BEDFORDSHIRE

**COUNTY NETBALL ASSOCIATION**

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at Leighton Buzzard Football Club, Lake Street, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 1RX 8pm on Thursday 3rd July 2025.**

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Trish Neill opened the meeting by welcoming members, league representatives, honorary guests, and committee colleagues. She emphasized the importance of this annual meeting as a rare opportunity to connect, reflect, and celebrate the achievements of Bedfordshire Netball.

Trish acknowledged the dedication of volunteers, the resilience of the community, and the shared commitment to growing the sport across the county. Special thanks were extended to Lian and her team for organizing and hosting the evening.

1. **Attendance and Voting**

Honorary Guests in Attendance:

- Gloria Keech – Former County Chair

- Maggie Jackson MBE – Long-standing honorary member

Apologies Received From:

- Kendra Slawinski OBE

- Alison Brightman – County President

Committee Representation:

- Trish Neill – Chair

- Mandy Mistlin – Vice Chair & PDP Lead

- Vicky Halfpenny-Stubbs – Secretary

- Sheran Lobley – Treasurer

- Grace Milligan – Website & Social Media

- Jo Brewster – England NDO

Apologies:

- Jo Randall – Competition TSG Lead

- Rachel Lewis – Schools representative

- Natascha Kelly – Volunteer Recognition Lead

- Victoria Topa – Welfare & Safeguarding Lead

- Maddie Harwood – Former officiating lead

- Julie Bassett – Co-opted Member

League Representation

Present:

- Lou Brown – Chair Heritage League

- Laura Simmons – Chair Luton, Dunstable & District League

- Lian Howlett – Chair Leighton Buzzard Netball League

Apologies:

- Bedford League – **No representatives present**

Trish noted the importance of full league representation and encouraged all leagues to ensure consistent engagement at future AGMs.

Vicky confirmed that 32 voting members were present, exceeding the quorum requirement. All attendees had signed in and registered their voting status, ensuring that all motions and decisions made during the meeting were constitutionally valid.

**Committee Introductions**

Trish introduced the current County Committee members and acknowledged their contributions over the past year:

- Mandy Mistlin – Vice Chair and PDP Lead

- Sheran Lobley – Treasurer

- Vicky Halfpenny-Stubbs – Secretary

- Jo Randall – Competitions Lead

- Natasha Kelly – Volunteer Recognition

- Grace Milligan – Website and Social Media

- Rachel Lewis – Schools Representative

- Julie Bassett – Co-op member

Each member was thanked for their dedication, particularly during a year of transition and growth.

1. **Approval of Previous Minutes**

The minutes from the previous AGM held on 10 July 2024 were circulated in advance.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes. Trish noted this as a positive reflection of the committee’s follow-through on prior actions.

Proposed by: Jo Brewster

Seconded by: Lou Harwood

Outcome: Approved as a true and accurate record

1. **Chair’s Reflections**

Trish shared a personal and candid reflection on her first year as Chair, having returned to committee work after a 20-year hiatus. She acknowledged the steep learning curve, the challenges of operating with an incomplete committee, and the health-related absences that impacted continuity.

Despite these hurdles, she expressed pride in the committee’s resilience and the progress made across governance, development, and community engagement.

Key Highlights:

Governance:

 - Introduced new policies on complaints, safeguarding, and expenses.

 - Aligned with East of England’s Tier 1 governance standards.

-Finance:

 - Maintained strong financial oversight with external audits.

 - Ensured secure reserves and transparent spending.

Events:

 - Hosted the county’s first umpiring conference.

 - Delivered a successful U13/U15 International Tournament with 16 counties and over 370 players.

 - Collaborated with London Mavericks and local councils to enhance development pathways.

Technology:

 - Launched a new website with integrated forms, surveys, and award submissions.

 - Developed a tournament app to streamline event management.

Membership:

 - Total membership reached 2,775 – an 11% increase.

 - Noted concerns about the sustainability of social netball leagues.

Officiating:

 - 36 Into Officiating awards, 17 C awards, 3 B awards, Sheran Lobley, Oliver Bumscombe & Sofie Randal) 1 A award (Katie Johnson).

 - 4 new mentors trained.

 - New working group formed to support umpire development.

Youth Development:

 - Continued success of the Heather Crouch Programme for 14–16-year-olds.

 - Expanded Talent Development Hub in Luton.

Volunteer Recognition:

 - Celebrated contributions through the County Awards.

 - Acknowledged the tireless efforts of committee members and league volunteers.

1. **Annual/Officer/TSG reports & Annual Report Overview**

The Annual Report, will be available on the county website, includes detailed updates from the County Committee, Technical Support Groups (TSGs), England Netball Development Officer, schools, and league chairs.

