

GBBA AGM Minutes, June 2024

The Gloucestershire Basketball Association Annual General Meeting was held at the Churchdown Club, Church Road, Churchdown, on Monday, 17th June, 2024. It started at 7.30pm.

1. Introductions

Dave Whiting chaired the meeting. He explained that he was doing so because Isobel Greaves (Chair), Ian Greaves (Referee Secretary) and Jenny Arroud (Secretary) had resigned from the GBBA Committee before the AGM.

Teams in attendance

These teams were represented at the meeting:

- Gloucester Old Spots
- Leadonites
- Malvern Mavericks
- Stroud Sharks Blue
- Worcester Cyclones
- YMCA Eagles
- YMCA Falcons
- YMCA Hawks

These teams were not represented:

- Gloucester Kings
- Stroud Sharks White
- University of Gloucestershire Kings
- Warriors
- Worcester Bears

2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Worcester Bears.

3. Approval of Minutes from AGM 2023 / Matters Arising

The minutes of the 2023 AGM were approved.

4. Finance Report

Cass Castello (Treasurer) gave the Finance Report. He split the report into two, covering funds available for general use and those that had to be used for fixed purposes.

General funds

- Competition: Cass said that, as has been typical, we spent more on competitions than we had received: £616.60 more. This was largely because of the money spent on the Finals Days.

- Development: Cass explained that we had received a grant from Basketball England South West, intended for the development of Level 3 table officials. However Basketball England had introduced the 'Course to Court' scheme, to train Level 2 referees at no expense to candidates. Ten candidates had stepped forward in our area: 1 didn't get started; 3 took and passed theory part of course, but didn't do the practical part; and 6 had completed the whole course, had qualified, and had refereed in the 2023/24 season. Having been told that we had switched from funding table official training to using the grant for the 'Course to Court' BE SW had awarded us less grant than we had bid for. We got £800, only half of which had so far been spent – mostly on a referees' conference, the 'Course to Court' referee assessment, and some table official assessment.

Fixed-use funds

- The Charity Cup had raised £1,316.65 for a very thankful 'Cots for Tots'.
- The PC Fund had not been added to, nor used – but it only contained £35.79 and Cass suggested that it should be rolled into the general development account.
- Cass explained that Good Conduct Deposits were naturally just kept (for use when teams failed to pay penalty sums that were due), not spent.

In total around £3,500 had been left in the GBBA bank account at the end of the season.

Prompted by Cass's mentioning table official development, Pascal said that Saxons had several table officials that could be added to the pool of TOs.

5. League Secretary's Report

Dave Whiting gave the report.

Competitions

Last year's AGM had long discussion about league format for 23/24: ended-up with new format - single division before Christmas to determine post-Christmas divisions. Broken backboard at the YMCA and unavailability of Leadonites' court until caused problems with playing fixtures. But other teams were helpful with swapping home/away games, for which we were thankful.

Kings won pre-season league, Bears second, Mavericks third.

Post Christmas, Stroud entered a second team, leading to a 6/7 team 1st/2nd division split. Warriors and UoG Kings, both mid-table before Christmas, chose to play in division 2.

Also needed to play Dexter Dawson Charity Cup and John Llewellyn Handicap Cup games.

YMCA court out of action, Leadonites' court unavailable until late January, Kings unable to play home in February – so decided to for each team to play each other team only once in each of the league divisions. YMCA Hawks won division 1, just pipping Bears; Stroud Sharks Blue won division 2, with Warriors a close second.

Only one post-Christmas league game was left unplayed, and no games were played with just one referee – a welcome change from recent seasons.

Dexter Dawson Charity Cup: reduced initial 13 teams to 8 by giving top 3 teams a bye to the second round: winners of 5 games between other 10 teams went into cup quarter finals with them. The losers went into the John Llewellyn Handicap Cup.

Kings beat Mavericks 80 – 54 in the Dexter Dawson Charity Cup final.

Stroud Sharks White beat Cyclones in the John Llewellyn Handicap Cup final – but only by 91 – 88: a great handicap calculation!

The Committee

We were completely taken by surprise by the resignation of Isobel Greaves as Chair, Ian Greaves as Referee Secretary, and Jenny Arroud as Secretary: it seems that Ian has withdrawn from basketball altogether. Hence Dave and Cass frantically trying to take the meeting notes!

Dave himself declared his intention to resign as League Secretary after the AGM – after 23 seasons (minus the two Covid years) on the committee!

Cass would be becoming Chair, given his knowledge of the GBBA and GBL.

Dave encouraged everyone at the meeting to think how they might be able to offer some of their time to make the GBBA and GBL to be the place to play basketball in the Gloucestershire area.

Emma-Jane Gardner (Worcester Cyclones) thanked Dave for all the work he had done through the years, including maintaining the GBBA website that enabled everyone to know what was happening. As an endorsement of what Emma had said, the meeting applauded Dave.

