

Lymm RFC Ltd
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
16th May 2024

Present

Neil Allen	Kerry Anderson	Arthur Ashcroft	Chris Askew	Adam Breeze	Keith Broadbent
Ted Broady	Aimee Cartwright	Colette Cartwright	John Cartwright	John Case	Derek Clark
Rick Condo	Andy Davies	David Dickinson	Adam Fletcher	Paul Foulkes	Stuart Freeman
Alan Gibson	Adam Halford	Tony Halford	Mark Hesketh	Will Hind	Andy Jackson
Fran Jennings	Rick Johnson	Neil Kelly	Malcolm Kimber	Andy Leach	Ian MacKenzie
Varun Maharaj	Peter Millachip	Danny McNicholl	Harold Molyneux	Willis Mungai	Dave Newton
Kate Newton	Malcolm Pritchard	Paul Rigby	Steve Rule	Peter Rutter	David Simpson
Martin Tompsett	Sara Worton	Tony Wright	James Yates	Kate Yeomans	

Apologies

Steve Ashall	Peter Cornelia	Ian Entwistle	Tim Jordan	Jim Knowles	Eric Quirk
John Hopkinson	Richard Membery	Simon Plumb	Peter Radcliffe	Jim Sproats	

Welcome and Introduction

The Secretary, Rick Johnson, opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees to what was the 7th AGM of Lymm RFC Ltd.

Previous Minutes

The minutes from the previous AGM were accepted.

Chairman's Report - David Simpson

On a general note I feel the club is in good shape in all areas of its activity and there is a real buzz about the place. Our monthly Exec meetings are upbeat and well supported and on the whole we are working well as a team.

Thanks to the efforts of Alan and his team the improvement in our catering, particularly on match days, is exceptional. After only 1 season in Nat 2 we have gained the reputation from both visiting clubs and players as having the best food in the league. The meals that Alan and his team provides for our senior players on week nights is a significant factor in attracting 30-40 boys to training on a Tuesday and Thursday. This commitment to training, in my view, translates into better performances on a Saturday.

Rugby

- I am sure you are all aware Lymm RFC 1st team remain in Nat 2 North (4th tier of the rugby pyramid) after finishing a creditable 10th winning 9, drawing 1 over the course of the season. For those who watched the boys play or have read the reports you will know that on another day they could have won a few more. Hopefully the experience they have gained will turn those narrow losses into wins next season.
- Lymm 2nd XV finished 8th winning 8, drawing 1. This 2nd team league is extremely competitive coming up against the likes of Caldby, Chester, Preston Grasshoppers and Sedgley Park most of whom will be paid for their day's work.

- Lymm 3rd XV finished the season 3rd having played 20, winning 13. Junior Colts finished 2nd losing out to Stockport by a single point.
- As you are all aware we are an amateur club in that we don't pay our players but we do strive to be the most professional outfit we can in the way that we prepare the boys on the training field and also the environment in which they operate. This includes high quality post-training food and match day food, high standard of transport for away games, full physio support along with assistance, should it be required, to fast track NHS waiting lists for injury assessment and/or treatment.
- I regularly travel on the away bus and my take is there is a fantastic spirit within the group. The fact they don't get paid has become a badge of honour coming up against and competing with semi-pro opposition.

For next season, funds allowing, we intend to improve changing room and physio facilities to further enhance the playing experience.

Unsung Heroes

I would like on behalf of the club to give special thanks to our team of volunteers that man the gates for our 1st team home games. I am not sure if you are aware but by volunteering to do this crucial piece of work they generally miss the first half of the game. (Total receipts for 2023/24 season of £14,259).

Thanks also those who keep our grounds, AGP and grass pitches in immaculate condition. It is worth noting that Lloyd, from the RFU, believes we have the best maintained AGP of the 26 in their stable. It is also worth noting that the Grounds team managed to keep the grass pitches in incredible shape given the rain we had during the winter months. Once again thank you to this group of volunteers.

Destination Lymm AGP

The condition of our AGP coupled with our operational management and catering staff have resulted in the Club becoming a go to destination for Sale Sharks, the RFU and Cheshire. This year Sale Sharks have used Lymm on numerous occasions in preparation to play opposition with artificial pitches. We have also hosted 3 Age Grade finals days along with a North of England Age Grade matches.

The Inner Warrior initiative – promoting girls and women's rugby has chosen Lymm to be one of its tournament hubs and we have already hosted one event. Hopefully Lymm will be entering a team in the not too distant future.

Performance Analysis

Please note all budgets / performance figures quoted are for the current financial year ending June 2024. The Treasurer's report will deal with the detailed analysis of the numbers for the year ending June 2023.

June 2024 will be the end of our second full year of setting departmental budgets and reporting performance against them on a monthly basis. Most departments are generally in line with expectation with the exception of Beechwood (House) and Tennis.

