

Fairford Rugby Club AGM 20th June 2022

Present – Committee members – Adam Blizzard, Danny Briggs, Wendy Button, Neil Craggs, Steve Darley, George Ellis, Chris Jackson, Chris Hill, Kenny Robins, Andy Stopka

Members – Alice Farnell, Emily Bennett, Gaia Hedges, Keiran Snape, Andy Marklove, Kay Kipling, Greg Jones, Helen Ross, Sabrina Crocker, Jake Page-Maskell, Keelan Little, Anthony Little, Pete Mason, James Fearn

Apologies - Scott Cohoon, Katharine Buchanan, Lindsey Thurlow, Lorna Pugh, Debbie Rees Jones, Katy Perrett, Gillian Stopka, Harri Cummings, Will Bowers, Gareth Bowman, Guy Livermore

| Agenda | Main Points | Action |
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| 1. Welcome | <p>SD welcomed everyone to the AGM and mentioned that the sad loss of our Chairman Beamer Chambers had triggered a wonderful ‘coming together’ of the club as a whole. He then briefed the meeting on the agenda items and explained that the AGM is not the forum for voicing new concerns but is tailored towards giving a ‘statement of the accounts’, setting membership fees, electing and appointing officers to the club committee.</p> <p>The Acting Chairman then asked if members had reviewed the minutes of the previous year’s AGM (July 2021), which had been promulgated in August 2021. He then confirmed that they were a true and accurate account of the meeting.</p> <p>Proposed: George Ellis. Seconded: Danny Briggs</p> | |
| 2. President’s Report | <p>The Acting Chairman read out the President’s Farewell Message:</p> <p>“Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Firstly, may I send my apologies from Greece, where I am on holiday and unable to attend this evening. Sadly, I must send my resignation from the role of President. I’ve had 18 wonderful years with this, most amazing club – you’re all such a very special set of people. I brought my son Ben, when he was only 5½ years old – I thank everyone who was involved at that time and during his entire rugby career – giving us both opportunities and experiences that we have both thoroughly enjoyed. I feel now is the time for me to step aside and let a young and enthusiastic new committee take the club forward (background laughter). I will continue to support and love Fairford Rugby Club. I’d like to personally thank everybody who I’ve worked with over the last 18 years. The highs and lows that we’ve all been through together have been very memorable. Good luck to the new committee members – please work as hard as you can to</p> | |

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| | <p>make your memories as special as mine. All the very best – Scott”</p> <p>The Acting Chairman then added his own thanks to Scott for his commitment to the club, wishing him well in whatever he does next. This praise was echoed around the meeting.</p> <p>George Ellis mentioned that past Presidents had been given nice gifts (decanter etc) when they left and that he felt we needed to discuss a send off event at the next committee meeting. The Acting Chairman agreed to make that an agenda item.</p> | <p>Action # 1 (Tracker No 98) – Chairman to raise topic of outgoing President’s leaving gift / function at next committee meeting.</p> |
| 3. Club Constitution | <p>The meeting voted to retain the Club Constitution</p> <p>Proposer: Wendy Button</p> <p>Seconder: Keelan Little</p> <p>Unanimously carried.</p> <p>See AOB for proposed Constitution Amendment to include Refund Policy.</p> | |
| 4. Club Development | <p>GE explained to the meeting that, of the four options for the development of a future Club House discussed during the July 2021 AGM – the focus had now narrowed to a development at Coln House – which has gained council support. GE mentioned that he had pre-viewed plans but they are not available for the general public until they have been ratified by Cotswold District Council.</p> <p>The latest update – which GE confirmed may be let out into the public domain – is that himself and Lorna Pugh went to a meeting a few weeks ago. GE explained that the project could cost approx.£1.2 million and that possibly half of that could be community money. The new planned Club House is a big footprint, GE expressed concerns about the lack of more that 2 changing rooms. There will be a large Function Room; several offices; a couple of bars; a big car park.</p> <p>The new development is planned to be in the Dillies Bridge corner of the CHOP field, facing the fields, entrance and car park along hedge. FYFC will therefore lose a field. The remaining football pitch would then need to move forward, which in turn will necessitate the need to move the rugby pitch closer to Coln House than the current location (approx. 20 to 30 metres).</p> <p>GE then read out a council update “we have requested pre-application planning advice from CDC” – in order to clarify the basis of a detailed application.</p> | |

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It is GE's hope that CDC are looking quite favourably at this application as a means to do something positive for Fairford town because of the closure of the gym.

