



17th Annual General Meeting of Lewes Rugby Football Club Ltd (82nd Meeting of Lewes RFC)

**Monday 5th July 2021
Held on line, via Zoom**

Present:

Robert Moore, Alan Page, Paul Nicholl, Paddy Henshaw, Danny Simpson, Simon Sampson, James Sale, Craig Brindley, Bob Lockyer, Jo-Anne Sunderland-Bowe, David Durrant, Nick Page, Mark Hall, Brandon Palmer, Hayley Newnes, Vic Bedford, Dereck Wade, Oliver Bowery, Elliot Moule, Ben Green, Nick Rawson.

Apologies:

Daniel Wade, Andy Kipling, James Halpin

1. Approval of Previous Minutes. 2020:

- Having been previously circulated, the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 29th July 2020 were approved by those present as being a true record.

2. Matters arising:

- The launch of Pride Club was delayed due to the pandemic and its associated restrictions, but plans are afoot to get it going during the coming season.

3. Chairman's Report – Paddy Henshaw:

- Welcome everybody to what is my first report to you as Chairman.
- It's fair to say that the 20/21 season has been a difficult season for us all with COVID and its associated issues and certainly not as expected. It is also a season where the club has lost a lot of players and supporters, both young and old, with some in very tragic circumstances. All our thoughts are with families and friends of those no longer with us.
- But notwithstanding the situation over the last 18 months with a sudden end to the 19/20 season and a very dis-jointed 20/21 season with no competitive league structures for us at any level, we have all still managed to play some rugby with some very good results.
- The minis and juniors were eventually able to play a number of friendlies, particularly after the last lockdown, with the highlight being the Colts winning 5 out of 5 games they were able to play during the season.
- The Lionesses ended the season on a high with the U15 team beating Seaford 75-10, and with the numbers in the age groups there is sure to be more success next season.
- The senior sections were also involved with a number of friendlies, with the women's team competing in some 7's tournaments towards the end of the season, and the men having home



and away fixtures to Burgess Hill and Uckfield in May, following a successful touch tournament during September/ October which saw Ditchling, Seaford and Brighton Sea Serpents competing over a series of weekends.

- There should also be a specific mention and thanks to those involved in the Lockdown Activities at the start of this year. Whilst we weren't able to get back on the pitch together, there were a number of activities, led principally by James Sale, but also including the Sunday morning minis sessions by Jo Sunderland-Bowe, quiz night by Catherine Moore, a number of Masterclass sessions by Brandon Palmer, and also a Q&A session with Tom Bowen, with the online publicity dealt with by Rab Willis.
- More generally, the overall position of the club is good. Mark will provide more detail shortly in his Treasurer's Report, but we are in a good financial position given the circumstances. We have also maintained good membership numbers throughout lockdown and lost very few players, which should put us in a good position for the start of next season.
- There have been a number of other clubs in Sussex that have been struggling for various reasons which we have not, and it's been interesting to see that as a club we are quite resilient in these circumstances as most of our costs and overheads only arise as a result of actually playing competitive rugby.
- We have also had the benefit of a number of grants from the local authority, RFU and Sport England, both directly to Lewes RFC and through the Sports Club where we have received a contribution or potential benefit through repairs and works to be undertaken. In the case of Sport England and the RFU, the monies directly to us will help us build and move forwards towards next season. This should allow us to start to look into some exciting projects over the course of next season to move the club forwards.
- The works on the changing room have also been completed, and whilst there are still works to be completed, this has been a positive step forwards, and the first significant works that LDC have undertaken for a number of years. That said, they are not in a position to undertake further works due to a lack of funds, but are happy to support us in anything else we can take forwards to improve the facilities such as decorations and other works. So hopefully over the next few months things will improve further with the support of our members in time for the start of the New Season.
- There have also been some developments with the Lewes Sports Club over the last few months. You should be aware that the Lewes Sports Club are the leaseholder for the Clubhouse and essentially act as the vehicle for the activities of both the Rugby Club and Lewes Priory Cricket Club, acting as the conduit that allows us both to share the same space. My predecessor, Nick Page, has taken over as Chair of Lewes Sports Club and we have all been working towards improving the leasing arrangements and other long-term agreements with regards to the Stanley Turner Ground through regular meetings and discussions with LDC and LPCC.
- We still have the support of our senior coaches for next season with Paddy O'Hara as Director of Rugby for the women's teams and Brandon Palmer as Head Coach for the men's team.