House

Turnover is predicted to be some 30% down against budget. This can be attributed to a number of factors, including:

- Overly ambitious forecasts for non-match days.
- Cancellation of Deloitte's marquee events. Not only did we lose the predicted revenue (£60k) for the Deloitte event we also lost the opportunity to host our own events in the marquee. We are attempting to mitigate some of this loss in revenue by holding social events within the club but given the constraints on numbers within the club this is unlikely to plug all of the gap.
- Delayed tennis court opening resulted in little or no revenue at the half-way house during the summer months.
- Inability to host catered events due to staff leaving and timing of replacements (spent this year working out exactly which skills are required and where).
- Matchday footfall lower than anticipated following our promotion, particularly away fans visiting Crouchley Lane (average match attendance 129 compared with 121 in the previous year).

- Failing to reach capacity for pre-match lunches.
- Home game clashing with panto performance.

Wet Margin

Forecast to be 54% for the year vs a budget of 62% however we would expect this to return to on or around budget moving forward as our new deal with the brewery and sales price increases start to take effect. It is worth noting that the take-up of membership cards and the associated 15% discount was significantly higher than anticipated and obviously impacts on the margin but will hopefully this will be off-set in terms of overall margin through increased sales. (Forecasted margin erosion on actual sales is estimated to be circa £12,000.

Dry margin

This again was affected by input costs but the decision was taken not to increase the cost to our members for match day catering and food re-charges to senior rugby and the M&Js during the current financial year. We forecast the negative impact of the higher input cost to be circa £23,000.

Staff cost as a percentage of turnover was significantly higher than budget and therefore impacted on our gross margin. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Lower than expected turnover resulting in the efficiency of staff.
- Incorrect allocation of costs eg staff operating the laundry, cleaning, general maintenance, room set up etc being coded to wet and dry sales – for next year's budget we will look in more granularity at exactly where wages and associated costs are consumed.
- Recent increases in the minimum wage will impact the year – these increases do not only affect those on minimum wage but the rest of the staff as differentials have to be maintained.

Tennis

Following the delayed opening due to a variety of technical issues on site during construction we are now forecasting £8,000 versus a budgeted £40,000 surplus in the year. Moving forward we are hopeful that we will make significant in-roads into achieving our target membership of 250 (currently 107).

Recent Clubhouse Improvements/Changes:

- The clearing and refurbishment of the stage area.
- Removal of pews (main area excluding blue room is now capable of hosting seated dining for 110.) It is our ambition to achieve this capacity for every home game next season.
- Forward facing tills including payment points have been introduced to speed up the bar, reduce queues and increase sales.
- Half-way house extension completed to increase the capacity, reduce queues and increase revenue (last year forecast turnover for the half-way house £45,000 in the current year up £19,000 on last year).

Five star food hygiene rating achieved – well done to all.

Planned improvements during the closed season:

- Introduction of stair lift to improve access to the club – funded by a kind donation from Paul and Brenda Johnston.
- Refurbishment of the corridor leading to the kitchen to allow for more efficient food preparation and storage and serving on match days.
- Purchase of new oven capable of keeping 100+ meals warm prior to serving.

Operational Update

Significant events in the year

- We organised, at the RFU's expense, to install a 2nd 3-phase 100 amp electricity supply dedicated to supplying the AGP floodlights. This means that the days of switching things off to prevent the fuses blowing are over and this, combined with a rebalancing of our phases, has meant our operations are not at risk through overloading our main fuse board (3 critical events in the year). The additional

capacity has meant that we can now invest in better kitchen equipment to support fully catered events. Removing the RFU from our supply also means we should be able to connect a large enough supply to the half-way house, therefore removing the need for a generator.

- Tennis courts completed and open for business. The planned completion date of April 2023 was missed due to a variety of technical issues and as a result we missed the summer recruitment opportunity.
- Caravan storage, subject to our request to extend our planning approval, will now be operated directly by the club. Once both compounds are full (end of July 2024) we would expect it to generate profits in excess of £25,000 per annum.
- Fitism – still keen to locate their business at Crouchley Lane. The original plan was for Fitism to locate their gym on the bank between Pitches 1 and 2. This location, however, was not seen as ideal by both our local councillor and Warrington BC planning department. We are now proposing to locate it behind the half-way house in the car park area which we feel will be much better received as it has far less of an impact on the green belt. However due to a technical planning issue Fitism is now required to submit a new planning application which they are in the process of doing.
- Sale of Manor Road – at the last AGM we stated that it was our intention to divest of the Manor Road site as soon as the new courts in the walled garden were complete. The rationale behind this decision was that we were facing increased debt servicing costs, through rising interest rates, at a time when we felt the value of the site was static at best. This sale has now been completed generating £570,000 after costs. This equates to a profit of £533,000 after the costs of purchase and the costs related to the granting of planning permission are netted off.
- Face recognition door entry system. We have now had installed and commissioned face recognition on the main clubhouse door, the changing room corridor and the tennis pavilion. This negates the need for keys and can also be programmed to restrict entry by individual at certain times of the day should that be required.

Insurance

Andrew Dougall and I have spent the last couple of years ensuring that our insurance cover in all areas of the club is adequate and appropriate. We are now both reasonably confident that we are in a good place and our broker fully understands who we are and what we are. Moving forward the annual reviews should be a much more straight forward process. Please note we have been liaising with the LTA to ensure all of their records are up to date as some of our insurances are covered through our LTA affiliation.