Dave said that he had offered to continue to look after the website.

6. Referees Secretary's Report

Ian Greaves had resigned before the meeting, so Cass gave a brief report in his place.

He said that the season had gone well, echoing Dave Whiting's comment that no game had had to be played with one referee. He also celebrated the addition of six new referees and thanked them very much for their work.

There had been a referees' conference near the start of the season with the excellent and enthusiastic Dan Cox, who had elaborated on the new rules and rule emphases.

Cass remarked that refereeing was sometimes a thankless task – and thanked all the referees for their work through the season, and also all the players who had, in general, cooperated so well with them.

Phil Battrick (YMCA Eagles) offered that he felt that the behaviour of some players and coaches was much worse in recent seasons than it had been – it had led him to give up refereeing – and that referees had been putting up with things that they should be responding to with technical fouls. Cass mentioned that, a few seasons before, there had been a campaign to clamp down on bad behaviour with stricter technical foul calls: maybe it was time to do that again. Roger Hoyle (Leadonites) said that he had found that explaining rules and interpretations that players didn't understand had helped in some of the games he had refereed. Another speaker felt that players responded, if the

acceptable boundaries of behaviour were made clear. Dave Whiting thought that the pre-game conference between referees and coaches were helpful.

7. Proposed Changes to the Constitution

None had been received.

8. Proposed Changes to the GBL Rules

Dave Whiting introduced these: he explained that some were to do with getting the rules on the website to reflect actual practice:

- 1. Finance
 - (b): Good conduct deposit increase from £25 to £50.
 - (f): Good conduct deposit for teams joining mid-season up to same as for full season, £50.
 - (g): Correct the place to send message about payment of penalties, from League Administrator to Treasurer.
 - (j): Make rule reflect current league and cup entry fee of £120.
- 3. Fixtures
 - (f): Minimum postponement notice period down from 8 weeks to 2.
 - (h): Minimum postponement notice period down from 8 weeks to 2.
 - (t): Claim for court costs must be within 48 hours of game start time, but receipt need only be submitted within 2 weeks.
- 6. Officials
 - (l): Referee fees increase from:
 - Level 1: £9.00
 - Level 2: £16.00
 - Level 3: £17.00
 - Level 4: £18.00To:
 - Level 1: £17.00
 - Level 2: £18.00
 - Level 3: £19.00
 - Level 4: £21.00
 - (m): Travel expenses up from 30p per mile to 45p per mile.
 - (q): Paying a referee by bank transfer must be pre-arranged with that referee.
- 13. Transfers
 - (c): Teams objecting to a transfer must state a reason, and the GBBA Committee will determine if it is reasonable.

All the proposed changes were accepted by the meeting, with no-one objecting.

Dave Merrick raised the issue of who should pay for the court, if a team agreed to host a game that had been scheduled to be hosted by their opponents: he felt that the court fee should be paid by the team originally scheduled to host. The meeting appeared to accept that idea, and Dave Whiting remarked that the issue of cost should be decided between the two teams, to the satisfaction of the team ultimately hosting the game.

9. League and Cup/Plate Structure 2024/25

The League

Dave Merrick (for Stroud) and Phil Battrick (for YMCA) mentioned that they were working on the idea of a central venue league for the new season. From that there was a preamble to the main league structure discussion, where the merits and demerits of a CVL were discussed.

There was general support for the split of the league into two divisions, that had taken place at Christmas. However, some felt that it was unfortunate that there had only been the opportunity to play one game against each opposing side since, as a result, the final division table had not properly reflected the relative strengths of the sides.

For the new season, two main alternatives were considered:

- Having one division from the start to the end of the season.
- Having one division before Christmas, split into two divisions after Christmas.

Variations were mentioned. One was having play-offs involving the top teams at the end of the season. Another was having two divisions throughout the season, based on the composition of two divisions from the second half of the 2023/2024 season, with 2-up, 2-down promotion between the divisions between the seasons.

An issue was fitting-in all the necessary games with each of the schemes. Dave Whiting made the point that having a single division throughout would mean having more flexibility about when (before or after Christmas) particular games were played.

A vote was taken and there was **a clear majority in favour of one division** throughout the season.

Cup Competitions

Dave Whiting asked for views on the handicap cup competition. Not everyone was enthusiastic about it, but the handicaps themselves seemed to have been well calculated, judging by the final game scores.

Some of those playing in the Dexter Dawson Cup Final, which was played before the Grainger Cup game at the University of Gloucestershire arena, felt separated from the league celebrations at the other Finals Day – and, perhaps, insulted about seeming to be a warm-up for the Grainger Cup game.

The suggestion was made that we have a Handicap Cup tournament, played over one or two weekend days.

