1. Annual Reports

Cheshire County Chairs Report 2018/2019 (Estelle Graham)

This last season has been a challenging, as ever busy and also a successful one. The new committee from 12 months ago has worked tirelessly and I would like to thank them all for their hard work and commitment to our sport of netball and to our county of Cheshire.

Our head coach Chris Brien lost her battle with cancer in Oct 2018. Netballers, friends and family showed their respect with 200+ attending her funeral, many in netball kit or wearing their daughters Cheshire hoody dug out of the wardrobe. She would have loved it.

With some change in personnel, Sue took responsibility of the academies. A successful shout out for coaches and mentoring opportunities saw a couple of new coaches join the squad. Training at Priestley throughout the season but with some frustration over closures has led us to look at alternatives for 2019/2020. A trip to the IOM in November was great fun as well as a winning trip. Hosting the travelling team from Australia in January once again, with players hosting the traveling athletes. Thanks goes to Phil for coordinating. Then a trip to Northern Ireland – an unbeaten tour, county tournaments at Bedford (a follow on from the April even we held in 2018 for Chris) and Telford, the later included the U12s.

Thanks and congrats to Sue and her team of amazing coaches and team managers who make the county academy experience one to remember for a life time. And Sam for sorting our on line clothing website and managing the dresses.

Thanks also Matt Heaton, our S&C coach – the girls all worked hard then worked harder.

Schools had the usual U15/16 , U18 and U12/13/14 fixtures along with the county round of the nationals. Unfortunately Cheshire didn't get any schools to the national finals this year but very close in a couple of age groups. I would like to thank Jess Fowler (and her side kick Lauren Watson) for all their hard work.

The Cheshire Junior Netball League is going strong, being run by a subcommittee of volunteers from the clubs. This season has been better than last year but more work is needed to ensure we provide a consistent regular competition for all age groups and abilities. As an affiliated league, we want to provide quality, not for profit competition.

Unfortunately Cheshire were not represented at any of the National Clubs finals this year.

The Elite league once again has run successfully with a few new teams taking part from outside of the county and some clubs using it for training for elite junior teams. This season has been a challenge with fixture changes and cancellations. It started late but many thanks to Marie Graham for her first year of assisting the county with the admin of this competition.

Chris McCall our officiating manager has been super busy as ever as her report will reflect. We now have a few more umpire assessors trained or being assessed to bring the new umpires through and Chris has been active across the county leagues, supporting, advising and mentoring, typically using the Warrington League for testing.

Development funds have been provided to some clubs this season along with a new school in Widnes with a £250 set of posts plus some coaching material and bibs from Chris's garage. This fund is to be reviewed and rebranded for the forthcoming season – information will be available on the website from Sept.

Congrats goes to Chester who qualified for the National prem play offs but unfortunately were not successful.

Player and club development continues to go from strength the strength. Two new clubs (NW Panthers in Chester and Kingsway in Cheadle) along with many of our existing clubs renewing their CAPS accreditation. And with the world cup looming, I think all clubs will be busy.

Changes at England including digitisation so the individual affiliates rather than the club, are full steam ahead. World Cup is around the corner, but EN are looking long term with self-funding and governance top of their list. The new committee will be subject to training and guidance so we can ensure we are compliant and using best practice alongside EN guidelines.

However, o**ur aim remains to increase the standards of Cheshire county clubs and schools** and be able to compete on the regional and national stage. Providing athletes with the tools to take their skills to the performance stage and currently have players in Thunder and WASPS NPL squads.

Volunteering is the back bone of Cheshire and 5 people were recognised for their efforts at the Goalden Globes, reaching a national awards in the middle of the world cup in St Georges Hall. Good luck to all the them.

Testing of youngster's hearts – Cheshire are supporting a charity call #TALE whom are putting on heart testing for young athletes with Cheshire getting the first 100 slots (asking for a £25 donation per person) in July. Our website has the details of how to get tested.

Netball in Cheshire is thriving with clubs bursting at the seams. Our new NDO Gemma Finney is a great support for clubs and committee alike and is very active in our county, supporting meetings and the presentation night. Manchester Thunder and England player Bekka Airey attended our presentation night, inspiring our young players.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank once again the committee and volunteers involved with Cheshire County Netball this season. A special mention to Fiona Rose, who has been active on the committee and as trial manager for many years, who is standing down as Vice Chair.

In 2019 /2020, we need to look to grow our committee, share the workload to provide a platform for our county academies and other affiliated members to 'grow' within our sport – be that as a coach, official, club volunteer OR as a walking netballer, dad who fancies playing in a mixed league or school needing kit to get started. I look forward to working with you all – old and new- Cheshire netball volunteers.

On the 30th June , I attended a governance training session with EN and my number 1 task this next season is to ensure we are Teir 1 complaint which we are 65% there already but this will only make us a better, stronger and a more robust county committee.

By working together and using the strengths to our advantage, **Cheshire continues to be a county of volunteers to be envied and I thank you all.**

Estelle Graham