



Annual Review 2023-24

Welcome to our third annual review and report to members since the incorporation of North West Hockey Ltd in June 2021. At the end of our third full season, our five core functions - [adult leagues & competitions](#), [junior leagues & competitions](#), [masters](#), [officiating](#) and [discipline](#), the Board and Management Committee, and other Committees have continued to develop and deliver an increasing range of activities for the North West Hockey Community. All Members are thanked for their support and input and particular to those who have attended our popular NW Clubs Forums and meeting.

As Chair, I continue to be extremely proud of what is achieved each season by our volunteer’s especially as so many are also still activity involved playing, umpiring, coaching, managing and contributing to running their Club’s and Counties as well. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers involved in delivering North West Hockey’s core activities and to all the volunteers in Clubs who we work with on and off the pitch.

Our Annual Review highlights progress, challenges of our core activities and provides a snapshot of what has been delivered in the past 12 months. In 2023-24 we have continued to focus on delivering at a grass roots level to support playing, officiating and the supporting governance. We have also continued work on our NW Strategy based on our experience of running hockey in the North West, feedback, input and ideas from our clubs received at Forums and against the new England Hockey Strategy for our Sport

New and activities delivered in 2023-24 include:

- Developing and sharing our new Officiating Strategy to support this vital part of our sport
- First State Schools Tournament with 18 schools taking part
- Running our first Senior Indoor competitions
- Introduce a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity role to support our work

The challenges we reported in 2022-23 remain but we are working to identify ways to support clubs and our committees to address some of the impacts. We recognise that Clubs face similar or linked challenges so the more we can work together to address and support the better for all. We’re continuing to focus on how we:

- Support the retention, development, and attraction of Officials (umpires, match officials, umpire developers and coaches) to take Club and NW Area appointments and to support Club Officiating. Our new Officiating Strategy addresses many of the challenges faced
- Work together to ensure hockey is a safe, enjoyable and welcoming sport to play, officiate, coach and watch
- Conduct and the EH Respect Code, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Safeguarding
- Identify and to address the challenges of attracting and retaining volunteers at Club and Area

Thank you again for your support.

Chris Reece, Chair, North West Hockey Ltd


Our members

- 92 Clubs (91 in 2023-24)
- 3 Counties – Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire Hockey Associations
- Legacy (Former Life)
- 10 non-member clubs who play their league hockey in the NW league (10 in 2022-23)

Our Governance Structure



2023-24 Board

Board: Directors				
Chair	Vice Chair	Finance Director	Governance Director	Operations Director
Chris Reece	Shelagh Everett	Niall Riley	Leighan Bleasdale	Wendy McDowall
				

Leighan Bleasdale elected and Niall Riley re-elected at the 2023 AGM. The Chair and Vice Chair roles are up for election at the 2024 AGM. Chris Reece is seeking re-election.

Shelagh Everett is not seeking re-election at the 2024 AGM.

2023-24 Summary and Highlights

Adult Leagues and Competition Highlights

- Committee of 17 volunteers run our North West Men's and Women's Leagues
- The 17 volunteers covering 36 Divisions
- 412 Adult Teams (199 Men's and 213 Women's) entered the 2023-24 season
- 18 Team withdrawals during season (15 in 2022-23)
- 4,000+ players across the NW Men's divisions
- 4,500+ players across the NW Women's divisions
- 4,540 NW matches per season (fewer forfeited than 2022-23)
- Second season of Development Teams and bedding in (20 Men's (12 more than 2022-23) and 21 Women's (6 more than 2022-23))
- Attempted to create Divisions of 12 where possible.

