

# Oxfordshire Badminton League–Minutes of the 2024 AGM held on 22 May 2024

The AGM was held at The Manor Preparatory School and started at 7.35pm.

## 1. Chair’s welcome

Judy Bendall (Chairperson) welcomed club representatives to the AGM and invited them to share the refreshments. She asked everyone to sign in using the attendance sheet and to nominate a representative to hold the vote for their club (using the named card for their club for any voting). Judy said comments from clubs were welcome as the AGM is an opportunity to share views and concerns.

## 2. Attendees and apologies for absence

Fifteen of the twenty clubs attended so the meeting was quorate. Apologies were received from Chilton, Feathers, Thame and Windrush. Oxford Brookes did not attend. Wantage, who wish to rejoin the League, were invited to attend. Six of the eight Committee members were present, with apologies received from Rosanna Berrows and Karina Lewis.

Club/Committee	Club Attendee(s)	Club vote held by	No. of teams
Abingdon	Kat Rale	Kat Rale	8
Bicester	Duncan Soanes	Duncan Soanes	2
Blewbury	Penny Brassell & Debbie Ritson	Debbie Ritson	1
Chilton	Apologies	-	1
Evenlode	James Fisk	James Fisk	7
Feathers	Apologies	-	4
Gosford Hill	Ian Whitehead	Ian Whitehead	6
Harwell Laboratories (HLBC)	Janet Atkins	Janet Atkins	4
Heyford	Praveen Sreekantan & Sam Anand	Praveen Sreekantan	1
The Leys	Mark Carpenter	Mark Carpenter	7
North Abingdon	David Rowles & Martin Kibble	David Rowles	6
Oxford	Tansy Branscombe	Tansy Branscombe	5
Oxford Brookes	-	-	2
Oxford University	Ananya Kamman	Ananya Kamman	3
The Park	Jonathan Ponsford	Jonathan Ponsford	1
Pegasus	Steven Chung	Steven Chung	4
St Clements	Stephen Hurt	Stephen Hurt	1
Thame	Apologies	-	2
Wallingford	Christine Cherrington	Christine Cherrington	3
Windrush	Apologies	-	8
Wantage	Lizzie Wilkinson	N/A	
		34M+12X+14L+16 3D	76
Outgoing Committee			
Chairman (acting)	Judy Bendall	Casting vote only	
Treasurer	Ian Whitehead	N/A	
Secretary	Janet Atkins	N/A	
League Fixtures Secretary	Rosanna Berrows (apologies)	N/A	
Committee	Peter Browning, Jonathan Ponsford & Ian Ross. Apologies from Karina Lewis.	N/A	

## 3. Minutes of the 2023 AGM held on 17 May 2023 and matters arising

Blewbury proposed and Evenlode seconded that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting. Janet Atkins (League Secretary) advised that, whilst most of the 2023 actions had either been completed or were included within tonight’s agenda, a few actions remained outstanding. Progress on listed actions:

- a. Although links for guidance on governance were circulated to clubs following the action from the 2021 AGM, the action relating to demonstrating compliance with equality and discrimination guidance is carried forward and may be impacted by BE’s Open Play Policy. **Action:** incoming Committee

## Oxfordshire Badminton League—Minutes of the 2024 AGM held on 22 May 2024

- b. League Anniversary event – this was held on Friday 17 May 2024. **Action:** completed
- c. Creation of a WhatsApp group for Fixtures Secretaries by League Fixtures Secretary. **Action:** completed
- d. Investigating the feasibility of local coaching courses with Julie Bradbury by Judy B. **Action:** ongoing
- e. Decision on criteria for OBL bursary applications. **Action:** completed
- f. Issue guidance to users on the use of Just Go system (RB reissued pre season) **Action:** completed
- g. Committee to consider amending title of female level play from Women to ladies. This was deferred, partly as BE issued and is reviewing their Policy on Open Play. **Action:** incoming Committee
- h. Provide information re friendly clubs on OBL website. No clubs provided information. **Action:** deleted
- i. League Secretary to contact BE re insurance position with known slippery floor and Thame to contact their venue's operating body to seek improvement. Issue resolved pre season. **Actions:** completed

#### 4. Chair's report

Judy Bendall addressed the AGM.

