

Adel Hockey Club – Annual General Meeting Minutes

Date: 20th April 2026

Meeting Attendance

- **Present:** Sam Jackson (SJ), Ross Nichols (RN), John Holden (JH), Louis Bowden (LB), Bryony Wellman (BW), MJ Auckland-Child (MJ), Andy Grindrod (AG), Natalie Innes, Will Powley, Mike Gillingham, Meg Burns-Stow, Oli Barron, Amelia Boddice, Sarina Wildblood, Alex Percival, Rachel Harrison-Taylor, Sue Renton, Gina Neal, Tania Bischof, Dave Margerison, Olivia Holmes, Richard Poll, David Hall, Jim Robinson, Alice Bowler, Roger Cherry, Ronnie Carr, Holly Sheen, Charlotte Winn, Lottie Christopher, Alannah Fawbert, Nick Cooper, Laura Matthews, Evan Griffiths, Hannah Fisk, Ellie Pritchard, Stefan Palenski, Mark Powley, Simon Taylor, Zoe Mather, Bridget Petty, Georgina Mill.
- **Apologies:** Mary Stewart (MS), Ian Phillips (IP), Richard Foster (RF), Chloe Cherry (CC), Rich Partner (RP).

1. Welcome & Approvals

- **Presidential Announcement:** Rich Poll has been appointed as the President of the Adel War Memorial Association (AWMA).
- **Approval of Previous Minutes:** The minutes from the 2025 AGM were formally approved.
 - *Proposer:* Natalie Innes
 - *Seconder:* Ronnie Carr
- **Obituaries:** The club observed a moment of celebration and applause to honour the lives of four recently passed members: Carolyn Hirst, Andy Milner, Ben Rippin, and Denise Hall, the wife of life member Dave Hall.

2. Committee Reports

Chair's Report (Sam Jackson)

- **Club Growth:** Formally confirmed by England Hockey (EH) as the largest hockey club in Leeds by membership, achieved while operating on a single pitch.
- **Development Plan:** The previous development cycle has concluded; the club is transitioning into its next three-year development plan to guide future direction.
- **Season Highlights:** Expanded club offerings by adding two new development teams this season. Junior structures were improved with enhanced training, matches, and tournament opportunities.
- **Coaching & Resources:** Brought in "Fletch" to oversee general coaching and dedicated coach development, specifically targeting the Ladies and Junior sections.
- **Strategic Risk:** Acknowledged the operational risk of growing too quickly; the club must ensure it can reliably fulfil fixtures and maintain high-quality hockey delivery.

- **Future Focus Areas:** Key priorities for the upcoming season include the changing room project, overall playing performance, internal/external communication, and improving/ retaining the involvement of legacy players.
- **Administrative Updates:** * Upcoming membership forms will capture player background details, including previous playing levels, roles, and formal qualifications.
 - Due to the End of Season (EoS) event falling on a Friday, the traditional morning site cleanup cannot take place then. Instead, two volunteer club "muck-in" sessions will be scheduled for May and August.
 - Sincere thanks were extended to the executive and wider committees for their hard work across the year.

Treasurer's Report (John Holden)

- **Financial Year Realignment:** The financial year has been successfully changed to 1st August – 31st July to better reflect the seasonal hockey spending cycle. The club is currently in Q3 of the current financial year.
- **Income Overview:** Total income stood at just under £130,000. This includes a £20,000 planning grant from Leeds City Council for the changing rooms and £10,000 in internal donations. The club's baseline "real" hockey income sits closer to £99,000, aligning with historical trends.
- **Subscription Revenue:** Total subscription income increased by 32% to over £71,000.
- **Outgoings & Expenditures:** * Total outgoings exceeded £93,000, driven heavily by upfront investment into the changing room project.
 - General repairs and improvements cost £37,000, which primarily funded the changing room project alongside basic pitch maintenance.
 - Coaching expenditure rose significantly from £3,000 to £10,000. The full-year projection sits at roughly £13,500, remaining safely within the £15,000 budget.
 - Match teas expenditure rose from £6,700 to £7,700.
- **Financial Health & Management:** Accounts were reviewed and confirmed to be in good order. A large cash buffer of £30,000 at the start of the year successfully insulated the club's accounts from heavy capital expenditures.
- **Future Outlook:** Digital tools like SumUp and club debit cards have successfully streamlined collections. Looking ahead, the committee will continue to support members with financial matters, but noted that funding the massive changing room project will require future trade-offs and ongoing strategic conversations.