2023-24 Adult League Presentation Evening will be held at 7.30pm on 16th July 2024 at Golborne Sports Club

Looking forward to 2024-25

- The EH Centralised Calendar is available on the EH Website
- A NW Calendar of important dates and events will be available in July 2024. Note all League Reserve dates
- Season start date: 21st September 2024* (*Subject to division size, 13 team divisions will start on 14th September 2024)
- The 8 Area review of the Adult League Regulations is complete. Publication expected end of July 2024
- All feedback collected during the 2023-24 season was discussed during the Adult League Regulations review (particularly Appendix 5)
- The Development Team guidance will be updated
- The Umpire Approval guidance will be updated
- A NW Complaints Form and guidance will be created

2023-24 Chairs

Committee Chairs				
Adult League & Comps	Junior League & Comps	Officiating	Masters	Discipline ADA Appointed Position
Leighan Bleasdale	Beth Alvey	Annette Badger	Tony Taig	Peter McInulty
				

The Officiating Chair is elected by the NW Branch of the EHO.

All other chair roles are elected by Members and all other roles are appointed.

Discipline is an appointed role and Taff Ahmed appointed Social Media Lead.

2023-24 ALMC

Chair: Leighan Bleasdale

League Manager: Clare Thompson

Men's Divisional Secretary: Robert Cobourne

Men's Divisional Secretary: Sam Sheikh

Men's Divisional Secretary: Rebecca Halliwell

Men's Divisional Secretary: Simon Farrell

Men's Divisional Secretary: Simon Worsley

Men's Divisional Secretary: Martin McInulty

Men's Divisional Secretary: Max Bartholomew

Men's Divisional Secretary: Derek Tebbutt

Women's Divisional Secretary: Laura Blunt

Women's Divisional Secretary: Marion Roberts

Women's Divisional Secretary: Debbie McClelland

Women's Divisional Secretary: Artie Senior

Women's Divisional Secretary: Victoria Bennion

Women's Divisional Secretary: Lisa Williams

Women's Divisional Secretary: Jo Nicholson

- The NW league structure review is complete
- Adult League entry was 1st May 2024 (22 Clubs missed the deadline, 2 Clubs have still not entered and have delayed fixture publication)
- NW fixture generation in draft: Publication expected end of June 2024
- A new pre-season tournament at Sedbergh is to be held on 31st August and 1st September 2024
- ALMC applications open in July 2024 and publication expected in August 2024
- EH continuing improvements to GMS. A new GMS Working Group was established in 2023-24 season
- A reminder that all Club and Team Admins must have their email and telephone numbers visible on the GMS

Junior Leagues and Competitions Highlights

2023-24 Committee

Chair: Beth Alvey

Junior Coordinator: Lou Nash

Julia Harries, Annie Rogan, Wendy McDowall, Charles Jackman and Suzanne Colclough.

- 3rd year of our new Junior competitions programme delivered through our committee of volunteers and this season we also took on organising the new format state schools' festival
- Continue to be increasing the hockey opportunities for young players in addition to county run activity, club fixtures and EH Championships
- NW Junior Leagues (U14 and U16) 44 teams competing (10 withdrew). 3 teams were combined teams with clubs joining together to enter teams.
 - U16's Boys (10) / Girls (7)
 - U14's Boys (16) / Girls (11)
- North West Finals Days delivered for U10 and 12 In2Hockey and U14 and U16s
- Festivals style events and tournament run for U8 / U10 / U12s / U14's through counties to encourage participation and more playing opportunities.
- Ran our second Junior Indoor competitions for U16 and U18 boys and girls with Brooklands, Timperley, Chester and Bowdon progressing to the national indoor finals
- The new format EH State Schools Festival held in March 2024 was a big success with 18 schools taking part and offering hockey for those schools developing their hockey offer
- Schools also progressed to EH School Championship finals through the Area feeder competitions. Thanks to all those involved in helping to organising.