Club Communications

Within our membership individuals prefer different ways to receive information from the club. We have formed a small Communications sub- group to look at how we communicate, website, email, social media, posters, letter etc to make sure that all of our members have access to consistent information. We also need to ensure that our membership has access to our goods and services. Not everybody is comfortable with internet based transactions or QR codes and although this is ultimately the future we need to manage the transition; we need to be there for everyone.

Donations and Sponsorship

In the current year we will receive around £60,000 in the form of sponsorship and donations of which 2/3rds came from 2 donors. It is an area that we are particularly weak in but it is incredibly time consuming doing the deals in the first place and then subsequently staying in touch and making them feel loved on an on-going basis.

The first team kit is up for replacement and we will be looking for some significant sponsorship, hopefully covering the next 2 years, but time is not our friend as we will need to be placing orders, ideally by the end of June, mid-July. If anyone knows of any companies, individuals that may wish to support us please let me know.

I am in discussion with Director of Rugby, Adam and a couple of members of the first team to look to mobilise the senior players network to obtain sponsorship on a commission basis.

Development

Consented scheme is for

- New AGP – complete
- 4 no flood lit tennis courts – complete
- 180 space parking – partially complete
- Coach parking – partially complete
- 5 detached houses on north car park
- 5 new houses to the south of the existing clubhouse
- 4 new dwellings in the existing clubhouse
- New clubhouse 22,000 sq ft

At the last AGM we announced that as soon as the tennis club relocated to the walled garden we would start to market the Manor Road site for sale. The site was sold with the benefit of planning and yielded after costs £570,000.

Following the granting of planning permission for 4 dwellings on the Manor Road site the original strategy was to try and identify a partner who in return for the Manor Road site plus the residential schemes at Crouchley Lane would build our new clubhouse. The logic behind this was any cashflow issues could be dealt with by the developer/builder and we could ensure that we wouldn't be homeless at any point during the project. This approach did not result in identifying any suitable partner but to be fair we were trying to do this during very difficult times of Covid and then more latterly rising interest rates and rising costs.

Although property prices in Lymm have held their own, build costs have increased circa 25% in the last 3 years which has a double negative effect on our project in that it increases the cost of our new clubhouse build and reduces the residual land value of our building plots. So in summary we are of the view that our build costs for the 'as consented designs' would be at least £4m and a likely net receipt for the sale of the building plot and existing clubhouse is probably of the order of £2.5m which would leave us a shortfall of £1.5m which even allowing for the offer of a substantial soft loan would be too greater gap at this time.

The club is not averse to carrying some debt, as we have shown in the past, but we do need to have a robust plan to service any interest and ultimately repay it.

As highlighted earlier in my Beechwood report our plan to generate surpluses through wet and dry sales is not yet there and surpluses from the tennis section have also not materialised so any increase in borrowings would not be responsible, particularly given that we already have outstanding loans to the tune of £600,000 which will require servicing and repaying over the coming years.

We are not in any way abandoning our ultimate goal but we do need to put our thinking caps on as to how we may address the predicted current shortfall and therefore I am proposing that we report back to the membership in 6 months' time with an update of our latest thinking. In the meantime we will make modest improvements to our existing building to ensure that we are compliant on all health and safety grounds and that the playing and social experiences are as good as they can be within the constraints of our Beechwood home.

Thank You

Lymm Rugby club has volunteers at its heart and we are fortunate to have a very talented team along with Kate, Alan and his team looking after the day to day operations and ensuring the longevity of the club. I would like to personally thank our President, the Board, all the members of the Exec, the volunteers of the M&J, tennis, squash and hockey sections and all those that support our world famous Panto and Vaudeville events.

There is an incredible number of volunteer man hours invested in our wonderful club however we always need more either to run and manage new activities/initiatives or spread the load on existing ones so if you feel you have skills and can help please get in contact with either Will Hind or me.

In response to a comment from Tony Halford that the Club may need more car parking space to hold Representative Rugby matches and events, the Chairman noted he has been speaking with local landowners to see if they are amenable to working with us. Adam Halford cautioned against using land which may not be suitable. He also noted that building residential properties in the car park could lead to potential difficulties and constraints on the Club's activities.

Treasurer's Report - Andy Leach

Fellow members and friends, it gives me great pleasure to present my fifth 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 Colm 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 2023

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 27 March 2024 and were filed at Companies House and with the Charities Commission before their respective deadlines of 31 March 2024 and 30 April 2024, and the relevant tax returns with HMRC before its filing deadline of 31 March 2024.

