

**Lymm RFC Ltd**  
**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025**

**Present**

Kerry Anderson	Arthur Ashcroft	Andy Aspinall	Chris Askew	Roger Atherton	Adam Breeze
Keith Broadbent	Ted Broady	Colette Cartwright	John Cartwright	John Case	Rick Condo
Ian Cope	Jo Cope	Janet Cliffe	Peter Cornelia	Andy Davies	Paul Foulkes
Adam Halford	Tony Halford	Yvonne Halford	Mark Hesketh	Will Hind	John Hopkinson
Andy Jackson	Fran Jennings	Paddy Jennings	Rick Johnson	Tim Jordan	Roy Kettle
Neil Kelly	Malcolm Kimber	Andy Leach	Julian Llewellyn	Ian MacKenzie	Paul Maguire
Varun Maharaj	John Millachip	Peter Millachip	Richard Membery	Danny McNicholl	Harold Molyneux
Gareth Neal	Dave Newton	Charlie Osborne	Simon Plumb	Malcolm Pritchard	Peter Radcliffe
Peter Rutter	David Simpson	Martin Tompsett	Alan Wilkinson	Alex Wigfield	Sara Worton
Tony Wright	James Yates	Phil Young			

**Apologies**

Neil Allen	Steve Ashall	Aimee Cartwright	Derek Clarke	Adam Fletcher	Stuart Freeman
Paul Rigby	Steve Rule	Jim Sproats			

**Welcome and Introduction**

The Secretary, Rick Johnson, opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees to what was the 8<sup>th</sup> AGM of Lymm RFC Ltd.

**Previous Minutes**

The minutes from the previous AGM were accepted.

**Chairman's Report - David Simpson**

In last year's report I outlined a number of initiatives that we intended to embark upon in this current year. Although we have not completed them all we have made good progress on many fronts which I will detail later in the report.

The atmosphere and enthusiasm at the club has been fantastic and although we have our challenges on a day to day basis Lymm RFC remains a fun place to be the vast majority of the time. Running Lymm RFC is like running a business, the key difference being is that the majority of the work carried out is by volunteers. It is truly remarkable what we achieve

*Rugby*

Lymm RFC 1<sup>st</sup> team after finishing 10<sup>th</sup> in their first season in National 2 North have exceeded all expectation finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> this season winning 19 of their games and beating all of the other National 2 North teams at least once. At one point in the season we were top of the league and contemplating what we'd do if we got promotion! It is worth noting that 75% of the appearances were made by players who had come through our Mini, Junior and Colts system and incredibly 29% of the players were aged 20 and under at the start of the season and 64% were 25 or younger so it all bodes well for the future. We capped off the season with a stylish 72-28 victory over Hull Ionians supported by a 100 strong guard of honour and watched by a big

crowd on a beautiful sunny day at Crouchley Lane. The atmosphere on the day was unbelievable. Lymm's current scrum half, Cal Morris, was selected to play for the Barbarians. In the same week Alex Mitchell, former member of our M&Js, was selected in the squad for the Lions Tour for Australia, not bad for a small village in Cheshire.

Lymm 2<sup>nds</sup> once again finished in 8th position winning 9 games over the course of the season.

Lymm 3<sup>nds</sup> once again finished 3rd, having played 22 games, winning 17. Mark Williams is leaving us to pursue an opportunity closer to home. I would like to thank him for all his efforts over the season. I am pleased to announce however that Paul Arnold will be replacing him as our Forwards coach. We are all very much looking forward to working with him.

You may or may not already be aware but the RFU in their wisdom has decided that it is our turn to be put in National 2 West. The rules state in the event that teams in the North are required to move to the West it will be calculated on mileage so this would suggest that the most southerly clubs would go to the West. Two seasons ago Chester received the poisoned chalice and were sent West, last season, following Macclesfield's promotion, they were the most southerly team and they replaced Chester in this league. As a result of promotions and relegations there is a requirement for 2 North teams to be allocated to the West for next season which if you apply the RFU mileage rules would be Chester and Macclesfield. However there is a small clause within the document which states the RFU can disregard the rules if they deem it to be in the best interest of rugby. They have deemed that for Macclesfield's and Chester's player welfare, player recruitment and retention and the financial burden they are to be exempt from the process. Therefore on the mileage rules the next two clubs are Lymm and Sheffield Tigers. We don't think that any of the northern clubs should be travelling to Cornwall to play its fixtures but given there is no right of appeal we are fairly resigned to the fact we are going to spend at least one season in National 2 West. It is worth noting that nobody from the RFU has spoken to us to understand the impact on our player welfare, player recruitment and retention or the financial implications of their decision. We estimate the additional travel costs alone to be circa £50,000. We also expect a reduction in income as for some home fixtures we wouldn't expect many away supporters to travel, given the vast distances involved. We have written to the RFU putting our case as an amateur, volunteer lead, community club asking them to explain why we are able to shoulder this burden better than commercial organisations that pay their players.