Masters highlights

2023-24 Committee

Chair: Tony Taig

Vice Chair: Colin Taylor

Vice Chair: Angela Duffy

Gareth Jones, Mark Jones, Karen Kaney, Rucky Mahmood, Mandy Pickersgill, Alison Baron, Andrew Sidebotham, Helen Hough, Gareth Pask, Lynne Pyman

- Masters continues to grow and offer more hockey across the North West and England!
- Our committee of volunteers are committed to developing Masters hockey for all and have organised:
 - NW masters gathering / training / games including roll ups for more social hockey
 - In 2023 organised NW representative teams:
 - Men's O35 to 70's (8 teams)
 - Women's O35 to O60 (6 teams)
 - Run the popular NW 500 Summer Mixed Master league and finals day
- Players have registered and paid £10 registration fee supporting the self-funding of the programme (370 in 2022-23)
- NW500 Mixed Master summer hockey second competition in 2023 and third season in 2024 showing the demand for different social format ways to play
- Men's and Women's NW Representative Teams selected to take part in 2024 Area Tournaments from O35s to Men's O70s / Women's O60s
- 2023 Women's O35 – Champions for 2nd year running sadly couldn't complete the triple in 2024
- Successfully rolled out use of Pitchero Platform to manage squad / player administration due to the growth in player numbers and activities to streamline admin and volunteer time
- Hosted 8 Area Tournaments for Men's O60 and Women's O60s in 2023 at Timperley
- Hosted 8 Area Tournaments for Men's O40 in 2024 at Timperley



2023
NORTH WEST HOCKEY MASTERS

MASTERS HOCKEY

GET INVOLVED

Are you a hockey master?
Ever thought about representing your region? Know someone who could?
We are always looking for enthusiastic individuals to play for North West Hockey
Please get in touch if you are interested... we would really like to hear from you.

Form more details please contact Tony Taig
masterschair@northwesthockey.co.uk | 07944893351

Looking forward

- Expanding opportunities for Indoor Masters hockey
- Early appointment of age group managers to ensure regular opportunities to play and fair opportunities to trial for NW representative teams for trials (all ages / genders) for those that wish to
- Profiling Masters NW population using EH / GMS data.

NW Officiating Highlights

Another challenging season the highlight being the work to develop and publish our North West Officiating Strategy, priority plans and alignment of our structure to the key themes. Highlights for the season include:

- 27 umpires on the Men's Panel and 17 on the Women's Panel taking North West appointments in 2023-24.
- 5 umpires gained their L2 and took appointments and 5 umpires returned to the Appointed Panels.
- Umpires were appointed to all North West Premier League (men and women's) games in 2023-24.
- North West Umpires took 12 NPUA appointments in 2023-24.
- 2 umpires gained there L3 and joined the NPUA.
- Efforts were made to encourage Club Umpires to gain there L2 to umpire their Club's Division 1 games and to support Club Umpires doing such games,
- We have continued to focus on development and using tournaments to support umpires through to assessment and progression through our excellent coach development and mentor team.
- Development events for club umpires:
 - Cheshire Cup Finals (August 2023) – 6 umpires focused on level 2/3 development.
 - Manchester Tournament (Sept 2023) – 36 umpires received coaching, 14 passed Level 1 assessment. The Tournament was also used to develop umpire support.
 - Lancashire Cup Men's and Women's Finals (April 2024) – umpire's and umpire support were appointed by NWHOC Developer Leads,
 - Junior Umpire development at NW Finals
 - U10 / U12 In2Hockey Finals – 20 young umpires took part.
 - U16 NW junior Finals – 2 young umpires took part.
 - 2 Young Umpires went on to national finals.
- Online Club's Umpiring Forum held in September 2023 and Umpire Development Forums held November on 'Improving Decision Making' with Annette Badger and in May 2024, 'Confident Umpiring,' with Gemma Jones

Congratulations to Gemma Jones on her appointment to the International Outdoor Panel



Discipline Highlights

- All Disciplinary matters (other than Disrepute's which are managed by England Hockey) are managed through the Area, and we continue to work closely with the other 8 Area: Area Discipline Administrators (ADA) and England Hockey
- Conduct towards officiating continues to be of concern.
- Wider issue of conduct and RESPECT remains a priority to address across all involved for 2023-24.
- Important that Club and Captains build in discussions on [RESPECT](#) code and conduct into pre-season preparation to build support and greater awareness around on behaviour
- Working with 8 Areas on the discipline process review