As is often the case these days, statutory 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 would consolidate 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 accounts of LRL for the year to 30 June 2023 record a deficit of £54,462, which was a marked increase on the prior year deficit of £4,547. Whilst there are a range of factors which impacted this – which I cover later – there are two key factors, both of which were outside our control, which contributed to this deficit. These were:

- Interest cost increased by £18,000 over prior year, predominantly due to the increase in Base Rates experienced over the period which moved from an average rate of 0.4% in FY22, to an average of 3.17% in FY23. As you will appreciate, this situation has worsened further in FY24 when the average for the year (assuming no further change by 30 June) will be 5.23%. In addition to the Base Rate, our interest-bearing loans attract a margin of 2.75% - hence our “all in” interest rate in FY23 was 5.92%, compared with the prior year of 3.15% (+88%).
- There was a charge of £19,000 to profit and loss in the year relating to irrecoverable VAT on the tennis court construction cost. Whilst this figure has still to be finalised, and may indeed reduce, hindsight suggests that it would have been more appropriate to capitalise this as part of the capital cost of construction. This compares with a VAT credit of £2,000 in FY22.

A summary of the overall financial performance for the year to 30 June 2023 aggregating all the entities in the group compared with prior years is as follows:

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Donations	40	34	31	59	23	31
Subs	70	73	61	86	77	75
Sponsorship	28	18	2	22	21	23
Bar surplus	39	23	2	52	28	46
Panto surplus	26	18	0	33	27	23
Summer events surplus	15	0	0	0	34	24
Grants	0	13	79	0	0	0
Crowdfunding	0	0	15	0	0	0
AGP income	19	17	13	13	0	0
Storage/parking	10	15	20	0	0	0
Other income net of other direct costs	29	(2)	23	(8)	(51)	(31)
Gross profit	276	209	246	257	159	191
VAT partial exemption	(19)	(2)	5	(3)	(8)	8
Establishment costs	(53)	(37)	(26)	(36)	(36)	(30)
Playing costs	(98)	(44)	(10)	(57)	(53)	(47)
Grounds costs	(20)	(17)	(9)	(15)	(17)	(9)
Lease and repair costs	(11)	(8)	(9)	(5)	(8)	(11)
Salaries	(52)	(47)	(36)	(42)	(19)	(19)
Accountancy and legal	(9)	(6)	(12)	(4)	(12)	(5)
Miscellaneous	(3)	(9)	(5)	(8)	(7)	(1)
Donations made	0	0	0	0	(6)	(7)
Finance costs	(38)	(20)	(18)	(25)	(23)	(25)
Depreciation	(26)	(23)	(20)	(21)	(6)	(8)
Total costs	(329)	(213)	(140)	(216)	(195)	(154)
Surplus/Deficit	(53)	(4)	106	41	(36)	37

In addition to the two adverse factors referenced earlier, key observations on the above are:

- In 2022/23 the 1st XV league structure changed, cutting fixtures from 26 to 22 whilst reducing the geographic coverage to the North West. Whilst this had a slight beneficial impact of travel costs (down £3k), the negative impact on bar revenues and general clubhouse traffic was undoubtedly considerably greater.
- Having said this, the bar surplus made good progress in the year as activity began to return to pre-covid levels.

- Whilst Deloitte returned for their first post-Covid event, logistics were sufficiently challenging that we were unable to put on additional marquee events as we had done in the pre-covid period. However, the £15k surplus was welcome given the previous 3 years without any such income.
- There was a push on sponsorship income which yielded excellent successes, increasing our revenues to £28k.
- The Panto worked its magic again as capacity and the number of performances returned to pre-covid levels.
- Combined, the surplus from these 4 activities – sponsorship, bar, Panto, summer events – in the year was £108k - broadly in line with the average surplus achieved over the 3 pre- pandemic years of £111k.
- Excluding grants (solely a feature of the pandemic) the other categories of revenue were consistent with FY22.
- Excluding VAT and interest (referenced earlier) our costs increased from £205k to £272k. Wage and general cost inflation was a factor in this as can be seen in the increase of £21k in establishment and wage costs.
- The two categories of cost where the greatest increase was experienced were grounds – largely due to the timings of maintenance programmes – and playing. Of the £32k increase in playing costs, £27k was attributable to player catering costs (Senior, M&J, visiting teams) which had previously not been separately recognised as a playing cost, but absorbed in the general costs of food provision. The remaining increase in playing costs of £5k was spread across a range of categories including physio, coaching, kit and equipment.

Adopting a similar methodology, the aggregated balance sheet at 30 June 2023 was as follows:

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fixed assets	1955	1,605	1,594	1,561	1,501	1,487
Stock	14	4	5	5	7	24
Debtors	66	32	18	3	55	89
Cash	15	75	62	19	45	56
Creditors	(185)	(41)	(35)	(45)	(101)	(127)
	(90)	70	50	(18)	6	42
Borrowings	(844)	(601)	(564)	(571)	(576)	(572)
Net Assets	1,021	1,074	1,080	972	931	967

Things to note here are:

- Freehold land and buildings at cost of c£1.5m, were valued by Savills in May 2022 at c£2.8m. This included the Manor Road site (cost £37k) which was sold in February 2024 (see below).
- Fixed asset additions during the year amounted to £375k, largely relating to the construction of the new tennis courts and associated enabling works.
- The increase in debtors over FY22 principally related to balances associated with the Deloitte summer event held in June 2023.
- The creditor balance is high as it includes a fixed asset creditor of £155k relating to the tennis court construction which was not completed until after the year-end, and the courts being officially opened in September.
- The investment in the new courts and related enabling works was funded through a combination of own resources, a new £100k loan from Handelsbanken and a £250k, 10-year interest free loan from the LTA - the latter being only partially drawn down at the year-end.
- In addition to this loan with Handelsbanken, we have a £40k overdraft facility in place. Our relationship with Handelsbanken remains very positive.