### *Women's Rugby*

The women's game is typically played on a Sunday afternoon ie a similar time to junior and senior colts. The formation of our new changing room now allows for that so the only thing missing is a team.

We have been in discussions with the RFU and Lymm High School to design a job description which would allow us to employ an individual who would assist with rugby at the high school, promote rugby within local schools and colleges along with developing women's and girls section at Lymm RFC. The cost of this role would be shared, not necessarily equally, by the 3 organisations. Will Hind is leading this initiative and we are hopeful to be able to announce something more concrete within the next few weeks.

### Performance Analysis

Please note all budget/performance figures quoted are for the current financial year ending June 2025 and they are included to give a direction of travel rather than an actual result. The Treasurer's report will deal with the detailed analysis of the numbers for the year ending June 2024.

June 2025 will be the end of our 3<sup>rd</sup> full year of setting departmental budgets and reporting against them on a monthly basis.

- House – when compiling the budget for Lymm Beechwood we did not include for any marquee events which is a standalone activity and should generate a minimum of circa £20k profit with an opportunity to double that if we sell all the events.

Excluding the marquee, turnover is expected to be down around 15% against budget with general bar sales being down 25%, general catering being down 50%. The halfway house bar and catering is on budget with a year to date turnover of £40k. Wet and dry margin is in line with budget. Despite being behind budget on turnover staff wages are on budget levels year to date and this obviously means our staff wages as a percentage of sales is above budget. There are a variety of reasons for this two of which is the increase in the minimum wage and the increased costs of National Insurance.

- Tennis – I think everyone would agree that the tennis courts within the walled garden are a fantastic facility. The membership continues to grow and we currently stand at 150 up from 107 this time last year. We would have hoped to have got nearer to our target of 250 and therefore our Tennis income is circa £11,000 down on budget year to date. Momentum is growing and hopefully the recent good weather will encourage more to try us out and join the tennis section.

#### *Recent Clubhouse Changes*

Given it is our ambition to build a new clubhouse we are obviously reluctant to spend large sums of money. However no investment is not an option if we are to operate in a compliant and efficient way. Two years ago we invested in the kitchen and the dance floor area which enables us now to host 110 for a sit down pre-match lunch. We had a number of these this season and it makes such a difference from both the point of view of the atmosphere around the place and the financials.

During the current season we have had a fairly major project to reorganise the space downstairs. We now have a new first team changing room, complete with new inter-connecting Physio room.

We have re-homed all items which were being stored into containers enabling us to create a new full size changing room with its own showers and toilet with access from the foyer giving us the ability to host women's rugby or adult and children's rugby simultaneously. The showers and toilet block which serves the newly formed changing room has Jack and Jill doors onto the changing room corridor and therefore can be used by squash and gives a changing facility for female squash players.

Thanks to a donation from Paul and Brenda Johnston we have installed a stairlift giving access to those with restricted mobility.

Following on from kitchen improvements two years ago we have also refurbished the kitchen corridor and purchased a new oven capable of keeping 100+ meals warm prior to serving.

#### **PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS DURING THE CLOSED SEASON**

Following our recent insurance renewal we are required to install a monitored fire alarm system at a cost of £13,000. A substantial amount of this investment will be able to be reused but it is a cost we could have done without but unfortunately it is unavoidable. Completion end of May.

#### Operational Update

##### *Significant Events in the Year*

- AGP Floodlights – The RFU is intending to install new LED lights on the AGP. This work is expected to be completed in July.
- Caravan Storage – we intend to request to extend our planning approval for a further 18 months.
- Fitism – at last year's meeting we were hopeful that the gym operator would be able to get planning permission to build a gym in the grounds of Lymm RFC. However we were unable to convince Warrington Borough Council's Planning Department that any of the proposed locations are acceptable and given the cost of a full blown planning application combined with the general opinion of the Planning Department, Fitism decided to abandon its ambitions at Crouchley Lane. In terms of our new clubhouse design we will now need to revisit this with a view to incorporating a gym.
- Insurance – Andrew Dougall has negotiated our insurance renewal for the next 12 months, unfortunately we are required to install a monitored fire alarm system as a condition of renewal. Works to be completed by the end of May.
- Club Communications – we continue to promote our great club and hopefully we can all agree that our website, social media presence, advertising at the motorway roundabout and exposure on Cheshire Radio is all helping to improve our profile within the community. It is a bit anecdotal but I am convinced that there are many more people following the performance of our 1<sup>st</sup> team, in particular, on a Saturday, than ever before. A visit to Lymm RFC for a 1<sup>st</sup> team home game is a proper day out and the more we can encourage the better as it is hugely beneficial both in terms of the team and the club's finances.