Our Finances 2023-24:

- Report to the Directors and Unaudited Finance Statement for the period 1st May 2023 to 30th April 2024 has been approved by the Board and will be shared at the AGM. This forms part of our statutory reporting to Companies House.
- Operating income for 2023-24 was generated through: Area Membership Fees, League and Competition Entry Fees, League fines and fees to clubs for Appointed Umpires.
- Our total income and expenditure are down, as 2022-23 included the purchase of new Masters kit.
- The Area has made a surplus for 2023-24, which will be reinvested into new Area projects that will benefit our clubs, details of which will be announced at the AGM.

Area Discipline Team 2023-24

Area Discipline Administrator: Peter McNulty
David Ellcock, Robert Cobourne, Jon Whiting, Darren Illidge and Taff Ahmed.

Appeals Panel Chair: Colin Leeman.

2023-24: 38 incidents

Category A 23 (20 Red, 2 MMO, 1 disrepute)

Category B 11 (2 from IOM)

Category C 1 still in progress

Category D 3 (1 from IOM)

Gender split: 32 Men , 6 Women

1 other disrepute has been raised which is in relation to the Category C red card.

Headline financials

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2022-23</u>
• Total Income	£57,230	£66,892
• Total Costs	£50,304	£57,743
• Net Surplus	£6,926	£9,149

See financial statements for full details.

Key work of the Board

- Responsible for the overall governance, strategy, finance and Area wide operation and communications
- Board and Management Committee meetings are held regularly throughout the season.
- Our third year of operation has focused on continuing to extend what we offer to deliver and support hockey for all across the North West.
- The Area Priority for 2023-24 to support and embed the work of the committees in their second full season. Continued work to implement effective of the ways of working.
- We continue to aim to develop our communications, and refreshed our Facebook groups to focus content on Juniors, Adult League, Masters and Officiating in addition to the main NW Social Media Sites and our website. This remains a priority to build awareness and engagement about North West Hockey and our NW clubs.
- Two successful Club's Forums held in Lancaster and Timperley and the feedback is being used to feed into our plans for 2024-25 and the interest in a range of 'topic' related online forums as well as the main forums.
- The Directors continue to actively engage with the 8 Area networks set up for the key area of responsibility

Developing our Strategic Framework

Working with Clubs



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Three high level strategic themes have been identified:

How we **promote** hockey in the North West

How we **develop** hockey in the North West

How we support the **growth** of hockey in the North West

(EH) A Strategy for the sport to 2028

VISION - Creating a future for our game together

MISSION - Let's shout about hockey. Let's...

WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE HOCKEY MORE
VISIBLE, RELEVANT AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

that provide the opportunity to share best practice, and input to a range of processes, guidance, and policies.

- England Hockey launched the new Strategy for the Sport and we are aligning our priorities to this, and continue to gain input from NW members at our Clubs Forums

NW themes we are reviewing and prioritising our plans:

Volunteers / Succession

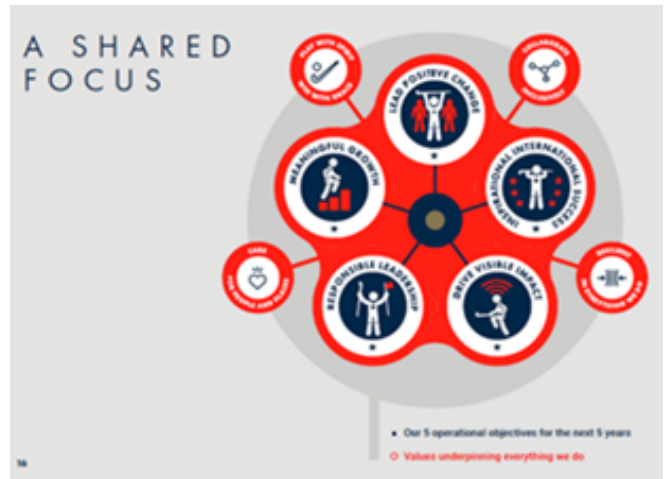
- Potential NW awards from 2025 / work with clubs on common challenges
- EDI role recruitment in process following a request for expressions of interest.

