

**BATH RUGBY SUPPORTERS' CLUB
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING HELD IN THE ILLUSTRIOUS
SUITE, THE RECREATION GROUND
ON 23 MAY 2012 AT 1930**



Present:

Committee:

Barry Cleeve
Glyn Edwards
Erica Edwards
Emma Sparks
Andy Thatcher
Jan Warrington
Mike Warrington
Kevin Lawrence - Secretary

Members:

Susan Andrew Hughie Armitage Wendy Armitage Derek Batchelor L Byrd S Bishop Steve Blanchard Pam Bonnet Kelvin Brunton Cath Burgess Fred Clayton Jenny Cleeve	Peter Collins Colin Evans Barb Hill Clive Hoskin Honor King Anne Kirkham Peter Lamont Pat Lawrence Peter Legge Sheila Legge Chris Maggs Pam Maggs	Betty Measday Peter Measday Jon O'Brien Lucia Palma Raymond Preston A Radford L Radford D Spurrell June Spurrell Tom Sutton Mervyn Swan	David Tait Cathy Thatcher Julian Trump Richard Turner Dot Wallace Dave White Eunice Williams Anne Woodman John Woodman
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Welcome

Barry Cleeve welcomed all those present and thanked them for attending. Barry then introduced Jeremy Wilton who had agreed to deliver a presentation and hold a question and answer session vice Nick Blofeld who was unavoidably away on business.

Speaker

Jeremy explained that during his session he would conduct a short review of last season and then concentrate on looking forward, focusing on strategies in hand to deliver the expectations of Bath Rugby and the supporters. Nick Blofeld was sorry that he could not attend.

On - Field

It was acknowledged that last year was not great. On the coaching side there had been a number of changes of role. Sir Ian McGeechan had originally arrived as Performance Director but following the departure of Steve Meehan, Sir Ian took on a greater workload including a more hands - on coaching role. For most of the season the coaching team consisted of 3; there was a view that this was adequate at the time but this decision has clearly been subject to review as the season came to a close. Rather than dwell on this, the important issue is to get the balance right for the future. It is essential that the right coaching structure is in place from the start; it is very difficult to make changes in mid – season.

In response to a direct question about the circumstances of the departure of the current coaching team, Jeremy confirmed that both Sir Ian's and Martin Haag's current contracts had not been renewed and a rigorous structural review had been undertaken. Jeremy emphasised that one of the fundamental aspects of the review was to determine how best to match the aspirations of the Bath Rugby supporters with the developing business strategy. The Club believes it now has an excellent team in place achieve its strategic objectives.

Gary Gold would decide how he wished to structure the coaching team and the allocation of tasks. That process was already in hand; the coaching staff report back on 14 June and would be ready to hit the ground running when the players return on 18 June. Jeremy emphasised how rigorous the review process had been and confirmed that the Bath Rugby ethos would be maintained.

New signings for next season were Rob Webber, Paul James and Dominic Day. There were no further signings to announce but Jeremy acknowledged that if the right Centre became available the Club would be interested.

Turning to last season's results, Jeremy reminded the meeting that the Club had suffered a number of injuries to key players at critical times. The second and back rows had been badly affected with long term injuries to Carl Fearn and Stuart Hooper and the situation at Hooker was even worse. Jeremy acknowledged that form had been inconsistent, but made the point that our final position in the league rested on the outcome of 4 very close results. Had they gone the other way then there is every probability that we would have made the Heineken Cup cut for next season.

Off – Field

Jeremy started this section of his brief by explaining the investment that had been made to try to improve the match day experience on the current Rec footprint. He cited improved toilet facilities, the new replay screen, improved PA system and also explained that prices had been held wherever possible. He explained that plans were in hand to improve the East Stand undercroft area to provide more space and an element of waterproofing. The North Terrace and Ringside areas were also under review to see if more could be done in these areas to improve the spectator experience.

Turning to the Recreation Ground development, Jeremy believed that Bath Rugby is a lot further forward than ever before. New Heads of Terms had been negotiated with the Recreation Ground Trustees which embraced plans to move the East Stand by 30m, demolish the West Stand and replace it with a much improved infrastructure including an events and conference centre as well as more seats. Jeremy made the point that Bath Rugby development needed to be founded on a sustainable business model. The Club is running at an operating loss at the moment (but only 4 Clubs have declared a profit). Capacity is key as is flexibility.

