



## **NEWCASTLE STAFFS. VOLLEYBALL CLUB**

(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Accounts and Trustees' Annual Report

for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023

# **NEWCASTLE STAFFS. VOLLEYBALL CLUB**

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## TRUSTEES

- Marie Barley (Secretary)
- Matt Smith (Treasurer)
- Els Drijfhout
- Ben Fernandez-Fontan
- Richard Guest
- Flossy Owen
- Will Roberts (Chair)
- Emma Rodgers
- Rod Stockwell

Due to personal circumstances Emma Rodgers stepped back from being a Trustee mid-season, to be replaced at the 2023 AGM.

## **TRUSTEES REPORTS**

The trustees present the annual report together with the financial statement for the charity for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023.

### **OBJECTS**

The objects of the CIO are:

The promotion of the amateur sport of volleyball, beach volleyball and sitting volleyball for the public benefit and the promotion of community participation in healthy recreation, by the provision of facilities for playing volleyball, beach volleyball sitting volleyball in Newcastle, North Staffordshire and South Cheshire.

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

We are such a progressive and positive club that in completing these reports I always struggle to reflect on the year past as my focus and energy tends to be forward looking, but recognising and celebrating what we have achieved is important in understanding where we can go.

The period covered by the 2022-23 volleyball season has been characterised by soaring ongoing inflation and a cost-of-living crisis. These issues have affected the club – we lost junior members in September whose parents referenced a decision to cut down on activities for their children to reduce costs, and despite freezing our membership costs we also needed to provide financial assistance to a larger number of members. In parallel with this, our costs have risen with venues increasing their charges.

We could not achieve this without the support of our sponsors and partners. Local businesses Paragon Pub Group, one of Staffordshire's premier employers and brands. Paragon feature as kit sponsor across all of our senior teams but their support behind the scenes again extended beyond this – thank you so much! Environmental Essentials, another local company also founded by a Newcastle-under-Lyme local, and friend of the club sustained their sponsorship of our Junior Teams.

The importance of two further partners can never be underestimated – Madeley School, now entering its 20<sup>th</sup> year as an active partner of the club, and Staffordshire University. Both partners accommodate our frequent requests for court time and are open to suggestions of how they might help the club progress further. Huge “thank you” messages should go to both.

The effective long term financial management of the club is therefore something that have given us security to ‘carry on regardless’ and work hard to provide the best possible quality experiences we can. The cushion of our reserves is a blessing that prevents sleepless nights, and it is notable that we experienced only a small decrease in our closing vs opening balance in the 2022-23 financial year. We are proud to be so well run in a voluntary context and celebrate that fact that our Trustees have not only this season dealt with the day to day running of the club but also undertaken important governance work for example reviewing our policies.

Other areas of our professionalism are our clothing partnership with Kitlocker and Nike branded clothing which also provides a kick-back into the club which we use to suppress costs, and our use of the Spond member management app which has helped transform member communication over the last two seasons, and critically reduce the time our volunteer spend on admin – meaning they can do more of the enjoyable stuff!

During the season we faced a complaint made against a coach and there followed a Safeguarding investigation. This tested the skills of our Safeguarding lead Flossy Owen, and she managed this admirably with the support of Rich Guest in particular. Ensuring our members has safe and enjoyable experiences is at the heart of the purpose of a community club, and confidence that the club will deal with any issues is critical to our credibility with members.

This season was also Rod Stockwell's last as NVL fixture secretary, and we salute his efforts over the years and commitment to the role and the teams. We are grateful that Rod will remain a Trustee... and as a volleyball fan anticipate he will still be at many matches through the season!

Led by our board of Trustees we celebrated our 40th anniversary in 2020 by looking to the future and imagining what the club might be in 2030 when we reach 50! Club members past and present contributed to lively discussions on this and we agreed three ambitions for 2030:

1. To double our membership (baseline of 135 members)
2. To create a home for the club (i.e. facility)
3. To ensure our players and teams are at the 'top table' of English Volleyball

In 2022-23 we made progress!

### **2030 Ambition 1: Double our Membership**

Through an increased media presence, direct approaches with schools and others, and targeted social media promotion this growth happened remarkably quickly, and relatively easily.

The challenge has been keeping up pace and the implication of achieving the target three years after setting it has been significant on our requirements for venues and coaches. We must now ensure we provide high quality experiences for our members and consolidate on this growth.

- 2020 baseline (September): 135 members
- 2021/22 season: 263 members (up 95% vs baseline)
- 2022/23 season: 276 members (up 104% vs baseline)

### **2030 Ambition 2: Create a home for the Club**

We set-out with two options in this ambition, a home at Madeley School, and/or at Keele University Beach courts. The costs and complexities relating to working with the University mean that in 2022 it became evident that this would not be a viable option unless the University changes its approach to investment in facilities.

Initial conversations with Madeley School have been positive with an in-principle 'yes' to creating a club room with kitchen, storage and indoor changing facilities on the small basketball court area between the sports hall and the new nursery. With the nursery having set a model for the adaptation of a mobile classroom building there is recent experience in the school.

We must now ensure we focus on creating a viable costed plan, and embark on a fundraising strategy.

