



LANCASTER CITY QUIZ LEAGUE LANCASTER CITY QUIZ LEAGUE

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**Minutes of the Lancaster City Quiz League AGM held on 9 June 2025, 8.00pm at
Lancaster Cricket & Sports Club**

Present:

Committee – Richard Hitchings – RH (Chair); John Pollard – JRP (Secretary); Ian Gibson – IG (Administrator); Janice Crossfield – JC (Treasurer); Paul Legon – PL; Ian Nicholson – IN; Callum Pownall – CP; Chris Coldwell – CC; Jo Hardman – JH

League – Hylton Brass – HB; Steve Thornton – ST; Barry Maguire – BM; David Hesp – DH; Mal Kitchin – MK; Jim Pyper – JP; John Goodhew – JG; Nigel Neil – NN

Agenda

1. Apologies:

No apologies had been received.

2. Previous Minutes:

The Chairman asked for a proposal that the minutes of the last AGM be accepted as a true record of that meeting.

Proposed – PL, Seconded – DH. Carried by a show of hands.

3. Matters Arising:

The Chairman noted that there were no matters arising from the previous AGM.

4. Chairman's Report: - See Appendix 1.

5. Secretary's Report: - See Appendix 2.

JH proposed a vote of thanks to IG for his efforts throughout the season. This was seconded by HB and carried by a show of hands.

6. Treasurer's Report: - See Appendix 3.

JG asked why it had been necessary to purchase a new Tony Clare trophy. IG explained that it was due to the loss of the plinth on the old trophy.

CP proposed that the Treasurer's report be accepted - Seconded by MK. Carried by a show of hands.

The Treasurer abstained.



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7. Election of Committee and Officials:

The following valid nominations had been received:

Chair	Richard Hitchings
Secretary	John Pollard
Treasurer	Janice Crossfield
Committee	Jo Hardman, Ian Nicholson, Ian Gibson, Paul Legon, Chris Coldwell and Callum Pownall

The Chair asked for a vote to accept the nominations and this was carried by a show of hands.

The Chairman also noted that whilst a Committee membership of nine wasn't bad there was always room for more and that if any League member was interested in joining he/she should approach the Chairman or another member of the Committee.

8. Rules of the League:

Proposed rule change to Section C,10:

"In order to take part in any Cup Competition from and including the quarter finals a team player must have played in at least two previous games or registered as a player at the start of the season".

*The Committee are seeking to change the word **two** to **one**.*

IG said that the reason for suggesting the rule change was that over the past few seasons teams reaching the cup quarter-finals have been finding themselves unable to raise a team because they have players who have only played once during the season. If players play one game at the start of a season the rules are that he/she can play in the later stages of cups, so it seems unfair that a player who has played one game later in the season is unable to.

PL wanted to know what the definition of the start of the season is. IG said that this related to the first 2 games of the season.

DH asked what the registration process was. IG said that if someone played at the start of the season he/she were deemed registered.

It was felt that not all League players were likely to be aware of the procedure so IG said he would clarify the rule as regards registration.

JG wondered whether, when this problem had occurred, the team involved had been aware of the rules. IG pointed out that if a team played in the League it was his/her responsibility to understand the rules.

JH proposed the rule change, JC seconded and it was carried by a show of hands.



9. Motions

Dog & Partridge:

"I would like to propose we look again at question setting, with a view to considering another source for questions".

BM felt that during the season just gone some of the sets of questions had not been up to a high enough standard. He was also concerned that potential new players were likely to be put off joining the League because the age profile of the question setters meant that questions did not appeal to a younger demographic. His team wondered whether it was time to consider sourcing questions externally. He therefore proposed that a sub-committee be set up during the 25/26 season with a view to making recommendations that could be implemented in the 26/27 season.

IG said there were a number of things that would have to be considered by any sub-committee.

DH said that he had approached Jack Bennett, a former league player, to see how much it would cost to source the questions from him. Jack had said that even at a discounted rate this would cost the League in the region of £2K per annum.

JH felt that it was eminently sensible for the Committee to look into this issue, and that the point regarding appealing to younger players was a good one.

IG pointed out that, depending on team numbers, it could be that the League comprised two divisions in the 25/26 season, in which case it might be necessary to ask some teams to set two quizzes.

The Chairman noted that the main problem with quiz setting is that it is subjective.

ST felt that giving the Committee a year to consider possibilities, costings etc is a good opportunity. On the subject of cost HB wondered if there was any possibility of sponsorship. IG thought that there was something in the rules prohibiting this and that he would check.

PL asked whether non-Committee members could be on a sub-committee. It was agreed that they could.

The Chairman asked that the leaving of implementation of any recommendations until the 26/27 season be added to the wording of the proposal. It was also agreed that the word "we" should be replaced by "the League".