Jeremy described the importance of the deal concerning Lambridge in delivering the necessary land quantity parity to enable the development plans. There is more work to be done; the Charity Commissioners require assurances about development viability at Lambridge and also concerning displaced sports. The planning and public consultation phases are extensive; a formal application normally requires 12 months to process. Nevertheless, Bath Rugby is optimistic. 2015 remains the target for Rec Development and had engaged an in-house architect with acknowledged heritage credentials to produce concept plans.

Farleigh House

There had been some delays but development work was now approaching completion. The new Gym facility was open and the Long Barn would be available for pre – Season training. Farleigh had given the Club a world class facility and established a genuine centre of excellence commensurate with Bath Rugby's aspirations. The players regard Farleigh as very important.

Questions

The following points were raised:

Q: How long are the contracts for the new coaching staff?

A: It varies between 2 and 3 seasons. Supporters should be reassured that the new team is in place for the long term.

Q: Are any of the new coaches kicking specialists?

A: No. this issue is "on the radar" and Jon Callard has been working with the Team. Gary Gold will take a view on this when he arrives.

Q: What exactly is the Bath Rugby ethos?

A.: Commitment, excellence and trust are the core values. The way in which the values are delivered varies across the different aspects of the Club's business but the ethos is constant.

Q: Following the West Stand development, will I still be able to stand?

A: Yes. The interests of the spectators remain a predominant concern. It will not all be corporate facilities. It was important to get the pricing structure right and options for a families enclosure were being considered. Ticket prices would be held at the same level for next season.

Q: Are there plans to improve facilities in the East Stand, including the bar areas and lighting in the toilets.

A. Yes. The problems relating to access to the Clubhouse bar at the end of matches was acknowledged.

Q. Can the East Stand be covered?

A: No, not as currently configured – the structure simply will not take it. Alternative solutions for the developed stand were being examined.

Q: Why are concessions not available on away tickets purchased through the Club?

A. Jeremy explained that limited numbers of tickets are provided for away games at full face value; the hosting Club do not provide concession tickets as part of the block. A number of aspects relating to away tickets were under review; Jeremy agreed to take this issue away and provide a response.

Notice Convening the Meeting

The notice convening the meeting was read. It was confirmed that in accordance with Paragraph 11 of the Constitution, the notice had been published on the Allez - Bath website and in the local Press not later than 21 days in advance of the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies had been received from Lisa O'Brien, June and Ian Burnham, Geof and Brenda Collins, Rebecca and Mark Knapman, David and Tracey Lawrence, Eric Noble, Christopher and Janet Pritchard and Charles Reeves. Apology on behalf of Bill Singer was notified from the floor.

Minutes of the last AGM

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 24 May 2011 had been published on the website with a limited number of copies available at the meeting. There were no matters arising and the minutes were approved for signature. The Secretary acknowledged the late publication of the minutes

and undertook to ensure that the minutes of the 2012 meeting would be taken at an early Committee meeting and published as soon as possible thereafter.

Chairman's Report Barry Cleeve delivered the following Chairman's Report for 2011. In response to a question from the floor he explained that he intended to cover Membership issues as part of his report.

Introduction

Hello again, another season has gone by and it's time to look back over the last twelve months. This season has been one of stabilisation as far as the BRSC Committee is concerned and one of great disappointment as far as on field matters are concerned. The on field issues have been chronicled well elsewhere and I don't intend going into them again in this Report.

The Season 2011/12.

As I said earlier this has been a time for stabilisation of the Committee and BRSC as an organisation. All of the previous season's Committee were on parade again with the addition of Andy Thatcher, who was co-opted to help boost the Social organisation, a few tweaks saw Committee members move seats but we stayed together as a solid unit through the period.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every member of the Committee for their sterling work and enthusiasm throughout the year. A meeting was held each month with a full attendance at most meetings.

I would also like to thank Bath Rugby for their continued support in the form of either Nick Blofeld or Jeremy Wilton whose contribution at each meeting was vital in keeping the lines of communication between Club and Supporters open and working well. Though at times we did think that the Club were organising events that traditionally were organised by BRSC.