### **2030 Ambition 3: To ensure our players and teams are at the top table of English Volleyball**

The success of the Men's 1<sup>st</sup> team in the 21/22 season served as a reminder of the **value and influence of performance across the whole club:**

- A positive feeling through the club
- Teams supporting teams
- Increased spectatorship including 5x 100+ crowds in a 9-day period
- Role modelling for emerging and young players
- The best habits becoming the norm
- Increased media profile
- Improved engagement with our sponsors

So, what did we do in 2022-23 to build on this and drive further change?

- Relationships with partners to increase training opportunities at no further cost to the club (use of Staffs Uni)
- Accelerated player progression
  - Creation of Women's Development team to bridge the gap between junior and NVL competitions
  - U15/16 train 2x per week as an expectation, including strength and conditioning
  - U18 players able to access up to 4 sessions/week through attendance of Newcastle College & joining NVL squads

- Taking our Beach Programme to a new level
- Invested in coaches to sustain momentum in overall club influence, reputation and brand (all three of our 2030 ambitions rely on having great coaches)
  - ... to cater for our growing membership
  - ... to make the most of our new facilities
  - ... to help our players achieve their potential
- We invested in utilising England Men's National Team coach to support coach and player development through coach mentoring and session support twice a month. This would:
  - value our coaches, directly supporting their development, learning and growth
  - raise standards of performance in coaching, and therefore on the court
  - demonstrate to our members and wider community that we are serious about taking the club forward, aligned with the charitable and community values upon which the club is built.

...And as a result we achieved:

#### **Senior Performance top achievements:**

- 6<sup>th</sup> place (= W/L ratio with 4<sup>th</sup>, improved ratio vs 21/22!) in the Super League
- 3 players represented England including Zakk Hadgett as captain
- Hosting England Men's Camps, coach Sam Stevenson invited to become an assistant with England Men

#### **Junior Performance top achievements:**

- Joe Kobylarz represented England at the CEV u19s
- Josh Sturland and Jim Cox represented England at the CEV u17s
- Further male and female athletes in England Juniors and Cadets training camps
- Richard Guest secured role as England Junior Girls Assistant Coach
- Rapid progression through Women's Development Team with players now training in NVL squad
- 6 young juniors attending Volleyball England Futures Camp
- Hosted Junior Beach Performance Camp led by England Beach coach Pete Makowski
- u18 boys 3<sup>rd</sup> in National Rankings, u18 girls 18<sup>th</sup> in National Rankings (did not compete in GP3, if they had and had secured average points from GP1 and 2 they would have been ranked 14<sup>th</sup>)
- u16 boys 7<sup>th</sup> in National Rankings, u16 girls 9<sup>th</sup> in National Rankings
- u15 boys 5<sup>th</sup> in National Rankings, 15 girls 15<sup>th</sup> in National Rankings (did not compete in GP3, if they had and had secured average points from GP1 and 2 they would have been ranked 12<sup>th</sup>)

To close I would like to express my thanks to all of the club's volunteers, coaches and trustees – especially to Marie Barley and Richard Guest without whose additional support in both time, reassurance and initiative – the role of chair would have been too much for me to carry. Most of all though... I'd like to thank all our members as the club is in such wonderful health thanks to the culture and environment that we have together.

Will Roberts  
Chair of Trustees  
June 2023

## **ANNUAL AWARDS WINNERS 2022-23 SEASON**

| CHAIR'S AWARD                |                    |                   |                 |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Senior                       | Julian Kobylarz    | Junior            | Josh Sturland   |
| SENIOR PLAYER AWARDS         |                    |                   |                 |
| Team                         | Coaches Player     | Players Player    | Most Improved   |
| Women’s Social               | Nike Baechle       | Bee Yusuf         | Els Drijfhout   |
| Women’s Development          | Lily Sturland      | Alex Viggars      | Dash Vitsynska  |
| Men 2                        | Thomas Jeneson     | Joe Kobylarz      | Trafim Brokh    |
| Women 1                      | Becky Hallworth    | Olivia Burton     | Abbie Gentle    |
| Men 1                        | Cameron Rhodes     | Zakk Hadgett      | Josh Wainwright |
| Social – most social member! |                    | Falko Drijfhout   |                 |
| JUNIOR PLAYER AWARDS         |                    |                   |                 |
| Team                         | MVP                | Most Improved     |                 |
| u18 Girls                    | Abbie Gentle       | Niamh Breslin     |                 |
| u18 Boys                     | Joes Kobylarz      | Harry Ford        |                 |
| u16 Girls                    | Alayna Hirschi     | Maria Pachucka    |                 |
| u16 Boys                     | Charlie Kobylarz   | Josh Sturland     |                 |
| u15 Girls                    | Gracie Wilmer      | Ryleigh Heron     |                 |
| u15 Boys                     | Seb Wood           | Seb Karas         |                 |
| u14 Girls                    | Sarika Krishnadas  | Lara Saint        |                 |
| u14 Boys                     | Seb Wood           | Ashish Saninair   |                 |
| u13 Girls                    | Maggie Friend      | Evie Watson       |                 |
| u13 Boys                     | Tom Satchithananda | Dylan Jones       |                 |
| u12s                         | Andrew Findlater   | Isabella Bradshaw |                 |
| VolleyStars                  | all players        |                   |                 |



## **SAFEGUARDING**

As a club we have been fortunate to have had very little issues regarding the welfare and safeguarding of our members. However, this year we have had one matter arise. This has now been closed, and the appropriate actions were taken.

