		35(36)M+19X+19L+27 3D	100 (101)
Outgoing Committee			
Chairman (acting)	Judy Bendall	Casting vote only	
Treasurer	Ian Whitehead	N/A	

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Secretary	Janet Atkins	N/A	
League Fixtures Secretary	Rosanna Berrows	N/A	
Committee	Peter Browning, Karina Lewis, Jo Simpson	N/A	

3. Minutes of the 2019 AGM held on 12 May 2019 and matters arising

The AGM minutes were emailed to the notified Club Secretaries and were also available in the document section of the League website. It was proposed by Evenlode, seconded by St Clements, that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposal carried.

Actions taken on the matters arising were:

- a) As the 5D did not run this season, the decision about a potential entry from a Newbury team lapsed.
- b) Actions relating to Azolve (the on-line reporting system) continue, with some issues being resolved, others being added and some requiring further development.
- c) Proceeds from the 2019 OBL Social raffle were distributed. Donations were made to three of the eleven charities nominated by clubs (John Radcliffe hospital re head injuries, Footsteps in Dorchester and St Tiggywinkles).

4. Chairman's report

“We started the season off very well with lots of games being played. People were getting used to the new online reporting system, with clubs remembering to go back and agree the scores. This is still going to take time to get used to and we still have a few teething problems with the new system. Unfortunately we had to end the season slightly earlier due to the government guidelines on Covid-19 and also had no end of season presentation or AGM.

The Committee has met up a few times on Zoom calls and discussed and agreed how we were going to end the season and the best and fairest way to rank the clubs in the league. This was sent out to all clubs with the final decisions which we will go through later. I would like to thank everyone on the League Committee for all their hard work and commitment. It can be a thankless task at times and we have to make difficult decisions at times however we always try to be fair and consistent with a duty of care to our members.

We will discuss later tonight how and if we run a league this season due to the restrictions, club's venues, club membership and availability to play. Thank you to everyone and those who have attended tonight's AGM.

For information, I am on a Zoom meeting with Andrew Broadhurst and the Oxfordshire Badminton Association Committee on Wednesday. We also need to discuss the recent information from Badminton England. They have frozen membership prices for the 2020/21 season, provided a further 25% reduction in price in recognition of the lost playing time caused by lockdown and provided more time to pay (extending the payment date from 1 November 2020 to 1 January 2021 to help clubs).”

5. Treasurer's report

Peter displayed the accounts for 2019/2020 on screen. Ian, who had prepared the accounts, invited people to view these and drew attention to some of the figures. As at 31 March 2020, the League had net funds of £5,262 after a season in which income exceeded expenditure by £520, compared with a deficit of £364 for 2018/19. His notes explained that the main factors contributing to the surplus were significantly reduced costs offset by slightly reduced income (the presentation evening 2019 profit of £88 was down compared to 2018). No Bursaries were granted during the year, engraving costs were a lot less (due to a major overhaul of trophies in 2018/19) and there were no postage and stationery costs (due to on-line reporting). He advised that he was

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still anticipating a likely website set up & ongoing annual admin fee next season but at this stage was not aware of these costs. The impact of Coronavirus on the league and member clubs is unknown and as he wished to be cautious would propose that the Affiliation Fee should remain at £5.

Evenlode proposed the accounts be accepted, Feathers seconded this. The vote was unanimous agreement.

6. League Reports for the 2019/20 season

Judy invited Rosie to go through the league results prior to updating us about Azolve. Rosie thanked everyone for bearing with her in her first season as League Fixtures Secretary and also to Peter for his help as she took over the role from him and for working together to progress the on-line reporting project. Laura from Pegasus commented that she thought Rosie had done very well and this was sentiment was endorsed.

The Government introduced “no mixing” guidance effective from the evening of 16 March to try to reduce the spread of Covid-19. Rosie said that as the season had finished early the Committee had to reach a decision about the result of unplayed matches. Matches up to 16 March were arbitrated by the Committee based on the circumstances of those matches and, for matches from 17 to 31 March, an averaging method was used and league tables produced. She advised that some results were very close, especially in Mens division 2 where the final ranking was decided by reference to the number of wins of the teams. If anyone had any questions, please ask. Evenlode asked if the results would be sent to clubs - Rosie advised that they had been and were also on the OBL website.