Having decided to move the AGM to the end of May we felt that it did give the new Committee time to get their "ducks in a row" before the new season starts and a longer time to think about and arrange events for the Autumn. Though I must apologise for the hitch that occurred with the new Seasons Membership Application Forms.

Press Secretary, Glyn Edwards sought and secured a deal to print the Newsletter with Wadworth's which has enabled us to produce a full colour, multi-page Newsletter, though due to a number of editorial problems the end of year edition was somewhat late in being distributed. I trust it was worth the wait.

Though continuing to support The Community Foundation shirt raffle it was agreed that it would no longer fly under the banner of BRSC but would be run solely by the Community Foundation.

This year we carried on the now accepted tradition of making end of Season Presentations on the pitch to Long Serving players and coaches, this year

Andy Beattie, Duncan Bell and Pieter Dixon were the recipients of the much sought after Bath Aqua Glass Rugby Balls. All of the players were really pleased to have received these awards in recognition of their hard work by those who watch them week in, week out.

Social Calendar

The season's Social Diary kicked off in August with the Annual Awards Supper. The format this year saw the introduction of a guest Master of Ceremonies. This year Matt Perry did the honours with great aplomb and Dave White picked up the Mowbray Woodward Trophy for Services to Bath Rugby, well deserved after years of selling Raffle Tickets in all weathers and serving as BRSC Chairman.

It was a splendid night and my thanks go to Emma , Andy and Bath Rugby's Becky Pocock for organising, what I thought was, the best Awards Supper to date.

Next followed, World Cup year, a RWC Forum, hosted by Glyn Edwards. When an All star line-up of Bath coaches and players gave us their thoughts on the World Cup at the Quarter Final stage and their predictions for the line – up for the Final, suffice to say few were correct!!

December saw the return of Stocky's Christmas Quiz, as always an enjoyable evening made a little more special by slightly more Supporter friendly questions and the attendance of a very healthy contingent of Academy squad players.

Next came a cracking evening of anecdotes and Laws of the Game from none other than our favourite whistler Bath's very own Tony Spreadbury. It was a great evening and I was honoured to bestow an Honorary Life Membership of BRSC on Tony in recognition of his contribution as a man of Bath to the game of rugby.

Following on came the annual Bingo Night which was unfortunately not particularly well supported this year despite the efforts of Dave Attwood who made a great job of "Calling" for the very first time.

Last, but certainly not least on the Social calendar was the Annual Race Night, brilliantly arranged by Jan & Mike Warrington, a packed Clubhouse enjoyed a great night's racing which raised £644 for the "Dream Come True" Charity

I would like to thank Dean and the team for their hard work during our events here at the Rec and for their understanding when we increase numbers attending at the last minute as we regularly do.

One disappointment has been the low turnout for some events, especially the "Bingo Evening". Whether we have not advertised them well enough or whether some of the events have become a little tired I'm not sure, but if

anyone has any bright ideas for new ventures then do not hesitate in talking to any member of the committee.

Membership

Membership has again dipped during the year from 867 to 752 this year. Whether we haven't sold ourselves well enough or a general tightening of the belt I am not sure, but the Committee's ambition is come out on the offensive next season and attract back those who have drifted away over the years.

Coach Travel

As always we would like to take this opportunity of thanking all who have travelled on the BRSC coaches this season.

It has been a another difficult season, with the financial restraints for many of us and the wonderful co-operation from Sky and ESPN who seem to have enjoyed moving dates and kick-off times at their but not our convenience ! We have, however, managed to run a coach to all Premiership games, including nineteen brave souls to Edgeley Park, Stockport, thankfully for the last time, having said that I bet Sale will still play their home matches on a Friday night at the Salford City Stadium, their new home!!

We must have the most unique raffles held in any part of the country, where those buying tickets also supply all of the prizes!

A sum of just over £1,000 will be split between our two Charities for this season, Swift and Bold, which is a 1st Rifles Charity to assist family travel to see wounded loved ones, and the Bandhavgarh Tiger Appeal.