Juniors Report (MJ Aukland-Child)

- **Membership Status:** There are currently 232 active junior members. All sections are entirely full with the exception of the Under-14 Girls and Under-16 Boys; an additional 32 children remain on the club waiting list.
- **Squad Performance:** High numbers have facilitated multiple teams across nearly all age groups. The two newly entered development squads were highly successful, boasting full 16-player matchday sheets almost every week.
- **Operational Progress:** * A new junior committee was formed to manage the section's extensive administrative workload.

- Launched successful Under-8 tournaments featuring visiting sides from Wakefield and Harrogate (three completed, two remaining).
- A dedicated juniors tour has been arranged for this year.
- Reached the club's highest number of regular coaches to date, helping welcome a wave of first-time players, particularly in the Under-16s.
- **Player Pathways:** Launched a new Junior Leaders Programme to transition older youth players into coaching and umpiring roles. Waiting lists must be carefully managed to correctly integrate junior players into senior squads without overwhelming senior teams with high numbers of young players.
- **Core Pillars:** The junior section will continue building on the core values of Belonging, Development, and Opportunity.
- *Note:* Club parent Jim Robinson expressed that he feels Adel is the best club in the region for juniors. Sincere thanks were extended to all junior coaches and helpers.

Ladies Report (Bryony Wellman)

- **Section Growth:** The section currently stands at 159 members. The club received 80 general enquiries this year, resulting in 37 new active players and 13 individuals remaining on the waiting list. A massive percentage of enquiries targeted "Hockey Saturdays".
- **Performance & League Movement:** The section experienced one relegation, while the Ladies 4th XI narrowly missed out on promotion. High player movement between squads across the season presented consistency challenges.
- **Junior Integration:** Significant numbers of Hockey Saturday players and juniors were integrated into senior sides. Future selection criteria will be strictly adhered to so junior integration continues smoothly without causing squad dilution or team disruption.
- **Proposed Ladies 6th Team:** The club is exploring adding a Ladies 6th XI next season to bring the section in line with the men's side.
 - While pitch space is available at the Grammar School at Leeds (GSAL), the committee must evaluate operational pressures regarding match teas, umpire availability, training slots, and coaching allocations.
 - A 6th XI would result in three Adel teams competing within the same or equivalent league tiers.
 - Addressing concerns raised by Ellie Pritchard regarding players potentially feeling isolated from the main clubhouse atmosphere at GSAL, SJ clarified that development squads currently use GSAL while all other home fixtures are rotated fairly across venues so no single team is stuck playing away from the main club consistently.
- *Note:* Thanks were extended to all coaches, captains, and umpires.

Men's Report (Louis Bowden)

- **Fixtures & Administration:** Fixture management was significantly smoother this season due to the decision not to enter cup competitions, resulting in drastically fewer cancellations than in previous years.
- **Committee & Captaincy Changes:** * Louis Bowden is stepping down after 3 successful years as Club Captain; proposed Jack Bethwaite will take over the role, subsequently vacating his position as Men's 6th XI Captain.

- Hans and Evan are stepping down as captains of the 2nd XI and 3rd XI respectively; Cameron M will step up as the new 2nd XI captain.
- **Squad Recruitment Strategy:** The club deliberately restricted external intake this year (accepting only 8 external players) to prioritise moving junior players up through the senior tiers. Additionally, the men's waiting list was much shorter than in previous seasons.
- **Team Performance:** * A challenging league cycle saw three team relegations across the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd XIs. Overall league positions were lower across the board, with the sole exception of the 5th XI.
 - The 1st and 2nd XIs were heavily impacted by several high-profile, experienced players stepping away from the club, requiring lower-tier players to rapidly step up into performance hockey.
 - Because the Men's 1st XI dropped out of the Premier Division, the club will no longer receive neutral league umpires, presenting a significant future officiating challenge.
 - On a positive note, Matt fostered a fantastic team ethos in the 4th XI, securing a strong league finish. The 5th XI showed drastic improvement, and the 6th XI successfully secured regular, completed fixtures.
 - The Masters section thrived, fielding competitive regular teams across three separate age brackets. The Under-35s Masters enjoyed a historic cup run, successfully knocking out the reigning national champions.
- **Strategic Aims:** The long-term plan requires the club's top teams to rebuild and bounce back. Immediate goals for next season are to win promotion for the three relegated teams and to continue refining the junior transition pathway.
- *Note:* SJ thanked LB for his dedicated service, praising the structural integrity and low player turnover maintained by the club.