Also, money raised from the sale of Coln House school is destined to fund a new sports facility in Cheltenham – so the Fairford Town Council are fully behind the rugby club project as recompense for the local community. GE praised Phil Bird and Colin Foxhall for their efforts on the council thus far.

If the finance falls into place, building work could commence as early as next year. (Wow! Fingers crossed)

GE then clarified for the meeting that the project hall will not just belong to the rugby club but will include the youth football club and work-out sessions (John Watson)

GE then explained the need for the membership to publicise the project by encouraging people to submit letters to the council in support of the venture and being seen, as a club, to be making strong efforts to raise funds themselves and to promote local community links (eg Fairfest / Air Tattoo).

GE then explained that CDC had a back-log of approx. 140 planning applications.

GE asked the group if there were any questions?

AL – is it worth contacting people who have donated and thanking them? DB mentioned that he has issued certificates of thanks to sponsors when he sees them. GE talked about the FRFC Challenges also being a positive publicity activity, promoting fitness too.

SD then talked about interim activities: the floor painting exercise had proven to be very positive to secure the arrangement with the FYFC facility.

GE also mentioned that FRFC had allowed FYFC to use the rugby pitches for parking as a way to keep the relationship between the two clubs positive.

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| | <p>DB – Is there a written arrangement in place for using the FYFC changing rooms and the Fairford Cricket Club bar? The Chairman stated that there were no written agreements in place but that was something worth trying to sort out.</p> <p>CH – discussed and thanked the volunteers for their efforts to clad and renovate the Coln field porta-cabin. Hedges have been cut back. A space at the side cleared where the old toilet block used to be. CH confirmed that the club have been donated a toilet, cistern and sink.</p> <p>DB asked if the old toilet block waste pipe is still in place – which CH confirmed to be the case – and clean water too.</p> <p>GE: stated that we need to start doing fund raising exercise such as car washing in the market square. Whenever anyone is doing anything positive for the local community – wear a FRFC shirt!</p> | <p>Action # 2 (Tracker No 99) – Request written agreement to continue use of FYFC changing rooms</p> <p>Action # 3 (Tracker No 100) – Request written agreement to continue use of Cricket Club bar</p> |
| <p>5. Youth Report</p> | <p>Post COVID there was a membership drop from 116 fully paid-up youths to 91.</p> <p>It has been a very successful year right across the age groups:</p> <p>New coaches; new committee members; building relationships with other local clubs to make sure our players get games. The Chairman thanked the four local companies who have continued their Shirt sponsorship. SD stated that we have cover in all key coaching roles but more help and players are always welcome. He then explained that Lorna Pugh has taken on the Safeguarding role and Fixture Sec for the Juniors and that we have a full season planned for next season.</p> <p>CH then added that the senior players who have helped coach the juniors have been brilliant; that we need to try to get more fixtures for the older youths because the kids really want to play; that communication is better than it has ever been</p> <p>GE mentioned that the parents helping out has been very useful and positive but we also need seniors to spend some time coaching the juniors because that is an</p> | |

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| | <p>excellent way to pass on and share their experience. It makes a massive difference when children get decent coaching.</p> <p>CH personally thanked Wendy Button and the Vixens for her support and commitment to the Juniors.</p> | |
| 6. Seniors Report | <p>DB started his report by praising the club for playing every game in the 2021/2022 Season fixtures list and staying out of the relegation zone – which was a great achievement after the departure of some key players in the previous year. He then mentioned that the re-structuring of the leagues have effectively moved FRFC down a level. DB then thanked the departing Captain (Ben Taylor) for his excellent year at the helm – on and off the pitch. Due to retirements; injuries; covid and self-employment making players not wish to risk injury; we entered the 2021/2022 Season ‘in trouble’ – DB thinks that we are in a similar situation again. The Tetbury based players are no longer coming over due to the league level change. Stroud, Norton & Minchinhampton will be in our league – FRFC’s aim should be to finish in the top 3.</p> <p>SD looked at the league re-structuring and stated that FRFC are still National Level 9 - however, there are now effectively 2 x Gloucester Prems – which at Level 8 is Counties 2</p> <p>DB mentioned that the problem we face with the re-structuring doesn’t affect us within the Gloucester levels – but teams in the Dorset / Wilts / Oxfordshire (such as Minety / Bassett 3s / Faringdon) are now effectively playing a level ahead of FRFC now – which makes us a potentially less attractive option for new players.</p> <p>The strength and popularity of the sport in the Gloucestershire leagues has made it harder for us to recruit.</p> <p>DB concluded by saying that “we will do what we always do – we’ll pull together” – (at this point – tears welled up in everyone’s eyes)</p> <p>DB then stated that, if necessary, he and Neil Craggs may even get their boots on</p> | |