Again, thanks to everyone who purchased raffle tickets and supplied the prizes. Thank you also to Jackie in the Club Shop who provided Club merchandise as prizes on all of our coaches

The Future

The aims for the future include

1. Raising the Profile of the Club
2. Attracting more members
3. Providing better services to Members

As I am standing down at this AGM I will leave next year's Committee to ponder on this list and methods of achieving those aims, but would like to take this opportunity of thanking you all for the tremendous support I have received since becoming your Chairman. When I took over I believe we were at a low ebb but hard work by all of the Committee has helped to put us on a firm footing to move into the future, for this I wish my successor the very best of luck.

Points from the Floor

Sue Andrew referred back to aspirations at the last AGM to focus on Membership this year and asked what the Committee had done to take this forward. She emphasised the importance of presence at match days and in particular the desk. She felt that the latter had been undermanned on occasions throughout the season and questioned whether we had been sufficiently proactive in engaging supporters and promoting BRSC membership. In response, Barry Cleeve acknowledged the importance of the match day presence and reminded the meeting of the efforts that had been made, citing the BRSC full participation in the Bath Rugby end of season event as an example. He also reminded the AGM of the social events that we had arranged, the positive drive on membership benefits and a highly visible profile in terms of web presence, programme notes and press articles. He thanked Matt Perry for his excellent work as MC of last year's highly successful Awards Supper. Membership numbers are a constant thread and will continue to be a primary focus for the next committee.

The Committee was asked whether we included BRSC application forms with season tickets. Barry was able to confirm that we do. In response to a question about inclusion of an application form in the programme, Kevin Lawrence confirmed that this had been considered but that Bath Rugby were not keen on inclusion of tear - off elements in the programme.

A view was expressed that as a Committee we had not been sufficiently robust in criticising Bath Rugby during the year. Barry was able to point to the press articles and programme notes in which we had not shied from expressing the supporters' views and disquiet.

BRSC Treasurer's Report for 2011/12

At the start of the financial year, the Club's financial position was dire. We had less than £27 to tide us over until the membership fees started to come in again. However, we had to prepare for the new season's membership which meant that we had to somehow find money to spend on membership cards and a flyer to raise awareness of the BRSC with season ticket holders. We also still had to pay for the newsletter printing, AGM paperwork printing, postage and stationery and also had to prepare for the Annual Awards Supper. Added to this was the fact that we could not borrow from the bank due to the type of account we have as a club.

We still had money in the bank though. For some reason only known to the previous Treasurer, the matchday Shirt Raffle proceeds had not been passed on to the Community Foundation since October 2010, and the 2011 Race Night proceeds had not yet been donated to charity. We took the painful decision to postpone this donation and approach our long-standing suppliers to try and pay our bills later. Some committee members who could afford it agreed to postpone being reimbursed for items they had purchased on behalf of the BRSC. We paid £11,300 to the Community Foundation immediately but

negotiated with Jimmy Deane and agreed to hold £1,100 back until the start of the following season. Bath Rugby kindly offered the services of their publicity material designer for free to assist with our membership drive and offered to help out with ideas to enable us to put the Awards Supper on a more financially secure footing.

In contrast with the previous year, the Awards Supper last August was a great success from a financial perspective. Emma Sparks obtained sponsorship from Roman Candles and Silcox Son & Wicks which enabled us to keep the ticket costs down whilst adding a pre-dinner drinks and canapes get-together and vastly improve the look and feel of the tickets and souvenir programmes. Bath Rugby paid for the food for their players and staff that attended and once again offered the services of their publicity material designers for free. We did eventually give the Players that won our awards a keepsake in the form of a Bath Aqua Glass rugby ball, but only in February when the financial situation of the Supporters' Club was secure.

Since that truly awful summer of near bankruptcy we have worked hard – successfully - to improve our financial situation.

As soon as we started to receive some membership income we paid the Community Foundation, our suppliers, and reimbursed those Committee members who had funded BRSC costs with their own money.

Next we needed to resolve the way the match day Shirt Raffle was accounted for. The money collected during home games for the Community Foundation was traditionally banked at first in the BRSC bank account – for no obvious reason as all of the funds were eventually handed over to the Foundation. This was changed from last September and the new arrangements ran smoothly all throughout the season. We also removed the anomaly that even though the Shirt Raffle was in BRSC's name - and the Raffle monies passed through our bank account - we had no actual control over any of the Raffle activities on the day. However, we still support the Foundation Shirt Raffles, and feature them prominently in our match programme pages.

