

# The 2023 Annual General Meeting of Alton Rugby Football Club

## 16th June 19.30

### Minutes – Final

**Apologies:** Theo Androuliakos, Tom Mills, Ryan Bale, Luke Parratt, Dean Collins, Fran Williams, James Aston, Charles Clarke, Adrian Sylvester, James Youell, Jez Powell Lewis Jones and Michael Searl

**Attending:** Malcolm Osborne (Chair), Steve Jenkins, Max Freedman – Thompson, John Ford, Kevin New, Tracey New, Ron Wray, Adam Burden, Steve Carter, Greg Beecham (Minutes), Aidan Trethewey, Tom Crew, Di Christmas, Bob Curtis, Colin Maloney, Adam Hoxey, Dave Callon, Pat Swaby, Steve Parratt, Sam Law, Georgie Roberts, Ezra Mosley, James Norris, Matt Arrowsmith and Dave Parratt

#### 1. Opening by Malcolm Osborne President

Malcolm opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and declaring it quorate.

- He reminded everyone that we would not be providing paper copies of the documents and directed members to where the electronic copies were available.
- Malcolm advised that we had not received any AOB items in advance and whilst we were able to take AOB items on the night we would not be able to vote on them on in line with the club rules.
- Malcolm introduced members of the committee

#### 2. Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous AGM were approved by majority vote with the following amendment by Malcolm:

- Following extensive research, it has been confirmed that the club was set up and our first game was in 1926 not 1924 as previously believed. This means our centenary year will actually be 2026. It is the intention of the committee to set up a centenary subcommittee in January 2025 to plan for the centenary year including a memorial game on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

#### 3. Report From the Committee

Steve Jenkins (Chairman) delivered the report on behalf of the committee.

In a break from tradition Steve mentioned that he was going to focus the report on committee's approach to running the club (see below). Given that we have recently celebrated the on-pitch success through various prize giving events Steve did not run through all the prizes and awards. Instead he mentioned they would be listed in an appendix to the minutes.

In keeping with previous reports Steve did want to acknowledge senior statespersons of the club who had passed away in the last year:

- Stu Copland a long-time member of the Club who played most of his rugby in the 1st and 2nd XVs at lock. He also served as the 1st XV skipper and Club Captain. Those of us who knew him will no doubt remember his “Highland Lassie Song”, performed post-match in the Club bar!
- Chris Barlow a stalwart member of the 3rds and "Brewers" XV during the 70s & 80's. Chris would always be available to play at whatever ever level he was selected for.
- Bob “Dolly” Doran, a past member of Alton Rugby Club, played for the 3rd & Brewers XVs, as a very strong prop, in the Eighties. He was also a regular at Pre-Match and “Red Bellies” lunches.
- Ken Tanner, also a past member of Alton Rugby Club, played, mainly as a second row, for Alton in the Seventies and Eighties at various levels.
- Bob Curtis also mentioned that Graham Garratt had passed away. Graham played for the 1<sup>st</sup> and Brewers XV with both he and his wife actively involved in running the club. Graham also served on the club committee.
- A minute’s silence was held for in memory of those that have passed away. Rest in peace.

Steve then went on to outline to committees’ approach to running the club. In summary:

- Focus on improving overall governance starting with defining what we stand for:
- Overarching Vision “THE BEST RUGBY EXPERIENCE IN HAMPSHIRE”
  - Everyone that interacts with Alton RFC leaves with a positive view of the club, players, mentors and volunteers
  - To be an integral part of Alton ... not just the rugby club
  - To be at the highest level attainable in rugby for all age groups
- To do this it was identified that we needed to work on club-based values (Complimentary to TREDs - RFU Values):
  - Inclusive - all are welcomed, valued and supported
  - Respect - in line with RFU this is earned by our actions and behaviours
  - Enjoyment - our actions result in smiles and enhance our wellbeing
  - Nurture - our people are at the centre of everything we do and we provide an environment where everyone can be the best they can be.
  - Excellence - everything is done to highest standards. No short cuts. Raise performance of teams to highest possible.
- Steve then outlined the Deep Dive that was undertaken on the structure of the club and how that was functioning. This concluded that the majority of actions and information was coming from a small proportion of the membership namely the

