

Minutes of The 2022 Annual General Meeting of Alton Rugby Football Club (ARFC)

Held at Alton Rugby Football Club, Friday 17th June 2022 at 19.30

(24 people in attendance: Start 1945hrs End 2120hrs)

Presidents welcome

Thank you all for taking the time to attend

For those we do not know me I'm Malcolm Osborne Club President and will be chairing the meeting tonight. We have number of agenda items to get through plus we have 2 items that we have been notified of to cover under AOB. We will take questions as we go through rather than saving them to the end but if we need too I will defer and we will provide answers off line. Not that I'm expecting to need to do so but I've mentioned now just in case. Agenda is as per those circulated, copies are on the tables along with the draft accounts and previous minutes. This will be the last year that we provide hard copies going forward we will publish and if you require you can bring otherwise we will use soft copy and project

Steve Carter will provide a run through on the numbers in more detail so please have your questions ready for him as we get to that section.

EC Members here tonight to help run through and manage proceedings are
Colin Maloney, Steve Carter, Steve Jenkins and Eloise Shrimpton

Apologies for absences have been received from

Tom Gaynor, Tom Mills, Joe Gwyther, Kathleen Digby, Charles Clarke, Lewis Jones, Carter Whittock, Andy Tart, Andy Gay

1. To consider and approve (with or without amendment) the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.

Approved by majority vote with no amendments

2. To receive and approve a report from the Committee on the affairs of the Club since the previous Annual General meeting

2021/22 Season

Going to do this a double act and provide the report in two sections, on and off the park to cover the playing and non-playing side of the business

Non-playing side

1. Following Covid lock down and restrictions we successively got back to playing rugby at all levels across the club. Huge effort from all coaches, team managers, players, helpers, backroom staff and everyone else meaning lots of people were able to enjoy games on Saturdays and Sundays
2. The club house fully reopened and you will see from the financial report that despite having to close over the Christmas period and cancellation of several social events the bar turnover was only 15% below our 2020 level.
Big events that have been held but go into next years accounts include Battle of Alton where we entertained approx. 500 people over a four day period as they camped out on Anstey park and use the club as their base for entrainment and a few events that have gone in the accounts held at the club by Exclusive Networks.
However re opening after covid has highlighted the importance of volunteers in running the clubhouse and the effect of having to pay staff rather than support from club members has reduced our profit margins
3. Several times through the pandemic volunteer support was requested in order to open the bar, as even paid staff were unavailable. This is not an Alton RFC specific problem but one faced by most of the clubs in Hampshire where people have chosen to do other things with their time rather than volunteering. Having said that it is not true of the playing side where we have a healthy list of coaches, team managers and first aiders. The challenge has been the running of the business.

As Tom said at last years AGM Volunteers are the life blood of a club and Alton are no different. As we move forward this year there will be a number of opportunities for people to step forward and will be encouraging everyone to do so.

4. The Club 5 year strategy was presented to a number of members via a Zoom call in May and while progress on developing and driving the plan has been slow due to the pandemic, we have the opportunity this coming year to quickly revamp as necessary, gain buy in from members and then drive forward.
5. This will include, Our centenary celebrations where we need to decide what and how we want to do to celebrate our 100 year anniversary. I think it will require a sub committee to coordinate efforts across the club
6. Progress on pitch development has continued with Alton Town Council. The ball is now in our court as to how we want to present our thoughts back to them. It will require a subcommittee to drive. We will also need to include Clubhouse development to consider the way in which the club will be used in the future rather than how we have in the past. A saying to think about is what got us here and the last 100 years wont necessarily get us there, the next 100 years. We need to think about how we see our club of the future.
7. We continue to be sponsored by a number of companies and individuals, providing equipment, shirts and cash across all age groups which we are very grateful for. Gorillia Gin remained the main sponsor for Alton Silverback. And again the city Lunch organised by Rupert delivering a substantial cash input. Over the past 4 years the event has produced approx. £50k for the club. What I don't think we have done well, is recognise all our sponsors and shown them our appreciation and how much their input helps to deliver the best rugby experience possible.
Something that we need to change if we are to develop and expand our sponsors.
8. Our junior section continues to provide a fantastic experience for our younger club members, where enjoyment, not win all cost is the key. The smiles seen on a very wet presentation day said it all for me. For those of you who have not seen the mayhem that takes place on a Sunday morning I suggest you pop down one day and see what a fantastic job is being done. Although the Junior chair stood down during the year and no replacement came forward, a special mention to Matt Arrowsmith for stepping in and helping make the year so successful.