Trish encouraged members to review the report and reach out with any questions. She emphasized that the report serves as a transparent record of the county’s operations and achievements.

**Technical Support Group Reports**

**Player Development Programme (PDP) – Mandy Mistlin**

Mandy provided an in-depth overview of the PDP, which supports U13 and U15 players as the first step in the England Netball Performance Pathway.

Selection Process:

 - 157 players were pre-screened in June.

 - After trials, 40 players were selected (24 U13s and 16 U15s).

 - Noted that some players declined places due to cross-county movement.

Development Initiatives:

 - Guest coaching from London Mavericks players: Ellie Ratu, Emily Andrew, and Chelsea Blackman.

 - Sessions were recorded and edited for a new Bedfordshire Netball YouTube channel to support coach CPD.

 - Plans to involve experienced coaches in future sessions.

Talent Development Hub (TDP):

 - Launched in Luton to support postcode-specific development.

 - Aims to raise the standard of local players and prepare them for PDP selection.

Partnerships:

 - A new 3-year agreement signed with England Netball.

 - Increased support and CPD opportunities now available.

Mandy encouraged clubs and schools to promote early applications and ensure talented players are aware of the process.

**Officiating – Lou Brown**

Lou highlighted Bedfordshire’s strong umpiring legacy and the county’s commitment to developing new officials.

Achievements:

 - 36 Into Officiating (IO) awards

 - 17 C Awards, 3 B Awards, 1 A Award

 - 4 new mentors trained

Umpiring Conference:

 - First-ever county umpiring conference held

 - Covered positioning, timing, and game management

 - Positive feedback received; plans to host bi-annually

Development Plans:

 - Refresher courses to be reintroduced

 - Continued mentoring and development at county events

 - Encouraged umpires to volunteer and stay engaged

Lou emphasized the importance of ongoing support and collaboration across leagues to maintain high officiating standards.

Proposer: The County Committee to propose that this document is accepted as a record of activities across the County for 2024-25 season.

Seconded; Grace Milligan

1. **Treasurer’s Report – Sheran**

Financial Overview:

- First year with a loss of £181, dipping into reserves.

- Reserves: £25,000

- Affiliation income: £11,490

- Development Fund: £21,340 remaining

- Largest spend: Umpiring Conference (free to all umpires)

Transparency and Stewardship:

Sheran reiterated that the county is the custodian of members’ affiliation fees and encouraged members to voice ideas for future spending. She emphasized that the committee is committed to transparency and responsible financial management.

Sheran recommended the re-appointment of Rawlinson Pryde Ltd as external auditors.

Motion to Approve Accounts:

Proposed by: Sheran Lobley

Seconded by: Elaine Newman

Outcome: Approved unanimously

**Development Fund & Facilities**

Trish and Sheran discussed the Development Fund’s purpose and encouraged clubs to apply for support.

Eligible Uses:

 - Coaching and officiating qualifications

 - Equipment and facility improvements

 - Tournament and event support

Facility Challenges:

 - Lack of floodlighting and court access raised as concerns

 - Committee is exploring partnerships with schools and councils

 - Portable floodlights suggested as a flexible solution

Members were reminded that the fund is underutilized and available to all clubs and individuals in the county.

ADDITIONAL NOTE REGARDING APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

It was noted that, during the AGM the formal proposal to reappoint Rawlinson Pryde & Partners as auditors for the coming year was inadvertently omitted and therefore not seconded or approved during the meeting.

To rectify this, if any member has any objections to Rawlinson Pryde & Partners continuing as our auditors for the next financial year, please notify Trish Neill by 28th July 2025 (bcnachair@gmail.com) . If no objections are received by that date, their reappointment will be confirmed, and they will continue in their role for the coming year.

1. **Confirmation of Membership Affiliation Fees**

- County fee remains **unchanged**

- England Netball increased adult fee to £41.30

- East Region fee pending vote on 13th July 2025 – **proposal is to remain same**.

- Following fee breakdown shared and discussed

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CLUBS | EN | COUNTY | DEV FUND | EAST | TOTAL |
| **Adult (Over 18) \*** | **41.30** | **£6.80** |  | **£1.20** | **£49.30** |
| **Under 18**  ‡ \***Under 14** ‡ \***Under 11**  ‡ \* | **19.04****10.56****7.40** | **£3.40****£1.70****£1.00** |  | **£0.60****£0.30** | **£23.04****£12.56****£8.40** |
| **2nd claim (if 1st claim is in Bedfordshire)** | **£0.00** | **£0.00** |  |  | **£0.00** |
| **2nd claim (if 1st claim is outside Bedfordshire)** | **£0.00** | **£7.00** |  |  | **£7.00** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES |  |  |  |  |  |
| **All full-time students and 1 named lecturer** **Unlimited number of participants who are full time students.** # | **£190.54** | **£20.00** |  | **5.00** | **£215.54** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SCHOOLS** |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **EN** | **COUNTY** | **DEV FUND** | **EAST** | **TOTAL**  |
| SECONDARY SCHOOLS | £29.08 | £5.00 | £0.00 | £5.00 | £39.08 |
| MIDDLE SCHOOLS | £29.08 | £5.00 | £0.00 | £5.00 | £39.08 |
| PRIMARY SCHOOLS | Free | Free | Free | Free | Free |