Executive Committee. This resulted in the re-invigoration of the committee structure reporting to the Executive Committee:

- Governance – Steve Jenkins
  - Playing and Development - Tom Crew
  - Finance - Steve Carter
  - Clubhouse and Social – Lewis Jones
  - Volunteers and Projects – Malcolm Osborne
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- This has allowed greater delegation of tasks and actions across the club and, whilst not working as smoothly as we would like, there is much greater oversight of how the club is functioning.
  - In addition, how we communicate has been reviewed and a new communication strategy has been introduced using website and social media amongst other tools to enable us to be more attractive to new sponsors, players, and the local community.
  - All of these actions have Rugby (and our people) at the centre of our efforts.
  - Steve also mentioned the project on improving the clubhouse facilities outlining that this is a step on the journey to being the best rugby experience in Hampshire. He also outlined how we are investigating the use of other facilities in the local environment - Changing rooms, pitches and liaison with local Companies to improve our community impact.
  - Steve went on to summarise that the club was a £175k turnover business with about 150 positions being managed on a volunteer basis. Most of these roles are filled and we are working to fill the remaining gaps. Steve asked all those in attendance to support the journey to make Alton the 'Best Rugby Experience in Hampshire' and mentioned that next season he will introduce his 'Chairman's Volunteer of the Month' award which will feed into RFU county and (hopefully) National awards. Steve highlighted that this year we had the winner of the Unsung hero in Hampshire (Theo Androuliakos) and mentions for Georgia Petty (Safeguarding Role) and Matt Arrowsmith for his sterling work in co-ordinating coaches and team managers across Sunday mornings.
  - Steve finished this section of the report by saying the club has been steered successfully through the impact of Covid, minimising the financial impacts and maintaining the playing numbers across the club, and that we are continuing to manage our way through the Cost-of-Living crisis. He reminded everyone that prudential management of club funds will always remain at the centre of what we do and that we do not envisage paying for improvement projects without actively raising the money to fund them.
  - Steve asked what people thought and those in attendance gave their wholehearted support to what they had heard. The report from the committee was approved by majority vote.

Steve finished with a couple of thankyou's:

- Firstly, to Colin Maloney for stepping in to take on the not inconsiderable tasks of being Honorary Secretary. Without Colin the committee would have been rudderless and the club at risk of missing key return dates and administrative deadlines!
  - To Ash Hamer for stepping in and setting up the playing committee. Due to personal circumstances Ash has had to step down.
  - Also, to Tracey New for all her hard work in managing clubhouse events and bookings over the past years
- Members showed their appreciation to both Tracey, Colin and Ash.

Malcolm advised that he had received a question about how much had been raised by City Lunches and in turn advised that the total amount was £60k. Members showed their appreciation to all those involved for their hard work in organising and raising such a significant sum.

#### **4. Financial Statement**

Steve Carter (Club Treasurer) delivered the financial statement. In summary:

- Draft accounts had been circulated in advance of the meeting and Steve had not received any specific questions ahead of the meeting.
- First “normal” year since Covid from a finance perspective ... albeit with some increased costs most notably the energy costs.
- The overall result this year was a loss of £5.3k – this can easily be absorbed without creating cash flow issues - compared with a loss of £11k previous year. About £12k short of the £7k surplus that was budgeted at the beginning of the year.
- Membership Income was up by £1k year on year (YoY) but still around £10k short of 2020 levels. Steve advised that a membership drive would be undertaken for the coming season and focus will also be on collecting the fees from all members. It was noted that this being a world cup year there should be a positive impact on recruitment.
- Sponsorship income shows a good increase this year but the headline number does not tell the whole story. The total includes last year's City Lunch (£11k) as well as this year's (£9k). Stripping these out, we are still left with an impressive £13k. Some of this is squad sponsorship but significant credit must be given to Kevin New for his recent work in signing up club sponsors. Members showed their appreciation for Kevin's efforts.