Thirdly, we identified our greatest cost, which was the printing and distributing of the Newsletter. Glyn Edwards, in his capacity as Newsletter editor, visited Wadworth to establish whether they would be interested in sponsoring our Newsletter. To our great delight they agreed to pay for the entire printing costs for 2 Newsletters per year. This has enabled us to issue a full colour Newsletter and post it to all members.

Fourthly, we have rationalised our bank accounts to just the HSBC current and savings accounts. We closed our old Barclays current account that was no longer used for anything - another leftover from a previous Committee. We also increased the number of committee members who are authorised to sign cheques so that we no longer have continuity problems when committee members leave – like we had at the start of this season.

Then we reviewed our merchandise. We realised that we still had a lot of ties, and some flags and trumpets. We also had large numbers of previous years' badges. We are now getting rid of our old badges in exchange for a donation to our chosen charity – Bath Mind. We have reduced the price of our other merchandise in the hope of shifting our old stocks. One of the tasks of the next Committee might be to come up with a new range of small value merchandise. We have deliberately not done that this year – we wanted to concentrate on putting the club back on a sound financial footing before looking to purchase new BRSC items for sale.

All our other events, the Rugby World Cup Forum, the Christmas Quiz, Ask The Ref, and the Bingo Night, were organised with the aim of breaking even, which was achieved.

A summary of the Club accounts is below. It is worthy of note that the Coach Travel account is not included, as it is run and controlled independently of the Committee, and as Treasurer I have no responsibility for it nor access to the books. The Club accounts have been audited by one of our members, Mr. Clive Hoskin, who offered his services as a result of my e-mail asking for a volunteer auditor back in April. Clive is currently Finance Manager for MediaClash in Bath, with 30+ years' experience in Finance having worked as a Chief Accountant, Finance Manager, and Finance Director.

He has reviewed the Bath Rugby Supporters' Club accounts – the financial statements, receipts and invoices for the 12 months to 30 April 2012 as presented to him, and he has reported that they have been kept to a high and accurate standard. Therefore he has endorsed my Treasurer's report as presented to this AGM. He has also stated that he is happy to continue in this role as 'volunteer auditor' for next year. On behalf of the Club Members I now thank him for his efforts.

Bath Rugby Supporters' Club – Annual Accounts 2011-12

	2010/11 Expenditure Paid in 2011/12 (accounted for last year)	2011/12 Income and Expenditure	2011/12 Commitments	Total 2011/12
Income				
Saturday Raffle		1,683.90		1,683.90
Membership		5,282.70		5,282.70
Events		6,073.20		6,073.20
Miscellaneous		505.72		505.72
		<u>13,545.52</u>		<u>13,545.52</u>
Expenditure				
Membership: cards, badges and flyer		853.89		853.89
Postage & Stationary	372.63	631.56	60.00	691.56
Printing	608.00	0.00	60.00	60.00
Presentations		375.00	268.02	643.02
Events	335.00	4,413.02	10.00	4,423.02
Charity - Community Foundation	12,405.85	0.00		0.00
Charity – Other	734.60	2,204.48	742.28	2,946.76
Misc		84.00		84.00
	<u>14,456.08</u>	<u>8,561.95</u>	<u>1,140.30</u>	<u>9,702.25</u>
	-14,456.08	4,983.57	-1,140.30	3,843.27
Add Opening Balance				26.64
Closing Balance				3,869.91
Add Commitments				1,140.30
Bank Balance				5,010.21