Sale of Manor Road

The Manor Road site has been recently sold to a builder/developer. Given the high cost of holding the development site (given the sharp rise in interest rates) and escalating building costs, the Board decided that the best option was to sell the site sooner rather than later. A process commenced in October 2023 and concluded in February 2024. The net proceeds from the sale (after all transaction costs) amounted to £570k, yielding a profit of £533k profit in LGL (the entity that owned the property). This profit has been subsequently donated to LRL, to allow us to make a significant repayment of debt whilst retaining a good level of cash reserves to support future development opportunities.

As this transaction has had a significant positive impact on the above balance sheet, it makes sense to set out the position at February 2024, which reflects this transaction. This is as follows:

Position as at 29 February 2024, post sale of Manor Road			
		Combined	
	Notes	£	
Fixed assets			
Property & buildings (nbv)	a	1,514,555	
Tennis courts		380,036	
Other fixed assets (nbv)		135,571	
Total fixed assets			2,030,162
Debtors		27,950	
Stock		8,907	
Cashatbank	b	107,580	
Creditors		(15,998)	
Balances on club cards		(6,545)	
Net current assets			121,894
Financing liabilities			
Handelsbanken interest only loan	c	325,000	
LTA Loan	d	250,000	
RFU "Winter Survival Fund" Loan	e	45,000	
Squash loan	f	6,000	
Chehire LTA Loan	g	5,000	
			631,000
Net asset value			1,521,056
Notes:			
a The property was valued in November 2020 by Savills at £2.3m.			
b Current overdraft of £40k with intention to increase to £75k.			
c This loan is interest only with a term to 31 January 2027.			
d Interest free repayable in 8 equal annual installments commencing in August 2025.			
e Interest 2%, repayable in 96 monthly instalments from June 2024.			
f Interest free loan repayable in September 2024.			
g Interest free loan from Cheshire LTA. Repayable £1k/£2k/£2k on 30 June 2024/25/26.			

Year to June 2024

Through the current financial year we have continued to invest in our facilities and build our capabilities and offer. Inevitably this requires investment in that cost base ahead of revenue generation and whilst, inevitably, it always takes longer than expected to grow revenues than costs, good progress is being made.

Hopefully, members will agree and have experienced first-hand the enhanced experience – both social and sporting – that the Club and our facilities provide. Areas of particular note include:

- Having changed our licence such that we are now able to accommodate non-member events as an additional revenue-stream, we are now seeing a steady flow of events being scheduled to broaden our reach and reduce the seasonality that comes with predominantly winter sports.
- The positive impact that Alan and Lydia Troy continue to have on our food and drink offer, the recruitment of a dedicated experienced chef and general clubhouse activity levels and management.
- Whilst the 6-month delay in the opening of the new tennis courts was disappointing as it meant we missed the opportunity for a membership drive ahead on the 2023 summer tennis season, momentum is now building, albeit the next 18 months will be important in membership numbers reaching the business plan objective.
- As noted earlier, the Panto returned to its normal performance and capacity regime which will continue going forward.
- Deloitte are not returning this year for their big North-West staff Ball this June – preferring to plan this as a biennial event instead. To cover this revenue loss at least partially, 2 Sportsman's dinners, a Lady's dinner and 3 Vaudeville performances are scheduled for June – all in the clubhouse.
- The promotion of the 1st XV to the National Leagues has provided a welcome return to 26 league matches in the season. This has provided enhanced revenue opportunities, offset by a necessary rise in playing costs with travel, physio and general support costs all increasing. Hopefully, with the success enjoyed this season and a place in National 2 North confirmed for next season, we will be able to attract more spectators and build on these incremental revenue streams going forward.
- We have taken over directly the caravan storage business from the third party we have been working with. This should allow us to increase revenues from this activity at little additional cost.

Whilst the surplus generated on the sale of Manor Road has provided us with welcome debt reduction (halving our annual cash obligations to Handelsbanken) and provided surplus cash, it will continue to be challenging to balance the books in an environment where cost inflation continues relatively unchecked, all whilst driving our development ambitions. To date we have invested over £1m in the development project. We will continue to work to deliver an outcome which is exciting, fit for purpose and sustainable all within our financial capabilities and wherewithal – but it will take time and (even more!) patience as we juggle the range of demands placed on our successful amateur community club.

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.

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 a request from Keith Broadbent, the Treasurer said he did not have a breakdown of staff salaries to hand and, in any case, did not believe it would be appropriate to disclose such personal employee information to the membership. Keith expressed some concern about the Club's ability to repay the current loans from mid-2025. The Chairman commented that the 2 year payment holiday for the LTA loan was designed to give time to build membership and despite the slow start he was confident that Tennis would be bringing in enough income to pay its way and service the LTA loan by Year 2 or 3.