With that I will pass over to Steve to provide an update on the Playing side. Not to steel too much of his thunder but with the changes in the league structure that has taken place at the end of this season, Alton have now been promoted 5 years on the trot going from L12 to L7 (even if the last move was due to reorganisation)

Playing side update

1XV stepped up to level 8 rugby effectively proving competitive in the majority of games. This is reflected in the number of close defeats (the team collected 7 losing bonus points. On reflection this was probably down to the lack of rugby in the last 2 years and the number of players used over the season resulting in a reduction in match day 'intelligence' or the ability to close out games. Moving into the next season and another promotion offers new challenges but also the knowledge that all of the teams (except Petersfield and Andover) in our division that we played last year we beat during Last season. This will build confidence and we can build on the great move forward in structure/gameplay introduced during last season. This should now be more embedded allowing greater match management to turn the narrow losses into wins!

In addition last season saw the 2nd XV complete a full league season putting out teams for all matches. In addition there were several Blackbacks that stood up to the Silverback match day squads. This is a great step forward and will help to further develop the rugby 'intelligence' of senior players.

Training numbers throughout the season remained good with many sessions providing 15 v 15 pre match run throughs! Next season we will build further on this providing 2 training sessions per week (Tuesday and Thursday) to allow greater skill development on Tuesday and unit match prep on Thursday.

The new season sees a new league structure for both Silverbacks and Blackbacks and both leagues are more challenging than last season but reduces travel time (except the journey to Jersey!) which should enable more players to be available more often as most meet times even for away games will be after midday for 2 pm kick

offs and even later for the 3 pm kick offs. Plans are being formulated for greater match day experiences at home to involve volunteers and age grade players in the match prep. Pre match lunches will be dedicated to age groups to allow them to use events to raise money for tours, kit etc and for the clubs nominated charities. Further details will be forthcoming. A return of events like 'Ladies Day' and 'Red Bellies' lunches will also be incorporated into the prematch lunch programme. Once again there will be a need for some volunteers to help coordinate these events but this is your club and is there to provide for the members.

Ravens – Kathleen Digby is leaving after her Sterling efforts of reintroducing female rugby to Alton RFC after many years. Age grade girl's rugby has also developed and will be a continued focus of the club. The age grade structure for the girls is changing and will have groups at u14 and u16 next year (keeping the same girls together for another year to consolidate). The u16 will then progress to u18 rugby the following season.

Colts rugby have had a hard season (this is across most clubs in Hampshire) being hit by the Pandemic more than other age groups). This was due to the key step up from u16 to colts be disrupted which added to the pressures on these young men to study for GCSE and AS/ A levels resulted in numbers being lower than in previous seasons. The Sterling work of Ash, Chris and Alexcis, however, kept the group together putting teams out for all league games and retaining Alton as Hampshire League 1 colts team – Ash is standing down from coaching the Colts but will be integral in future pathway for our age grade players from when they join they club to becoming senior players representing the Silver and Blackbacks!

Age Grade rugby had a strong season with great numbers training on a Sunday morning all the way from u6 up to the U16.