JG wanted to know when the sub-committee would report. It was agreed that it would report to Committee during the 25/26 season but the final report would be to the next AGM.

JRP made the following amended proposal:

"I would like to propose the League look again at question setting, with a view to considering another source for questions for the 26/27 season".

This was passed by a show of hands. DH abstained.



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Merchants:

"For the 25/26 season the quiz Committee should agree a way for quizzes to be rated each week and a league table being created for the quiz of the season".

JH said that this proposal was an attempt to address the issues regarding the standard of quizzes that had just been discussed. He felt that most players would be able, at the end of each quiz, to give a 1 to 10 ranking of how good that quiz had been, based on criteria such as quality, balance and interest.

The Chairman said that a similar idea had been tried several decades ago and that it had fizzled out. He also pointed out that quiz ranking would be subjective, with one player giving 10 and another 1 for the same quiz.

JC echoed the point about subjectivity, and asked how the definition of a good quiz could be arrived at.

BM said that he had investigated other quiz leagues and that the Macclesfield league had a system whereby an entertainment score was given at the end of each quiz.

DH didn't think that a ranking system would improve the quality of quizzes. It could lead to friction, and players would be worried about upsetting other teams and making them feel that they were being persecuted.

HB felt that the statistics presented by IG on the web site already provided all the quiz quality information that was necessary.

MK agreed with DH and HB and felt that any ranking would be totally subjective.

PL felt that there is a point about the age profile and the nature of the questions. The Chairman said that the problem is that questions tilted towards the younger demographic might well cause discontent at the older end – something of a Catch 22 situation.

CP wondered whether instead of a ranking at the end of each quiz maybe some criteria could be set which could be used to analyse IG's statistics in order to rank quiz quality.

JH proposed the motion and CP seconded. There were 5 votes in favour, 10 against, and 1 abstention. Consequently the motion was not carried.

10. Any Other Business

Choice of venue for League events.

HB said that the League rules state that all major events should be held at a venue that has a team in the League, and therefore the Committee had broken the rules by holding the Finals Night at the Railway Club. IG pointed out that the rule in question includes the word 'normally', thereby allowing some discretion when selecting venues. The Committee therefore denied the charge of rule breaking.

He also pointed out that historically a number of venues without League teams had hosted events, including the Phoenix Club and the Imperial Hotel.



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HB said that there were venues that opened on Monday nights in order to accommodate their quiz teams, and that this was difficult for them in the current financially challenging times. When these venues subsequently heard that non-league venues were being chosen to hold major events this did not go down well.

IG said that if teams wanted to put forward alternative venues then they were entitled to do so.

PL felt that it would be appropriate to ask teams if their venue was suitable for hosting an event. It was agreed that this should be discussed in the Committee.

Format of Finals/Presentation Nights.

HB questioned the need for a presentation night, and felt that they were very much a thing of the past?

DH felt that a presentation night was needed.

HB said that the recent Finals Night was the first one he had attended where a comfort break was provided in the middle of each final, and that the lack of such a break on other nights had caused problems for older players.

HB suggested that rather than having both finals at one venue each should be held at a separate venue. This would mean the need for one set of questions, which would relieve pressure on question setters and would also be cheaper for the League if a decision was ever taken to buy quizzes in.

NN referred back to previous comments about entertainment value (see 9 above). He felt that the 2025 Finals Night had provided good entertainment value and he didn't see any value in having a separate presentation night.

Checks on quiz questions prior to enveloping.

HB returned to the issue of the quality of quiz setting (see 9 above). He said that he had noticed problems with a number of quizzes during the 2024/25 season, and he made specific reference to the quiz where one round had been duplicated. He was also concerned that most quiz rounds only had one spare.

IG pointed out that one spare per round is the norm. However, HB felt that it would be better to have two spares, and PL agreed, noting that mistakes do get made during the running of quizzes.

HB suggested that each week one of the non-playing teams could vet that week's quiz before the enveloping process, checking for things like missing answers, duplicated rounds and the like.

IG wanted to know why, if the team setting couldn't get things right, it should be left to a vetter to have to do it. JRP also questioned the practicalities of making changes to a quiz when teams would be turning up to the Golden Lion expecting to pick up their copy.



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JG thought that JRP's concerns could be addressed by changing the timetable, for example setting out a requirement to have quizzes available two weeks prior to quiz night. This would give time for the vetting and correction process.

ST said that his team spends a lot of time proof-reading any quizzes they set, and he wanted to know what happens when other teams turn out badly proof read offerings. The Chairman pointed out that this would entail an email being sent by him to the relevant team captain.

