

Lymm RFC Ltd
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
18th May 2023

Present

Neil Allen	Kerry Anderson	Julie Antonelli	Steve Ashall	Arthur Ashcroft	Nick Ashton
Ryan Beddard	Tom Bray	Adam Breeze	Keith Broadbent	Ted Broady	Colette Cartwright
John Cartwright	John Case	Derek Clark	Rick Condo	Ian Cope	Peter Cornelia
Andy Davies	David Dickinson	Adam Fletcher	Alan Gibson	Adam Halford	Tony Halford
Yvonne Halford	Tom Harris	Mark Hesketh	Andy Jackson	Rick Johnson	Tim Jordan
Neil Kelly	Sharon Kelly	Jim Knowles	Andy Leach	Ian MacKenzie	Paul Maguire
Varun Maharaj	Richard Mambery	John Millachip	Peter Millachip	Danny McNicholl	Willis Mungai
Gareth Neal	Dave Newton	Kate Newton	Simon Plumb	Malcolm Pritchard	Eric Quirk
Peter Radcliffe	Paul Rigby	Steve Rule	Peter Rutter	Dave Simpson	Jim Sproats
Tony Wright	James Yates	Kate Yeomans	Alan Wilkinson		

Apologies

Chris Askew	Alan Cummins	Laura Hay	Jon Hilton	Will Hind	John Hopkinson
Guy Larkin	Harold Molyneux	Rono Mukherjee			

Welcome and Introduction

The Secretary, Rick Johnson, opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees to what was the 6th AGM of Lymm RFC Ltd. As was the case the previous year, the meeting was being held with some attendees in the Clubhouse and some attending virtually.

Previous Minutes

The minutes from the previous AGM were accepted.

Chairman's Report - David Simpson

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year as Lymm's Chairman and I have spent much of my time ensuring that I fully understand all the workings of all aspects of the club and to that end I have met with all the various 'department heads' to discuss the good, the bad and the ugly and formulate plans with each moving forward. When I sat down with the senior rugby coaching group, at the beginning of last season, who would have thought that we would be celebrating promotion to National League 2 come the end of it. This is truly an incredible achievement given that we do not pay players, unlike most in the league, but we have managed to build a squad which had over 75% of its players coming through the Mini and Junior section. This promotion is exciting and terrifying in equal measure, but I am sure both the coaches and players can rise to the challenge.

I would like to give a special thanks, on behalf of the Board, Executive Committee, and the wider membership, to Neil Kelly for his work as President over the past 4 years. In particular, Neil has been instrumental in developing our pre-match lunch offering which has seen numbers rise from circa 10 per home game to over 100 on one particular occasion. As well as being great fun the pre-match lunches have given us a significant increase in turnover not only from the lunch itself but also increased bar takings

before, during and after the game. It is worth noting that one of our best days ever, in terms of bar takings, was on the weekend when we were due to play Sandbach and our pitch was unplayable. The lunch went ahead, the internationals were on the TV and a great time was had by all. Hopefully Neil will continue to have an active role but without the pressure of high office.

I would also like to thank Alan and Lydia and their team for their support and work in moving our bar and food offerings forward. The food at Neil's pre-match lunches has been received extremely well and the player's food after training and their post-match meals have made a massive difference to the experience of our senior players and have played no small part, in my view, to our successes on the pitch.

I always understood that volunteers were vital to the day to day running of the Rugby Club, but it is not until you get closely involved in all aspects of the organisation that you realise just how much the volunteer groups do. From the M&J sections to Grounds, events and our world-famous panto, the amount of effort that goes in is quite incredible and we would not be able to survive without them. I would observe though that more volunteers to share the workload of our existing volunteers is much needed and I think we need a concerted recruitment drive, probably from the M&J section, to identify people with the time and skills to take the club in all its guises forward.

As well as our success on the Rugby field we have welcomed our new Tennis section which was formerly based at Manor Road. Four all-weather floodlit courts are due to be completed early June and we look forward to the section achieving their ambition of growing their membership to circa 250. Although the courts will be capable of supporting year-round Tennis their busiest period will be May to the end of September which fits very nicely with the closed season for rugby and hockey and this will hopefully result in us becoming a 52 week a year operation which can only be a good thing for the long term sustainability of our multi-sports club. The building of the Tennis courts was originally going to be the last phase of our development however with the help of an interest free loan from the Lawn Tennis Association we have been able to bring this forward thus freeing up the old Manor Road Tennis Club site for development. To allow us to build the membership it is felt that we need a clubhouse close to the courts. In the long term this will be provided by our new clubhouse itself but in the interim the intention is to put a temporary building adjacent to the archway.

With regards to the development of the houses more generally we are in discussion with several potential partners. There are a number of technical challenges to overcome around VAT and cashflow in that we obviously need sufficient funds to at least start the build of the clubhouse but will be unlikely to fully realise the value of our assets whilst ever we are in our current home. I am currently working on a phased plan which hopefully will address the challenges we face. Once the Tennis courts are open and Manor Road is available for development/divestment we will be in a better situation overall and we can start to plan the next phase.

Along with Rugby, Hockey, Squash, and Tennis we also have plans to bring a commercially operated gym onto the Beechwood site (subject to planning in September 2023). The commercial arrangement is one whereby we will receive rent from the operator as well as free hours, equipment, and personal trainers, to support our Senior Rugby section (this may be extended to other sections of the club). The Planning Application has been submitted today.

As the club grows both in terms of membership, revenues, and expenditure it is vitally important that we have tight control of the club's profitability and cash-flows. At the beginning of last season Kate Yeomans, Andy Leach and I produced detailed budgets for each 'department'; Rugby, House, Grounds, etc. Kate, who has done an outstanding job over the past year, produced monthly management accounts whereby we have compared our actuals against budget for each department. I am pleased to report that the forecast for 22/23 is in line with expectations (with the exception of Tennis revenues, project delayed by 6 months) and we have used these figures as the basis for our 23/24 budget.