Hockey Experience

- Link to Respect / Conduct and overall match day experience linking to clubs

Visibility

- Social Media Lead's for the 4 core areas of activity and Area
- Promote more NW 'hockey stories' links to club activity



Link to:

<https://www.englishockey.co.uk/governance/about-englishockey/creating-a-future-for-our-game-together>

NW Hockey – priority themes to shape our work

We have reviewed the previous strategy inputs and work and Area Health Check identified 5 'priority' themes to shape our plan against linking to the Strategy for to 2028



Officiating and hockey support structures

- Officiating Strategy and Action Plan
- Ways to play / Junior growth
- State schools tournaments / festivals
- Universities – retention / future growth (post Uni) clubs links



Working with the wider hockey family

The NW team continue to be engaged and active members of a number of 8 Area Groups – the networks for those involved in running our sport in each of the Areas developed and set up as part of the EH governance review set out in ['A structure fit for the future'](#)

The focus remains on shared learning and best practice opportunities, agreeing core guidance, policies, and principles to support the new structure, and the benefits of a support network across the country of volunteers doing the same role in other Areas.

In addition to their North West roles:

- Shelagh Everett, was re-elected for a further three year term as a Member Elected Non-Executive Director of England Hockey.
- Annette Badger sits on the EHO Officiating Working Group (OWG) and EHO Officiating Strategy Group
- North West Board and Chairs continue to be actively involved in the 8 area groups for their specific functions In addition Leighan Bleasdale sits on the GMS working group and Wendy McDowall sits on the EH Marketing and Communication Group.

England Hockey Awards 2024

Congratulations to those recognised at this year's England Hockey Awards 2024:

Winners: Macclesfield M1 (Men's Team of the Year), Kirkby Lonsdale W1 (Women's Team of the Year)

Finalists: Bowdon M1 (Men's Team of the Year), Pendle Forest W1 (Women's Team of the Year), Annette Badger (Area/County Volunteer Award), Robert Turner (Coach of the Year), Kirkby Lonsdale HC (Emerging Club of the Year) and Pendle Forest HC (Emerging Club of the Year).

Congratulations to our Adult League and Competition winners!

Congratulations to Alderley Edge Womens 1's and Didsbury Men's 1s who were both promoted back to EHL Conference North and to Bowdon Men's 1's promoted to EHL Premier Division.

League presentations will be made on Tuesday 16th July 2024 at 19:30 at Golborne Sports Club when trophies will be presented.

Men's Division Champions 2023-24	Winner
North West Men's Premier Division	Didsbury Northern 1
North West Men's Division 1	Crewe Vagrants 1
North West Men's Division 2	Macclesfield 1
North West Men's Division 3 North	Kendal 1
North West Men's Division 3 South	Timperley 3
North West Men's Division 4 East	Brooklands Manchester University 4
North West Men's Division 4 North	Preston 5
North West Men's Division 4 West	Chester 3
North West Men's Division 5 East	Didsbury Northern 4
North West Men's Division 5 North	N/A
North West Men's Division 5 South (Central)	Macclesfield 2
North West Men's Division 5 West (North)	Runcorn 1
North West Men's Division 5 West (South)	Denbigh 1
North West Men's Division 6 East	Bowdon 6
North West Men's Division 6 South (Central)	Crewe Vagrants 3
North West Men's Division 6 West (South)	Chester 5
North West Men's Division 7 East	Timperley 7
North West Men's Division 7 South (Central)	Crewe Vagrants 4

