

Minutes of Meeting

Subject: Ashford Rugby Club AGM

Date (Time): 11-Aug-2016 (19:30)

Minutes: John Heaver

Meeting: 52

| Meeting Attendees | | | Distribution |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Ian Foinette | H.W. Marsh | S Tanner | Committee |
| John Norman | Charlie Vavasour | Dave Henderson | Web |
| Bob Jones | Mark Bowes | Vanessa Burdon | |
| Wilson McVittie | Jo Amber | Rhys Fussell | |
| Vicky Norman | Guy Thurgood | Charlie Norman | |
| Shirley Jones | Mike Barnes | Richard Haynes | |
| Steve Bond | H. Stevens | Amanda Bowes | |
| Dave Burdon | Claire Stourbridge | Will Welsh | |
| Vanesa Burdon | Mark Bowls | Harry Norman | |
| Rhys Fussell | Matt Parker | Scott Booth | |
| Lloyd Stocks | Ian Lane | Amber Moody | |
| Allan Ferries | Guy Slater | Ayron Lakin | |
| Kevin Grayson | Barbara Henderson | Martyn Hodge | |
| Danny Leech | Jack Burdon | Ciaran Slater | |
| Anthony Baker | Tom Stokes | John Heaver | |
| Grant Wilson | Darren Hall | Martin Briscall | |

1.1 New & Existing Actions

| Item | Date raised | Action | Owner |
|--|-------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| 52.01 | 11-Aug-16 | Apologies | John Norman |
| Neil Crossly-Roberts – Grant Burdon – Ian Nelson – Dave Knight – Dave Nelson – Tony Crampton | | | |
| 52.02 | 11-Aug-16 | Minutes from last AGM: Agreed | John Norman |
| 52.03 | 11-Aug-16 | Matters Arising – No matters arising | John Norman |
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| 52.04 | 11-Aug-16 | Presidents Address | Ian Foinette |
|--|-----------|--------------------|--------------|
| <p>It's been a difficult season: not only because of the results, but also because of our appearance before the R.F.U. disciplinary tribunal in March. However, we've emerged from both with considerable credit. That may seem a strange thing to say about them, but for reasons I'm going to mention later, it's true. It comes from the support from the players, members and many others, not least the R.F.U. disciplinary tribunal itself.</p> <p>Results: you won't need me to tell you of the problems we've faced, but it has been humbling to see our 1st XV turn up week after week, still with enthusiasm and commitment. That was due, in no small measure, to the selfless dedication and leadership of Rhys. His example galvanised the team and I want to pay tribute to him and the players. Their example has inspired everyone in our club and has impressed greatly the clubs we've played. I heard many very complimentary remarks about how, despite the sometimes one-sided matches, the 1st XV never gave less than 100%.</p> <p>Despite this season's difficulties, the club coach, Darren, has been his usual robust and tenacious self. Among other things, I've noticed his generous and understanding approach towards referees, which has been a feature of his tenure and has made him a conspicuous figure on the touchline. No-one can doubt his loyalty to our players.</p> <p>For our club to progress, the 2nd XV players should all be striving for promotion to the 1st XV; similarly the players in the 3rd XV should be striving for promotion into the 2nd XV and beyond. Unless that is the club ethos, there can be no progress. Regardless of which team a player plays for, that ambition, to put pressure on those in the higher teams, is what produces strength and depth in any club. Everyone ought to aspire to play at the highest level within our club.</p> <p>We are one club, not three or more clubs within a club. The juniors must realise they have a pathway to the top and that must be as a result of seeing their fellow-players make that progress.</p> <p>The R.F.U. hearing: the proverbial "elephant in the room" - I'm not going to go over old ground; neither am I going to ignore it. Suffice to say we blotted our copybook, but I was very impressed by the way our club and John Norman in particular, dealt with this unfortunate chapter. We were anxious to make full disclosure to the R.F.U. and did so. Far from the judgment reading like an horror story, it also dwelt on all the good things about our club. The tribunal were impressed with the spirit within our club, the tremendous work done on the mini and junior side and the wonderful contribution made by John over many years. They resolved not to put us in a position from which it would have been hard to recover. The penalties imposed on John and our club were mitigated substantially because of all the really good things about our club. We had considerable credit in the bank and even after having to draw on some of it, the tribunal recognised the value of our club to the local community and rugby in general. I took great comfort from that recognition, and so should you.</p> <p>We start next season on minus 10 points, with the remaining 45 points suspended for the duration of the season. I have no doubt those points will not come into play and we have the capacity, in our new league, to recover pretty quickly – that was the hope and expectation of the tribunal, who wanted to support our club, notwithstanding the problems we created. In my view, it was a merciful approach by the tribunal, based on our past performance and reputation.</p> <p>I have had a number of messages of fulsome support, from members, V.P.s and other clubs. Whatever embarrassment there might have been, has, to a large extent, dissipated, but I expect there will be comments or queries during the season. I know we will be open about what happened, but it is something we should strive now to put behind us, given the support we have received and we should look, realistically, to the future.</p> | | | |

Thanks: I've mentioned Rhys and his fearsome contribution and there are many others without whom this club would not be this club. I hope you and they will forgive me if I don't mention everyone by name; it's not to say their contributions have not been recognised – indeed the fact our club functions as it does, is a testament to their modesty and commitment.