You will see from the chart that we are forecasting significant increases in our bar and food sales, events and hospitality, the Halfway House and membership subscriptions. With regards to membership subscriptions, we are reviewing the current rates and we are likely to increase them for the coming season

but please note that the majority of the growth in subscription income is down to our newly formed Tennis section. There are detailed plans behind these numbers, and all of these are leading us to a position whereby we are in good health when we eventually take residence in our new clubhouse. I would comment that the work of volunteers will play a big part in achieving the growth in these areas.

As you are all aware we are a members' club and I have made it one of my priorities to encourage everybody to pay their membership and as you can see from the chart this forms a significant part of our overall income. Historically as a members' club we have not been able to invite members of the public into the bar but having recently applied for a premises licence we are now able to host events which do not directly involve our club membership. These events will go a long way to supporting the significant increase in food and bar sales within our 2023/24 budget. The Halfway House has been a huge success but has been limited by its design and it is therefore our intention to increase its capacity to encourage more people to use it on match days and cope with what we hope will be increased attendances now we are in National League 2.

CONSOLIDATED RESULTS						
	Actual 21/22	% of sales	Forecast 22/23	% of sales	Budget 23/24	% of sales
Bar and food sales	107,458	34%	125,779	26%	196,525	26%
Membership subscriptions	71,368	22%	82,188	17%	159,500	21%
Event and hospitality income	-	0%	89,233	18%	159,048	21%
Other income	44,512	14%	88,273	18%	90,294	12%
Halfway House	-	0%	31,069	6%	72,223	10%
Sponsorship	18,030	6%	28,617	6%	39,500	5%
RFU AGP income	29,728	9%	17,515	4%	17,477	2%
Gift aid and donations	47,431	15%	25,823	5%	15,375	2%
TOTAL INCOME	318,527	100%	488,496	100%	749,943	100%
	% of costs		% of costs		% of costs	
Beechwood direct costs	(99,044)	33%	(177,856)	43%	(269,399)	42%
BW fixed overheads	(123,744)	41%	(132,029)	32%	(193,421)	30%
Senior rugby	(44,365)	15%	(56,726)	14%	(90,000)	14%
Tennis	-	0%	(5,804)	1%	(38,605)	6%
Grounds costs	(17,875)	6%	(18,874)	5%	(23,307)	4%
M&J rugby	(18,156)	6%	(22,039)	5%	(20,242)	3%
TOTAL COSTS	(303,184)	100%	(413,328)	100%	(634,973)	100%
NET PROFIT before financing	15,343		75,168		114,970	
Financing costs	(19,890)		(33,709)		(47,617)	
NET CONSOLIDATED PROFIT	(4,547)		41,459		67,353	
Beechwood	-		9,226		30,743	
RFC	(4,547)		32,233		36,609	
Total	(4,547)		41,459		67,353	

Sponsorships/partnerships is an area where I feel we have hugely under-performed. An eight-week initiative carried out by 3 university students (current members of our 1st team) successfully raised over £16,000 from local businesses. Attracting sponsors needs to become much more co-ordinated and over the coming months I will be looking to develop the strategy to turn circa £30,000 into £100,000 over the coming years. If any of our members are aware of anyone within the club who can assist with this exercise, please put them in touch.

At the beginning of my tenure as Chairman I set the club/myself the following goals:

- Detailed budgets and reporting across all 'departments' within the club
- All senior rugby players to be paid up members.
- Promotion to National League 2
- Creation of a Tennis section
- Formation of a girls and women's Rugby section
- Completion of our new clubhouse
- Installation of floodlit, water-based Hockey pitch

In achieving the above it has/will be very much a team effort and I would like to thank the Board and the Executive Committee for their work and support in taking forward our ambitious plans

Peter Cornelia expressed concern that being placed in National League 2 West by the RFU could be a recurring position for the Club and asked whether this is being addressed. The Chairman responded that the RFU are not currently giving any guarantees but have used phrases such as 'sharing the pain' and their custom and practice is to move teams around in such circumstances. The situation is still fluid with correspondence going to the Chief Executive and the RFU Board meeting taking place yesterday and as such it is not a topic that should divert focus from meeting.

Treasurer's Report - Andy Leach

Fellow members and friends, it gives me great pleasure to present my fourth Treasurer's report since taking over the role at the 2019 AGM. I have divided my report under a number of headings which I hope make sense and provided a useful structure.

Corporate structure

It's probably worthwhile setting out the present structure of our club, which is as follows:

Lymm RFC Limited ("LRL")

- A company limited by guarantee where each member's liability is limited to £1.
- A charity registered with the Charities Commission.
- Has a Board of Directors currently comprising: Executive Officers - David Simpson (Chairman), Andy Leach (Treasurer) and Rick Johnson (Secretary); and 3 non-executive Directors – Tony Wright, Mal Pritchard and John Cartwright.
- Undertakes all our rugby related activities and owns all our land and buildings, except for the Manor Road Tennis Club (MRTC) site (see Lymm Garden Limited below).
- Has two wholly owned subsidiaries – Lymm Beechwood Limited and Lymm Garden Limited.

Lymm Beechwood Limited ("LBL")

- A limited company, wholly owned by LRL.
- Has a Board of Directors currently comprising David Simpson, Kate Yeomans and Andy Leach.
- Undertakes all our commercial activities, such as managing the bar and organising fund-raising events, including the panto and marquee events.
- Each year, any surplus created by LBL is donated to LRL, thus avoiding any unnecessary and avoidable tax leakage.

Lymm Garden Limited ("LGL")

- A limited company, wholly owned by LRL.
- Has a Board of Directors currently comprising John Cartwright, David Simpson, Peter Radcliffe and Andy Leach.
- Was dormant until August 2020 when it acquired the MRTC site.