We are grateful to our coaches for their hard work and vigilance, and as club we should be proud of our commitment to the members in our club but must ensure we don't become complacent.

Florence Owen  
Safeguarding Officer, June 2023

## **JUNIOR VOLLEYBALL**

Running a junior section for players aged 7-18 requires a significant commitment from coaches in a voluntary section and we are fortunate to have enough coaches who understand the commitment and personal investment that young people deserve and need if they are to flourish and develop in sport.

Sincere thanks to all those who have coached juniors this season. This has been led by Julian Kobylarz, Ant Viggars, Matt Smith, Flossy Owen, Richard Guest, Will Roberts, Jack Dunkley and Sam Stevenson, supported at various points through the season by, Stefan Costachescu, Elliot Wilde, Phil Harrison, Paul Goodwin, and Jess Keen.

Though not playing for the club specifically we should also recognise yet again the amazing achievements of the Newcastle College based volleyball programme who won the following Association of Colleges titles:

- Girls' Cup
- Girls' Championship
- Boys' Championship

We can also celebrate numerous regional and national team selections, and of our strongest transfer of training commitment into Beach Volleyball of any season, supported by the camp provided by Pete Makowski, England coach.

## **VolleyStars**

Following its establishment in 2021 the VolleyStars group continued to thrive in 2022-23 despite lower number than the previous season. By the end of the season with some newbies added we had 12 regular attendees aged 7-11 (school years 3-6) in weekly sessions at Clayton Sport Centre, with three further u12s able to access additional training time in parallel.

Sadly it is really hard to get any competitive play with other clubs for this age group as so few clubs are active, however this does not appear to affect the children's enjoyment or interest, or that of their parents.

In May Sam Stevenson ran a series of sessions for the boys in the Stoke City FC Academy at u9-u11, sharing the details of VolleyStars with these youngsters.

Over the course of the season significant progress has been made by the young players and if they stick with the sport these early experiences will stand them in great stead to be our volleyball players of the future!

## **Girls' teams**

### **U12/u13/u14 girls**

The younger girls were coached by Will Roberts, who until April had to coach solo this season due to a lack of available committed young leaders. Will was then joined by former NCAA player Jess Keen who recently moved to the area from France along with her family and will play an increasing role in coaching over the coming seasons adding excellent coaching knowledge and experiences for the girls.

A strong volleyball culture has been developed in this group and despite a handful of drop-outs during the season the core 16-18 girls are highly committed and have been enthusiastic about taking

in additional training and opportunities wherever possible including attendance of the Beach Camp led by Pete Makowski.

We entered B, C and D teams into the 4v4 Tier 2 format through all three Grand Prix events. All these teams performed competitively and it was gratifying to see them come up against a consistent set of opponents across three months, getting to know their opponents and how to overcome them, developing their playing style and skill deployment. The highlight came at Frodsham in Grand Prix 2 when the B team played without a coach and reached the final of the tournament beating physically bigger, older and stronger teams through their court coverage and quality of skills. With the C and D team cheering them on it provided a memorable moment for the programme.

- *Sarika Krishnadas, Maggie Friend, Kornelia Chudyk, Charlotte Keen, Isabella Bradshaw and Isabelle Roberts all attended the Volleyball England Futures Camp*

### **U15 Girls**

The u15s team was selected from players who trained in the combined u15/16 training sessions on Monday and Friday evenings. The sessions were led by coaches Rich Guest, Flossie Owen and Anthony Viggars. We have 25 registered players within this group (two did drop out) and Fridays session in particular had very good attendance with about 20 girls there each week with an even split between year 10 and 11 girls. Monday session attracted a consistent 14 or so of the more dedicated players.

Competition wise we did feel that our u15s might compete strongly on a national level although nothing is certain at this early age group. Unfortunately, due to illness and unavailability we never quite did ourselves justice. In GP1 we produced a very nervous performance and finished 3<sup>rd</sup> to two teams who would both go on to reach the semi-finals.

Having been placed in a silver group for GP2, we did then play with more confidence and managed to win 2 from 3 matches. Due to further player unavailability for GP3 we sadly did not compete. Whilst this was a sad end to the team's season, hopefully they can gain some confidence from the GP2 performance to push forward next season on their current status as a good silver pool team.

- *Both Skye Whitfield and Gracie Wilmer trained with the England Cadet Squad.*
- *Isabelle Regan gained selection along with Gracie Wilmer for the West Midlands Regional team*

### **U16 Girls**

The u16s group for the most part had a positive season with both 'A' & 'B' teams competing well in tier 1 and 2 Grand Prix competitions respectively.

