



## GUILDFORD HOCKEY CLUB

AFFILIATED TO SURREY HOCKEY ASSOCIATION AND ENGLAND HOCKEY  
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### AGM 2021 – Men's Section Report – 2020/21

I will start by stating the blindingly obvious: the 2020/2021 season was a funny season. It was very stop-start and as the season ended, it would have been very easy to say.... "we could have, we should have ...". On the pitch, matters were very frustrating and that is one thing. But on a personal level Covid has affected my family, and I am sure it has affected us all in a great many ways. In short, I think we need to appreciate what we have and not what we don't have...

We entered September with high levels of optimism. In many ways GHC members were lucky as we did play more competitive games than many clubs, with teams playing between 5 and 8 league game and lots of friendlies and interclub events. At the end of the season, we finished grateful for our health, friendships and the fact that we had played at all.

As a Men's section the membership grew 10-15% year on year with now over 170 adult members registered on Teamo. This growth was very pleasing as we welcome new players in all age groups and special mention must go to Mike Fitter.

Mike has almost single-handedly grown the Men's Cavaliers & B2H group into a thriving hub at the bottom end of the club; on some days he has well over 40 players available.

This new team – only established in 2019/20 – has captured the minds and enthusiasm of our members and we will be adding a 2<sup>nd</sup> parallel team in the coming season, taking our Men's section to 10 competitive teams in Saturday leagues.

We have Junior members playing every week in every eligible side and are really trying to create a strong and clear pathway for juniors into adult hockey at all levels.

I firmly believe that whatever your level there is a GHC side waiting for you.

On the pitch we played some great hockey when we could and without the inference of COVID I am confident that the Men's 1's, Men's 2' and Men's 5 Krakens would have gained promotions to higher leagues.

The great work done by Dan and his coaching team has seen a strong foundation for the adult players. We have been able to improve the coaching for Men's sides and we will further invest in this going forward. We are incredibly lucky to have coaching available to all players – whatever their ability – and I think this is a great for GHC. I will mention a few names and and I am sorry if I have missed you out but many thanks to Dan, Beckie, Neil, Greenie, Ryan, James and Josh for their support in 20/21.

For 2021/21 we have strong plans to continue our growth and create age group teams for the older members ie “Over” or O40s, O50s and if possible 2 x O60s teams. [NB England Hockey have moved away from Vets and Supervets to “Masters” and O35, O40, O50 etc age groups.]

This plan is really trying to fill a void for older players for which there is a healthy demand. As an example, over the last bank Holiday weekend GHC hosted over 300 O50s Men's teams and 3 strong O50s Women's sides in an EH format Summer Masters Series tournament. It was so good we are doing it again on June 26 & 27<sup>th</sup> and it will be a firm fixture in the GHC calendar.

Last year, as a bit of fun, I started to keep track of who was the GHC men's top goal scorer, and it was fitting that M1 striker Ross Ferguson won the award in 19/20. This year Ross had to settle for 2<sup>nd</sup> place as our esteemed Club Treasurer, Mark Lenel, won the coveted award, helping the M5 finish unbeaten in the league.

The club is run by a large number of volunteers and it can be a thankless task. The Captains put in countless hours behind the scenes to make the Saturday games fun – Thank You to all. Sadly, James Higgins is standing down as Captain of the M3/ Shadows - thank you very much, James, for your contribution.

Other people to thank include Andrew Austin who was not only the Captain of 1 side but Captained 2 sides!!!! As he looks to next season, common sense has prevailed and Andrew is relinquishing the job of the M5 Krakens Captain – which he has done brilliantly for a number of years – to focus on the M6. Thank you for having done both jobs!

David Jennings has been awesome as Fixture Secretary and incredible at help being as flexible as possible in this very important role (without pitch bookings we don't play!).

With lots happening at the Club, a new green pitch, new leagues and more, I look forward to seeing you in the bar very soon.

Mike Kefford  
GHC Mens Captain, 8 June 2021

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