Bath Rugby Supporters' Club – Annual Accounts 2011/12

	2011/12	2010/11	Variance
Income			-
		12,695.9	11,012.0
Saturday Raffle	1,683.90	4	4
Membership	5,282.70	5,635.75	-353.05
Events	6,073.20	4,716.00	1,357.20
Miscellaneous	505.72	336.50	169.22
	<u>13,545.52</u>	<u>23,384.1</u>	<u>169.22</u>
		9	-9,838.67
Expenditure			
Membership: cards, badges and flyer	853.89	1,318.36	464.47
Postage & Stationary	691.56	1,623.04	931.48
Printing	60.00	2,501.39	2,441.39
Presentations	643.02		-643.02
Events	4,423.02	4,340.17	-82.85
Charity - Community Foundation	0.00	13,140.4	13,140.4
Charity – Other	2,946.76	5	5
Misc	84.00	381.01	-2,565.75
	<u>9,702.25</u>	<u>789.09</u>	<u>705.09</u>
		24,093.5	14,391.2
		1	6
	3,843.27	-709.32	4,552.59
Add Opening Balance	26.64	735.96	-709.32
Closing Balance	3,869.91	26.64	3,843.27
Add Commitments			
		13,140.4	12,398.1
Charity	742.28	5	7
Unpaid Expenditure	398.02	1,315.63	917.61
		14,482.7	
Bank Balance	5,010.21	2	-9,472.51

BRSC Charitable Donations for Season 2011/12 - 01/05/11 to 30/04/12

	£	£
Tamara Johnson Trust Fund - Saturday Raffle		1,683.90
Dorothy House - Awards Supper Raffle		350.00
Bath Mind:		268.71
- Quiz Night Raffle	143.00	
- Bingo Night Raffle	45.00	
- Donations in lieu of old BRSC badges	80.71	
Dreams Come True - Race Night		644.15
Total Charitable Donations		2,946.76

The Committee firmly believe that the Supporters' Club should be financially secure. Based on the expenses that we incur over the summer – the costs of producing membership cards and badges for example – I estimate that we need a 'cushion' of £2000 to function properly. This has been achieved earlier than we expected. This is mainly due to the generous Newsletter sponsorship from Wadworth.

Committee Members are not reimbursed for travel costs and we always purchase our own tickets to BRSC events. Any costs are only reimbursed to Committee Members after being agreed in advance and claimed with a receipt.

Next year I intend to continue to manage our finances tightly. We will continue our search for sponsors to help with our running costs, wherever appropriate. There will be some money available to improve our 'matchday presence' at the Rec, which the Committee and Bath Rugby agree should have a higher profile than has been the case in the past.

The Treasurer's report was accepted without further comment. The meeting thanked Erica for a clear presentation and all her hard work during the year.

Nomination of Scrutineers

Kelvin Brunton and John Woodman had volunteered to act as scrutineers.

Election of the Committee

The Secretary, Kevin Lawrence, introduced this section of the AGM by explaining that the posts of Chairman and Membership Secretary were subject to election this year and that as two nominations had been received for each post, a vote would be held by show of hands, counted by the scrutineers. Mike Warrington raised a point of order from the floor, explaining that this process was a departure from previous years when the Committee had been elected and had decided itself who should fill the identified positions. The Secretary confirmed that election to specific posts was in accordance with the current Constitution.

- **Chairman**. Kevin Lawrence introduced the candidates, Glyn Edwards and Andy Thatcher and read their nomination pen pictures. Glyn Edwards was elected as Chairman by majority vote.
- **Membership Secretary**. Kevin Lawrence introduced the candidates, Anne Kirkham and Tom Sutton and read their nomination pen pictures. Anne Kirkham was elected as Membership Secretary by majority vote.
- **Committee Members**. Emma Sparks' nomination to the committee was approved. Since there were insufficient nominations to meet the full committee complement, unsuccessful nominees for the Chairman and Membership Secretary posts would be able to take up positions as full members of the Committee should they wish to do so.

Any Other Business

No other items had been submitted for discussion.

Close The meeting closed at 2130. Barry Cleeve thanked the Committee Members and also Kelvin Brunton for all his work as Allez- Bath "webmaster", a role from which he is now standing down.

Post Meeting Comment

Although not part of the formal AGM which had been closed, Amoree Radford made a personal statement in which she strongly expressed disappointment with a number of aspects of Committee performance over the last year. None of the issues raised had been identified in advance as required by the Constitution and no response was made.

Amoree Radford proposed a vote of thanks to Mike and Jan Warrington for all was their work on behalf of the Club which attendees happily supported. Pat Lawrence also proposed a vote of thanks to Barry Cleeve for all his work as Chairman of BRSC over the last two years which was warmly received.