**'A' Team** (tier 1) – started off THE GP Series well winning 2 from 3 matches which placed them in a gold group in London that would turn out to be somewhat a 'group of death'. After a long journey they fell to defeats against 3 teams who all went on to reach the semi-finals – included eventual finalists Richmond and Boswells. The team did however respond well, winning all 3 games in GP3 finishing equal 8<sup>th</sup> in the overall rankings. The team should take great heart in the fact that without the particularly tough 2<sup>nd</sup> round draw they would have perhaps finished even higher in the rankings.

**'B' Team** (tier 2) – the side consisted mainly of u15 girls not in the 'A' team squad with most playing 6v6 volleyball for the first time. The team won half of its games across the first 2 GPs and the girls gained valuable experience. Unfortunately, their GP3 was cancelled at the last minute by the host club. Some girls also competed in the u15 tier 2 (4v4) GPs alongside our u14 group.

- *Alex Viggars trained with the England Junior Squad*

### **u18 Girls**

In this age group we again had 'A' & 'B' teams competing in tier 1 and 2 Grand Prix competitions respectively. The 'A' team was made up entirely of girls training within the Development Group, whilst the 'B' team also included some of the stronger u16 players also. Teams and sessions were coached by Richard Guest and Anthony Viggars

Whilst the **'A' team** will probably view this club season as disappointing there were contributing factors and the majority of the team would also go onto have success with the College Academy team. In GP1 the team was hit by a double blow to the first 6 with a late player withdrawal through illness and a setter injury in the first game. Despite this the team should probably still have finished 2<sup>nd</sup> rather than 3<sup>rd</sup> which could have drastically altered their season. In GP2 the team did perform extremely well, with 3 good performances, only losing to a very strong Wessex team.

The **'B' team** which featured most of the u16 'A' team players competed in the first 2 GPs at tier 2 level travelling to Wirral on both occasions. Playing 2 set matches the girls struggled to win games outright but did manage to draw most matches.

Due to a shortage of players (Easter Holidays) across both team for GP3 we only entered one combined team in the tier 2 event. We proved too strong for our opponents winning all 4 games with several of the younger team members putting in excellent performances.

- *Abigayle Gentle trained with the England Junior Squad*

### **Boys Teams**

With Adam Bradbury stepping away from coaching this season, the stable structure provided in 2021/22 was disrupted as we did not manage to secure the consistent high quality coaching coverage across teams that we aspire to. Thanks to the extraordinary commitment of Julian Kobylarz and dependability of Matt Smith, Jack Dunkley and Will Roberts we sustained A and B teams for u18 and u16, and A, B and C teams for u15s – but it was hard work with some originally committed coaches withdrawing at short notice.

### **u12/u13/u14 boys**

Huge credit should go to Jack Dunkley who turned 19 during the season and as a graduate of our junior section himself, found himself as a first year Medical Student taking significant responsibility for what is an excellent group of boys. We have an excellent and large cohort of boys in the u13 category, three of whom were in the u15 A team – Gabriel Fatu particularly impressive and promising with his powerful attacking play.

In the Grand Prix events we were able to give a good number of the boys court time but sadly some missed out due to football commitments and we would love to see them get available for the Grand Prix events next season. We hosted GP1 and travelled to Black Country for GP2, then Frodsham for GP3. On each occasion our teams predominantly made up of u13s with 1x u14, 2x u12s and 1x u11 playing in these competitions came up against physical and experienced u15 players from other clubs who could have played 6v6 in tier 1.

This group is very exciting and the club must take care of nurturing them to stay in the sport and develop well over the coming seasons.

### **U15 Boys**

The u15s A team was selected from players who trained in the combined u15/16 training sessions on Monday and Friday evenings. The sessions were led by Matt Smith and Julian Kobylarz, with occasional support from Will Roberts. The group grew during the season with additional players in the u16 group in particular adding depth to the B team – and new u15s joining in the spring who show great promise for next season. When focussed, the boys show great promise but there are novice and experienced players whose training attendance is too sporadic, and behaviours limit their and others' development. With a small number of actual u15s, the team relied on better u14s and u13s.

Competition wise, we had the bad news in January that Jim Cox's England u17 selection to compete in the CEV qualifiers in Bulgaria clashed with Grand Prix 1 so the boys had to play without their captain, setter and start player. With u13s Eugen and David Costachescu stepping in to play a two setter system up in Urmston the boys turned out a strong performance to win the group!

Jim was back for GP2 but carrying an injury and the boys travelled to title favourite Leeds. The team struggled to play at their best, losing two matches but doing enough to qualify for the last 8s in GP3.

For both GP1 and GP2 Julian Kobylarz stepped in to coach due to the withdrawal of the planned coach for this group, and at GP3/last 8s Matt Smith took the team getting in valuable experience in his young coaching career.

GP3 didn't quite go to plan as the boys lost to an Ashcombe team they really should have beaten, but with Jim Cox still not fully mobile due to his lasting ankle injury heads dropped and more experienced players struggled to step up. The team finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the group missing out on the semi-finals ***finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in the National Rankings for the season*** – including two defeats to eventual national champions Leeds.

- *Jim Cox played for England Cadets*
- *Seb Wood and Max Butterworth played for the West Midlands region*

### **U16 Boys**

The u16s group had a positive season with both A and B teams competing well in tier 1 and 2 Grand Prix competitions respectively.