"Dear all

On behalf of myself and the OBL committee I just want to say thank you very much to everyone for attending. I really do appreciate you all taking time out to attend our AGM and I really do welcome any feedback and contributions. Thanks to clubs for entering teams this season. In general, the season progressed well with no major issues. Pete will present the League Report on behalf of Rosie as they worked together to finalise this season's divisions. He will also outline the key dates for preparing for the 24/25 season.

It was great to see a good turnout at the Anniversary Presentation and Social event last Friday so thank you to those clubs who supported the evening and many congratulations to those teams who received trophies for winning divisions, including a belated presentation to Blewbury for 3D Div 4 for a previous season. There is some cake left from the evening so do please have some. We also had a great raffle and the incoming Committee will decide which charities will benefit based on the suggestions received from clubs at the Social and today.

I would like to talk about our communications & administration.

1. On a less encouraging note & sadly also as in previous seasons, unfortunately some clubs/teams appear incapable of adhering to either our Rules &/or the Just Go guidance notes for the input and verification of results in a timely manner. Please remind those responsible in your clubs that they should familiarise themselves with both of these as it is frustrating for opponents and causes additional work for the League Fixtures Secretary to chase clubs. Club Secretaries, how can you improve your internal communication with your club?  
What do you need from us to help support you and how can we change this as committee members can't continue to spend this amount of time on this next season?
2. I wish to reinforce the need to insure club members/players with BE. Rule F1 requires this to be done prior to playing in a team to ensure eligibility. Importantly, players need to be registered to have insurance cover in case anything should happen.
3. Clubs are reminded that requests on their entry forms for the non-standard placement of teams in divisions should only be made in exceptional circumstances and that this does not include a (general) lack of players season to season.
4. As promised at the 2023 AGM, we invite discussion re **Rule F5** and how this is working (it relates to the "spirit of not fielding a player of a higher standard to win to any point in the season" and the use of the words "significantly higher standard"). Please can I remind clubs regarding this.
5. The other is to update you about BE's Policy on Open doubles and the potential implications for us as a League for the coming season. However, I have recently had a call from Nick Rimmer from Badminton England who has advised me that this had now been put back for another year due to some issues

# Oxfordshire Badminton League—Minutes of the 2024 AGM held on 22 May 2024

they have faced with the new policy. BE needs to rewrite some of the Policy so OBL will await guidance for the 25/26 season.

I would like to record OBL's thanks to Norman Stewart from The Leys BC who has recently stepped down as Chairman after many years service. He was a regular attendee at our AGMs and social events, organised/helped with the The Leys junior club and provided continuity within his club and the League. We wish him well.

After a break of several years, we once again invited clubs to apply for bursaries from OBL to assist with the development of badminton. Six clubs applied for bursaries, predominately for contributions towards the provision of coaching or helping club members achieve coaching qualifications. A cheque has already been sent to Norman for The Leys request; Oxford will be presented with a cheque tonight and other clubs once they supply invoices for incurred expenditure. Ian will present the Treasurer's Report and provide more details. Obtaining access to coaching or coaching qualifications has not been easy and I will provide an update.

Coaching – we have acknowledged issues with both sourcing coaches and finding courses to obtain coaching qualifications in Oxfordshire. These issues were reiterated on some of bursary applications. I have taken this up with Julie Bradbury who also has acknowledged this and, in conjunction with BE and OBA, is trying to find a solution. If we get enough people for a level 1 and level 2 course Julie Bradbury will be able to organise these courses in Oxfordshire.

Finally, my thanks to my fellow committee members (some are here tonight but others, Rosie and Karina, are unable to be here due to prior commitments) for their support and guidance, their huge contribution to keeping us going and for the resilience they have shown this year.