Alton also successfully hosted the u7 and u8 festivals. Great thanks go to Matt Arrowsmith, Tom Gaynor and Fran Williams and all of the pitch marshals etc for their support. As a club we want to put on more such festivals (end of season 7s, age grade, etc) but these only happen if we have a team of volunteers to assist with the planning, implementation and clearing away after! The club also provided facilities for Age Grade finals and schools cup final days. Alton continues to be a small club providing big support to the Constituent Body!

Success was also evident at the older age grades with the u16 winning their league and being the 'best' team in Hampshire. A good sign for next years colts!

U14 also achieved the accolade of winning the Hampshire waterfall cup competition and put out 2 sides on a regular basis. A very good effort.

Under 15 and u13 reached the plate finals

All the Age Grade teams participated in their Hampshire leagues and also had a series of friendly fixtures and home training.

If you have neighbours that have moved into the area that play rugby please encourage them to come down to the club and join the growing numbers of players (and volunteers) at Alton RFC

3 To receive and approve a Financial Statement for the preceding financial year

Compared with the previous financial year, the year ending 30 April 2022, whilst still impacted to some degree by Covid, has been much closer to "normal".

The club's total income recorded for the year has bounced back to just shy of £141,000, compared to £81,000 last year (note: nearly 50% of the 2021 income was Covid grant support), but is still not back to the levels we saw in the years ending April 2020 and 2019 (£174k and £163k respectively).

As you would expect, given that we were operational again in the 2021/22 season, the expenditure side of the equation was also significantly up on last year, with cost of sales of nearly £73,000 (that is primarily the costs of bar and kitchen supplies, along with salaries) and administrative expenses of nearly £79,000 (i.e. the costs of running the club).

The net result recorded in the end of year accounts, as I am sure the 'eagle eyed' amongst you will have spotted, is a paper loss of £11,020 (we were in effect cash flow neutral for the year, with the loss equating to the depreciation charge).

It is important for me to note here, in anticipation of questions about ending the year with a loss, that the income side of the equation does not reflect the proceeds from the successful City Lunch organised by Rupert, nor the sponsorship from Gorilla Spirits. Although the City Lunch took place in March, and it looks like we will have made around £13k, I took the view that the proceeds are not crystallized until we have the money in our account (which does not happen until all auction payments are received). In relation to the Gorilla sponsorship, we are waiting for the final reckoning and the bar purchases in the end of year results include a charge of just less than £2,500 for Gorilla gin that will ultimately be covered by Gorilla's sponsorship.

If this additional income had been incorporated in the end of year accounts, we would have made a surplus for the year of about £4,500.

It is also worth noting that the ECWS weekend event straddled the end of the financial year, which means the bar and kitchen income was boosted not only in April but also in May, giving us a good start to the current financial year.

Looking at the income side of the equation, specific points I would draw attention to are:

- bar sales, catering and club hire income, although significantly up on last year, are still £10k behind 2020
- subscriptions (i.e. membership fees) are also about £10k behind 2020

I suspect this reflects that fact that the ongoing, although much reduced, impact of the Covid pandemic.

On the expenditure side of things:

- the dramatic increase in wages is explained mainly by the fact that in 2021 the kitchen wages were included in the catering costs, whereas in the 2022 accounts they are in the bar wages line. Overall, however, the wages bill has increased by over £4k, attributable to a combination of increased hourly rates and increased paid hours. It is clear that we should be able to reduce the salary bill if we can get more volunteer help.
- Repairs and maintenance costs include an upgrade of the alarm system (£2.6k) and internal decoration of the club (£2.8k)
- light and heat are up significantly, partly due to increasing prices but might in fact be overstated as based on "accruals" in anticipation of a larger invoice rather than actual invoiced amount
- Accountancy fees include the cost of Styles' support (£250/mth) plus a late charge from Whettone Matthews for the previous year's payroll.
- The other increased expenditures compared with 2021 can largely be attributed to the fact that we played a lot more rugby and opened the club house a lot more frequently that we did in the previous season.

As a final point in relation to the numbers, I note that we still have very healthy reserves and overall the club's finances are sound.