3. Club Development Focus

Officiating & Umpiring Development (John Holden)

- **The Challenge:** The club faces a critical shortfall in umpire numbers due to the Men's 1st XI relegation (requiring club-supplied umpires for home games), junior section expansion, and the potential addition of a Ladies 6th XI.
- **Current Vulnerabilities:** Charlotte Winn was highly commended for successfully covering all weekly fixtures. However, the club has lost several veteran umpires. A small pool of individuals are covering a disproportionate number of games, masking a deeper deficit that could eventually force fixture cancellations if those individuals become unavailable.
- **Incentives & Reimbursements:** * Umpiring qualification courses are completely free to members.
 - Unassessed match officials are paid £15 per match; Level 1 assessed umpires are paid £20 per match.
 - Active umpires will be issued a club-provided earpiece and an official England Hockey match official shirt.
 - Umpires will be entered into a recurring raffle for free entry into club social events.
- **Action Plan & Pathway:**

- **Mentorship:** Charlotte Winn will actively pair inexperienced or anxious umpires with veterans to provide on-pitch coaching and psychological support.
- **Club Culture:** The club aims to shift mindsets so senior players actively contribute to the officiating pool rather than viewing themselves purely as players. Teams will be expected to cover 1 or 2 matches across the winter season.
- **Training Grounds:** Friendly training games, pre-season fixtures, and summer league matches will be explicitly used as low-pressure environments to blood newly qualified umpires into higher-tier hockey.
- **Systemic Education:** Look into implementing a mandatory pre-season umpire induction pack for all team captains. Junior sections will link youth umpiring directly to the Young Leaders pathway.
- **External Learning:** The committee will look to benchmark successful systems like the York Umpiring Academy, which provides excellent post-match feedback frameworks and conflict resolution support.
- **Matchday Scheduling:** To help individuals umpire multiple games, the club is exploring shifting the middle home matchday schedules to allow longer warm-up slots, opening the door to scheduling Men's 1st XI and Ladies 1st XI matches back-to-back.
- **Member Feedback & Disciplinary Matters:**
 - Georgina Mill noted a severe communication gap, as she and many others were entirely unaware that umpire training courses were free. John Holden urged the club to gather wider internal feedback regarding officiating anxieties.
 - Will Powley suggested proactively inviting local neutral pool umpires who are known to enjoy the atmosphere at Adel to fill our vacant club slots.
 - Responding to Stefan Palenski's concerns regarding on-pitch dissent, SJ highlighted that the newly introduced club disciplinary process will actively penalise red cards, persistent yellow cards, and repeat instances of umpire verbal abuse. Mark Powley added that England Hockey is tightening regulations to penalise clubs for cumulative team cards.

Changing Rooms Project (Andrew Grindrod)

- **Planning Status:** Following extensive consultation with local planners, full planning permission was successfully secured within six months of submission—a major milestone given local zoning restrictions. The core scope remains unchanged: 4 modern changing spaces, a communal club room, gear storage, and official officiating facilities.
- **Phased Strategy & Costings:** Initial comprehensive commercial costings came back significantly over budget. To remain realistic, the project is pivoting to a 3-year phased construction model. Total projected costs sit between £900,000 and £1,000,000.
- **Capital Funding Sources:** Funding will comprise internal cash reserves, fundraising, institutional loans, and grants. The club is aggressively pursuing a second development grant from Leeds City Council.

- **Pitch Replacement Capital Trade-off:** The club holds £200,000 allocated for future pitch replacement. If current pitch maintenance allows, the club can push back the replacement timeline, unlocking critical liquid capital to fund initial changing room construction phases.
- **Phase 1 Timeline:** Construction is slated to begin in July/August 2026, focusing on site clearance, bulk earth removal, ground levelling, and foundational civil works.
- **Cost Engineering & Utilities:** Significant savings have already been achieved by structurally engineering out a costly retaining wall. While routing utilities from the main clubhouse presents an expensive hurdle, positive ongoing discussions are taking place with the club's rear residential neighbour regarding boundary fencing extensions to prevent errant hockey balls entering his garden. Building this goodwill could allow the club to tap directly into utilities near his property line, yielding substantial cost reductions.
- **Club-Wide Governance:** Once phase 1 enabling works begin, a dedicated, club-wide fundraising committee will be officially convened. Responding to Mike Gillingham's query regarding cost-sharing with other AWMA sports sections, SJ noted that while other sections are beginning to offer support, Adel Hockey is intentionally retaining sole project leadership to a) ensure it happens, b) help guarantee our members absolute priority booking rights across the season.