Colette Cartwright asked whether the situation with Deloitte's not having marquee events this year was permanent. Andy responded that there have been a lot of changes at Deloitte's but he was still hopeful they would return possibly in 2025.

Senior Rugby Report - Adam Fletcher

What an amazing season. Once again, I would like to thank the Executive Committee for all the support, they have given me and the squad throughout the season. Thanks also to Peter Millachip and Olly Brown for their continued hard work with the 2nd and 3rd. And a massive thanks to Andy Davies, the Coaches, Physios Vicky and Matt and Club Captain James Yates.

Also, I must extend a thanks to Alan, Lydia and the staff for looking after the players on a Tuesday and Thursday training nights as well as on Saturday's. The food has been outstanding and has played a really positive part to our success this season. Thank you to Malcolm Kimber for taking on the 4th Official role, and to Paul Rigby and Andy Jackson for their match day support along with all the match report scribes and last but not least, Chris Askew and his Grounds team for looking after the pitches.

This season was a trip into the unknown of National League rugby. This time last year it was looking like 13 trips to the unknown of the SW of the country, luckily, we were reprieved and have been again for next season. The season had it all; it's brutal, enjoyable, stressful, and super competitive. To finish 10th and have 9 wins (could have been more) is evidence of a successful season. The lads deserve great credit, they have worked exceptionally hard and dedicated a lot of time and effort into the season. There have been some great performances, notably Sheffield Tigers, Hull and Otley at home, but it will be hard to ever beat the feeling after Tom Shard knocked over a last second drop goal to win away at Fylde.

The 2nd team have found it tough at times especially against the likes of Caldy and Sedgley Park. As we know it is a hard league and we are a young team in transition. However, there have been some outstanding performances and again the lads need to take great credit in the performances they put in weekly.

The Eagles have had another strong season and deserve their high placed finished. The likes of Martin Henderson, Chris Kinsey and Jez Ure are keeping the average age of the team up. I'm looking forward to celebrating with them all tomorrow night at the Annual Dinner.

Looking forward to next season

As many of you know we have had a couple of notable retirements this season in Gavin Woods and James Kimber, and Jordan Widdrington is moving away for work. I think you will agree that they have played more than a significant part in our success over the past 10 seasons or so and I am hoping it is not the last we see of all 3 of them on the pitch.

Unfortunately losing Gavin is a double whammy as he is stepping away from his coaching responsibilities. I'm actively trying my utmost to bring in a suitable replacement. There has been some interest but nothing concrete as of yet.

Player's feedback has taken place with a review of the season, and we are well and truly already planning for season 2024/25 with the aim to cement ourselves as a Level 4 club.

Tony Wright asked whether Macclesfield had completed their appeal against being allocated to National League 2 West. Adam Fletcher confirmed he had spoken to coaching staff at Macclesfield and they have reluctantly accepted the situation.

Mini & Juniors Rugby Section Report - Will Hind

The M&J section currently has 374 registered players and has hosted the Cheshire U16s Finals, Junior Colts Cheshire Finals, Junior Colts Halbro NW Colts League Cup finals this season. All of which have produced good turnovers and recognition for the Club.

Over 97% of coaches are DBS checked and we have made great strides in making sure we have good compliance.

Adam Breeze has developed a coaching handbook and we are now, with the help of Jonathan Cartwright, implementing some minimum standards for players and coaches at different ages. There is now a defined pathway and expectation for skills that follows the RFU pathway and focuses on our teams and coaching support.

The section would benefit from more interaction between ages, more members of the Senior teams being involved and more publicity.

Academy

The Academy is progressing well but needs more senior or 'other voice' input. The Junior Colts lost in the semi final of the both the Cheshire Cup and League Cup and came second in the league. The U16 team won the Cheshire Cup.

The Club will have both Junior and Senior Colts for the upcoming season so the need for coaching is high. We will be swapping training nights around because Lymm High School want to train their senior team on Tuesdays to enable more Wednesday fixtures. This means we may get more access to some coaching on Thursdays and that younger ages, who have trained on Thursdays will switch to Tuesdays.

Minis

The Minis are doing very well. Friday nights have been very successful and have developed links through to Senior Rugby with guards of honour etc working well. To make sure we get the recruitment of players (and parents) Ian Cope is running our inaugural Primary School Rugby festival on 22th May with 7 schools and 100+ kids.

Regional Development Officer

To aid the development of players and retention into senior teams as well as supporting the senior school (who are the life blood of the recruitment) we are putting forward the idea of employing an RDO. The detailed plan of this is still being worked on but essentially if we can get this in we may need to look for sponsorship to help.

School Scholarships

Working with the school and the RFU we are putting together a rugby scholarship scheme at the school. This will give the players who are chosen a BTEC in PE (equivalent to 3 A-levels) and will be dependent on rugby skills. This development would be the first in a state school and enable another rugby teacher to be employed as well as ensuring that rugby is firmly back on the school programmes.