1. **Constitution Amendments**

Term Limits (Sections 5.4–5.6):

Members may continue beyond 3 terms on a rolling annual basis if no new nominations.

Seconded by: Gloria Keach

Dispute Resolution (Section 11.1):

Escalation path: Local → County → England Netball → Sports Resolution only changed to bring in the newly introduced complaints policy September 2024

Seconded by: Diana Mason

Kit Guidelines:

Adopted England Netball’s inclusive kit policy

Seconded by: Laura Simmons

Gender Inclusion:

Adopted England Netball’s gender policy

Seconded by: Sandra Hewlett (Heritage)

Financial Year-End:

- Change from 31 May to 31 August

- Transition year: 15-month accounts

It was asked if AGM will be moved Trish advised she believed not necessary, and we could hold an EGM by zoom for final accounting period approval in September 2026.

Seconded by: Jan Woods

All amendments were approved unanimously.

ADDITIONAL NOTE REGARDING AGM : We do not have to change the AGM July date as our County Constitution does not state it has to follow the financial year end.

1. **Elections and Appointments**

Re-Elected Officers (Unanimous Vote):

- Chair: Trish Neill

- Vice Chair + PDP: Mandy Mislin

- Treasurer: Sheran Lobley

- Secretary: Vicky Halfpenny-Stubbs

- Competitions: Jo Randall

- Volunteer Recognition: Natasha Kelly

- Website & Social Media: Grace Milligan

- Schools: Rachel Lewis (job-sharing with Victoria Topa)

Officers Standing Down:

- Maddie Harwood – Officiating

- Victoria Topa – Welfare & Safeguarding (moved to Schools)

- Julie Bassett – Co-opted Member

- Lou Harwood – Luton & Dunstable League Chair

League Chairs:

- Heritage: Lou Brown

- Bedford: Heather Nolan

- Luton & Dunstable: Laura Simmons

- Leighton Buzzard: Lian Howlett

New Co-opted Members:

- Sarah Ashby

- Jackie Stigwood

Vacancies:

- Officiating TSG

- Coaching TSG

- Welfare & Safeguarding TSG

Trish invited anyone who was interested in the open vacancies to reach out and assured them of full support and guidance.

1. **County Volunteer Awards**

The following members were presented with an Award in the various categories:

Long Service: **Heather Pollard** (15 years)

The Bedfordshire Young Volunteer Award: **Caitlyn Knight**

The Bedfordshire Children & Young Person Coach: **Sue Williams**

The Bedfordshire Adult Coach: **Nicky Knight**

The Bedfordshire County Grassroots Officials Award: **Sue Davis**

The Bedfordshire County Grassroots Volunteer Award: **Jess Baird**

The Bedfordshire County Unsung Hero Award: **Katherine Gallagher**

The Bedfordshire Teacher of the Year: **Daniel Day & Leigh Moreno**

The Bedfordshire County Club of the Year Award: **Maulden Club**

Nancy Morris Award: **Grace Milligan**

Sylvia Eastleigh Award: **Jeanette Johnson**

Awards were presented at an afternoon tea and prosecco event at The Bedford Country Golf Glub, Clapham on 18th May and the Schools AGM 2nd June. Trish emphasized the importance of recognizing and celebrating volunteer contributions.

**East Region One Awards**

- Ceremony: 13 July in Cambridge

- Nominees: Rachel Lewis, Lou Harwood, Grace Milligan, Trish Neill

- No East Region long service awards this year (20-year minimum)

1. **Date of Next AGM:**

Proposed Date:\*\* 2 July 2026

Host: Bedford League

Location: Bedford (venue TBC)

**Acknowledgements**

Trish presented a gift as a personal thank-you to:

Gloria Keach for her unwavering support and guidance, Jo Brewster for support particularly with the Engage system.

A Big County Committee thank you was given to Lou Harwood for her years of service to Luton & Dunstable League and her support during the transition. Lou will be missed.

**Meeting Close**

With all agenda items completed and no further business raised, Chair Trish Neil officially closed the meeting at 20:54.

She thanked all attendees for their time, contributions, and continued support of Bedfordshire County Netball.

Signed as accurate…………………………………………. Dated……………………………………………