- Was established as a potential means to realise property under the development programme in a tax efficient manner.

One of the consequences of this structure is that it, effectively, splits the club's financial performance across three different legal entities, making it difficult for the casual observer to really appreciate the full picture. This is addressed further below.

Results to 30 June 2022

The annual accounts for LRL, a copy of which is attached to this report – together with the accounts for LBL and LGL - were approved by the Directors on 13 March 2023 and were filed at Companies House and with the Charities Commission before their respective deadlines of 31 March 2023 and 30 April 2023, and the relevant tax returns with HMRC before its filing deadline of 31 March 2023.

As can be seen from the accounts of LRL, a small deficit of £4,547 was recorded for the year to 30 June 2022. As is often the case these days, the accounts are difficult for third parties to interpret, something which is magnified in the case of LRL as our accounts are required to follow a specific Charities Act format, which is more designed for organisations of a different shape. This is further complicated as we choose not to prepare accounts (and incur the associated cost) which consolidated the performance of LRL with its two subsidiaries, LBL and LGL. In order to get a true picture of our overall financial performance, it is necessary to aggregate the accounts of LRL with those of LBL and LGL. The effect of this on the income statement is shown below.

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Donations	34	31	59	23	31
Subs	73	61	86	77	75
Sponsorship	18	2	22	21	23
Bar surplus	23	2	52	28	46
Panto surplus	18	0	33	27	23
Summer events surplus	0	0	0	34	24
Grants	13	79	0	0	0
Crowdfunding	0	15	0	0	0
AGP income	17	13	13	0	0
Storage/parking	15	20	0	0	0
Other income net of other direct costs	(2)	23	(8)	(51)	(31)
Gross profit	209	246	257	159	191
VAT partial exemption	(2)	5	(3)	(8)	8
Establishment costs	(37)	(26)	(36)	(36)	(30)
Playing costs	(44)	(10)	(57)	(53)	(47)
Grounds costs	(17)	(9)	(15)	(17)	(9)
Lease and repair costs	(8)	(9)	(5)	(8)	(11)
Salaries	(47)	(36)	(42)	(19)	(19)
Accountancy and legal	(6)	(12)	(4)	(12)	(5)
Miscellaneous	(9)	(5)	(8)	(7)	(1)
Donations made	0	0	0	(6)	(7)
Finance costs	(20)	(18)	(25)	(23)	(25)
Depreciation	(23)	(20)	(21)	(6)	(8)
Total costs	(213)	(140)	(216)	(195)	(154)
Surplus/Deficit	(4)	106	41	(36)	37

By comparing the 2022 financial performance with prior years, the impact on the shape of the Club's traditional revenue streams and cost base of the Covid pandemic and related lockdowns can be clearly seen. In particular, it is worth highlighting that:

- This was the year in which the alleviation of the impact of the Covid pandemic began with a full return to senior rugby from September 2021. As a consequence, our cost base naturally began to rebuild towards pre-pandemic levels whilst income streams also regained some positive momentum. However, it was clear that this would be a transitional year as bar revenues were sluggish to start with as

members naturally took a cautious approach to the speed at which they would return to normality; whilst the panto returned it was at lower capacity; and, once again, there were to be no summer events. In addition, we operated from September to May without a club steward/bar manager.

- Despite operating without a bar manager for 8 months of the period, the bar surplus showed some recovery towards historic levels. Overall, bar and food sales – including the halfway house – for the year were a credible £107k.
- Sponsorship income also returned to historic levels having been almost nothing in the previous period.
- In fact, the surplus from these 4 activities – sponsorship, bar, panto, summer events – which had averaged £111k over the 3 pre-pandemic years – recovered from £4k to £59k in 2021/22.
- In addition, membership subs also recovered as the Covid-reduced M&J membership fee returned to its normal level.
- As would be expected though our cost base increased generally ahead of the income streams recovering. In addition, some of Covid-related reliefs such as business rates and the JRS came to an end. Playing, establishment and grounds costs all returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Adopting a similar methodology, the aggregated balance sheet at 30 June 2022 was as follows:

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fixed assets	1,605	1,594	1,561	1,501	1,487
Stock	4	5	5	7	24
Debtors	32	18	3	55	89
Cash	75	62	19	45	56
Creditors	(41)	(35)	(45)	(101)	(127)
	70	50	(18)	6	42
Borrowings	(601)	(564)	(571)	(576)	(572)
Net Assets	1,074	1,080	972	931	967

Things to note here are:

- All but £85k of fixed assets relate to freehold land and buildings. As part of a valuation exercise completed for Handelsbanken in May 2022, Savills valued this freehold land and buildings, including the MRTC site on Manor Road, at £3m.
- During the year, £17k of costs directly related to our Development Programme were capitalised.
- Creditors and debtors are much lower than in 2019 and earlier due to the cancellation of the summer marquee events which tended to run right up to our year-end. Included within creditors is an amount of £7k representing the amount members had pre-loaded their loyalty cards.
- At 30 June 2022, borrowings comprised:
 - a £9k interest free loan from the Rugby Football Foundation (dating back to their support for our 2006 land acquisition comprising pitches 2 to 5), which is being repaid at the rate of £7k per annum and which will be fully repaid by December 2023;
 - a £45k loan from the RFU (at 2% fixed and repayable over 8 years from 30 June 2024) as part of their 'Winter Support Fund' designed to cover costs incurred by clubs in investing in their facilities post-Covid; and
 - a £548k loan from Handelsbanken.
- Our relationship with Handelsbanken remains very positive. Throughout the pandemic we kept them well informed of our financial position and the actions we have taken to manage our finances within our means. On more than one occasion they have said how impressed they are with our financial management and control, reporting and forecasting. The Handelsbanken loan is interest only, at 2.75% over LIBOR, and was originally set to mature on 7 February 2022. However, given the confidence they have in us and the direction of travel of our development plans, supported by the valuation undertaken by Savills, during the year they extended this maturity date by a further 5 years to 7 February 2027 at which time, depending on the progress of the Development Programme, the expectation is that it will be either fully repaid or any balance converted into a longer-term amortising facility.