Thanks were expressed to all teams for competing and the winners were congratulated. A virtual presentation (using on screen trophies) was made following the Azolve update. The 2019/20 winners were:

3 Discipline

Division 1	Abingdon A
Division 2	North Abingdon B
Division 3	Evenlode C
Division 4	Evenlode E

Mixed Doubles

Division 1	Abingdon A
Division 2	Windrush B
Division 3	Windrush C

Mens Doubles

Division 1	Abingdon A
Division 2	Abingdon B
Division 3	Pegasus A
Division 4	Evenlode B
Division 5	Oxford A

Ladies Doubles

Division 1	Abingdon A
Division 2	The Leys A
Division 3	Oxford A

Peter Browning requested that all clubs that had not yet returned trophies please contact him so he can get them engraved and subsequently presented to clubs at a later date. **Action:** Clubs & PB

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7. On-line Reporting system (item 8 on the agenda)

Rosie provided an update on the Azolve on-line reporting system and associated issues. Both she and Peter had continued to liaise with Badminton England representatives during the season to advise them of issues with the Azolve system to try to get these resolved. The majority of the initial teething problems have been sorted but other enhancements (including verifications that were reasonably anticipated to be within the original system) are ongoing, such as checks on the addition of input scores and the capacity to autofill scoresheets with player names. As users became more familiar with the input and verification process the number of user errors reduced. Thanks were expressed to those clubs who had returned the survey on Azolve usage to Matt Jackson as this had provided an insight into what mattered to the clubs. Peter reported on behalf of Matt that there had been several common themes expressed by clubs and that these had been advised to Peter and Rosie to either add to or reinforce items already on the list to be followed up with BE. Oxford (Neil) asked if the reports option will work in future – Peter hoped so and would continue chasing for it. He added that he and Rosie had produced internal reports to identify discrepancies such as the use of “unknown” player and other oddities. He expressed his hope that clubs will continue to be patient as we work to improve the system but admitted that it did at times feel as if OBL were effectively “early doctors” testing a prototype. Peter thanked Ian Ross for his offer to use “his other routes” to help reach appropriate BE people if this would help with progress. Oxford University said they had needed to reschedule several matches due to changes resulting from their venue and asked if clubs would in future be able to amend fixture dates without reference to the administrator. Peter explained that historically disputes had been caused by clubs not being aligned when dates had changed so this was why such changes will continue to be done centrally. Judy thanked both Rosie and Peter for their hard work in introducing and progressing on-line reporting.

8. The 2020/21 season (item 7 on the agenda)

Judy said that the BE guidance had not changed much since the last Committee meeting (in mid July) ie that badminton could be played in line with the BE pathway for the return to badminton which specified the requirements for Covid safe play and restrictions on types of play. The availability of venues seems to be a practical obstacle to many clubs being able to resume play as, whilst some clubs know if they can or cannot use their venue, other venues have not advised users. Some of the one court halls have been advised but it is thought the position should become clearer once schools have returned and leisure centre companies have formulated their policies. She also mentioned that a duty of care is owed to players, including those who may be vulnerable for whatever reason, and that a combination of factors needs to be considered when deciding what to do for the coming season. She believed that the OBL Committee view was probably not to run the league but very much wanted to hear the views of clubs tonight.

The views expressed on behalf of clubs and from individuals are in the Appendix but may be summarised as:

- There are too many unknowns to plan with sufficient certainty (venue availability and player willingness to play/travel is uncertain so the ability of clubs to consistently field teams is consequently unknown, impacting on allocating teams to divisions. Covid-19 infection levels may rise, causing Government guidance to change at short notice. A duty of care is owed to players and they must not feel any coercion to play to fulfil fixtures).
- Do not start competitive league play in October but review resuming league play later in the season. Matters for consideration include: alternative formats for a “one-year special season”, how to allocate “home” and “away” fixtures if venue availability were anticipated from different dates, consideration of an extended season and inclusivity (ie would it be right to run a league if not all clubs were able to compete) &, if it were run, how would this affect divisions for the following season as historically team

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allocation is predominately based on the end of the prior season results. Depending on how any play was organised it may be necessary to amend the Rules, which would require agreement via an EGM.