- Donations Sponsorship and Gift Aid – although we have seen some improvement in our sponsorship efforts this is still an area we are under performing, in my view. We have a good product and our exposure through social media in particular is significant. If any of you know of anybody who would like to get involved in sponsoring Lymm RFC please put them in touch. I think it is fair to say the commission scheme introduced last year to encourage our senior players to bring sponsorship opportunities to the club has not been anywhere near as successful as we would have hoped. We will try and re-launch this initiative at the club dinner tasking each player to bring at least one sponsor for next season.

### Development

#### Consented Scheme

#### New AGP – complete

- 4 new floodlit tennis courts – complete
- 180 parking spaces – partially complete
- Coach parking – partially complete
- 5 detached houses on north carpark
- 5 new houses to the south of the existing clubhouse
- 4 new dwellings on existing clubhouse
- New clubhouse 22,000 sq ft

In my last Chairman's report I outlined the problems we were facing in terms of the likely revenues of the sale of the building plots against the likely cost of our new clubhouse.

By far the most profitable approach would be if we built the houses ourselves and then sold them on either off-plan or following completion. This approach however requires a substantial amount of funding which we would be unlikely to secure from conventional lenders and if we did it would be very expensive.

Following discussions with the Lyons family they have very kindly offered to give Lymm RFC a £3m interest free facility for a period of up to 18 months. They will take a charge over the land upon which the 5 detached houses will be built.

We intend to enter into a fixed price JCT contract but in order to arrive at a figure we have been required to commission ground investigation report, results favourable, and a drainage strategy/design. Once these are both known our chosen contractor, Shorts, will provide us with a fixed price billed contract which is expected to take 13 months from commencement. We plan to be on site 1<sup>st</sup> July. This is a significant step forward to us realising our ambition of a new clubhouse.

The stakeholders that are our grounds team and gate/carpark team were briefed some weeks ago and we are currently reviewing the necessary works required to ensure our parking provision is adequate for next season – exciting times!

### Thank You

- Once again our volunteer group has done a brilliant job over the last 12 months. In addition I would like to thank Kate Yeomans for her work over the years and Jo Cope, her successor, who has got to grips with the finances and systems extremely well. Alan and his team continue to improve operations and he, along with Will Hind, are the engine room behind our planned June marquee events. I would like to personally thank all the board, all members of our Executive, our Grounds team, the volunteers of the M&J, Tennis, Squash and Hockey sections and those who support our world famous panto and Vaudeville events. Particular thanks to our car park crew and as I've stated before they do it for the love of rugby and miss the first half of most home games.
- Thank you to Steve Rule for his 15 years work as our Cheshire representative, Malcolm Kimber for his work as 4th official, the referee's hosts on home match days and our scribes home and away.
- Heartfelt thanks go to Varun, who in his role as President for the last 2 years, has been a pleasure to work alongside. When I say work, coach trips to the away fixtures and hosting our opposite numbers for home games isn't really work and I have thoroughly enjoyed our President/Chairman dynamic. Our wives think we are a bad influence on each other but I would beg to differ.

- We do have hundreds of volunteers within our organisation but we could always do with more so if you feel you have the time or the skills or both to contribute to Lymm RFC please let either myself or Will Hind know and we will find you a job.

In response to questions from the floor, the Chairman clarified that the profit from this phase of development will allow the club to get rid of its debt and achieve financial stability.

Peter Cornelia expressed concern about leaving the existing clubhouse and about parking by the walled garden and believes decisions are being rushed.

Ian Cope commented that the membership was not wholly behind moving out of the existing clubhouse and Adam Halford suggested there should be a member vote. But in response to a question from Phil Young as to whether this phase of building houses in the car park was the only aspect of the future development that had been approved by the Board, the Chairman confirmed this to be the case.

Tony Halford raised the issue of losing car parking spaces and the impact this could have on match days. As already noted this is an area which is under further consideration.

In response to a question from Tim Jordan, the Chairman confirmed that advice had been taken in respect of Stamp Duty liability should the land be transferred to Lymm Garden Ltd as proposed.