Women's Division Champions 2023-24	Winner
North West Women's Premier Division	Alderley Edge 1
North West Women's Division 1	Wilmslow 1
North West Women's Division 2 North	Lancaster University
North West Women's Division 2 South	Winnington Park 1
North West Women's Division 3 East	City of Manchester 1
North West Women's Division 3 North	Kirkby Lonsdale 1

Women's Division Champions 2023-24	Winner
North West Women's Division 3 North (Central)	Garstang 2
North West Women's Division 3 West	Crewe Vagrants 1
North West Women's Division 4 East	Didsbury Greys 2
North West Women's Division 4 North (Central)	Windermere 1
North West Women's Division 4 South (Central)	Cheshire Blues 1
North West Women's Division 4 West	Liverpool Sefton 3
North West Women's Division 5 East	Horwich 1
North West Women's Division 5 North (Central)	Chorley Phoenix 2
North West Women's Division 5 South (Central)	Deeside Ramblers 4
North West Women's Division 5 West (North)	Merseyside Police 1
North West Women's Division 5 West (South)	Rhyl & District 1
North West Women's Division 6 East	Wigan 2
North West Women's Division 6 South (Central)	Lymm 4

Adult Leagues and Competitions Committee 2023-24

Committee Position	Grade	Name
Adult Leagues & Competitions Chair	N/A	Leighan Bleasdale
Area League & GMS Manager	N/A	Clare Thomson
Division	Grade	Divisional Secretary
North West Men's Premier	2	Robert Cobourne
North West Men's Division 1	2	Robert Cobourne
North West Men's Division 2	3	Sam Sheikh
North West Men's Division 3 North	3	Rebecca Halliwell
North West Men's Division 3 South	3	Sam Sheikh
North West Men's Division 4 North	5	Simon Farrell
North West Men's Division 4 West	4	Simon Worsley
North West Men's Division 4 East	4	Martin McNulty
North West Men's Division 5 West (North)	5	Simon Farrell
North West Men's Division 5 West (South)	4	Simon Worsley
North West Men's Division 5 South (Central)	4	Max Bartholomew
North West Men's Division 5 East	4	Martin McNulty
North West Men's Division 6 West (South)	5	Derek Tebbutt
North West Men's Division 6 South (Central)	4	Max Bartholomew
North West Men's Division 6 East	4	Simon Worsley
North West Men's Division 7 South (Central)	5	Derek Tebbutt
North West Men's Division 7 East	5	Derek Tebbutt
North West Women's Premier	2	Laura Blunt
North West Women's Division 1	2	Laura Blunt
North West Women's Division 2 North	3	Leighan Bleasdale
North West Women's Division 2 South	3	Clare Thompson
North West Women's Division 3 North	5	Marion Roberts
North West Women's Division 3 North (Central)	4	Debbie McClelland
North West Women's Division 3 West	4	Artie Senior
North West Women's Division 3 East	4	Artie Senior
North West Women's Division 4 North (Central)	4	Victoria Bennion
North West Women's Division 4 West	4	Lisa Williams
North West Women's Division 4 South (Central)	4	Lisa Williams
North West Women's Division 4 East	4	Artie Senior
North West Women's Division 5 North (Central)	5	Marion Roberts

North West Women's Division 5 West (North)	5	Leighan Bleasdale
North West Women's Division 5 West (South)	5	Jo Nicholson
North West Women's Division 5 South (Central)	4	Leighan Bleasdale
North West Women's Division 5 East	4	Victoria Bennion
North West Women's Division 6 South (Central)	5	Jo Nicholson
North West Women's Division 6 East	5	Leighan Bleasdale

Thank you from North West Hockey and the whole of our hockey family to all North West Hockey Volunteers and those working in Clubs, Counties and across our sport.

Join us online for the 4th AGM of North West Hockey Ltd on Thursday 4th July 2024 at 19:30.

We welcome questions in advance please send to chair@northwesthockey.co.uk or subject to time there will be the opportunity to ask questions at the AGM on the Review of 2023-24 and the work of North West Hockey Ltd.