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| | <p>again.</p> <p>SD asked if anyone else had any points to raise regarding the Seniors? NFTR.</p> | |
| 7. Vixens Report | <p>DB stated that his involvement with the Vixens, since October 2021, has been absolutely brilliant and had resurrected his love of coaching. The National uptake in women’s rugby is fantastic and FRFC Vixens has progressed into fully contested Line Outs and Scrums from the start of the season.</p> <p>During the season, the Vixens achieved the mile-stone event of their first ever full contact victory against Swindon Supermarine – a fantastic result which we all hope will be repeated over many future years.</p> <p>The Vixens also came runners-up (to the hosts) in the North Dorset 10s – and they’re back in the Inner Warrior League next season for a second year.</p> <p>CJ will arrange as many games as possible but there are not many teams in the league so the fixtures will be spread out over the year. The Vixens are planning a Tour to Newquay in August. DB explained that we have lost 3 x strong players for work / Uni so we need to push the recruitment.</p> <p>DB ended his report by praising the Vixens for the spirit; commitment; laughter and passion that they all bring to the club – which was echoed throughout the room.</p> | <p>Action: Chairman to phone all bars in Newquay to warn them about the Vixens Tour in August</p> |

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8. Election of Committee

The Acting Chairman then explained that there are 5 x positions on the committee that it is mandatory to vote into place each year. He mentioned that the President (Scott Cohoon) stepping down has left a vacancy that has been difficult to fill. The new President will not be nominated during this AGM but must be a person who has a long-term interest in the club and who has the time to give to the role that it deserves. The committee do have people in mind but nothing yet has been formalised.

The Acting Chairman then asked if the AGM trusted the committee to conduct the search for a new President on the club's behalf – to which point, no one raised any concerns.

The AGM then went on to vote in the core committee positions as per below, with the AGM attendees showing unanimous agreement:

| Role | Elected | Nominated | Seconded |
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| Chair | Steve (Badger) Darley | C Jackson | K Little |
| Treasurer | Katharine Buchanan | A Blizzard | K Kipling |
| Secretary | Andrew Stopka | A Little | A Blizzard |
| President | Vacant | | |
| Facilities | George Ellis | N Craggs | K Robins |

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| 9. Appointment of Officers | <u>Incumbents</u> | |
| | Senior XV's Head Coach | Danny Briggs |
| | Senior XV's Assistant Coaches | Neil Craggs / Kenny Robins / Ben Goodey |
| | Senior VX Captain | Harri Cummings |
| | Senior XV Vice Captain | Keelan Little |
| | Senior Players' Rep | Kenny Robins |
| | Vixen's Head Coach | Danny Briggs |
| | Vixen's Assistant Coaches | Adam Blizzard / James Fearn / Harri Cummings / Charlie Bailey (once recovered) |
| | Vixen's Captain | Katy Perrett |
| | Vixen's Vice Captain | Wendy Button |
| | Vixen's Players' Rep | Wendy Button |
| | Senior Fixtures Secretary | Chris Jackson |
| | Youth Fixtures Sec | Lorna Pugh |
| | Sponsorship | Debbie Rees Jones and Lindsey Thurlow |
| Grants and Funding | Lindsey Thurlow | |
| Youth Membership | Lindsey Thurlow | |
| Rugby Safe Lead | Gillian Stopka | |

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| | <p>There is £9,713 left, of that £10,000 donation – which is ring-fenced for Fairfest. It is hoped that the money will then generate more revenue for the club via Fairfest.</p> <p>GE explained that the council donation had come through a government-backed initiative to support social events in small communities.</p> <p>DB clarified that, if the £10k donation is discarded from the main account – the reduction in balance would be approx. £16,000 – which the Chairman verified – that £16k is mostly due to the cost of the cabin upgrade (£15,696)</p> <p>The Chairman concluded the Financial Report by stating that the committee have decided to address the current deficit in the accounts by increasing the membership fees.</p> | |
| 11. Membership subscriptions | <p>SD: The 2021/2022 season membership fees had been frozen due to the recovery from and impact of COVID. However, the club is currently running at a loss, so the committee have agreed to raise the membership fees as follows:</p> <p><u>Seniors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £120 membership fees Zero match fees 20% student discount (which reduces Student Fee to £96) but the student must be available for the majority of the season to qualify. 'Guests' £10 match fee Guests are players such as Uni Students returning during breaks If guests play more than 3 times, they must become full members. <p><u>Vixens/Girls</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £100 membership fees <p><u>Mini/Youth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £80 for the first child £60 for siblings Including FRFC playing top for new members. <p><u>Social</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £10 | |

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SD explained that the increases look large but the rationale is that we must, as a club, try to push the accounts towards increasing revenue each year, rather than allowing the balance to dwindle.