If we could improve the interaction between clubs and the appropriate members of the Committee, especially during the season, then I believe the League tables will be more up to date as the quality and timeliness of results should improve. This would be a benefit for all clubs!

As you are aware we are volunteers giving up our time to support the League and we really need your help and support to continue this. If anyone would like to volunteer to join the Committee then please do speak up when we reach the election agenda item.

Thank you and we look forward to welcoming you and your teams to the new season.”

There were no comments raised in response to the Chair's report.

## **5. Treasurer's report**

The Treasurer (Ian Whitehead) asked attendees to read his report rather than listen to him read it out. This consisted of an income and expenditure statement, a statement of funds and notes to the accounts. These had been reviewed by Janet Atkins.

The League reported a surplus of £262 compared to £414 in 2022/23. Income was £474 with team fees of £380, a £30 charge for non AGM attendance and £64 interest. Expenditure of £212 included a £50 deposit for the recent Social/Presentation evening (the remaining costs will fall into 24/25 accounts), engraving of £111 for the three years 2019/20, 2021/22 and 2022/23, £26 for AGM refreshments and £25 for a gift to an outgoing Committee member for their contribution. As reported in previous seasons, there may be future website set up costs and annual administration charges. As at 31 March 2024 net assets were £5,960.

Ian explained that six clubs had applied for bursaries. The Committee discussed the requests and decided to award £861, with some funding for each of the clubs following the production of invoices for incurred expenditure by the end of the 2023/24 season. Most of the requests were for the provision of coaching or attendance at coaching courses to gain qualifications. The Leys had already received their cheque and Ian

## Oxfordshire Badminton League—Minutes of the 2024 AGM held on 22 May 2024

presented Tansy from Oxford BC with a cheque at the AGM. The bursary expenditure is expected to be included in the 2024/25 accounts. Other clubs awarded bursaries (subject to incurring expenditure by 31 March 2025 and providing appropriate evidence) were Bicester, Blewbury, Gosford Hill and HLBC.

Ian advised that the charity raffle at the Presentation evening raised £191 and thanked clubs for their support.

Ian proposed that entry fees of £5 per team be retained for the 2024/25 season. St Clements seconded this. There were no counter proposals so £5 deemed agreed. There were no questions raised about the accounts.

### **6. League Reports for the 2023/24 season**

Peter Browning provided the League Fixtures Secretary Report which was compiled in conjunction with Rosie (League Fixtures Secretary) before her taking a few months break from the committee. He started his report by congratulating those teams that had won their divisions and said that the 2023/24 trophies had been awarded to clubs at the recent Social together with the 3D division 4 trophy to Blewbury which was a belated presentation for 2021/22. Club representatives had signed the record sheet for the receipt of trophies. The divisional results are shown in the Appendix.

“Thanks to all clubs that are still dealing with Azolve/JustGo. We know it's not ideal but being linked to the registration system is still outweighing the negatives! Well done to the majority of clubs that complied with the system guidelines and the OBL Rules but please, those that haven't, you need to improve! There have been a few issues with some clubs that have caused some issues throughout the season. Unfortunately this has resulted in some scores being modified and some teams being affected by getting points they were not expecting which impacted them and others in the league - players playing up too many times and playing down and unregistered players being the issues. As Judy mentioned, clubs have a responsibility towards their players and if injuries should occur to unregistered players they are unlikely to be covered by BE insurance. We have also encountered issues with some players not being affiliated correctly with BE which has caused some delays in outcomes being announced to affected clubs.

Rearrangements - as ever please ensure all communications on issues between clubs, rearrangements (postponements and new date) and concessions are copied to the Fixtures email promptly so all is tracked. This reduces further delays and the need to chase clubs up.

Entering results on time - we are still getting quite a few matches not being entered on time, it is usually the same offenders, you know who you are, please input scores ASAP, no need to wait for 10 days! This helps keep the tables up to date so they are more useful to users.