Vicky has been a tower of strength for many years, in so many ways, but for entirely understandable reasons, has decided to cut back on her involvement. We have been truly fortunate to have had her doing so many crucial things, ensuring the smooth running of our club's various activities, all done with consummate efficiency and apparent ease. She will be handing over responsibility for the bar and catering, both of which have grown in importance under her stewardship. I'm sure you will all want to join me in offering heartfelt thanks to her for everything she has achieved for our club. She's not disappearing, merely reducing her workload.

John has been at the helm for a long time. It was only when I became the president that I began to appreciate just how much time and effort he and Vicky put into ensuring the success of our club. Their commitment and involvement is impossible to define and I can't begin to do justice to their roles. We owe them a great debt of gratitude. John's candour in the recent difficulties has been admirable and although he would modestly seek to dismiss it, that candour shows the quality and decency of the man; and he still plays.

Bob has navigated us through the financial stresses of real life for a club such as ours. His unflappable temperament has meant a steady course has been set and you'll hear from him as to how positive the future appears. He has managed to find a new accountant to audit our books, following the resignation of, to whom we owe our sincere thanks. The reason the A.G.M. is late this year is because of that problem; there will have to be an E.G.M. to adopt our accounts when the new accountant has had time to review the books, but I doubt there will be any surprises, given the way in which Bob has steered the ship. Our thanks to him.

Shirley, is ever-present, running raffles, dealing with enquiries with the shop and countless other things. It's the fact they are countless, that marks out just what she and many others do without drawing attention to their contributions – thanks to her.

Continuing the nautical theme, Mark Bowes, in his own inimitable way, has extended his development of the 100 Club, shipshape and Bristol fashion. It's been a great success, due to his efforts, as you'll hear. Few people at V.P.s luncheons, escape without being signed-up – and long may it continue - because he is a difficult manto refuse. Of course he does many other things as well, not least being the consumption of Whitstable Bay and being the driving force behind his "mighty 3rds". Everything he does is for the benefit of our club – and what a benefit it is. We are remarkably fortunate in having Mark and so many others, who do so much.

Vanessa has decided to hand over her club welfare brief and will be much missed. It is a difficult job, but she has done it with great aplomb; gently admonishing those she has had to chase about C.R.B. (or whatever its present name may be) checks, which are vital to the club. Whatever have been the difficulties, she has always triumphed.

Also in the pantheon of leavers, is Neil. He has relinquished his role as secretary and, sadly, isn't here to listen to any doubtful words of praise from me, but is swanning around the Italian Lakes, although no doubt he'd rather be here. I can't imagine how much work he's had to put in over the last few years, but I've seen the results; it seems to me it's been almost a full-time job, including dealing with the registration of all players and much more besides. No committee can function without a secretary who is on top of the job. I'm tempted to joke that his absence tonight shows that, but in reality, he has kept us all up to the mark and has shown he has had a complete grasp of so many aspects of the club's activities. He told me he's intending to have an "umbrella" role, whatever that means, but I expect, if we're suffering from heavy precipitation in the future, he'll be happy to help, as long as it doesn't include ordering any more blazers.

What about others? You'll hear about the various sections of the club from other sources, so I won't steal their thunder. From the point of view of the committee, all its members have worked hard all year. Although we drink the odd pint at meetings, your committee do wrestle with a great many matters of real importance for our club. Dave Wing, Martin Briscall and the ever-youthful Mike Barnes, that well-known member of the travelling community, when he can get out of his caravan, as past-presidents, all make tremendous contributions to the running of our club. Their experience and wisdom – I'll leave you to decide about that wisdom – are invaluable.

Charlie Vavasour keeps a weather-eye on development and is a source of immensely wise advice on many other matters. His prominence when it comes to P.R. and press-releases is a real asset to our club and should be neither underestimated nor taken for granted. Personally, I'm very grateful to him for his advice earlier this year – he's a very safe pair of hands.

Dylan, Martin and Mike are the new dream-team liaising with the V.P.s and organising luncheons, so the future is assured and if no-one can remember what Dylan looks like, I think his photograph is up somewhere.