- Consider organising combined 3D/5D non club specific events at viable venues for interested players.
- Clubs could organise “friendly” matches if they wished.
- How will BE Insurance cover be impacted by Covid-19 and what is the insurance position if players (whether affiliated to BE as individuals or not) play as a small group of individuals in a non club venue?

After hearing from all clubs, it was unanimously agreed that the league will not start in October and that the resumption of league play will be reconsidered at a later date when the situation will hopefully be clearer. It was anticipated that this review would be a month or so before the end of 2020. Ian Ross requested that the decision to reconsider the AGM decision be minuted. Judy said her expectation was that the review could be conducted via an EGM or by the Committee, depending on circumstances. In response to The Leys (Mark) asking how the season would operate, it was advised that if play appeared possible then the Committee would decide the format after taking the views of clubs into account.

Action: Secretary to write to clubs to advise the decision (to not start in October and to review this at a later date) and Website Administrator to put the letter in the document library on the OBL website. Secretary/PB

9. Election of Committee for 2020/21

The Secretary reported that, despite requests to clubs, no nominations had been received in advance from people wishing to join the Committee. The acting Chairman passed control of the meeting to the Treasurer.

Peter Browning advised that he was willing to remain as a Committee member and administer the website and that Rosie Berrows was willing to continue in the Fixtures role. Together they would be willing to continue liaising with BE to try to enhance the on-line reporting system. All the current Committee (ten volunteers) were willing to stand for re-election.

Ian Ross said he was happy to be co-opted onto the Committee but that he would not force an election. Item 5 of the Constitution was read out by the Secretary as there was uncertainty regarding if any co-option could take the total Committee above ten people. (*Item 5: “The Committee shall consist of minimum of 8 and maximum of 10 members, to include Chairman, OBL Secretary and Treasurer, who will be elected each year at the AGM. The Committee shall be empowered to co-opt additional members. The Chairman will have the casting vote only, on all matters at the AGM and Committee meetings.”*) Following discussion, Ian was thanked for his offer and the Secretary suggested (as the Constitution states it is the Committee’s decision), that the new Committee decide if it was able to co-opt anyone. Ian expressed his willingness to attend this meeting.

Action : Incoming Committee

Several clubs offered to propose and second the re-election of the Committee en masse (including Bicester, St Clements and Thame): the Secretary recorded that Deddington proposed and Feathers seconded the proposal. All clubs agreed and Judy resumed control of the meeting. The incoming Committee comprises Chairman Judy Bendall, Treasurer Ian Whitehead, League Secretary Janet Atkins, League Fixtures Secretary Rosie Berrows and Committee members Peter Browning, James Fisk, Matt Jackson, Karina Lewis, Charles Malyon and Jo Simpson.

Evenlode asked what governance was in place, including the length of tenure for serving as Committee members and/or in specific roles. It was noted that the Constitution does not cover this and that it would be prudent to review it in line with BE guidance/best practice of some other sporting organisations. **Action:** Committee

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10. Any Other Business

St Clements asked if viable clubs could let the Secretary know about halls and summer clubs so that the list could be publicised to other OBL clubs who did not currently have access to halls. Deddington said they should know within a few weeks if they could function during the summer. Oxford said they would appreciate information on alternative venues. **Action** : Clubs and League Secretary/Peter Browning

The League Secretary advised that the League has a significant anniversary next season and, Covid restrictions permitting, the Committee hoped to organise a celebration with the clubs. **Action** : Committee

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the AGM and for their helpful input. The Committee would now discuss the date of their virtual meeting and actions from the AGM.