Concedes – we have had quite a few conceded matches for various reasons, mostly clubs unable to field players. It was worrying to see 18 of them and a further 17 that didn't take enough pairs (good that the match was played but why is this happening-are clubs overstretched?). With only 415 matches in total this is quite a lot. There are a few clubs that make up most of it sadly. A 9-0 amended result or the points in a 3D match can have a significant consequential impact on innocent clubs. Also, each conceded match costs money to each club so it's best to be avoided if possible. Please don't over commit yourselves with team entries and please spread your matches as best you can, preferably trying to play each opponent in the first half of season and also in the second half. One injury or illness can affect you massively if you play the same team within a week!

Mistakes - throughout the year there have been many mistakes on player inputs on Azolve/JustGo - it's not the greatest system I admit but we must all be much more careful to input players/scores correctly and must also verify accurately as well. Again there are repeat offenders on this and we advise clubs to share the load as

# Oxfordshire Badminton League—Minutes of the 2024 AGM held on 22 May 2024

best you can to avoid issues. The entry of "unknown players" in particular has been abused and has led to a lot of delays where the Fixtures Secretary has had to trace who the unknown player actually was.

Azolve/Just Go -as always, we welcome your feedback on the Azolve/JustGo platform and we continue to work with people who run the platform to iron out errors as we become aware of them. It may be that we eventually turn to another platform but this does not seem to be an option at present.

League WhatsApp group for Fixtures Secretaries – we wish to know if people found this useful?

## 2024/25 season

- We have been told by BE's Mark Downie that Azolve/Just Go will stay for at least next season but the future of it hangs in the balance. It is hoped that leagues will work with him to find a viable alternative.
- Jon Ponsford is joining myself in administrating the leagues next year
- Entries for next year need to be emailed to fixtures@oxfordshirebadmintonleague.com as usual by 30th June. With regards to clubs who have made special requests pre-season about placement of teams in the relevant divisions, these should only be requested under exceptional circumstances and the OBL will not consider these unless there is a very good reason. Requests increased post Covid but the impact of this on player availability is no longer considered as potentially exceptional."

In response to Peter's question about the WhatsApp group, N. Abingdon asked if Secretaries could be added to the group – Peter replied he would add a question on the entry form. He also made a plea for clubs to ensure their club information on the OBL website was kept up to date.

Blewbury asked if Just Go would have the facility to autoinput names from the first time a player name was input into the results. Peter replied "sadly not" but that we had asked for this improvement ever since BE introduced the system. Ian Ross commented that users could use the control copy function to help reduce errors with the input of names. (See IR suggestion in the Appendix).

James Fisk (Evenlode) m, asked about contacting Rosie. Janet, League Secretary, advised that the generic League Fixtures Secretary email will go to the incoming League Fixtures Secretaries (Peter and Jon).

James asked about player eligibility, mentioning that a club that had said they would request adjustments for their ineligible players had not. He also said that he always tried to contact the opposing club in the first instance with any queries about player names. Ian Whitehead (Committee) said it helps the OBL Committee if clubs talk to each other first to resolve issues pre involving OBL.

Wallingford asked if clubs could be given guidance on using Just Go. Peter said this was issued to clubs pre season but would check if it needed updating ready for the coming season. **Action:** Peter Browning

## **7. 2024/25 season**

Peter advised that an email will be sent out soon with details of the process and timetable for 24/25 entries and input of fixtures to Just Go. He reminded clubs that the season ends on 31 March and starts on 1 October although clubs may, if both clubs agree, play matches in September. He anticipates:

- Soon – issue invitation to clubs to submit team entries
- 30 June – entry forms to be returned and payment made (by BACS or cheque)
- July (mid) – OBL Committee meeting to allocate teams to divisions
- 16 July – issue divisional structure to clubs and request Fixtures Secretaries to arrange fixtures with opposing teams

## Oxfordshire Badminton League—Minutes of the 2024 AGM held on 22 May 2024

- 31 August – deadline for clubs to input home fixtures to Just Go system and submit the proforma for all their fixtures to the OBL Fixtures Secretary

### 8. Proposals for changes to Rules or Constitution

No proposals were received from clubs.