4. Treasure's Report – Mark Hall:

- Copies of the club's annual final statements were distributed prior to the meeting. These statements are independently reviewed by the club's reporting accountants, Knill James, ahead of the AGM and presentation to members.
- Income for the season is down year on year, mainly from subscriptions and sponsorship. With the majority of the club's costs being directly linked to rugby activities, coats were also down, resulting in a small positive surplus for the year.

- The club was fortunate enough to receive COVID related grants directly from the RFU, Sport England and also the local council which have all helped to fill a hole in the club's income and avoid running a deficit.
- Lewes RFC is in a good position compared with other clubs in Sussex and in a strong position, in no small part from the of the grants, to be able to fully restart rugby activities across all sections of the club in September.
- A question was raised about the aspiration for a new clubhouse in time for the club's centenary in 2030. The Treasurer responded that reserving some funds for facilities and groundwork maintenance provides a solid base but will require an annual contribution to a capital fund to achieve this goal - as yet, no plans have been firmed up.

5. Election of Officers:

- The following committee members were happy to stand for election as club officers. They were nominated and seconded as follows, and there being no other nominations received, these were all duly elected.

POSITION	PROPOSED	NOMINATED BY	SECONDED BY
CHAIRMAN	Paddy Henshaw	Paul Nicholl	Jo-Anne Sunderland-Bowe
SECRETARY	Paul Nicholl	Paddy Henshaw	Jo-Anne Sunderland-Bowe
TREASURER	Mark Hall	Jo-Anne Sunderland-Bowe	Paddy Henshaw

6. Presentation for approval of the amended club constitution

- Copies of the amended club constitution were distributed prior to the meeting.
- With one alteration concerning the club's playing shirts, the new document was accepted.

7. Election of Club President:

- With David Whiting stepping down after five years as President, the meeting unanimously accepted the Management Committee's recommendation that Robert Moore should become the new Club President.

8. Election of Vice Presidents:

- The Management Committee's proposal that the following should be elected as Vice Presidents was similarly approved:
 - Aimee Day,
 - Ben Green,
 - Mark Hall,
 - James Halpin,
 - Paddy Henshaw,
 - Jill Jackson-Hill,
 - Andy Kipling,
 - Elliot Moule,
 - Hayley Newnes,
 - Hannah Ross,
 - Danny Simpson,
 - James Sale,
 - Jo-Anne Sunderland-Bowe,
 - Sarah Turner,
 - Dan Wade,
 - Jade Walter,
 - Rob Williams,
 - Sophie Williams.

9. Confirmation of Subscriptions for 2021-22 season

- There will be no change in the headline rate of subscriptions for the 2021/22 season, however to reflect the reduced provision of rugby in 2020/21 a discount of 40% will be offered for 2021/22 to all full paying members.
- Members are of course welcome to pay the full non discounted rate and effectively donate/gift the discount back to the club.

10. Election of Reporting Accountants:

- It was agreed that Knill James should be re-appointed as Reporting Accountants.

11. A.O.B.

- There was much gratitude for the range of lockdown activities offered during the season.
- Discussion on memorial matches and the RFU President's visit on 23rd October took place.
- Nick Page gave the meeting an update on the current state of affairs between the Lewes Sports Club and Lewes District Council over the Stanley Turner Memorial Ground. We continue to pursue Lewes District Council for a number of things.
 - A new long-term lease on the clubhouse.
 - The current lease (which expired in 1999 and protected and currently just rolls over) is in the name of Lewes Sports Club. The LSC is also the rate payer and licensee on behalf of the two constituent clubs, Lewes Rugby Club and Lewes Priory Cricket Club
 - We have been presented with some very general heads of terms on a new lease, but currently LDC cannot provide any revised pricing until they have had a commercial valuation of the property done.
 - We do expect an increase in rent. It has not changed since 1999, but will negotiate what we can, based on the fact the clubs provided 25% of the original cost of building the clubhouse in 1979.
 - LPCC want to renew their licence to maintain allowing them to maintain their wickets and outfielders. This is under review by LDC
 - LRFC are requesting a similar agreement to maintain the rugby pitches.
 - LDC advise they need to await the expiration of the current contract in 2023.
 - LRFC have taken advice as to an ongoing cost to take this on. The expectation is that LRFC will insist on submitting proposal and costing to LDC when the business comes up for tender.
 - All LDC Councillors have been contacted individually to ask for any support they might be able to provide. Positive messages received back and the ball is in LDCs court to come back to us.
 - There are apparently still plans for LDC to transfer the Stanley Turner Trust to Lewes Town Council. However, we will continue to deal with LDC as the current Trustees until any transition happens.

Meeting closed at 8.42 pm