Several attendees expressed their thanks to the Committee for their work during the year, especially with the curtailment of the season, recognising it had not been easy to decide how to finalise the league positions. The endorsement from Thame (Rob) was indicative of others with his “thanks to the Committee for their hard work in these extraordinary times.” Thanks were also recorded from Pegasus (Laura), Gosford Hill (Somes), Feathers (Stuart), Bicester (Anthony), Oxford (Neil and also Tom, when he left the meeting during the election), St Clements (David), North Abingdon (David) and The Park (Steve). *(Please accept my apologies if I failed to identify your comments amongst the melee of voices).*

Janet Atkins

League Secretary, Oxfordshire Badminton League

3 June 2021

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Appendix -views about the 2020/21 season on behalf of clubs and by individuals (listed alphabetically by club)

Abingdon – similar comments to others in Abingdon.

Bicester – echoes Ian Ross's thoughts. Club hopes to get use of leisure centre in August but not heard back yet. Don't start at the usual start of season but would wish to review in the hope that a later start is possible.

Chilton - no club view provided but Ian's personal view was that it was a bit premature to say no to competitive badminton but could defer the decision to January (when the situation should be clearer) and not necessarily have both a home and an away match. He suggested consideration also be given to people's willingness to play at a neutral venue. Also, if there is no competitive badminton or a non-standard format is proposed, consider how the existing Rules need amending: his view was that an EGM would be needed to invoke them.

Deddington – the club plays in a Community hall. Their risk assessment will need reviewing (especially re cleaning) but it seems that they will have access to the hall so may be able to play friendlies.

Evenlode – no response has yet been received from St Helens to the club's enquiry about availability. They cannot book the local leisure centre as it is being repurposed for fitness etc. Stella likes the idea of a tournament at operating venues and would welcome friendly matches.

Feathers – the Spiceball LC currently expects to open for badminton on 17/9. Stuart helps run the Banbury League so is waiting for schools to advise clubs re availability but thinks they may have to wait until January to resume play. He would be happy with an OBL delay until January.

Gosford Hill - Ian's concern was about hall availability. He felt that, for the League to run, all clubs should have access to a hall and that, as the position for many clubs was unclear, we can't realistically organise it yet.

Harwell Laboratories – the earliest date for the hall is October (due to building work). Members had been asked if they would consider league play from January but the majority view was no league play in 2019/20.

The Leys – the school is currently closed. It is hoped the club will start in early October and Norman is preparing a paper (using BE guidelines) which the school has requested prior to deciding if it will permit hire. Hand sanitiser will be provided and the club will undertake to clean badminton posts.

North Abingdon – currently no hall hire at St Helens. If league play is possible later in the season then they would support that. Give consideration to a league wide tournament. David asked how BE Insurance was impacted by Covid issues as players would need insurance.

Oxford – club advised their venue (Headington Girls School) is not allowing external hire until November at the earliest so league play from the New Year may work for them. Fairer if all clubs were in any league play.

Oxford Academy – the venue is currently allowing external hire but the club has decided to wait until 3/9. A risk assessment is required (although they are a very small club) and the school want to view the Insurance Certificate. They have been offered 3 courts for the price of 2. The club stated it is aware that the same group of 6 players must play in a bubble all session.

Oxford University – the club currently has access to courts and can also book courts at Matthew Arnold School.

The Park – the Leisure Centre is not yet available and there is no indication when it will be.

Pegasus – the Leisure Centre has told the club it is not yet open and there are no timescales for when it will be.

St Clements – the school (Matthew Arnold) seems open. He is not sure how players will stay 2m from each other and be able to play badminton. The club has an AGM later in the week and will discuss options.

Thame – Thame Leisure Centre is operated by GLL. The hall (Lord William School) is not yet available and is being repurposed for fitness. Members want to play but have not venue. Rob suggest we be pragmatic as no dates for hire of many venues are available yet.

Wallingford – the school has not made a decision but Karina suspects this may happen once pupils can return. Karina expects that the BE guidance on play may adversely impact the insurance position if people play now. If play from January, consider a non-standard format for this unique season.

Windrush –echoes the views of many clubs re delaying the start of season due to prevailing circumstances. The Leisure Centre is run by GLL and currently has gym equipment set up. Henry Box School requires hirers to provide a risk assessment & has made no decision on any hire before October half term. The view of Brian, club Chairman, was advised by Vijay as being to aim to start the league in January and run a full season to May.