- In addition to this loan with Handelsbanken, we have a £40k overdraft facility in place which has only ever been used sparingly to help manage short term cash flow.

Year to June 2023

The current financial year has seen a welcomed continuation of the return towards normality - not that things will ever probably be exactly as they were pre-Covid. Matters of particular note include:

- During the year we changed our licence such that we are now allowed to accommodate non-member events as an additional revenue-stream.
- The positive impact that Alan and Lydia Troy have had on our food and drink offer and general clubhouse activity levels and management.
- An increased focus on sponsorship revenues with some of our returning students driving an increase from £18k in 2022 to an expected £29k for the current year.
- A push on Gift Aid recovery led by Kate, resulted in an increase in this revenue stream with some future potential to increase this as we are able to recover c£10k of "back Gift Aid", that has been identified.
- The establishment of our tennis section will help membership subs increase by an expected £10k in the year.
- The Panto returned to its normal performance and capacity regime, generating a surplus of £22k from ticket sales and another estimated £8k from bar sales.
- Deloitte are returning for their big North-West staff ball in June, which will provide a welcome boost to our revenues. However, this will just be a one-off Deloitte event (albeit significantly bigger than previous years) rather than a number of events over a 10-day period. Should the Deloitte event be a success, we are planning for a "bigger season" in 2024.

It is worth noting the position of our exposure to two expense categories, energy costs and interest, that have been the subject of considerable publicity and concern over recent months. As far as energy costs are concerned, we locked into 3-year fixed price contracts during 2021 such that our electricity rates are fixed to 31 March 2024 and our gas rates to 31 July 2024. This has given us considerable comfort to date and will continue to do so for most of the year to 30 June 2024 – this is in sharp contrast to some of the horror stories we have heard from other clubs who were not in our fortunate position. It is worth noting that we are already being quoted fixed rate renewal prices for when these current contracts come to an end, which suggest a doubling of our energy costs (which are expected to be c£20k in the year to June 2023) is likely, albeit not until the year to June 2025.

Whilst we are in a good position with our energy costs, the same cannot be said of our interest cost as, whilst we do have some interest free and low fixed rate debt, interest on the majority of our loans is exposed to the increase in Base Rates that have been steadily applied by the Bank of England since December 2021. As a consequence, our interest cost has risen and, in the year to 30 June 2023 is now forecast to be £8k more than we budgeted, a budget that was itself £6k more than incurred in the year to June 2022. Our current estimate is that, absent any sharp fall in interest rates over the next 12 months, interest cost will rise by a further £14k in the year to 30 June 2024 – effectively an increase from £20k in the year to 30 June 2022 to £48k in the year to 30 June 2024. Clearly this is a cost we can do little about in the short term, but we do remain confident that this increase can be accommodated within our future cash flows.

Looking at the year to June 2023 in the round, we had originally budgeted for a surplus of £65k but are now looking at a forecast for the year of around half of that at around £30k. Whilst, inevitably, there are a number of 'unders and overs' across revenues and cost categories the principal variances are in interest (as explained above) and the impact on Tennis membership that the delay in the completion of the new courts has had – we had budgeted on the basis that the courts would be ready for playing for the start of the tennis season in April, but this is now looking likely to be sometime during June, reducing our budgeted membership subs by £30k.

Given the increase in our cost base that we have felt over the past 2 years, it seems inevitable that the Executive will be recommending a modest increase in membership fees to the Board from the forthcoming year. Whilst no decision on this or the quantum has yet been made it should be noted that membership rates were last increased in October 2019.

It is worth reiterating that the above figures represent an accounting surplus and not a cash surplus. We continue to invest in our facilities and move our development plan forwards – all of which consumes cash. Having said this, we do remain confident that by continuing to build our revenue streams and manage our costs (albeit inevitably we have to invest in our cost base ahead of generating the related incremental revenues) our cash generation will be sufficient to allow us to deliver our plans. In particular, the anticipated return to a full marquee season, the positive impact on tennis membership that the new courts will have, continued growth in social revenues and the return to 13 home 1st XV fixtures will be important factors in this.

For completeness, it should be noted that during the year to June 2023 we have raised an additional £100k loan from Handelsbanken (to help finance some of the development project enabling works) and a £250k interest free loan facility from the LTA to fund the lion's share of the cost of building the 4 new tennis courts. The former is a 5-year term loan whilst the latter is repayable over 8 years following an initial 2-year repayment holiday.

Colts Academy funding from The James Hutchings Charity

As you may be aware, James who was a Founder Member of the Club and our 3rd Captain for the 1962/63 season, passed away in 2021. James, or 'Gentleman Jim' as he was better known, moved to Birmingham in 1974 but retained his interest in the Club and its development. He was a Life Member and has always been a generous Patron of the Club, keeping in touch and attending Past Players' functions. Before his death, James set up a charity to support a range of causes close to his heart in education, sailing, culture and sport. Following a number of conversations with Peter Cornelia, James' family and the trustees of his charity felt that James would approve of Lymm RFC being a beneficiary of his charity, something that would also keep alive the memory of Gentleman Jim at Lymm RFC. In particular, it was felt that some funding to support youth rugby would be appropriate. To this end, The James Hutchings Charity has entered into a 5-year programme of support for the coaching of our Colts Academy. We are most grateful for this generous commitment of support and, in recognition of this, we will now refer to 'The Lymm Colts Academy supported by The James Hutchings Charity'.

Other matters

I would like to put on the record my thanks for the tremendous support I have received since our last meeting from Alan and his team and our army of volunteers. I can't let this opportunity pass without putting on record my thanks for the tremendous support that both I, and the broader Executive, have received over the past year from Kate. As you that know her will appreciate, Kate is reliable, diligent, professional and incredibly hard working with a great sense of humour – a winning combination in my book!!.

