

# Blewbury Amazons Girls Football Club



## Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 16th July 2024  
The Melland Room  
Blewbury Clubhouse  
Blewbury Rec

## MINUTES

### Committee Attendees:

C Flakelar  
C Richmond  
T Wright  
M Holtom  
C Ward  
A Flakelar

### Committee Apologies:

J Webster  
M Smith

### Chair's address – Caroline Flakelar

*“Welcome to only our third AGM as a Club and thank you for making the effort to attend. We appreciate your engagement and hope the greater insight you receive from this meeting will help more member families understand how we are run and why. Without further adult help we will have to curb our growth and development.*

*We set out to provide a quality footballing experience for local girls. We know we are doing this because we were successful in achieving 2 star FA accreditation at the beginning of this season. This is the highest achievable level for a single sex club with no specific disability pathway. Achieving this accreditation means we offer the best standard of grassroots football for players and volunteers. It also means that we have satisfied the FA that we are a sustainable and resilient club that is built to last. We ensure that our coaches are fully qualified and have completed their safeguarding & first aid courses to give each child the best and safest experience. We know this is not always the case elsewhere.*

*We have been successful in obtaining a number of significant grants and sponsorship which have allowed us to keep fees to a minimum whilst we establish ourselves and obtain essential pieces of expensive equipment. We have experienced two notable issues with vandalism and will need to manage this going forward. The grants from the Football Foundation and Barclays have allowed us to purchase 32 portable, battery powered floodlights allowing almost all of the club to train under our own lights. This has*

*significantly lowered our outlay on winter training expenses and will allow us to continue to provide winter training at minimal cost going forward.*

*The weather provided a significant impediment to all grassroots footballing activity this season causing frustration and disruption at all levels. We were more fortunate than many clubs and were often able to host fixtures and keep training where others clubs were flooded out. It did however increase the pressure on parking and pitches at all venues. Unfortunately we will likely have to become less generous with fixture reversal requests going forward as the club has grown so much and we must work hard to minimise wear on pitches that we do not own or control. The weather issues only highlighted the lack of local all weather facilities and the expense of them. Hiring these for winter training going forward is not fiscally appropriate nor achievable for all now we are such a large club - the floodlights could not have come at a better time. We were impacted significantly by the postponement of our original tournament 2023 tournament and it's rescheduling into a smaller format, the financial impact is reflected in our accounts. Fortunately our most recent tournament did make us some money and we hope it becomes the basis point for a bigger, better tournament at Harwell Campus next year.*

*Working across multiple venues (Blewbury, Aston Tirrold, Harwell, Brightwell and Wallingford school) the majority with limited parking and grass pitches and the lack of a real "home" is a significant impediment for us as a Club and as a Committee because of the additional administrative and cost burdens as well as having to keep multiple parish councils and resident groups happy. As we have grown, managing these venues has almost become a full time role in itself. We are encouraged that Harwell Campus seem keen to develop a genuine relationship with us going forward and will keep everyone apprised on these developments. We will continue to liaise with Berks & Bucks FA regarding opportunities to lobby for all weather facilities that we have a chance of accessing.*

*Thanks to the Mini Amazons initiative our current U7s are ready to become an U8 team playing competitive league matches for 24/25 and we now have a coach ready to take on girls to form a new U7 team which will be able to play competitive league football from September, not just friendly festivals. We have had lots of teams at League and Cup finals competitions and several girls picked up by or training with professional clubs where they will continue their footballing journeys. Other than the odd space here or there we have a full Club with a team or more at every age group from U7 to U16 for the 24/25 season providing more than 220 local girls with football in a safe and happy environment. This growth and our excellent reputation is something we are all very proud of and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Coaches, Committee and Parents for all their hard work in achieving this. Without our amazing volunteers who juggle work and family commitments, this club would not exist. I thank those stepping down for their outstanding input over the last 3 seasons and welcome those who are stepping into new club roles today as we look forward to the 24/25 season and beyond."*

### **Welfare Report – Caroline Ward**

CW welcomed CR who has shared the role this season and reiterated main role for the Welfare Officers is to ensure all coaches have DBS, First Aid and required coaching

certificates. The Club probably have higher standards than other clubs, but the Committee feel our players deserve the most qualified coaches. CW and CR recognised the coaches for their efforts in spending the time to achieve accreditation. Safeguarding also includes working with teams to prevent issues such as bullying. CW closed with observing that it's been a very positive season - and the quietest to date.

### **Constitution and Governance report – CR**

CR stated that she has joined the Committee this season with a mandate to ensure legal compliance.

One of the first issues to look at was the inclusion of 'girls' in the name of the Club, particularly in the context of boys wishing to play in girls leagues. Whilst The FA's approach is to be inclusive, all templates are geared towards the inclusion of girls/women in clubs historically dominated by boys/men; and not geared towards girls-only clubs.

The Committee was unanimous in the view that the Club was created to provide opportunities for girls and women in football and so CR was asked to ensure that our Constitution and Governance supported this goal.

The Equalities Act allows for association exceptions, whereby organisations can select members on the basis of selected characteristics. Under this framework the Club is required to become an association, that carries certain requirements such as having over 25 members and that the admission to membership involves a process of selection. Such a framework allows our members to only be females.

As all of our members are currently under the age of 18; parents will exercise votes on behalf of their daughters.