JP suggested that the need for proof-reading should be included in the quiz setting guidelines. He also suggested that the league rules be amended to make sure that there was a consistent approach on match night in the rare event that rounds are duplicated.

MK pointed out that we are all human beings, and that it was important not to make a mountain out of a molehill. The issues discussed were all part of quizzing.

Outcome of objections.

HB wanted to know what happened when objections were submitted. He said that objectors never get to hear the results.

JC and IG pointed out there haven't been any objections since 2022. IG also shared an example objection sheet, showing clearly how the final decision is fed back to the teams involved.

Use of old trophies as individual awards.

HB said that he thought there were at least 3 old quiz trophies that were not in use. He wondered whether they could be presented annually to the player in each division who has the top weekly score on most occasions. This would be seen as appreciation from the league for their efforts throughout the season.

IG said that the trophies involved would be the old Division 4 and 5 trophies.

DH felt that rather than total scores, measuring averages would be better. However, he personally thought that quizzing is a team pursuit so he would not be in favour of individual trophies.

MK pointed out that the old trophies are probably not in a fit condition to be presented for any purpose.

The Meeting closed at 9:50 pm



Appendix 1

Chair's Report for 2024-2025

The 2024-2025 LCQL season has been, I believe, the most difficult since the Covid-affected and abandoned season of 2019-2020. Initially the league comprised three divisions, each of 10 teams, as in 2023-2024. But in the fortnight or so **before** the start of the 2024-2025 season two teams scratched – George & Dragon A from division 1 and Lancaster Railway Club from division 3. The reason for withdrawal in both instances was the inability to raise a full complement of quiz players. Moreover, within a few weeks of the season's start a third team - Skerton Liberal Club in division one – had also dropped out of the League; here illness and incapacity within the team prevented its continuing in the League. The late withdrawal of these three teams made it impossible for Ian Gibson, the League's Administrator, to attempt what would have had to be a thoroughgoing re-organisation practically from scratch. The consequences of this unforeseen and very unfortunate turn of events did not affect everyone equally: division two retained its original ten teams, with each playing 18 matches and suffering only four bye weeks; while division three was reduced to nine teams, played 16 games and endured six bye weeks. But it was the first division that was hit hardest: there was a reduction here to only eight teams, with just 14 matches each, and with no fewer than eight bye weeks. This turn of events caused many teams a disjointed and somewhat unsatisfactory season.

This is my fifth Chair's Report. In most if not all of them I have commented on the quality of the quizzes, sometimes favourably, sometimes less so. The 2024-2025 offering has not been one of our better efforts. Only 18 'full houses' were achieved by just 11 players in total (and indeed ten out of the 18 'full houses' were achieved by just three outstanding players). 18 full houses are approximately half of last season's equivalent. It does seem that, in general, questions were harder and sometimes rather abstruse and/or too narrow in scope. I make no apology for repetition here (see previous Chair's Reports), so please be aware that there is an excellent document – 'Guidelines for Question Setters' - on the LCQL website. This very useful and important information is to be found on the home page under the general heading Question Setters' Area, then within that under the sub-heading Setting Guidelines. The advice given there is clear, straightforward, comprehensive and rational. Please have a look at it.

In the 2024-2025 season there was a slight increase in the number of teams to require recompense for the production of their quizzes. They are, of course, perfectly entitled to do so. However, in the case of one team a charge of £14.52 was made, and in the case of another no less than £18.75. These costs were, of course, met by the League. Despite this, the League is very fortunate that a large majority of the setters do not levy any charge at all. Printing costs have risen sharply in recent years, and as things stand the cheapest price available locally for printing a single sheet is 12p. If each quiz comprises four sheets (completely achievable, apart from the very small number of knock-out quizzes needing additional two tie-break rounds) and 15 copies of each quiz are required, the total cost amounts to £7.20. The principal reason why the two quizzes mentioned above cost so much more is because the number of sheets printed for each copy was excessive – no fewer than 8 sheets in the first case mentioned above. The message is, thank you to the many teams who make no charge for the costs involved – please keep up the good work; and secondly, if you do wish to make a charge, either self-print and invoice the League accordingly, or use the cheapest commercial printer you can find. Confine your quiz to 4 sheets if at all possible.



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I would like to acknowledge, wholeheartedly, the efforts of my colleagues for the sterling work they carry out as Committee members - reliable, positive, good-natured and supportive. Furthermore, the three League officers – John as Secretary, Janice as Treasurer and Ian as Administrator – are unstinting of their time and wholly committed to the cause. They do the heavy lifting while I stand to one side, urging them on. Heartfelt thanks to them all. Challenges lie ahead, but I am confident that with their help the LCQL will survive for a good time yet.