Women's and Girls Rugby

We have a strong desire to build a women and girls section for Lymm and with the Women's Rugby World Cup approaching this is great timing. It has always been difficult because of the communal nature of the changing rooms. We are committed to this and have gradually got a team of volunteers. The RFU Inner Warrior programme has asked to start using us more regularly next season so we need to try and capitalise on this momentum. The RDO could help in this regard too. With the combined efforts of the Inner Warrior, ourselves, Shale Sharks Ladies and support from the RFU we think that at least some social, pitch up and play can be happening in the coming season.

Friday Nights

The success of Friday nights, pioneered at first by Gareth Neal, has been very positive. We took the opportunity of a cancelled booking to book some in bulk and have filled every slot with (as previous) some M&J games. On this basis then when the allocation of the AGP was being discussed we took the view of asking for it within our host club allocation, at the expense of some time on Sunday mornings. We have then booked and paid for the hours back on Sundays. This should enable more M&J activity, senior/vets pitch and play nights and women's rugby (who could then have the changing dedicated to them on given nights)

Thanks

Thanks for the help and support to the volunteers:

- Ian Cope (Banking, Risk Wealth and People manager and MBA Student) for being Minis Chair and organising the Primary schools festival
- Paul Wardle (Senior Project Manager) for fixtures and AGP co-ordination
- Ralph Tucker (CEO Cotswold company – The Home of Forever Furniture) as Safeguarding lead
- John Case (aspiring golfer) for all the work on membership and digital support
- Adam Breeze (International Expansion and Inward Investment specialist) for coaching co-ordination and training support
- Alan and Lydia and their team for all the catering
- Kate for all the membership and purchase support
- Lal Walker for the excellent posters and adverts
- Chris Askew and the Grounds team
- The Executive for all the support
- All the Volunteers who give up time and the Parents who stand in the cold and act as the taxi service

Squash Section - Richard Mambery

I would like to start by extending our thanks to the Club and it's Executive for the ongoing support the Squash Section receives for premises and facilities. New lighting and heating has made a substantial difference.

Unfortunately membership numbers, have marginally dropped over the last year. Although the Squash club has had an improved player engagement with several evenings held at the clubhouse including our end of season dinner.

We continue to have active club nights on Sundays and Tuesdays as well as excellent participation in the North West Counties Squash League matches on a Thursday night.

Team league finishing positions for winter league were:

- Lymm 1st team played in Division 4, with a hard fight to stay up in that Division, taken down to the last match of the season. After an strong initial start in the league, multiple injuries meant the team struggled. Many thanks to Gavin Royston for his captaincy, even whilst unable to play.
- Lymm 2nd played in Division 5 and finished in the top half of the division, having played in the upper half for nearly all the season. This is a reflection on the number of players now playing league Squash and the efforts of the 2nd team captain Martin Tompset. Many thanks.

Tennis Section - Stewart Freeman

The 2023 tennis season started at the old Manor Road site on the 1st April 2023 due to experiencing delays in the completion of the new floodlit courts at Beechwood. Interim membership packages were therefore set up to cover the summer period ending September 2023. Membership numbers at the end of April were 51; 37 adults and 14 juniors, raising £3,590 in fees.

Membership targets were agreed to achieve 153 in total, 86 adults and 67 juniors, by the 30th September 2023 which would incorporate the move to the new courts which went ahead on the 15th July. A Grand Opening event took place on 10th September 2023 and by the end of the month, membership had increased to 132, 88 adults and 44 juniors, raising a further £5,297 in fees.

The shortfall in membership numbers was put down to existing tennis players at other clubs having paid their annual membership in the April at the start of the traditional tennis season along with a much lower than expected take up of reduced membership offers to those playing other sports, Rugby, Hockey and Squash at the Club. However it is pleasing to note that a further 81 members have joined for the main summer months.

For the first time in the club's history we would now be able to play during the winter months and therefore membership packages were set up to cover this, both annual commencing 1st October, along with a winter only membership covering the period October to March 2024. At the start of 2024 membership numbers

stood at 113, 85 adults and 28 juniors, which raised £8,936 in fees, a reduction anticipated due to members not renewing who didn't want to play tennis over the winter months.

Membership packages were again reviewed in February and new ones launched commencing on a date of purchase basis, which is a full 12 months membership irrespective of the date joined and incorporating monthly direct debit options on all packages in alignment with rugby membership. These offer the most flexible and competitively priced packages of all our local tennis clubs.

Even with these new packages and advertising on social media, posters in the village and a half page advert, on page 2 in Lymm Life, we have failed to impact membership numbers as we had anticipated with current figures standing at 106; 81 adults, 25 juniors, with annual fees equating to £3,228 from new members and renewals since March that is only 19 members.