A question was raised of the situation where a boy identifying as a girl wanted to join the Club. CR stated that the Committee had discussed the situation and had agreed to consider the matter on a case-by-case basis. Further, the Committee would have to take into account a variety of factors, including the safety of members, so a 17-year-old would be a different situation than a 7-year-old. This case-by-case approach would also apply to a girl identifying as a boy, but that in the absence of a recently updated FA trans policy we do not wish to include a specific trans policy in the Constitution.

CR referred to the new Conflict of Interest policy, with a need identified to avoid Committee members having a vote on matters where they have a personal interest in the outcome.

A question from the floor raised the issue of the membership form setting the expectation of volunteering and the risk of accusations of discrimination if a parent is not able to volunteer due to personal circumstances. CR indicated that sensitivity would be employed in this situation.

The meeting address the three motions tabled:

Revised Constitution was passed unanimously.  
Admissions Criteria was passed unanimously.  
Conflict of Interest policy was passed unanimously.

### **Treasurer's Report – TW**

TW presented the financial statements and outlined that the Club's main income streams remains membership fees, sponsorship and grants. The statement outlines a surplus of around £4,000. The Club also maintains a welfare grant fund to assist families that may be struggling to pay subscription fees; TW reiterated that coaches should contact the Chairs if any of their parents require help.

A question from the floor observed Harwell is an excellent facility, but asked if the lack of a barbeque had a significant impact on revenues for the weekend. The Chair outlined the plans to deepen the relationship with the Harwell Campus, firstly as a way of offsetting training fees, but also to provide other opportunities for sponsorship, work experience for players and so on, with the tournament being a key early opportunity to build ties.

Discussion moved onto the issue of volunteering and the requirement for more help as the Club has grown. The meeting considered several options such as those used by Park Run. The Committee to report back on measures to be taken.

A question from the floor asked if income from the tuck-shop could be ring-fenced for the use of that team. CW pointed out that the difficulty is only some teams play at grounds that have tuck shop to run.

The motion on the financial statements was passed unanimously.

### **Resolution on waiving coaches' fees**

Resolution d. i) from the AGM Agenda:

*"Members aged under 18 who are the children of Club Coaches ('Club Coach' means an adult registered on the Club's FA Whole Game System account to coach children in an Amazons team for the 2024-25 season, and who holds (or, for a new coach, holds by 1 January 2025) all the qualifications required by The FA and the Club to do so) shall be entitled to a waiver of membership fees for 2025-2025."*

SF recorded that once all conflicted parties had left the meeting, the quorum of six votes had been met, with eight votes across four parents being present. (With each player member representing one vote).

A rationale for the motion to waive fees for coaches was provided – a show of appreciation for the current coaches, and an encouragement for more coaches to step forward. To prevent any potential abuse, only coaches formally registered on the FA Whole Game system would be granted a fee waiver and that registration requires DBS, Safeguarding, First Aid and basic Football Coaching qualifications. This waiver would include the potential fees

of around 40 player members, slightly less than 20% of the total, which would represent around £8,000.

The resolution to extend a fee waiver for coaches was passed unanimously.

### **Resolution on waiving Committee members' fees**

Resolution d. ii) from the AGM Agenda:

*“Members aged under 18 who are the children of Committee members (meaning members of the Club’s management committee who attend the majority of the committee’s meeting throughout the 2024-2025 season) shall be entitled to a waiver of membership fees for 2024-2025.”*

SF recorded that once all conflicted parties had left the meeting, the quorum of six votes had been met, with eight votes across seven parents being present.

The resolution to extend a fee waiver for Committee members was passed unanimously.

### **Questions to the Committee**

Sponsorship – request for clarity around teams finding sponsorship. CF confirmed that each team should be finding a sponsor for kit- which has now happened. If there are extra sponsors Chairman can direct to teams that don’t have sponsorship.

CF mentioned the need for a sponsorship manager

A follow up question was raised on restricted categories for sponsors – the list of restrictions was confirmed as any business principally engaged in alcohol, cigarettes, gambling or sex-related products. Clarification was sought on a pizza company being considered junk food – the Committee were agreed that on its face pizza may not necessarily be considered junk food, and that if the parents of that team had misgivings they could reject sponsorship, but then the onus would be on them to find a replacement.

A question was raised about old kit – the Committee confirmed old kit was stored to enable new players to begin playing immediately. A decision will have to be made about kit being handed down to younger age groups.

The Committee clarified that kit remains the property of the Club, notwithstanding the difficulty of getting back kit from players leaving the Club.

Finally, the Committee expressed a wish to get to the point where old kit could be recycled.

### **Committee membership**

CF announced that Mark Holtom and Terry Wright would be stepping down from their roles on the Committee, but noted that they would remain in their coaching roles. The full Committee thanked both Mark and Terry for all their work for the Amazons since they became involved, at the very inception of the Club.

Terry Wright will be replaced by Corinne Bridgeman as Treasurer.

Also joining the Committee, Dan Freeman joins as Webmaster.

The resolution for MH and TW standing down from the Committee, CB and DF joining the Committee, and other existing members remaining on the Committee was passed unanimously.

### **AOB**

CR suggested that the current timings for the AGM (just after the Amazons tournament, right at the end of the financial year, just as the school year is ending) is not ideal and suggested that AGM timings should be adjusted to September; with the next AGM therefore scheduled for September 2025.

The resolution passed unanimously.

Revised Membership Form for Season 2024-2025 – CR stated that the new Membership Form would be going on Spond in the next week.

Sandy Flakelar

21<sup>st</sup> July 2024