Grant is the website supremo. It's excellent, so please have a look at it on a regular basis for news, views and announcements. I've no idea how it works, but then I'm still using a fountain pen, so things such as Facebook, Whatsapp and other communications in the ether, are a complete mystery. There's a rumour that my generation was wiped out by the Ice Age or a meteorite, so that may explain my total ignorance. For you bright young things, apparently it's the brave new world.

Allan Ferries has conducted considerable research about our aspirations for the future and has provided much food for thought, and, I hope, action. His reports have pointed out a number of matters requiring development within the club, all intended to ensure we progress. By applying sound analysis to areas both on and off the field, it will be possible, probably for the first time in the recent history, to make suitable plans for development of our club, particularly on the playing side. He's put in a great deal of work and it's much appreciated.

Sponsorship: Steve has had to stand down after a short but highly productive period mugging sponsors. I've observed before, that rugby clubs can't exist on subscriptions and bar takings alone. Although the clubhouse is now let out on a regular basis for various functions, we need sponsorship. It's a vital aspect of our club's finances. May I ask all of you to consider if you know of potential sponsors? If you have anyone in mind, please tell us and a proper presentation can be arranged.

Finally, my thanks to all the ever-present coaches, parents, V.P.s and players. Although I can't list everyone, I want to mention Guy Thorogood, because, in his own way, he is typical of those without whom our club could not survive. Without the support of countless people such as Guy, doing all sorts of things behind the scenes, not expecting public recognition, but contributing because they and we all share an immense love of the great game of rugby. It's a game that teaches discipline, respect, tolerance and develops the ability to get on with others; in essence, lessons for life. With your continuing support, our club and the game of rugby will go from strength to strength.

You'll have noticed that I've always referred to this as "our" club; it's deliberate, because it is **our** club. We all have a stake in it and a shared desire to look, with confidence, to the future.

It's been a very great privilege to be the president of such a fine club and I thank you all for your support for our club.

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| 52.05 | 11-Aug-16 | Financial Report | Bob Jones |
| <p>This will be a brief and very different finance report. As yet I have no accounts to present to members for approval. In early May we were advised by our accountant, Philip Hindle of Beresford's that regrettably his work pressures were such that his firm could no longer undertake the preparation of the Club's accounts. Although we made various proposals which might have enabled this year's accounts to be completed these did not prove to be viable and at the end of those negotiations we reluctantly accepted that we would have to search for another accountant. At this point I would like to put on record the Club's huge thanks to Philip and to the staff at Beresford's who for a number of years have produced our accounts and who have not charged us for the immense amount of work they did.</p> <p>After taking advice we subsequently approached Michael Wood an accountant in Bank Street who has now agreed to prepare the Club's accounts. It is hoped that the Accounts for the Year End 31/03/16 will be finalised by mid to late September and the knock on effect of this is that it will be necessary to hold an EGM probably in early October so that those accounts can be presented to the members for approval and signed off by the Committee. As a CASC we have to submit a copy of our agreed accounts to FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) by the end of October so we are still within that timeline. There is a cost implication to the club for this work but we believe that the proposed amount represents good value in the light of the work required.</p> <p>What I can report to members is that generally the finances of the Club are in reasonable shape. We got through the year to 31/03/2016 on the income we generated from subscriptions, bar takings, fund raising events etc and at the end of the rugby season we had a reserve fund of some £8k to help get us through the months from May to August when our income streams are much reduced. This was despite the Beer festival making a loss for the first time in many years due to increased costs and poor weather. We were rescued to a large extent by an extremely profitable Fireworks Night which netted over £10k to the Club's funds. Having the AGM later this year does enable me to tell members that the reserve we had at 31 March has got us through the summer and we will start the new season with a clean slate other than a few very minor creditors. Last year we proposed an increase in subscriptions and an increase in bar prices. This year there will no similar proposal. After much discussion this year's Beer Festival will go ahead; we have made some savings in costs, we hopefully have more vets teams entered and with reasonable weather we will hope for a significantly better outcome. It is vital that members get behind this event by volunteering just a few hours or by attending with family and friends. The Beer Festival and the Fireworks Night are key events in the Club's ability to keep subscriptions and bar costs down but keeping us in a financially healthy state.</p> <p>I talked earlier about our accounts for the year ended 31 March 2016. The rules allow us to benefit from a full audit exemption which otherwise would incur considerable further accountancy costs. In order to benefit from this is necessary for a resolution to be passed at a General Meeting under the requirements of Section 84, Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. So as with last year I would propose that the Club avails itself of this Section by agreeing to an audit exemption for the year ended 31/03/16. It is necessary to pass such a resolution at each years AGM. Can I have a show of hands of those in favour. Any against.</p> | | | |