Finally, thanks to the hard work and support of my fellow Directors, Presidents past, present and future, Executive Committee members and our wider membership I am confident that we will continue in a healthy financial position going forward and have tremendous opportunities to ensure that our club remains at the heart of our community for generations to come.

In response to the Treasurer's report, Eric Quirk commented that there are some areas sensitive to change such as utility costs and interest rates that can significantly impact costs to the extent that forecast profits could be wiped out. The Chairman responded that the money the Club has invested and the planning consents that have been achieved have increased the Club's Balance Sheet from £500k to something nearer £4M. The MRTC site will be freed up for sale should we choose so to do and the value would wipe out the current loans. The Board will need to consider whether it is best kept to be developed along with the other parts of the Club or in isolation. Eric agreed that the aspiration is brilliant but suggested the Club should produce a Marketing Plan for the Manor Road site as soon as possible to insulate against additional costs that are outside of our control.

Arthur Ashcroft thanked the Chairman for his presentation and noted he takes great comfort from the fact that there are very competent people running the Club.

Senior Rugby Report - Adam Fletcher

The Chairman presented the trophy for winning the RFU's Regional 1 North West league to Adam Fletcher, Director of Rugby, James Yates 1st XV Captain and coaches Andy Davies, Tom Bray and Peter Millachip.

The 1st XV had an amazing season winning promotion to National League 2 from the Level 5 Regional 1 North West League on points difference from Blackburn. Next season will be the first time in the Club's history it has played in the National Leagues and although it has come probably quicker than expected everyone is delighted about it. Adam gave particular thanks to the hard work of Head Coach Andy Davies, captain James Yates, Defence Coach Tom Bray, Team Manager Paul Rigby and to Peter Millachip and all of the 2nd team squad who gave such excellent support when called upon.

To be able to field 3 teams on a regular basis is excellent at this level of rugby especially after Covid. Peter Millachip and Olly Brown do fantastic work to get the teams out on a Saturday. The 2nd XV made it to the semi-final of their League Cup competition losing out to a strong Sedgley Park team and the 3rd XV, who had some 18 consecutive victories, finished second in their league to Northwich. The Senior Colts had a tough end to the season with difficulty fulfilling fixtures but credit to Willis Mungai for getting so many of them playing for the 2nd and 3rd XV's towards the end of the season.

Thanks also to Alan Troy and his team. The Thursday night food has been a big success and Saturday's food is always excellent.

The highlights of the season are:

- 96 league points, the most the Club has achieved
- 1089 points scored in 22 games, another record
- 160 tries at an average of 7 per game
- The Club was the RFU's Team of the Month for January 2023
- 39 players used which is 13 less than the previous season which might suggest more consistency in selection
- Matchday squads of 18 players averaged 75% home grown players
- 9 players made their league debuts, Scott Redfern played 22 games and 31 of the 39 scored
- Nathan Beesley was top try scorer
- Oli Higginson reached 250 1st XV games and Cormac Nolan 200
- Gav Woods, Ben Simpson and Nathan Beesley made it into the league's Team of the Season
- Gav Woods, Cormac Nolan, Nathan Beesley and Cal Morris were selected for Cheshire
- Adam reached 200 1st XV games in charge of the team

Derek Clarke asked whether there will be a change in the recruitment model for the challenges of the new season. Adam replied that the Club will not be paying players and will remain amateur. Being in the National Leagues means we can dual register Sale Sharks and Caldy players. The challenge will be all the tougher for being put into the West region but there will be a big pre-season to get fitter and stronger.

Andy Jackson asked whether most players were looking to stay with the Club. Adam confirmed they are although he will need to touch base with some following the announcement of the allocation to the West division. He will be meeting with them next week to develop the strategy for playing at the next level.

The RFU has introduced a new law restricting the height of the tackle to the lower sternum. Mark Hesketh asked how the team is preparing this. Adam responded that he thinks it will benefit the fast flowing style of rugby the Club plays.

Adam confirmed there are ongoing discussions about the allocation in National League 2 West but the approach is to plan for playing in the West and if things change it will be a bonus. Of the 26 games around 20 would be akin to playing in National League 2 North and he will work with the squad to see how best to approach the longer distance away fixtures.

Mini & Juniors Rugby Section Report - Will Hind (presented by Ian Cope and Adam Breeze)

The Minis and Junior section have had a good year contributing well to the clubs income as well as developing some great players of the future. While COVID may have impacted the Colts this year has shown the club future seems strong with good performances from the U16 and U15. We are looking at improving the links with Lymm High School as well as supporting coaches training throughout the season while still building further on links between the senior teams and the age grades, including the Academy growth thanks to the support from The James Hutchings Charity.

M&J in numbers:

- M&J Paid Up Players = 354
- M&J Social Member Parents = 441
- Colts Playing for 2nd XV = 9
- Colts Playing for Eagles = 3 (different players)
- Cheshire Under 18s = 6
- Cheshire Under 20s = 1
- North England U18 Trials = 2
- Scottish Exiles = 1
- Irish Exiles = 1
- Wigan RL Academy = 1 Junior Colt
- Sale Academy = 2 Junior Colts
- Squads: U5 – 20; U6 – 32; U7 – 29; U8 – 27; U9 – 32; U10 – 25; U11 – 19; U12 – 30; U13 – 35; U14 – 26; U15 – 35; U16 – 31

The Academy continues to be supported by coaching from Tom Bray with input from various senior players and coaches such as James Yates and Andy Davies. One of the identified barriers to progression to Adult Rugby is the continued perception of parental involvement, so enabling the Academy to have additional coaches is an important step towards overcoming this. It also means we will establish good links with the senior squad for the future especially on Tuesday nights.