Despite being disappointed with the current membership numbers, initiatives are planned to support increasing them as follows;

- Free fun tennis sessions run by our Head coach for each rugby M&J age group, 2 completed to date, big thank you to Ian Cope for making this happen.
- Table outside the clubhouse this Saturday for Lymm May Queen and clubhouse staff supporting in the village distributing leaflets.
- Open Day 30th June in conjunction with Lymm Festival, free for all adults and juniors to attend.
- Agree with other sections to present at their committee meetings to reinforce reduced membership packages available to their playing members.
- Continue advertising on both social media and in the village.

A new Head Coach was appointed in March, Luke Grantham, Level 4. He is also Head Coach at Heaton Sports Club, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, where he has transformed their tennis section with overall membership at capacity and with 120 juniors involved in regular coaching. He has recently implemented a new coaching programme for us and is keen to revisit local schools as well as the other sports sections in order to drive both coaching attendance and membership.

Team training has also been implemented with the view of improving competitive team performances. We strongly believe that if our Ladies and Mens teams can climb the Divisions, both first teams currently in Division 4 and 5 respectively, this would also attract more members/players.

Pay and Play has been an option with a total of 84 individual bookings in 10 months since the opening of the new courts, bringing income of £961. This is definitely an opportunity area as there is still plenty of court availability and we will be looking to agree a reduced fee of £10 per hour, currently £12, for the summer months to drive this.

Overall feedback from both existing and new members are that our new courts and facilities are superb and this has been replicated by players from travelling competitive teams. Social tennis on Saturday, Sunday and Monday is thriving with most members choosing this as their preferred option to play.

A massive thank you to Alan, Lydia and their team for providing food and drinks on match nights as well as supporting other events the club has run and to the Grounds staff for their ongoing maintenance of the Walled Garden area.

It would be remiss of me not to recognise Pete Radcliffe, my predecessor, for his efforts in contributing to the project in moving our courts from the old Manor Road site. This was recognised by the Lawn Tennis Association where following a strong nomination, he received the Cheshire Volunteer of the Year award which was truly justified.

David Simpson asked why Pay-and-Play has not been as popular as expected. Stewart responded that the LTA had pushed this to us very forcefully during the loan negotiations but he has contacted both Stockton Heath and Appleton Tennis Clubs and they are having the same low level of take up. The reduction from £10 to £12 is an attempt to encourage more people to take up this option. He also confirmed that increased advertising is being done outside the Club's membership. It was also noted that John Case is putting in place new email arrangements that will allow easier and more effective communications to the whole of the Club's membership base i.e across all sections.

Hockey Club - Ian Entwistle

Firstly, a big thank to the Rugby club for its continued support and use of the facilities throughout the season. Alan and all the staff have been tremendous and are a credit to the Club.

Season review

Mens section (Northwest Hockey)

- The Mens 1st team retained their league status in the Division 3 South league finishing 8th with 24 points.
- The Mens 2nd team were unfortunately relegated from Division 5 South Central after finishing bottom of the division.
- The Mens 3rd team finished top of Division 7 South Central but as they were entered as a 'Development' squad they couldn't be promoted.

Ladies Section (Northwest Hockey) –

- The Ladies 1st team were unfortunately relegated from the Premier Division despite a valiant effort under their new coach.
- The Ladies 2nd team retained their league status in Division 3 West finishing 6th with 29 points.
- The Ladies 3rd team narrowly missed out of promotion from Division 5 South Central finishing 3rd with a highly respectable 41 points.
- The Ladies 4th team won Division 6 South Central as champions! Winning 16 of their 20 games.

The Badgers and Beavers teams both performed well with 5 of the Badger's boys stepping up to the Mens 3rd team for their senior debuts towards the end of the season. A fantastic achievement for them and the club which is a credit to their coaches hard work.

Off Season

The season may have finishing but the hockey still goes on with Lymm entering teams in the following –

- Northwest Master 500 (Veterans team)
- Timperley summer league (Mens & Ladies)
- Armitage summer league (Ladies)
-

Future plans

In an attempt to attract more members to the club the committee have decided to introduce a few initiatives:

- Refer a friend (with both parties receiving reduced membership fees). Family membership (with siblings receiving reduced membership fees per child).
- Back to Hockey (for new and returning players to take up the sport. Dates booked in at the leisure centre starting 20/07 for 6 weeks).

Hopefully with these initiatives and our continued efforts to form stronger links with local schools we will return to hockey for the new season in a stronger position.

Election of Officers/Directors

The following appointments were confirmed at the meeting:

Chairman - David Simpson; proposed by Tony Halford, seconded by Malcolm Pritchard

Treasurer - Andy Leach; proposed by Steve Ashall seconded by Mark Hesketh

Secretary - Rick Johnson; proposed by Tony Halford, seconded by Steve Ashall

President, Varun Maharaj, commented that he felt the position of President Elect, which was introduced by Neil Kelly 2 years earlier, was one which had helped him fulfil his role as President. As such the Presidents had met and appointed John Cartwright as President Elect for the next 12 months.

Any Other Business

David Simpson asked members to support the upcoming Vaudeville performances which have not sold out.

Sara Worton requested the Club sought some storage space for equipment for the pantomime.

No other matters were raised.

Rick Johnson

Secretary, Lymm RFC