**'A' Team** (tier 1) – started off the GP Series like a train, dominating their GP1 pool winning all games 2-0 in convincing style at Madeley. They also got to host GP2, but had to do so with libero Lucas Stuttard setting as a result of Jim Cox's ankle injury. In a 'group of death' this was seriously bad news – as both of the eventual national finalists were in this Gold Pool. The boys beat London Sharks (who ended up beating Leeds in the national final) and this performance and a heart breaking 2-1 defeat to Leeds saw them secure enough sets and points to qualify for the last 8s despite finishing 4<sup>th</sup> in this group. Per the u15s, sadly Jim Cox had not recovered sufficiently physically to train at the required mental intensity ahead of the last 8s and he admirably struggled through to make it work but not able to be at his best. All three pool games at the Last 8s were incredibly close but it was the 15-12 deciding set defeat to Richmond that cost Castle a place in the semis, and as a **result 7<sup>th</sup> in the national rankings**.

**'B' Team** (tier 2) – played in both GP1 and GP2 but due to date clashes could not make GP3 work. This group was coached in competitions by Toby Waugh, assisted at GP1 by Harry Ford. The team played well learning a lot finishing with 3 wins, 2 draws and 5 defeats across their 10 matches in the GP series.

- *Josh Sturland played for England Cadets and West Midlands*
- *Charlie Kobylarz trained with England Cadets*
- *Lucas Stuttard played for the West Midlands*

### **u18 Boys**

In this age group we again had A and B teams competing in tier 1 and 2 Grand Prix competitions respectively. The A team featured a strong core of boys with NVL and National Squad experience, and the B team a real mixture of players – fringe A team players who could progress, less experienced u16s, and emerging younger talents!

Whilst the **A team** will probably view this season as disappointing as they didn't make the final or play at their best at the Last 8s, they must remember they **finished clear 3<sup>rd</sup> in the National Rankings**. For GP1 they travelled to East Northants taking 2-0 wins over the hosts, Coventry Riga and Wombourne, and they were then hosts for GP2. They started the day at 100 miles an hour convincingly beating Leeds before throwing away a winning position vs perennial champions Richmond to lose 2-1. They then beat Exeter to secure 2<sup>nd</sup> place and a strong ranking going into the last 8s. Despite beating Worthing and Black Country at the last 8s the boys weren't at their best and lost to IBB London Polonia meaning they got Boswells in the semi-final, and the Essex side provided too strong.

The B team had an up and down set of performances but plenty to be positive about, particularly the performances of emerging u16 and u14 players. They finished the season on a high winning their GP3 pool, and an overall record of 3 wins and 6 defeats in the season

- *Joe Kobylarz played for England Juniors*

## **SOCIAL VOLLEYBALL**

NSVC Social Volleyball has had a very good year. We play in Madeley every Wednesday from 6-8 pm. The aim is to give people the opportunity to play volleyball, whether for the first time, as continuation or returning to the sport. And that is exactly what we do every week!

Use of the Spond app is working satisfactorily. We have now 112 people on the social membership list, that's 30 more than last year! Players have to sign up for the evening, and we have had to introduce a waiting list, to cap the number of players at 42 per evening, that is 6 teams of 7 playing on three courts. We first met this number at the end of May!!

We still have a healthy mix of beginners and advanced players and try to make the teams more or less even in strength, so that all can get the most out of it. Inexperienced players are learning from those who have been playing for years, and it is great to see them improving through the year!

Players come from all over Europe and beyond. This year again we had of lots of students from Keele and Staffs Uni join us.

Payment goes via the Sumup App, which works most of the time, but depends on internet availability. It is proving to be very useful for taking payment on the evening. Some members prefer to pay annually.

As we have a high number of players every Wednesday, it is important that we keep our equipment in good order, so that we can safely play on three courts.

This season we entered a women's team in the West Midlands league again. Bee Yusuf coached us and you can read about this in the report from the Ladies 2nd team. Some of the men from social have kindly helped out with scoring and lining, which was much appreciated!

Els Drijfhout

05/06/2023

## **WOMEN'S NVL REPORT (National Volleyball League)**

### **Overview**

Following relegation to the national league division 3, the ladies team had what can be reported as a mixed season.

There was a large change over of players, with some of the key younger players, developed through the club turning 18 and moving away to university. Two players left to have babies and two players returned to the club, having not played since school but now wanting to become established NVL players. This change over caused some instability within the team in terms of expectation and standard of play.

The first half of the season saw the team lose a number of games 3-2 and games lost that could have been won. Following Christmas with a more consistent approach and a core team developing the team finished well, winning their last 6 fixtures to finish 3rd.

The aim for next season is to build on this and get promoted to Div 2.

### **Coaching**

As the coach I feel much more confident in my second year of coaching the team. I have a good rapport with the team and feel I have the personable skills to get them to perform to their best ability. In terms of technical coaching I feel this is an area where I would still like further development.