While the Colts sadly did not progress in league or cup competitions, a number of them have already stepped up to playing for the senior teams, mainly the 2nd XV. The U16 this year won the Cheshire Cup which is an even more impressive achievement as they have never streamed. They step into Junior Colts for next season looking strong. The U15 also had a good season winning the Cheshire Bowl and have good numbers as they enter the Academy.

Adam Breeze will be the Coach Training Co-ordinator and leading help in keeping co-ordination with the senior coaches. As a club we are focused on enabling our teams to have the best most rounded support for their players and coaches. To enable this to take place we will be going through each Age Grade to determine a needs assessment for that Age Grade. 93 members have signed up to become coaches.

As part of recognising the need for retention and its importance for the future of rugby and for Lymm Rugby Club in particular the link between Lymm High School and the club is being strengthened. We are having meetings with the Head and the PE staff to look at how we can help and ensure the importance of the link is reinforced and that Lymm HS can return to being a strong Rugby school. Once we have had the meetings we will be coming back and forming a plan of how to help.

The younger junior ages are all coming forward well and we will be looking to see the coaching and support for them is upheld for the coming season thanks to co-ordination with Adam Breeze. Typically the U12 to U15 also train mid week and the biggest issue we face there is around getting space on the AGP once floodlights are needed. Other age grades also want some training time and currently we pay for some time on the old astroturf Hockey pitch at the school– we will be looking with Rugby 360 to see about additional times on the AGP. .

Overall the courses are being well attended, with a safeguarding course here at the club attended in force. Ralph Tucker is continuing his crusade for complete DBS cover and indeed from next season the RFU states that everyone on the pitch needs a full DBS, so no 'parent helpers'. Top line the numbers are:

1. DBS at an all time high of 90% with 5% in training (including new coaches for next years U5s).
2. Safeguarding course - next focus as this is compulsory from next season. There is 70% completion to date.
3. We have had no major incidents since the last AGM with coaches utilising Ralph if and when required to resolve playing issues (e.g. dangerous play from opposing teams) or parental issues impacting player welfare.

For next season there is a change to the Safeguarding requirements for coaches with not only an insistence that no one should coach without a DBS check complete but that they have also completed an online Safeguarding course as well. The RFU is also rolling out the requirement for an in-person session 'Play it Safe' to be complete.

Whilst this increases the administration the coaching team has stepped up brilliantly and the Lymm 'Play it Safe' course was the only one in the region to 'sell out'.

We have also, encouragingly, seen a growth in the number of coaches, up from ~80 last year to 93 with more to come as the U5s get organised. This helps massively with ensuring player welfare is supported. Of these we have 12 not yet DBS checked, predominantly recent joiners. Even with the recent introduction of increased requirements after a push in April over 50% of coaches now have all 3 qualifications with the remainder being picked up over the summer and a 2nd play it safe course lined up at the club for early September.

We will also focus on First Aid cover over the summer though again with a sell out course being put on at the club through JC this season.

All this will back up the coach coordination from Adam and ensure Lymm is one of the leading clubs for M&J player welfare and development in the region.

As we continue to work on the coaching and courses available for the older Junior teams it is important to not forget the 'minis' as they represent the most numerous section. To focus specifically on their needs from pre rugby at U5 and U6 through to U11, Ian Cope has agreed to be the Chair specifically for Minis. His main focus will be to look at reaching the local primary schools and ensuring we have great reach and recruitment as well as looking to find the best relevant courses, potentially looking for Kids First accreditation.

Thanks go to John Case for his work on GMS and the website, to Ralph Tucker for his continued diligence in Safeguarding, to Ian and Adam Breeze for allowing me to volunteer them, and extremely special thanks goes to Paul Wardle who agreed to continue as the M&J Fixture Secretary as well as AGP co-ordinator and pitch allocations chief. Final thanks go to all the Age Grade coaches and especially Willis Mungai and Rono Mukherjee who have reached the end of their journey with M&Js as outgoing Senior Colts coaches.

Ian added thanks to Alan Troy for his commitment and the many parents who have helped out in the Halfway House on a Sunday. There have been notable successes with the Christmas Party, the first Junior Vaudeville that Keith Broadbent organised, the Guard of Honour for the 1st team's final game and the Coimbre tour undertaken by the U12s and U15s.

Squash Section - Richard Mambery

Membership numbers are slightly up into the 60s although the top 3 players have left. There are now 5 female members whereas previously there have been none. The Junior Academy has been disbanded as one of the leavers was the Academy coach. However, with the uplift in numbers there has been an increase in social activity with the re-introduction of Squash Ladders and social competition nights.

The 2 teams in the North Cheshire Leagues have had mixed results this season. The 2nd team finished 8th from 8 in Division 5 South West and the 1st team 8th from 13 in Division 4 North East.

Richard thanked the 1st team captain Ryan Beddard, and 2nd team captains Geoff Green and Martin Thompsett for their efforts over the season. He also thanked Alan Troy for his help with after match hospitality on a Thursday which had been well received by visiting clubs and David Simpson for his support in helping to get the Squash section more inclusion within the Club in both the current and future location.

Tennis Section - Pete Radcliffe

Walled Garden Project

Negotiations with LTA on the loan continued, including agreeing the interest-free repayment plan over 10 years. Handelsbanken approved a £100k bank loan for the Walled Garden Project. A meeting took place with WBC Planning Department to understand the process we must follow to gain approval. They advised to get the tennis courts in place before submitting a planning application for a dome. A four-courts' ring beam was included in the full specification prepared for tendering. The time involved in WBC appointing a new Planning Officer to obtain the above advice had delayed the tennis court construction by a further month.

The tendering process took place in July and August, but only two out of five contractors responded. The quotes were well outside the budget, due to excessive costs to include a ring beam, wall reinforcements and a drainage system to accommodate a future dome and the new clubhouse.