### **Treasurer's Report - Andy Leach**

Fellow members and friends, it gives me great pleasure to present my sixth 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 presently owns all our land and buildings.
- 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, Rick Johnson 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 and Andy Leach.
- Was established as a potential means to realise property under the development programme in a tax efficient manner.
- Was dormant until August 2020 when it acquired the Manor Road Tennis Club ("MRTC") site, which was subsequently sold in February 2024.
- Since then, LGL has not traded.

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 2024

The annual accounts for LRL, together with the accounts for LBL and LGL, were approved by the Directors on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and were filed at Companies House and with the Charities Commission before their respective deadlines of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025, and the relevant tax returns with HMRC before its filing deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. 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. So, 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<sup>th</sup> June 2024 record a surplus of £386,357, which compares with the previous year's deficit of £53,462. On the face of it this was an impressive outturn, but the outturn was significantly enhanced by the profit of £543,000 registered on the sale of the MRTC site of £543,000. Adjusting for this and the prior year operational deficit of £53,462 increased to £156,643. A summary of the overall financial performance for the year to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 aggregating all the entities in the group compared with prior years is as follows:

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Donations	87	40	34	31	59	23
Subs	104	70	73	61	86	77
Sponsorship	16	28	18	2	22	21
Bar surplus	8	39	23	2	52	28
Panto surplus	23	26	18	0	33	27
Summer events surplus	5	15	0	0	0	34
Grants	0	0	13	79	0	0
Crowdfunding	0	0	0	15	0	0
AGP income	15	19	17	13	13	0
Storage/parking	10	10	15	20	0	0
Other income net of other direct costs	13	29	(2)	23	(8)	(51)
<b>Gross profit</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>159</b>
VAT partial exemption	(15)	(19)	(2)	5	(3)	(8)
Establishment costs	(66)	(53)	(37)	(26)	(36)	(36)
Playing costs	(157)	(98)	(44)	(10)	(57)	(53)
Grounds costs	(17)	(20)	(17)	(9)	(15)	(17)
Lease and repair costs	(32)	(11)	(8)	(9)	(5)	(8)
Salaries	(62)	(52)	(47)	(36)	(42)	(19)
Accountancy and legal	(14)	(9)	(6)	(12)	(4)	(12)
Miscellaneous	(7)	(3)	(9)	(5)	(8)	(7)
Donations made	0	0	0	0	0	(6)
Finance costs	(57)	(38)	(20)	(18)	(25)	(23)
Depreciation	(41)	(26)	(23)	(20)	(21)	(6)
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>(438)</b>	<b>(329)</b>	<b>(213)</b>	<b>(140)</b>	<b>(216)</b>	<b>(195)</b>
<b>Operational Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>(157)</b>	<b>(53)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>(36)</b>
Profit on sale of land for development	543					
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>(53)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>(36)</b>

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

Key observations on the above are:

#### *Revenues and gross margin*

- The increase in donations reflects, in part, an alternative to sponsorship provided by individuals. This also accounts for the slight reduction in sponsorship in the period. It is worth noting though, that the relatively (compared with other clubs of a similar standing), has been an area of focus for us through FY25 where some progress has been made.
- The increase in subs reflects a combination of (i) the increase in membership fee rates from FY24; (ii) an increase in rugby membership (especially within the M&Js); and (iii) the growth in subs from the tennis section following the relocation to the new courts in the walled garden. Resultant year-on-year subs increases were 20% for senior rugby; 41% for M&Js; and 298% for tennis.
- Overall bar sales (wet, dry and sundry) totalled £266,000 an increase of 9% over the prior year. However, when the increase in internal recharges for player food (see below) is eliminated, overall sales declined by 7%. Wet sales were certainly disappointing in the September to November period of the season when the RWC appeared to have a negative impact on general match and lunch attendance. Encouragingly though, overall margins broadly held up at 48%, with the reduction on FY23's level of 54% being attributed principally to the greater proportion of sales attracting membership discounts combined with the relatively high number of cost increases in the year given the inflationary pressures that prevailed through a large part of the year. The main impact on the bar surplus though was an increase in wage costs of £31,000 due to a combination of (i) a conscious decision to improve our "offer" by the employment of a full-time chef; (ii) increased casual staffing levels to improve our "offer" by the employment of a full-time chef; (ii) increased casual staffing levels to improve service more generally; and (iii) the increase in the minimum wage and the knock-on impact that this had on wage levels across the board.
- In the end, the only summer events were the Sportsman's dinner and lunch held in the clubhouse towards the end of June, as the Vaudeville performances and Ladies lunch were cancelled.