There were no proposals from the Committee as BE has deferred the mandatory introduction of Open Play. As a consequence there are now no proposals from the Committee to amend our Rules to incorporate the previously anticipated changes. Once the revised Policy is issued the OBL Committee will assess what changes we may need to make to our Rules and/or Constitution. **Action:** incoming Committee

Ian Ross (Committee) stated it was incumbent on OBL to share information from BE. His view was that fundamental changes will need approval by an AGM or EGM.

Judy (Chair) advised that Ian Ross will lead the review of the OBL Rules. He and Janet (Secretary) had already spent time looking at them and had identified some sections that require clarification or explicitly, rather than implicitly, wording what happens under certain circumstances. The intention is to wait for the BE Open Play information so that those changes are also incorporated then all proposed Rules reviewed by the Committee and approval sought from member clubs for all updates at the same time. **Action:** IR & incoming Committee

### 9. Election of the Committee for 2024/25

The OBL Constitution requires a minimum of 7 and maximum of 10 members, including Officers of Chair, League Secretary and Treasurer, with the Committee able to co-opt additional members. No nominations were received in advance from clubs. Judy asked that attendees ask within their clubs for volunteers to widen the representation of clubs and hopefully views on the Committee. All the existing Committee were willing to stand for re-election. The acting Chair passed control of the meeting to the Treasurer. The Chair was returned unanimously and Judy resumed control. The Officers were proposed, seconded and elected before the general Committee members were proposed, seconded and elected as a group.

- Chair – Judy Bendall was proposed by Ian Whitehead and seconded by Blewbury.
- Treasurer – Ian Whitehead was proposed by Bicester and seconded by Evenlode.
- League Secretary – Janet Atkins was proposed by Blewbury and seconded by Oxford.
- League Fixtures Secretary – Peter Browning (also website administrator) and Jonathan Ponsford were proposed as joint Fixtures Secretary by Bicester and seconded by Oxford.
- General Committee members – Rosanna Berrows, Karina Lewis and Ian Ross were proposed by St Clements and seconded by Wallingford.

### 10. Any Other Business

Rule F5. David (North Abingdon) commented on the wording of Rule F5 regarding the standard of player. He has no issue with the spirit of the rule but stated his club would welcome guidance on the practical interpretation of the rule. He advised he was seeking help to advise those within his club. He said his club would prefer to field (and play against) a full team but believes there is currently a wide “grey area” in how clubs interpret the rule.

Rule F5 begins “It is not in the spirit of the League to field a player of a higher standard to win at any point during the season.” Before stating that “clubs are entitled to appeal if they feel there has been a significant breach of this fair play policy.” Ian R expressed his personal view that he would view a situation as “could a selection be justified to yourself and, if queried, to the opposition”. Peter B said the use of “significant” is important. As a player, Oxford said they would rather play a match or games than not, even if the opposition/a member of the opposition was a bit stronger than expected. Blewbury expressed the view that if a team were edging towards promotion it would seem a shame to have a very strong player against you but generally have to accept if it means a match gets played. They wondered if a distinction might be made between a “needs must” fielding of a player or a deliberate enhancement of the strength of the team. Oxford also mentioned that, for personal reasons, they had a player who wished to play in a particular team. Peter B asked if anyone

## Oxfordshire Badminton League—Minutes of the 2024 AGM held on 22 May 2024

had any suggestions for improved wording? No-one had any immediate suggestions other than Ian R commenting that the rule could be removed entirely (as something similar does not exist on many other leagues) so that clubs could play who they wished at any time. Evenlode asked if OBL had made any F5 adjustments this season and Peter B replied “No” although some had been requested

Website issue. North Abingdon (David) asked why the OBL website showed a warning message “HTML- lack of certificate”. Peter B was aware of this and said it depended on the application being used but that he will investigate further. **Action:** Peter Browning

Thank You. Blewbury expressed their thanks to the Committee for their work during this season, saying they had enjoyed the Social and encouraged others to come along another year. Judy thanked them, adding that we had expected to have had sole use of the venue but that thankfully all had worked well on the night.