The decision was taken to request architects D5 and Labosport to produce a re-design for the courts without a ring beam, to assume a simple drainage system and no wall reinforcement. Labosport contacted five favoured contractors and requested a quick re-tendering by mid-October, with the aim of completing the courts in time for the 2023 season to start by Easter Saturday (8th April).

Once again, only 2 contractors responded to the re-tender request, one of which was Chester based, Platt Construction Limited, a company that was highly recommended to Manor Road Tennis Club (MRTC) during the research undertaken in 2020. The Platt tender was the more attractive of the two, so negotiations and a visit took place w/c 24th October and a fixed price was agreed for the construction.

The Lymm RFC Board met twice, on 26th and 31st October, to review the Platt tender and an adapted business model calculating the minimum membership numbers along with minimum Pay and Play and coaching utilisation required to breakeven in cashflow terms over the 10 years of the LTA loan.

The LRC Board unanimously approved the tender and 'breakeven' business model on 31st October. The expected discharge of conditions consent from WBC, due on 8th December, did not occur due to backlog of planning approvals. However, Platt agreed to start 'enabling work', removing top soil and digging a drainage trench, to make some progress. Construction of the new courts, with floodlights, was estimated to take between 12 and 16 weeks, so we were still optimistic on completion by Easter 2023.

A marketing campaign to attract new tennis members commenced with a club-wide communication, and continued throughout the winter to address our targets for 2023, enhanced by the publication of a comprehensive coaching programme to be launched when the courts are open.

In January, the marketing team was joined by Catherine Lawler (social media), Simon Plumb (PR) and John Case (website), helping to draft a Marketing Plan that was presented to the February Exec meeting.

Several weeks of construction delays occurred due to concerns about the compactness of the soil at the south end of the site, where the majority of fill was required to level the ground. This probably occurred because the formation material, when cut and filled in wet conditions, was retaining moisture due to the sandy clay nature of the soil. Various solutions were explored, in conjunction with JJP, the consultants who conducted tests on the soil, culminating in importing 6F2 material to stiffen up the affected formation and re-compact, followed by a 100mm extra level across the entire area.

The consequence of the above was that the completion of the courts and move from Manor Road would not occur until at least end-May and probably later. Therefore, the 2023 tennis season commenced at Manor Road on 1st April. The following decisions were made at a Tennis Exec meeting on 8th March:

- Existing members and new members to be charged the same rates as last season, valid to end-September (not March 2024);
- When we move to the new courts, no additional fees to be charged to play up until end-September;
- Winter subscriptions to start on 1st October at the rates agreed previously for the new courts;
- Coaching, social tennis and team tennis to take place at Manor Road, as in previous seasons;
- Coaching fees to be reduced for members to encourage juniors to join, and new members to be offered 2 free coaching sessions;
- Existing members sent a re-joining message via ClubSpark and encouraged to pay their fees to enable them to start playing social and team tennis, and booking coaching and private games;
- Direct emails to all sections of the Rugby Club to promote the above, with the same messages communicated via social media;
- A quiz run by the Tennis Section for all sections at LRC on 12th May;
- A significant tennis promotion to take place during the M&Js presentation day on 11th June;
- A Tennis Open Day to take place in September on the new courts.

A temporary tennis clubhouse is being obtained to be situated within the Walled Garden and available when the new courts open. Most of the outstanding planning conditions were discharged in March, with a remaining one discharged this month. Posters advertising 'New Courts Coming Soon' were put up on the outside of the Walled Garden and in the clubhouse on 11th March, prior to the last 1st team match. 2,000 copies of a promotional leaflet were produced and distributed in both clubhouses, local schools and shops.

Ground work development re-commenced on 3rd April, an on-site progress meeting took place on 18th April at which it was decided to lay an additional 100mm of stones to resolve the lack of compacting in some areas (additional cost circa £15k). Since then, significant progress has been made that can be seen either in person or via photos and videos posted on social media. Mid-June is the forecast completion date and the courts will be available to view on the 11th June, during the M&Js presentation event, along with a promotional campaign run by volunteers from the Tennis Section, including the facility to sign up new members and provide some tennis games run by our coach, Martin Gleave.

The 2023 tennis season commenced at Manor Road on 1st April, with social tennis. League matches and coaching commenced during w/c 10th April. To date, 53 adults and 14 juniors have taken advantage of the Summer 2023 discounted membership offer, raising £3,590. A 3 month 'taster' offer from when the courts are open will be made to LRC members by raising their monthly direct debit by £10.

Implementation of the Marketing Plan is continuing, with the support of Catherine Lawler on social media, John Case (website & Rugby Club database) and Simon Plumb (PR). There have been regular postings on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, plus a newsletter to all members of LRC was posted on 12th April, promoting membership of the Tennis Section and the Quiz Night held at LRC on Friday 12th May.

Membership targets for the current Summer season, by end-September are 86 adults and 67 juniors, with 70 adults and 83 juniors joining for the 2023/24 Winter season from 1st October to 31st March.

Tennis Playing at Manor Road (2022)

The 2022 summer season attracted 64 members (50 adults, 3 junior girls and 11 junior boys).

During the 2022 season, MRTC competed in the Warrington and District Tennis League. It was disappointing for 3 of our teams but the Ladies 1st team finished 3rd in Division 4 with 7 wins, 4 draws and 3 defeats, narrowly missing out on promotion by 2 points. Ladies 2nd team only won once in Division 5 but most of the team were new to competitive tennis. Men's 1st team finished bottom in Division 4 with 3 wins, 1 draw and 10 losses, Men's 2nd team in Division 6 did not win a match. An advertising campaign within the Rugby Club failed to attract any players to assist the 2nd team to complete their season.

The 2022 MRTC AGM took place in November. The club made an operational profit of approximately £2,300 for the 21/22 year ending 30th September.