In passing, a plea was made to stage any all-star game away from the finals, so that those playing in the finals felt able to play.

Dave Merrick felt that we needed to do more to bring the Gloucestershire basketball community together – to meet and chat and get to know one another, rather than simply to turn up, play a game, then go away again. He implied that we should use something like the Finals Day to achieve this.

Dave Whiting said that it would be for the incoming Fixtures Secretary to find out what the teams wanted with respect to the cup competitions.

10. AOB

There was none.

11. Election of Officers

Preamble

There were questions from the meeting about the composition of the committee and the roles within it. Dave Whiting and Cass explained that there were two entities:

- The Gloucestershire Basketball Association (GBBA), responsible for promoting basketball of all forms in the county, and with a legitimate interest in anything happening in basketball.
- The Gloucestershire League (GBL), the running of which had always been the major activity of the GBBA Committee.

It was explained that Isobel, the past GBBA Chair, had wanted to establish separate committees for the GBBA and the GBL – but that there had never been enough volunteers to staff two committees.

Although the GBBA had a remit to promote non-GBL basketball, such as school, junior and women's basketball, it had never really been very good at fulfilling that – with the exception of Paul Christensen's involvement in schools basketball when he was both a teacher and Chair; and the time when Joe Grainger had promoted junior basketball before his sad death.

The 2023/24 season committee had had Jay Marriott as co-opted National Basketball League representative and he was still ready to perform that role.

Election

Cass explained that he had assumed the role of **Chair** because there was no-one else with experience of the Committee and who 'knew the ropes'. He said he was also happy to continue as **Treasurer** – a job largely requiring work outside committee meetings.

Cass said there was a need for a **Secretary**: **Pascal Harris** (Old Spots) volunteered: he was nominated by Emma-Jane Gardner (Worcester Cyclones) and the nomination was seconded by Phil Battrick (YMCA Eagles). He was elected unopposed.

Pascal also said that **Andy Steckbeck** had said he would be happy to be **Referee Secretary**. This was enthusiastically received by the meeting. Pascal nominated Andy and Emma-Jane Gardner seconded the nomination.

Phil Battrick (YMCA Eagles) volunteered to be **Fixtures Secretary**, provided that Dave Whiting would remain as webmaster: Dave agreed, and nominated Phil. Will Brain (Malvern Mavericks) seconded the nomination.

Having been assured by Dave Whiting that the role of **Registrar** was effectively redundant (because of recent BE membership portal 'improvements'), **Phil Battrick** volunteered to do the job. Dave nominated him and Dre Rucinkas (YMCA Hawks) seconded the nomination.

Widening the work of the GBBA

Dave Merrick challenged the meeting about actually doing some work towards non-GBL development. Cass, quoting Paul Christensen, said that anyone who was willing to work for basketball in the county from the Committee was welcome to join it.

Emma-Jane suggested that the three people at the meeting with junior basketball involvement, Pascal Harris, Dave Merrick and herself could get together to organise a junior event in the county – involving other junior clubs, and through contacting schools. Phil Battrick confirmed that Cheltenham Chargers were soon to be using the YMCA court, seeming to imply that they could be naturally included.

Emma explained that the junior teams with which she, Dave Merrick and Pascal were involved, and the Cheltenham Chargers, all played in the YBL (Your Basketball League). (It was later pointed out that the Leadonites club also had teams in the YBL.) This led seamlessly to...

Kevin Henry on YBL

Kevin Henry, a board director of YBL, had been invited to address the meeting.

He explained that the YBL had begun as a youth basketball organisation but had expanded to include women's basketball, wheelchair basketball, men's development teams, and more. YBL now involved players aged from 6 to 65. The teams in their junior competitions:

- Always played relatively locally (travelling no more than 45 minutes to games).
- All played play-off games within their local league at the end of the season, wherever they had been placed in the league.
- Got the opportunity to travel to inter-regional play-offs if they won their local league – run as a CVL for each of the age groups over a Championship weekend.

YBL was 10 years old, and its graduates included those who gone on to play senior national league, international basketball, and local league; to enter the BE Aspire programme; to coach; and to table officiate. YBL had run table official and referee courses open to people outside YBL – it was able to provide such courses at a cheaper than usual price.

YBL was a company with a board of directors, rather than volunteers, and had the resources to promote basketball in various ways. YBL's aim was to help build basketball from the grass roots and to help people get where they wanted to get in the sport.

Kevin said that he had come to our AGM because we had a YBL junior teams in our area, and he wanted to understand the general feeling in our area – and that he was going to similar meetings in several other areas to do the same. YBL was active in Birmingham, the West Midlands, Shrewsbury, Northampton, Milton Keynes, Bedford, Newbury, Oxfordshire, Leicestershire and Derby, as well as Gloucestershire.

Discussions continued, but the formal meeting ended at 9.15pm.