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| 52.06 | 11-Aug-16 | Games Reports | John Norman |
| <p>Games Fixtures – Allan Ferries Thanks to all on the game committee and the continued effort from all the committee in the games selection process.</p> <p>1st Team Report – Rhys Fussell – It’s been a very difficult season but the team have remained positive and look to rebuild and go forward in the 2016/17 season. I want to thank all the lads for the 100% effort both on and off the pitch, always holding their heads high. Lloyd Stocks has been appointed as team manager.</p> <p>Ladies Report – No Ladies report</p> <p>2nd Team Report – No 2nd team report</p> <p>3rd Team Report – Kevin Grayson – I am stepping down as skipper from the “mighty” 3rds this season but I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the support to both me and the team.</p> <p>Junior’s Report – No Junior’s report</p> <p>Mini’s Report – No Mini’s report</p> | | | |
| 52.07 | 11-Aug-16 | House Report | John Norman |
| <p>Vicky is stepping down as house manager and the position is currently vacant. If anyone wants to stand for the role. John described the role. No one has yet taken the offer</p> | | | |
| 52.08 | 11-Aug-16 | Development | Charlie Vavasour |
| <p>The changing rooms have been repainted and we are looking to extend with a new mobile unit that although this not ideal it will last a few years and will give us 2 more changing rooms, a gym area and a physio room. We are awaiting planning permission from Ashford borough council to progress.</p> <p>We are in talks with Southern Water for compensation to repair the road and layby after excessive use by their lorries.</p> <p>Plans to develop the land adjacent to the motorway are under review.</p> <p>The Ashford bowls club are in negotiations to relocate to our grounds.</p> | | | |
| 52.09 | 11-Aug-16 | 100 - Club | Mark Bowes |
| <p>The 100 club has a fund to support the club currently sitting at £17408.60 are have sponsored the TV and other projects within the club. We are currently at 92 members but want to reach 100. Winners of the lottery have been published on previous minutes</p> | | | |

| 52.10 | 11-Aug-16 | Sponsorship | Steve Bond |
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| <p>Firstly, it has been an honour and privilege to serve the club as sponsorship director for the last year. The sponsorship situation for the 2015/16 season is summarised as follows.</p> <p>There are now 25 sponsors across all age groups. Cash sponsorship ranges from £500 to £5k per sponsor and the amount of services provided in lieu of cash is much appreciated but often difficult to quantify.</p> <p>The exact amount of total sponsorship is difficult to estimate given the nature of some of the services provided and the fact that some sponsorship goes straight to individual age groups. Bob will be able to summarise the amount that came into the club centrally.</p> <p>Sponsors have been well represented in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invites to the beer festival, fireworks evening, sponsors lunch and other home games. • Prominent position on the new website • New pitch hoardings • 1st team visits to sponsors such as the Black Horse Pub • Regular communication from the club regarding all events. • Photo opportunities with the 1st team <p>Sponsorship has also enabled us to buy plenty of kit, equipment and funded new signage across the clubhouse. Clearly, there is always more that can be done and I hope that whoever takes on the role has every success.</p> <p>I offer my sincere thanks to the Committee, sponsors and those members who have assisted me in this role over the last year. I wish the Club every success for next season and I will continue to support by helping coach the U9's Ashford Spitfires!</p> <p>Steve Bond</p> <p>NB: I have lodged a record of sponsors, prospective sponsors and other relevant documentation with the Honourable Secretary for reference if required.</p> | | | |
| 52.11 | 11-Aug-2016 | Election of Officers | John Norman |
| <p>President – Ian Foinette Club Chairperson – John Norman Hon Sec- John Heaver Treasurer – Bob Jones Junior Chairperson – Vicky Norman Clubhouse Manager – Not appointed Development Coordinator – Charlie Vavasour Games Committee Chairperson – Allan Ferries Sponsorship Director – Not appointed Welfare Officer – Jo Amber Junior Coordinator – Jon Richards Mini Coordinator – Scott Booth Communications Officer – Grant Burdon Subscription Coordinator/Data Officer – Barbara Henderson 100 Club Coordinator – Mark Bowes Immediate Past President – Martin Briscall Committee Member – David Wing 1st XV Captain – Rhys Fussell Ladies Captain – Katie Allen 2nd XV Captain – Will Welsh 3rd XV Captain – Haynes</p> | | | |

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| 52.12 | 11-Aug-2016 | Awards | John Norman |
| <p>Arthur Munday Bowl: John Norman nominated Guy Thurgood for long service to the club, no other nominations Guy won the award.</p> <p>Jim White Cup: John Heaver nominated Rhys Vessel, rest to be confirmed.</p> | | | |
| 52.13 | 11-Aug-2016 | AOB | John Norman |
| <p>Club communication - Lloyd Stocks Commented on how poor the communication was within the club. John Norman replied that the communication would be improved with the appointment of Barbara Henderson and the collation of the database for the club.</p> | | | |