Manor Road Tennis Club Officials 2022/23

Chair:	Keith Moss
Deputy Chair:	Yvonne Halford
Treasurer :	Stewart Freeman
Membership Secretary:	Stella Connor
Secretary:	Roy Kettle
Coach:	Martin Gleave
Safeguarding:	Julie Freeman

Other Committee Members: Janet Cliffe, Rob Spence, Kevin Cordwell, Peter Sumner, Andrew Goodwin

Captains:

Janet Cliffe (Ladies 1st), Julie Freeman (Ladies 2nd),
James Lord (Men's 1st), Stewart Freeman (Men's 2nd).

Peter closed by thanking David Simpson who has been the driving force for the move to Beechwood and to the Executive Committee and Board for their support.

Tim Jordan asked whether there is any proposal for joint membership of the various sports the Club is now able to offer. Peter confirmed that any member of another section of the Club will be eligible for a discount on Tennis section membership fees. There will be a more comprehensive package of fees to provide multi-sport discounts to all members going forward.

Hockey Club - Julie Antonelli

Congratulations to the Rugby section on their outstanding achievements on the field and it is fantastic news that the new Tennis courts will be open soon which is something that will be shared with Hockey Club members.

The Hockey Club are running 3 Mens and 4 Ladies teams with 120 senior players and 80 juniors. The Ladies 1st team finished 2nd in North West Division 1 and are awaiting confirmation of their promotion to the North West Premier League which will be a fabulous achievement. There has been quite a lot of transition in the other Ladies teams with a lot of younger players being developed. The fallout from this is that potentially all 3 of the Ladies teams will be relegated. This is not entirely negative as teams will be more competitive and the club can build on this going forward.

The Mens 1st team finished a commendable 4th in NW Division 3 South and hope to build on that next season. The Mens 2nd and 3rd teams have had a challenging season, finished towards the bottom of their leagues and have seen a decrease in membership numbers with a lot of junior players coming through. At the beginning of the season there was some concern that the club would not be able to sustain 3 Mens teams so it is pleasing to see that they have.

A new coach, Tammy, has made excellent progress bringing on the Juniors. The stand out team is the Beavers who have had some great results and beaten some of the bigger clubs in the area where previously the club has not been able to compete. 6 of the Junior Ladies have represented the North which is more representation than either Timperley or Bowdon.

Going forward their are 2 main priorities:

- The ongoing pitch situation. The Lymm HS pitch has about 5 years life left and the Club is now in a working group has been set up with Warrington BC, England Hockey and Warrington HC to look at a replacement and another new pitch in the area. This may unlock some funding from the pitch at Padgate that is set for development.
- There has been an approach from Urmston HC about a merger. They have a similar ethos and culture and run 2 Mens and 3 Ladies teams. Information has been shared with members and consultation will

continue. There are advantages and synergies to be gained and it will likely lead to a member vote. The intention would be to have Lymm as the base which would benefit the Rugby Club.

The Hockey Club AGM is next Thursday and Julie will be stepping down as Chair. She thanked everyone for the support they have given and will introduce the new Chair once they are elected.

In response to a question from Pete Radcliffe about potential for Hockey members to join the Tennis section, Julie noted that a lot of Hockey members play cricket in the summer but there are a lot of members living in Lymm so there is a good chance. Pete will share information at the AGM next week.

Club Development - David Simpson

David used the attached slide deck to give the meeting an update on the Club Development plan. The consented scheme has only been amended in respect of timing where the acquisition of the Manor Road site has brought forward the building of the new Tennis courts. Once the courts are finished we will be able to develop the Manor Road site for housing which will provide significant additional funding for the scheme.

The architects are considering a more flexible way to build the new Clubhouse so that it can be delivered in phases. It will be multi-sport and we want it to be a go to place for the Community. There are some issues around RFU standards and accessibility which we will overcome. Plans will need to be re-submitted but will be at the building size will not change which means there will not have to be a new Planning application. If the new designs are accepted we may be able to go ahead with a Ground Floor facility until further funds are available. This would replicate everything we currently have i.e. bar, changing rooms, Squash Courts and kitchen along with a Steward's flat and allow us to exit the existing clubhouse before developing it.

The Halfway House will be extended to put a wall round the covered area and put in a bar. The brewery will bear the cost of new bar equipment. North West Timber have offered to sponsorship with materials.

There have been various discussions with housing developers. These will be easier once Manor Road is released next month. Discharging some pre-conditions and making a substantial start will lock in the Planning Permission. If the Club can do the work that will overcome drainage and access issues it will make the site more attractive to developers and increase its value.

Fitism have applied for Planning Permission for a gym on the bank between Pitch 1 (AGP) and Pitch 2. It will generate around £1k per month and be another asset for Club members.

In the future there may be potential for a full 11-a-side Hockey Pitch on Pitch 3. This will still leave us with sufficient pitches for Rugby. Currently the Hockey Club subs are double what the Rugby Club members pay and virtually all of it goes on renting pitches.

We are also talking to the RFU about moving the timings of our AGP pitch allocation so that it fits better with the our Rugby season i.e. we get more hours in the season and less hours in the closed season.

There will be a modest temporary Clubhouse and toilets for the new Tennis courts. This can be relocated when the new Clubhouse is being built.

Election of Officers/Directors

The following appointments were confirmed at the meeting:

Chairman - David Simpson; proposed by Neil Kelly, seconded by John Case

Treasurer - Andy Leach; proposed by Neil Kelly, seconded by John Case

Secretary - Rick Johnson; proposed by Paul Rigby, seconded by Steve Ashall

Neil Kelly expressed his thanks to all members for their support during his term of office as President and his confidence in the Executive and Board. President Elect, Varun Maharaj was confirmed as the new President. Varun thanked Neil for his support and guidance over the past year and wished all Club members every success for the forthcoming season.

Any Other Business

Simon Plumb noted that Vaudeville tickets were 50% sold and encouraged members to attend.
No further items were raised.

Rick Johnson
Secretary, Lymm RFC