



GUILDFORD HOCKEY CLUB

AFFILIATED TO SURREY HOCKEY ASSOCIATION AND ENGLAND HOCKEY
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AGM 2021 – Women’s Section Report – 2020/21

In last year’s AGM report from outgoing Ladies Section Captain, Maggs Kyte, she hoped for a start of the new season “do”...I think she meant 2020 not 2021! But here we are, hoping that the end is somewhat in sight for this awful pandemic, and once again we can hope for a more normal season from September.

Hats off to you all for battling through all that the last 12 months (and more) has thrown at us, both on and off the pitch. It was superb to see some hockey finally being played again towards the very end of the season, and while results didn’t matter for most as leagues were as good as cancelled, didn’t it just feel so good to be back playing and supporting??

While the pandemic was raging, many people have been working tirelessly to set up the new league structure that will kick in from September 2021. We were deemed a “border club” and as such had to give consideration to which new England Hockey Area we wanted to be part of. While many of the clubs we are used to playing have opted for the Greater London Area, we have stuck with our roots in the new “Oaks” league which covers the South East Area: Surrey, Sussex and Kent.

If you haven’t heard much about this change the key reasons for it are:

- A simplified (national) governance structure supported by local organisations
- Common set of rules (nationwide)
- Better access for clubs and teams to the National League structure
- Reduced travel times for participants
- Local management with greater transparency and accountability to clubs
- Simplified structure i.e. 8 leagues instead of 5 leagues is a better structure for competitions

With 2 new GHC women’s teams in September (taking us to eight teams!), we will have a team in almost all the Oaks leagues. So, let’s get some promotions next season and the following season we can enjoy some friendly inter-club competition!

As for what the two new teams will look like and where they will sit, everyone in the Women’s section should have heard a bit more about it from their Captains, but if

anyone would like to understand more about it, or about the new league structure, please do get in touch.

By the way you may have noticed a switch to me using “Women’s” section instead of “Ladies” section. This is an intentional move we have taken in line with all major sports (except Wimbledon where it’s Ladies and Gentlemen!), and in line with EH and FIH.

Thank you to everyone who has helped out this season however big or small – captains, coaches, managers, pitch bookers, umpire coordinators, covid leaders, first aiders, players, parents, family who have helped the less tech-savvy get their audio and video working on zoom catch up calls(!), and even this year the many painters who helped spruce up the clubhouse. You’ve all helped keep the GHC spirit alive despite the distance.

I cannot wrap up though without a few special thank you’s for those who have gone out of their way this season.

Melinda Rock, because you know when you’ve been getting InTouch at 5am? That’s not Melinda being an early riser, she hasn’t gone to bed!

Dan Fox, for making everything happen so smoothly while so much goes on behind the scenes.

Mike Kefford, as the wiggly lines on the sand pitch may soon be a thing of the past, after persistence pays off to get the second pitch re-laid.

Sarah Fletcher-Evans, who has kept us all in the loop on social media while we’ve been apart.

Mark Lenel, because who could have forecast all this in the finance report? And who would have believed him if he had.

Dave Dickson, for guiding us through Teamo, and for finding friendlies to make sure as many of you as possible got a weekend fixture.

Dave Jennings, for pitch booking...and then re-pitch booking.

Dave Hall, for supporting the clubhouse bar but also for running a fantastic online quiz for us all to get far too competitive about.

Andrew Fergusson, for being covid rules and regs extraordinaire and for putting on all that was possible behind the bar.

James Relph and Tony Hall, for combined efforts in making the clubhouse fresh and ready to welcome us all back.

James Bennett, for setting up the Crowdfunder...and to all of you who donated!!

Maggs Kyte, for working with England Hockey to represent our needs in the new league set up.

Goodness, that was a long list and surely I've missed people off (that's the trouble with not seeing people's faces as a reminder!).

Despite (and sometimes because of) all that we have fought through as a club, as squads, and as individuals we are thriving in the Women's section. With the new squads to support this growth next season looks to be a corker.

I hope you all have a really amazing summer...we deserve it. Enjoy the break, enjoy the warmer weather that has finally arrived, and we look forward to welcoming you all back with open arms ready and raring to go for the new season.

Jo Collins, 1 June 2021

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