- The income from the bar, kitchen and club house hire was up by £18k YoY. Club house hire charges actually dropped significantly this year (but to a large degree this can be explained by a change in the way we have accounted for events, with the catering income from events now being attributed to the kitchen rather than the club house). This was balanced by a £4k increase in bar takings and an impressive £17k increase in kitchen takings compared to last year.
- Despite the positive income results that because of rising costs more needs done to generate revenue from the bar, kitchen and club house if we are not to increase membership fees. Steve went on to outline the committee's intention to increase bar (and possibly kitchen) prices to bring them closer to regular pub prices. This would be alongside a discount scheme for paid up club members bringing prices back down to, or close to, current bar prices.
- Adam B mentioned that his experience of similar schemes at other clubs had not been great and not consistent with providing the best rugby experience in Hampshire. Malcolm and Steve clarified that the details are still being finalised but this would likely involve a new till system with a pre-paid card which was more acceptable than having to show a membership card and had the added benefit of improved cashflow for the club.
- Costs generally been kept under control and in-line with budget. The most notable exception is the high costs for light and heat, which have jumped by over £10k YoY and are £8k more than budgeted.
- Increases have also been seen in cleaning costs (waste disposal and supplies) and we have bought new trophies and medals for the awards this season.
- Steve clarified the big jump in tournament fees was down to the U15 tour costs having been recorded against this account (the tour costs were fully covered by sponsors, parents and the squad budget).
- The other significant increase is the catering costs which Steve explained is not surprising against the corresponding increase in kitchen income as well as recognising that a significant proportion of the kitchen costs can be attributed to the free player meals that are provided for home senior and junior fixtures.
- Steve then explained the bar and kitchen finances in a bit more detail. Bar takings were £63k, bar purchases £38k and bar staff costs are £13k, giving us a net contribution from the bar of £12k. Ignoring private events, the kitchen takings are about £20k, kitchen purchases are about £18k and kitchen (and cleaning) staff costs are £10k. So, on the face of it the kitchen costs us around £8k to run.
- However, what we must remember is that the kitchen produces a large number of free player meals for seniors and juniors throughout the season (estimated at least 5,000 and perhaps as many as 8,000). This is part of the 'price' for playing rugby.

- It is difficult to quantify, based on the data we currently have, the exact cost (supplies and staff costs) for delivering the free meals but if we conservatively assume that 50% of the purchase costs and 50% of the staff costs should be allocated to the free players' meals, we can conclude that the free player meals cost the club around £14k (which in principle should be allocated as a "rugby" cost), with the £20k kitchen income having associated purchase and staff costs of £14k, giving a net contribution from the "commercial" activities of the kitchen of around £6k.
- For next season Steve is considering whether we can sensibly capture data that would allow us to quantify the costs of providing the free meals more accurately.
- Steve concluded that, despite our losses in the last two years, the club remains financially sound and he is confident that with a focus on membership income, the measures proposed around bar prices and continuing control of expenses, will be able to return a surplus next year.
- The draft accounts were approved by majority vote.

Steve also finished with some thankyou's:

- Nigel Youell for his ongoing support in relation to the payroll
- Lewis Jones for managing the bar finances
- Kevin New for his work to bring in new sponsors to the club.
- Members showed their appreciation.

## 5. Election of Officers

The following officers were elected by majority vote:

Office	
President	Malcolm Osborne
Chairman	Steve Jenkins
Secretary	Greg Beecham
Treasurer	Steve Carter

6. **Vice-Presidents** - None proposed

7. **Honorary Members** - None proposed

8. **Election of Members of the Committee.**

The following members were elected by majority vote:

John Ford  
Kevin New

Lewis Jones  
Max Freedman-Thompson  
Tom Crew

**9. Appointment of auditors – not proposed**

**10. Alterations to the rules of the Club – None proposed**

**11. Any Other Business and Matters Arising**

- Matt A enquired about the appointment of the Junior Chair. Steve J replied that he would like to move us away from thinking about the club in terms of Juniors and Seniors. His current thinking was that we would not have a Junior Chair and instead we would ask a couple of the team mangers to take on some of the responsibilities without the burden of attending the executive committee. It was suggested that a meeting be held with age grade coaches and team managers.
- On the subject of closer integration Ezra mentioned his desire for age grade players and parents to be represented at pre-match lunches. Steve J responded that he was trying to align more Colts and 1<sup>st</sup> XV matches as well as including age grades against next seasons fixtures list with a view to inviting them to the pre match lunches. Matt A added his support although cautioned that would not be a quick fix and we should not expect instant results.
- On the subject of Best Rugby Experience in Hampshire Sam Law asked what more could be done to make the club feel less like a church hall and more like a 100-year-old rugby club for example rehangng the club memorabilia. Steve J responded that this would be a key task for the Rugby Force Day and added that we had been successful in a £500 grant application for this as well as another application of £500 to support volunteer recruitment.
- Steve J updated members on the coaching situation. Adrian Sylvester will take on the role of 'Director of Coaching' leading the coaching strategy and development across the whole club from U6 to Masters. Matt Chapman is taking over as Blackbacks coach. Jez will continue as head coach and will be joined by assistant coaches Will Johnson, Gareth O'Brien and Tom Williams. In addition, the Colts coaches will be Ben Hinshelwood (lead) assisted by James Youell and Alex Cisco Sansei.
- Malcolm mentioned that after consultation with the Masters it had been agreed to make the Masters blazer available to all members in order to enhance visibility of the club. Master would receive a unique pin badge. This generated quite a lot of discussion and whilst there was general support for a club blazer it was suggest that perhaps this should be slightly different to the Masters blazer.
- Matt A asked about the situation with London Irish. Steve J responded that it is still early days and although he had been proactive in contacting the RFU we were still waiting to hear exactly what the situation means for us. In the meantime, the RFU

has taken over the DPP. Matt cautioned that this might impact age grade recruitment for next season

- Kevin New will be contacting local schools as part of awareness and membership drive

## Appendix – Awards and Prizes 2023

### 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> XV

Red Tie Awards	Di Christmas and Lewis Jones
Captains Tie	Karter Whittock
Players Player Silverbacks	Aidan Tretheway
Players Player Blackback	Theo Androuliakos
Coaches Player	Ryan Bale
Young Player	Lewis New
Breakthrough player	Oli Hunt
Car Crash	Oli Fielder

### Ravens

To be announced following presentation evening 07/07/23

### Age Grade

U6	Coaches Player	Ben Davis
U6	Most Improved	Wilfred Dunnet
U6	Silverback Award	Charlie Legg
U7	Most Improved	Zoe Fletcher
U7	Coaches Player	Daniel Naude
U7	Endeavour	Nora Poff
U9	Most improved	Enid Champness
U9	Coaches player	Leonard Poff
U9	Team player	Owen Matthews
U9	Team Player	Barnaby Cavell
U10	Most Improved	Leighton Sayles
U10	Coaches Player	GeorgePoff
U10	Endeavour	Finley McFall
U11	Players Player	Oscar Keightley
U11	Endeavour	Finley Williams
U11	Coaches Player	Harry Fowlston
U11	Most Improved	Charlie Maltby
U11	Most Improved	Ethan Jaffray
U12	Most Improved	Rory Lett
U12	Coaches Player	Olly Tapp
U12	Endeavour	Nicholas Forbes
U12	Player's Player	Jamie Hargreaves
U13	Players Player	Heath Norman
U13	Coaches Player	Max Connolly
U13	Endeavour	Vinny Milner
U13	Most Improved	James Carmichael
U13	Supporters Player	Oscar Thirlwall

U14	Coaches Player	Zack Schuil-Brewer
U14	Players Player	Jack Cook
U14	Endeavour	Tyler Bromhead
U14	Breakthrough	Callum Short
U15	Most Improved Back	Jack Woolley
U15	Most Improved Forward	GeorgeBell
U15	Player of the Season	Sam Thirlwall
U15	Coaches Award	Hector Poulsen
U16	Coaches Player	Edward Newell
U16	Most Improved	Stuart Hall
U16	Players Player	Max Sly

### **Addendum to the Financial Statement – added 24/10/2023**

At the AGM earlier this year, draft accounts were presented to the meeting and approved. As part of finalising the accounts we discovered that we were missing some of the bar income, this was added into the final version of the accounts signed by the club officers and submitted to the FCA. The net result was that the club made a small surplus of £1,300 in the last financial year rather than the £5,318 loss presented in the earlier draft accounts.