4. Formal Proposals & Votes

Proposal 1: Club Name Simplification

- **Motion:** Drop the word "Leeds" from the official club title to formally rename the organisation to **Adel Hockey Club**. This removes naming confusion with local rivals, aligns with common vernacular, and enhances distinct brand identity.
- **Discussion:** Ellie Pritchard raised kit branding concerns; SJ confirmed that old branding will be systematically phased out over multiple kit replacement cycles. Amelia Boddice confirmed web domain alterations would cleanly redirect search engine histories.
 - *Proposer:* Rich Poll
 - *Seconder:* Ronnie Carr
 - **Vote Result:** Carried unanimously.

Proposal 2: Junior Membership Fee Restructuring

- **Motion:** Standardise and simplify junior subscriptions via a flat 10% base fee increase across the section. Replace the complex, multi-tiered sibling discount with a flat 10% discount per additional sibling.
- **Benefits:** Drastically reduces administrative burdens when onboarding families mid-season via Spond. Fully integrates independent kit-owning Goalkeepers and Premium Pupil concessions in line with senior protocols. Under-6 and beginner Under-8 groups will move to a flat £5 per-session fee, while regular Under-8s move to standard junior rates.
- **Discussion:** Stefan Palenski requested calculations for three-child households; the committee noted that while base costs increase slightly, the new system protects family discounts when juniors transition up into senior squads. MJ confirmed market

research shows Adel remains significantly cheaper than all major rival junior clubs in the area. Net revenue gains from this change will be modest due to inflation.

- *Proposer:* Ellie Pritchard
- *Secunder:* Jim Robinson
- **Vote Result:** Carried unanimously.
- *Note on Umpire Subsidies:* Will P and Oli B queried whether dedicated umpires could receive subscription concessions similar to coaches. Rich Poll, Ross Nichols, and Amelia Boddice clarified that coaching requires a fixed, weekly season-long time commitment, whereas umpiring operates on an ad-hoc basis and is already financially compensated per match.

Proposal 3: Constitutional Amendments

1. **Club Engagement Wording:** Amended official constitutional language to explicitly mandate and encourage all active members to be participatory citizens within the day-to-day operation of the club.
 - *Prop:* Evan Griffiths | *Sec:* Stefan Palenski | **Result:** Carried unanimously.
2. **Paid Personnel Compliance:** Constitutional updates ensuring all part-time paid coaching staff, external consultants, and service providers are contractually and legally aligned with club guidelines.
 - *Prop:* Rachel Harrison-Taylor | *Sec:* Oli Barron | **Result:** Carried unanimously.
3. **Internal Disciplinary Expansion:** Revised wording to empower the internal disciplinary sub-committee to penalise misconduct occurring off the pitch or during social functions, alongside standard matchday infractions.
 - *Prop:* Meg Burns-Stow | *Sec:* Ronnie Carr | **Result:** Carried unanimously.
4. **Financial Reporting Frameworks:** Formal tracking updates regarding internal budget setting and seasonal financial reporting.
 - *Prop:* Alex Percival | *Sec:* Roger Cherry | **Result:** Carried unanimously.

Proposal 4: Elections & Appointments

- **Executive Committee Block Vote:** * *Prop:* Hannah Fisk | *Sec:* Oli Barron | **Result:** Carried unanimously.
- **Wider Committee Block Vote:** Appointed with the note that the club is actively seeking volunteers to fill three critical vacancies: a Co-Social Secretary, an Assistant Webmaster, and a Match Tea Coordinator.
 - *Prop:* Sue Renton / Oli Barron | *Sec:* Roger Cherry / Jim Robinson | **Result:** Carried unanimously.
- **Captaincy Election Process:** Approved a constitutional amendment removing senior team captaincy votes from the general AGM floor. Captaincy selection is now handled internally by the respective squads.
 - *Prop:* Alex Percival | *Sec:* Louis Bowden | **Result:** Carried unanimously.
- **Vice President Nomination:** Jim Robinson was unanimously elected as a Club Vice President in recognition of his extensive service, becoming only the 34th Vice President in the club's 80-year history.
 - *Prop:* Will Powley | *Sec:* Hannah Fisk | **Result:** Carried unanimously.

5. Any Other Business (AOB)

- **Club Pantomime Fundraiser:** Club President Rich Poll announced plans to direct and produce a major club pantomime fundraiser over 4 nights later this year. This marks the revival of a tradition last performed in 1986. The production requires 10 cast members and is projected to raise over £5,000 for club development.
- **Facility Storage Regulation:** Members are strictly reminded that personal kit and team equipment must no longer be left in the main clubhouse foyer; all club items must be transferred to the external garage storage area.