Simon Lotus helped with some coaching it was felt by the team that his approach was not overly suited to the women's game at our level. As a new coach I found his technical coaching very helpful but not his style of coaching. It would be more appropriate when he has more than 2 hours per week as he talked a lot and used problem solving for the players. I did learn from him and have implemented some of his strategies for drills and getting the players to focus in training particularly during the warm up and building up to multi play but due to the inconsistency of his commitment to the ladies team, he did not get to know the players and this support was therefore infrequent and not as productive as it could have been.

### **Players**

Ruth had a good season as captain and is developing in this role as a leader. Other players shown improvement in their play, that were committed to training. There was a feeling at times of a less professional attitude towards matches and training and feeling more social, maybe due to the expectation that division 3 would be easy.

As a team we have discussed this and wish to strive towards a more professional vision for the team, support by both myself and Rich Guest.

Keeley Guest  
June 2023



## **MEN'S 1<sup>ST</sup> TEAM REPORT**

Following the obvious success and excitement of the 2021-22 season it was always going to be a tough act to follow, and it is fair to say that the 2022-23 season was a tough one for the Men's 1<sup>st</sup> Team playing in the Volleyball England Super League.

However, we are looking back on a challenging season with following positives:

- 6th place finish in the Super League
- National Cup Quarter Final, losing out to the team that lost in the final
- Three players playing for England including the captain of the National Team
- Super League debuts for three of our talented junior players
- Support of the England National Team coach in monthly sessions to enhance performance

The 6<sup>th</sup> place finish vs 4<sup>th</sup> last season, and a quarter-final vs final appearance in the cup is obvious cause for disappointment and the season was full of ups and downs. We were rocked in the summer by the decisions of last season's MVP and former pro and England captain Adam Bradbury's decision to reduce his commitment to playing (Adam ended up playing <50% of matches) and of Matt Smith to take a break from playing (returning to play a limited role after Christmas), Rich James stepping away from the sport (again playing a bit-part after Christmas), Jack Richardson moving overseas, Ieuan Lamb retiring and Roo Scott moving back to California!

Positively had made some good recruitment with Iqbal Mohammed returning to the fold, tall and powerful middle Josh Wainwright moving into Newcastle with a desire to play at the top level (having lower league experience), plus James Baker and Iain McKellar signing to support the squad in the games in the South-East.

Injuries were then also a key feature with Iqbal rupturing his ACL away at Nottingham in the autumn after an impressive start to the season, followed by mid-season Canadian signing Rees Lehman suffering the same injury in the Cup Quarter Final playing only 1.5 games for the team prior to the injury. We then lost Seb Bukowski for two months due to a lower leg problem and Jim Smith who responded impressively to having to step up from Men2 tore his ankle ligaments in a blocking joust in February.

So how did we manage to finish in the league?!

Credit must go to the deep reserves of resilience from Zakk Hadgett, Cam Rhodes, Stef Cowley, Josh Wainwright, Elliott Francis and player-coach Sam Stevenson in this period. Through the season this group were the heartbeat of the team and they actually achieved a better win-loss ratio than the previous season, hamstrung only by the Super League scoring system that does not reward 3-2 wins in the way it does for 3-0 or 3-1. We got the same number of wins as the team that finished 4<sup>th</sup> but being the kings of the 5-setter is no good for your league finish!

Thank you to all those who have supported the team through the season especially Rod for the secretarial and scoring support, and the club members who cheered us on!

Sam Stevenson, Head Coach  
June 2023

## **WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT TEAM REPORT (West Midlands League Div. 1)**

As the number of junior members grew, at the end of the 21/22 season, we decided to create an additional section removing the previous reliance upon specific age groups within the junior section. The aim of the development group was to provide an environment where players of a certain level or potential under the age of 20 could train & play together to support their technical development; opportunity to play competitive games & progression towards the senior women's team.

The team was entered into the West Midlands league and trained on a Thursday at Newcastle College under the coaching of Ant Viggars and Richard Guest. At the time of writing, the squad consisted of 16 active players with ages ranging from 15 to 19.

In terms of meeting the initial aims of the programme I would outline the following:

### ***Technical Development***

Every single player within the group improved on an individual basis over the course of the season. Obviously some players improved more than others and the younger players in particular benefitted from training with older, more competent players. The programme also allowed the players to get more challenging training sessions as the coaching team would insist on a higher standard of play than at younger age group levels.

### ***Opportunity to play games***

The team was entered into the West Midlands league division 1 and, at the time of writing, the team are in 6th place out of 8 having won 4 and lost 9 of the 13 games played. There are a couple of games that were not played due to logistical challenges (of both teams) and they may be conceded however it is expected they will finish in 6th place retaining their place in this league.

The standard of 4 of the teams in the league in was extremely high (at least Div.3 NVL standard) and whilst they did give the team good experience of competitive games, it was at times challenging given the age and experience of the individual players compared to the opposition. In certain games, 4 of the 6 players on court were under the age of 16 which will be beneficial to the longer-term development of the players. The games also provided some good preparation for the national u18, u16, u15 tournaments.

### ***Transition into the Senior team***

The playing system applied within the training sessions and matches mirrored that of the senior womens team which also supported certain players own transition and gave an insight for other players as to how that team plays and is coached.