Senior Men will keep the sponsorship scheme – the website is being updated. The sponsorship scheme will also include the Vixens

AL asked if the Social Membership applies for both the rugby and cricket club – explaining that he had paid his dues to the cricket club last year and he had also paid the rugby club – which means he had paid twice.

The Chairman confirmed that the social fee should apply to both the rugby and cricket clubs.

DB stated that he only paid the rugby club social membership and not the cricket club. It was not clear whether the social fee is a season membership, or an annual membership. The Chairman took an action to clarify the situation with the Cricket Club via Alex Paton

HR mentioned that the Ross family had joined the cricket club social membership last year because COVID had limited the numbers

KR asked why the club are not collecting Match Fees. The Chairman explained that the collection of match fees is notoriously difficult and that the increase in membership fees will cover our costs and balance the accounts.

KR asked if the AGM needed to vote on the increase in fees

The Chairman also explained that there is no requirement in the Club Constitution to put the increase in fees to a full membership vote. The committee was empowered to make that decision and all had agreed with the fees stated.

The Chairman then asked the AGM if anyone would like to take the opportunity to voice their concerns about the increase in fees

HR stated that, for two youths, the combined fee was £90 last year and the joint fees would be £140 this year and that, in her opinion, an increase of £50 for both children was disproportionate and using the Youth set up as a 'cash cow' for the Seniors.

Action # 4 (Tracker No 101) –
The Chairman is to contact Cricket Club via Alex Paton to clarify the situation regarding social membership fees – do social members need to join the cricket club and the rugby club? Or does one £10 membership fee cover both clubs – and who do people pay that money to etc.

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DB challenged the phrase 'cash cow'. WB mentioned that the Seniors and Vixens generate more revenue for the club via social events and over the bar – so when viewed relatively, the Seniors and Vixens also contribute their own fair share to the club. WB expressed irritation at HR's comment and that we need to think like 'one club' and recognise that all elements contribute – but in different ways.

GE explained that 'on paper', it does look like the Youth set up are contributing more money to the club accounts than other areas – approx. £6000 income at the start of each season and the Seniors and Vixens don't reach half of that but at pitch-side, for example: the Beamer Memorial Day raised £750 and we had many lucrative days over the bar throughout the year – typically raising £1500 per year for the club. The lower income from the Seniors and Vixens fees in comparison to the Youth fees at the start of the season balances out over the course of the year. We will never be able to make the Youth income and the Senior income balance exactly – because we don't know how much we will raise at pitch side and over the bar – but we are trying very much to be as open and fair as possible to all members.

AL added that there is no reason why Youth members could not attend social events such as President's Days.

GE commented that social events are not just about having fun – they also show the outside world what FRFC stands for and including the Youths is great for the club and our publicity.

The Chairman concluded the discussion by explaining that the decision is made, the committee think that we are offering good value for money but we will review the situation again at the end of next year when we will know whether the increase in membership fees have adversely affected our membership numbers or whether we have balanced the accounts.

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| 12. AOB | <p>SD – A member left the club last year and asked for a refund on membership. The committee then realised that FRFC did not have a Refund Policy in our Constitutional Rules. The Chairman explained to the AGM that we have discussed that policy during committee meetings and decided that a refund will only be considered under the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The individual moves away from the area (beyond reasonable travelling distance) B. The offer that they signed up for is no longer available to them with the caveat that: If a group of people all leave and that causes the team at that age level to have to stop playing – FRFC will not be giving a refund <p>SD explained that “the offer they signed up for is no longer available” – means, for example, one of the teams having to cease playing and training due to lack of numbers. SD then explained that the Constitution will be amended to include the new Refund Policy, once the wording has been agreed by the club committee and they will then be disseminated for all members to read, if they so wish.</p> <p>No further AOBs were raised, so the Chairman concluded the AGM by thanking everyone for attending.</p> | <p>Action # 5 – Refund Policy to be discussed by committee and Constitution Amended</p> |
| | Next AGM is TBC June 2023. | |