Finally, I mention that we are into our second year of the day-to-day bookkeeping and payroll being handled by Styles & Associates, and having smoothed out some initial wrinkles, all is going well. I should also add special thanks to Nigel for his ongoing support in relation to getting payroll information to Styles and Lewis for overseeing the bar finances and providing the required information to Styles.

That concludes my report. Happy to take any questions now or feel free to email questions to me (treasurer@altonrfc.club) if any occur to you subsequently.

4.To elect the Officers for the ensuing year.

The following Officers of the club we elected by majority decision

1. President; Malcolm Osborne

Chairman –

As you are aware Tom Gaynor is standing down this year as Chairman. When he was appointed he said that he wanted to do the role for 5 years. With the pandemic this continued for a further 2 years making a total of 7 years in post. During this time he has moved the club forward in the way that it operates. His vision was to get the 1st XV from the lowest point in league rugby level 12 back to the London leagues by season 2020/21 which was achieved.

We were introduced to the 'Tip of the spear' (Not as bad as it sounds and not a punishment!) His vision was (and still is) that a club is judged on the success of its 1st XV no matter how successful other squads or age groups are. The 1st XV are at the vanguard and the 'tip of the spear'.

Tom was also unusual as a chairman as he came from the junior side of the club which, again, proved its worth as has viewed the club as 'one club' not a series of silos and cohorts. The club of Alton is at the forefront of his thoughts and he used this ethos to drive forward the executive of the club to strive for greater things.

Tom's legacy, as a Chairman, will be a more cohesive club that is striving to be better in all aspects of its purpose; to be the best rugby experience in Hampshire.

I would like to thank him for all that he has done for the club during this time.

All his hard work and leadership has helped develop the club infrastructure and the way in which the club house is used and seen the Sliverbacks promoted from L12 to level 7 .

At the Club Dinner in appreciation he was awarded a Red Tie for work above and beyond expectations

2. Chairman; Steve Jenkins
3. Secretary; Colin Maloney
4. Treasurer. Steve Carter

5 and 6 .Election of Vice Presidents (VPs) / Confirmation of Honorary Members:

No VPs were nominate for election at this AGM

7.Election of Committee Members: ARFC Club Rule 13.1 states that the Club's Executive Committee ("the EC") should also include a number of elected members.

The following people were elected by majority decision to join the EC

1. Greg Beecham
2. Lewis Jones
3. Maxine Freedman Thompson
4. Eloise Shrimpton
5. Rupert Vitoria
6. John Ford
7. Ashley Hamer

Further members will be co opted as required during the season by the EC

8.Where necessary in law or where the members require:

8.1 To appoint the Auditors for the ensuing year, or

8.2 To consider a resolution disapplying the provisions of the Act relating to the

By Majority decision No auditors were appointed

9.Additions or Alterations to Club Rules: None proposed.

10. Any Other Business The AGM will consider relevant any other business of which due notice is given (or take this for consideration by the EC) as detailed under Club Rule 8.1.11.

- a. Bar Volunteer proposal (Malcolm Osborne) – A proposal was made to involve all club members in supporting the running of the bar by re introducing (whole club membership) Bar Teams. Following discussion, the proposal as tabled was withdrawn. It will be re tabled at the playing committee, for only playing members inclusion, plus volunteers
- b. Regulation 9 – First Aid Provision (Mike Robson) – withdrawn as Mike was unavailable

11. To hear any other relevant matter for the consideration of the Committee during the ensuing year, but on which no voting shall be allowed

Areas that need to reviewed by the EC and actioned as necessary we discussed;

- a. Development of ladies rugby at ARFC to include developing connection and support of ladies rugby in schools
- b. Coordinated Recruitment drive, including advertising and target new housing developments/Alton towns expansion for all age grade, ladies and senior teams
- c. Review post-match meals options
- d. Marking out of cross rugby pitches during the season