The group benefitted from the consistent presence of Abi Gentle and Lily Sturland who were also members of the senior squad and leaders in the u18 team. A number of the squad also had the opportunity to train with the senior team at various times throughout the season.

### ***Next Steps***

Overall, the creation of the group has been a success with the key aims met or exceeded. We have decided to evolve the group in the 2023/24 season and it will be renamed Womens 2. The team will continue to play in the West Midlands and be focused on the development of junior players with the additional aspect that it will involve more senior squad players to support the transition and also create a more competitive team within the tournament.

Ant Viggars & Richard Guest  
20.5.23

## **MEN'S 2<sup>ND</sup> TEAM REPORT**

Overall 5th in the league with 7 games won and 7 losses however 1 game had to be forfeited as our hosts (Derby Darkstar) couldn't supply a venue this was also done to Coventry Riga by the same club so we forfeited a game to Cambridge 3-0 25-0.

First triangular of the year was at Loughborough against the hosts and eventual winners of the league (they only lost 2 games against the Cambridge teams all season ) and Northampton Polish Crew (NPC) and despite a strong squad present the first 2 games didn't go our way however some good individual performances however at crucial times our own mistakes let us down.

Despite having 17 players signed up for NVL our first cup game was at Urmston in November and due to a Volleyball England Camp, work commitments and injuries we only had 7 players available despite a rally in the 3rd set (lost to 23) we ended up out of the cup 3 – 0 however the silver lining for the trip was that Freddie Guest made his senior debut for the club.

The next game saw a good win against Rhino's VC Cambridge a 5 setter 16-14 in the final set with Elliot Wilde hitting several winners under pressure to secure the victory as this was a single match away at Cambridge this was made all the sweeter due to a long journey there and back.

The next triangular was against Coventry Riga and Cambridge (eventual runners up in the league) and due to venue congestion the first game was played at Newcastle College and the next 2 at Keele we came away with one win and one loss.

The next triangular was against Nottingham Rockets and Loughborough, the rockets game was a bizarre affair as we won the first 2 sets to 11 and 22 and went on to lose the game in 5 sets. Having played Loughborough in the first game of the season we were confident we had enough talent to give them a game. The match was lost in 3 sets with 2 going to 25-23 and this was probably the best standard of volleyball we played all season even in defeat there was a lot of positives with Loughborough having to use their 6' 7" Australian beach pro tour opposite to counter the castle attack.

We finished the season strongly beating Riga and NPC (avenging the opening day defeat) in the next triangular, lost a close 5 setter to Rhinos (making honours shared for the season) then finished the season with emphatic wins against Nottingham and Derby twice.

We had a good mix of players this year with seasoned NVL players, players returning to the game and talented youngsters coming through the club however until the 2nd half of the season we never had a consistent team and we missed key players in some games. We will miss Mark Speake's experience as he retired this season however, we now have some early career talented players who have had a couple of years NVL experience that will be complimented by returning NVL players and juniors.

We look forward to next season's challenge.

Julian Kobylarz, Head Coach (June 2023)

## **WOMEN'S SOCIAL TEAM REPORT (West Midlands League Div. 2)**

### **Summary of the season**

For the volleyball season 2022-23, I continued my role as the team secretary/coach/captain for the ladies' 2nd team, I oversaw arranging fixtures and potential training opportunities. The members of the team had given a good indication that they were interested in playing in the west midlands league like in the previous years. Therefore, Ant, Rich, and I, with the support of the club chair made the executive decision to enter the social team into Division 2 of the West Midlands league.

This decision was influenced by the creation of an additional team called, the ladies' development team, this team was entered into Division 1 of the same local league. I oversaw organising the fixtures for both teams. The social team started with about 10 members, but that number grew as some other people showed interest, we ended the season with double that number.

In terms of matches, we had 12 fixtures in the West Midlands League (6 away and 6 home matches). The league started in October 2022 with a 3-0 win against Stourbridge & I'm pleased to say that that winning streak lasted the entire season with the team never losing a match. We ended the season at the top of the league table. Nevertheless, we had some issues with members' participation.

### **Participation and Performances**

At first glance, it seems like we have a lot of members but the commitment from each person was highly variable with only 5 core players. Most of the time we found ourselves recruiting players from the first team or players from the university team that also play social volleyball for the club. Hence, this lack of commitment and consistency made it quite difficult to plan the matches effortlessly.

Furthermore, home matches were sometimes trickier to plan as we won't have enough possible referees or scorers to help. Most of the time, I planned the fixtures in a way that the development team and the social team played matches on the same day so that we can help each other officiate the matches. So, we got help from the coaches of the development team and Abbie G. and Diane G., and vice versa. The courts at Madeley were booked through Marie.

I'm proud that we were able to go from the bottom of the leaderboard to the top this year and there were some amazing performances throughout. As much as I enjoy contributing to the club, I realised toward the end of the season that the workload I had was not manageable in the long run. I had to arrange fixtures, book & set up venues, organise match officials, recruit players, coach players, & captain the team while also trying to play to win. Unfortunately, I was rather drained by the end of it all. So, I'm taking a step back next season to allow other members to take up some leadership roles.