Teams for 2024/25. North Abingdon advised they may be able to enter an additional team.

Bursary funding. Heyford and Abingdon asked if there were any additional funds this year. Ian W replied “No”, as clubs had been invited to apply by 31 March and bursaries received by that date were reviewed. Ian R commented that we are a League whose primary function is to facilitate the playing of inter club matches rather than a County Association which has responsibility for developing badminton. It may be that clubs consider approaching OBA to enquire if they have any available funding.

Coaching. As coaching qualifications were mentioned in the Treasurer and Chair reports, several clubs asked for more details. In answer to questions, it was confirmed that the Levels are sequential (i.e. Level 1 needs to be completed before progressing to Level 2), that Level 1 requires a weekend whereas Level 2 courses consist of several weekends (currently two) followed by an assessment day. Ian R commented that Level 1 coaches may support higher qualified coaches and that a coach may not lead a session until they qualify as a Level 2 coach. Heyford mentioned that safeguarding for children/vulnerable people is needed.

Scoring. Pegasus asked what OBL knew about potential changes to the scoring system. In future there may be five games to 11 or 13 points, which some think may make the game more interesting to view (and could increase TV revenue). Ian R said he was aware of possible changes but the timing of any implementation and which levels of badminton would be impacted were not known. He thought the BWF may discuss scoring at their first AGM in the next Olympic cycle.

The meeting finished at 8.50 pm.

Janet Atkins  
League Secretary, Oxfordshire Badminton League  
12 October 2024

# Oxfordshire Badminton League–Minutes of the 2024 AGM held on 22 May 2024

## APPENDIX – 2023/24 results and shortcut for the input of player names to Just Go

2023/24 results by division were:

Mixed	Division 1	Division 2
	Abingdon Mixed A Feathers Mixed A Windrush Mixed A Abingdon Mixed B Gosford Hill Mixed A Leys Mixed A	Oxford Mixed A North Abingdon Mixed A Evenlode Mixed A Bicester Mixed A Gosford Hill Mixed B Pegasus Mixed A

Ladies	Division 1	Division 2
	Abingdon Ladies A Feathers Ladies A Leys Ladies A North Abingdon Ladies A Windrush Ladies A Gosford Hill Ladies A Evenlode Ladies A	Oxford Ladies A Oxford Uni Ladies A Wallingford Ladies A Oxford Uni Ladies B Oxford Brookes Ladies A Leys Ladies B Harwell Ladies A

Mens	Division 1	Division 2	Division 3	Division 4	Division 5
	Abingdon A Feathers A Evenlode A Abingdon B Thame A Windrush A	Gosford Hill A North Abingdon A Pegasus A Oxford Uni A Bicester A Windrush B Windrush C	Heyford A Oxford A Feathers B Thame B Gosford Hill B Abingdon C Leys A	Pegasus B Wallingford A North Abingdon B Evenlode B Park A Windrush D	Oxford B Gosford Hill C Oxford Brookes A St Clements A Leys B Evenlode C Chilton A Harwell A

3D	Division 1	Division 2	Division 3
	Abingdon 3D A Wallingford 3D A Windrush 3D A Evenlode 3D A Abingdon 3D B Leys 3D A	North Abingdon 3D A Pegasus 3D A North Abingdon 3D B Oxford 3D A Evenlode 3D B	Harwell 3D A Leys B Blewbury 3D A Windrush 3D B Harwell 3D B

Shortcut for the input of player names to Just Go to copy and paste player names (works for some operating systems)

- Ctrl + C          copies selected text
- Ctrl + V          pastes the last selected text
- Windows + V    brings up a pick list of every Ctrl+C and allows selection