Finally, and on an inevitably sombre note, I should like to pay my respects to Bob Clark, Marge Bainbridge and, most recently, Lesley Guise – all stalwarts of the LCQL who have sadly passed away during this quiz season. RIP.

Richard Hitchings

Chair LCQL

2025



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Appendix 2

Secretary's Report for 2024-2025

Once again I have spent the year with the limited role of League Secretary whilst Ian Gibson, as League Administrator, has continued to handle all administrative matters, including running the web site, managing the control of weekly quiz sheet packs and recording results. My thanks go to Ian for once again doing the lion's share of the work, and for providing the substantial amount of data enclosed within this report.

Thanks are due as usual to the management and staff of the Golden Lion for their efforts each week on behalf of the league

Season 2024 - 2025

The season started on 23rd September 2024, it was played over a 22-week League season plus 5 Pool Weeks, Quarter-finals, Semi-finals and Finals. Initially 30 teams registered, split into 3 divisions comprising 10 teams each. However, just before the start of the season, there were 2 withdrawals (George & Dragon A and Lancaster Railway Club). This threw a spanner into the workings of the fixtures, leading to more bye weeks in Divisions 1 and 3. Regrettably, additional bye weeks resulted in Division 1, when Skerton Liberal Club left the League.

As an experiment, we also started the Pools Weeks at the beginning of February, rather than January, to give setters more notice.

The playing season ended on 19th May 2025 with Finals' Night, which again incorporated the presentation of Trophies and Prizes to the various League/Cup winners and Runners-up.

Division 1 - Winners: Boot & Shoe B; Runners-up: Gregson A

Division 2 - Winners: Merchants; Runners-up: Gregson B

Division 3 - Winners: Golden Lion A; Runners-up: Hest Bank C

Dennis Wigham – Winners: Boot & Shoe B; Runners-up: Gregson A

Tony Clare - Winners: Heysham Cricket Club B; Runners-up: Hest Bank C

Nominations for 2025 - 26:

Chair:	Richard Hitchings
Secretary:	John Pollard
Treasurer:	Janice Crossfield
Committee:	Jo Hardman; Ian Nicholson, Ian Gibson, Paul Legon, Chris Coldwell, Callum Pownall.

One Rule Change was submitted.

Proposed rule change to Section C - Competition Rules: Section 10:

*In order to take part in any Cup Competition from and including the quarter finals a team member must have played in at least **two** previous games or registered as a player at the start of the season.*



The Committee are seeking to change the word two to one.

Two Motions were submitted:

Dog & Partridge: I would like to propose we look again at question setting with a view to considering another source for questions.

Merchants: For the 25/26 season, the quiz committee should agree a way for quizzes being rated each week and a league table being created for quiz of the season.

Any Other Business:

Heysham CC B: - have raised a number of points to be discussed under A.O.B.

27 existing teams have re-registered for the 2025-26 Season.

Considering that we have fewer than 200 registered players, the League's website continues to be well used during the playing season. The annual fees remain at £57.46, which they have been for some considerable time.

John R Pollard
Secretary



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Appendix 3

Treasurer's Report

At the beginning of the 2024-2025 season, our opening balance stood at £1,842.87 and our closing balance is £1,549.88 (Lloyds Bank = £1,493.69 + Treasurer's float = £56.19).

Our total income for the season was £1,170.00, all of which came from league fees.

Our expenditure this season totalled £1,462.99.

This represents a deficit for the season of £292.99. This is explained by the purchase of a new trophy for the Tony Clare cup competition, 2 fewer teams playing in the League (reduction in income from subs) and an increase in the value of book tokens awarded to winners and runners-up in our League and Cup competitions.

Our largest items of expenditure were, therefore, book tokens (£1,060.00), the new Tony Clare trophy (£159.99), trophy engraving (£78.97), our annual website fees (£57.46) and stationery (£36.61).

Photocopying costs reimbursed to question setters this season totalled £54.51. This works out at £10.90 for each quiz charged for (only 5). This increase on previous years reflects the few photocopying options now available in the area and the higher costs of those that still exist – for example, we were presented with 2 very large receipts for £14.52 and £18.75. We thank those teams and individuals who made no charge.

As regards team membership fees, all but one were paid before the end of October deadline. Thank you. The vast majority of teams (21) are now choosing to pay their subs by bank transfer.

Shortly before Christmas, we were informed by Lloyds Bank that the Treasurer's Account (the account we had) was being withdrawn and replaced with a new Community Account. The upshot of this is that we now have to pay a monthly fee. This is only a small amount (£4.50) and so is not a problem as far as our league accounts are concerned.

I can confirm that our accounts are in a healthy state as we look forward to the 2025-6 season.

Janice Crossfield (Treasurer)
LCQL