### **Highlights**

- Winning all matches 3-0 except for Cleobury who took one set off us (3-1 win).
- Being able to put together a team for away matches that were scheduled at obscure times (Tuesday at 8pm)
- Getting help from some NVL team members when we were short players.
- Collaboration with the Development team

Bee Yusuf  
Ladies Social Secretary  
June 2023

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Dear Members

As at the 2022/23 Year end on 31/05/2023 the Total Expenditure for the year was £34,102.72. Total Income of £33,559.45 leaving a Closing Balance of £1,809.54. A decrease on Last Year's Balance of £545.50.

The stability from our opening to closing balance for the year ended 2022/23 can be explained by additional initiatives taken by the club throughout the year. The employment of coaching services and development to aid coaching across the club cost the club substantially. Both indoor and beach court hire has contributed largely to the total expenditure for the year. Our annual awards event was also another initiative where the board of trustees mutually decided to harbor some of the cost, reducing the cost for our members. This again amounted to a relatively large expense for the club.

The Gift Aid for both 2021 and 2022 has been claimed and the amounts have been received. For the year 2020/21 we received an amount of £1,950.08. For 2021/22 an amount of £3,537.21 was received.

The year-end accounts of 2022/23 will be sent to Sefton's Accountants for auditing. As we are over the £25,000 threshold of income, we require an independent examination.

Once audited the accounts and information will be sent to the Charities Commission for publication on the website (last year's accounts can already be viewed online)

Matt Smith

NSVC Treasurer

31/05/23

|                                    |                   |  |                                      |                   |  |                                       |                   |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| For Season 2022/23                 |                   |  |                                      |                   |  |                                       |                   |
|                                    |                   |  |                                      |                   |  |                                       |                   |
| <b>INCOME</b>                      | <b>2022/23</b>    |  | <b>EXPENDITURE</b>                   | <b>2022/23</b>    |  | <b>Opening Balance as at 1/6/2022</b> | <b>£32,355.04</b> |
|                                    | <b>£</b>          |  |                                      | <b>£</b>          |  | <b>INCOME</b>                         | <b>£33,559.45</b> |
| Snr Contirbution                   | £5,068.62         |  | Volleyball England                   | £1,236.00         |  |                                       | <b>£65,914.49</b> |
| Jnr Contribution                   | £11,492.81        |  | Jnr Reg/Entry Fees                   | £0.00             |  | <b>EXPENDITURE</b>                    | <b>£34,102.72</b> |
| Social Contribution                | £3,744.15         |  | Ref Fees                             | £1,779.38         |  |                                       | <b>£31,811.77</b> |
| Lyme Lottery                       | £171.50           |  | Club Affiliation                     | £0.00             |  | <b>Balance at Bank 1 (31/5/23)</b>    | <b>£25,088.59</b> |
| Spond                              | £0.00             |  | Audit                                | £618.00           |  | <b>Balance at Bank 2 (31/5/23)</b>    | <b>£6,720.95</b>  |
| Sponsors                           | £500.00           |  | Hall Hire                            | £9,458.04         |  | <b>Closing Balance as at 31/05/23</b> | <b>£31,809.54</b> |
| Refund/Reimbursement               | £127.00           |  | Grants/sponsorship                   | £750.00           |  | <b>Difference</b>                     | <b>£2.23</b>      |
| Sumup                              | £0.00             |  | Merchandise                          | £0.00             |  | <b>Cash in hand</b>                   | <b>£2.23</b>      |
| Awards Eve/Club Night              | £2,582.65         |  | Beach Court hire                     | £3,819.82         |  | <b>Balance</b>                        | <b>£0.00</b>      |
| Gift aid refund                    | £5,487.29         |  | Award Eve                            | £1,618.98         |  |                                       |                   |
| 40 anniversary                     | £2,815.15         |  | Tournaments                          | £1,748.23         |  |                                       |                   |
| Competition Tournament hosting fee | £345.00           |  | Qualification/Registration reimburse | £233.50           |  |                                       |                   |
| Beach series                       | £1,225.28         |  | Gifts                                | £166.55           |  |                                       |                   |
|                                    |                   |  | Sportset                             | £244.00           |  |                                       |                   |
|                                    |                   |  | Website                              | £0.00             |  |                                       |                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                       | <b>£33,559.45</b> |  | 40th anniversary/Club event          | £5,691.59         |  |                                       |                   |
|                                    |                   |  | Equipment                            | £110.00           |  |                                       |                   |
|                                    |                   |  | Club Kit                             | £2,543.63         |  |                                       |                   |
|                                    |                   |  | Repairs & drilling                   | £0.00             |  |                                       |                   |
|                                    |                   |  | Coaching Fees                        | £3,784.00         |  |                                       |                   |
|                                    |                   |  | Membership and Regular Refunds       | £301.00           |  |                                       |                   |
|                                    |                   |  |                                      |                   |  |                                       |                   |
|                                    |                   |  |                                      |                   |  |                                       |                   |
|                                    |                   |  |                                      |                   |  |                                       |                   |
|                                    |                   |  |                                      |                   |  |                                       |                   |
|                                    |                   |  | <b>TOTAL</b>                         | <b>£34,102.72</b> |  |                                       |                   |