#### *Costs*

- Establishment costs increased by £13,000 year-on-year to £66,000. The principal factor behind this was that the 3-year fixed price deals on gas and electricity that we entered into in 2020/21 came to an end, at a Pme when energy prices were especially high. We then entered into new 2-year fixed price contracts albeit at markedly higher unit prices. The impact of this will be felt further in FY25 when these new prices will have applied throughout the year. • Lease costs increased by £21,000 largely due to the impact of the new tennis pavilion.
- The biggest increase as in playing costs. This was our first season at National 2 and we took the decision that in conjunction with the coaches, the decision was taken to significantly "professionalise" the experience for our senior players. As a consequence:
  - Travel costs increased by £7,000 on FY23 due to (i) better quality transport; (ii) an extra away fixture; and (iii) the increased mileage given the heavy North-East make-up of the League.
  - Physio costs increased by £12,000 as we increased provision, provided cover for 2nd XV and increased quality and availability of equipment and supplies.
  - Player catering costs (covering seniors, M&Js and Colts) increased by £38,000 to £65,000 in the year. This was a result of (i) a change in "accounting" such that food costs included a "profit element" as the charge from Beechwood to RFC included a 50% margin for Beechwood – previously food had been cross-charged at cost; (ii) a decision to provide player food post training on Tuesday and

Thursday and prior to long away trips – previously only food post matches had been provided; and (iii) the impact on numbers training (and hence eaPng!) of this increased provision.

- Interest cost increased by £19,000 over prior year (and by £37,000 on FY22!), predominantly due to the increase in Base Rates experienced over the period, which moved from an average rate of 0.4% in FY22, to 3.17% in FY23 and then to 5.23% in FY24. In addition to the Base Rate, our interest-bearing loans with Handelsbanken attract a margin of 2.75% - hence our “all in” interest rate in FY24 was 7.98%, compared with the prior year of 5.92% (+35%).
- Depreciation increased in the year by £15,000 reflecting the significant investment in our fixed assets we have made in recent years, most notably the construction of the new tennis courts at a cost of c£373,000.

#### Property Sale `Profit

As mentioned earlier, the MRTC site was sold in February 2024 to developer Macrane Properties. The sale price was £580,000. The original offer was £620,000 but issues with the site during that arose prior to completion which would increase build cost, necessitated some give on the price. With a book value of £37k (principally planning and legal costs) a surplus of £543k was generated. Adopting a similar methodology, the aggregated balance sheet as at 30 June 2023 was as follows:

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Fixed assets	2,062	1,955	1,605	1,594	1,561	1501
Stock	15	14	4	5	5	7
Debtors	33	66	32	18	3	55
Cash	10	15	75	62	19	45
Creditors	(93)	(185)	(41)	(35)	(45)	(101)
	(35)	(90)	70	50	(18)	6
Borrowings	(620)	(844)	(601)	(564)	(571)	(576)
Net Assets	1,407	1,021	1,074	1,080	972	931

Things to note here are:

- Freehold land and buildings at cost of c£1.5m, were valued by Savills in May 2022 at c£2.25m. In September 2024, an offer of £1.1m was received for the north car park as a development site.
- Fixed asset additions during the year amounted to £183k, largely relating to the construction of the new tennis courts and associated enabling works.
- The decrease in debtors over FY23 reflects the reduced level of summer events.
- The creditor balance in FY23 included creditors related to the ongoing construction of the tennis courts.
- Borrowings at the year-end comprised a commercial £325k loan from Handelsbanken; a £250k interest free loan from the LTA; and a £45k loan at 2% from the RFU.
- In addition to the loan with Handelsbanken, we have a £40k overdraft facility in place. Our relationship with Handelsbanken remains very positive.

#### Year to 30 June 2025

We undertook a very detailed month-on-month budgeting exercise for both LRL and LBL. This indicated a surplus for the year before depreciation of £34,000 would be achieved – split £45,000 in the first half year



and a deficit of £11,000 in the second half – a typical profile, dependent on the number and success of the summer events/marquee. The budget only included a relatively modest contribution of £10,000 from such events in June 2025. At the 6-month mark the surplus was tracking a little behind budget at £33,000, with the impact of higher interest rates than budgeted accounting for £5,000 of this adverse variance. The sense is that the third quarter was a poor one – for a range of reasons – and that by 31<sup>st</sup> March, this adverse variance would have increased. However, with a full marquee month in June ahead, we remain hopefully that a successful series of events here will help us claw back the shortfall.

#### 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, received throughout her tenure from Kate. As you know, Jo Cope replaced Kate in October and has stepped into the role brilliantly. Please give Jo every help and assistance as we continue to strive to provide the support, information and accountability that a high achieving club such as ours deserves. 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.

Keith Broadbent noted he sees inefficiency in operation of the bar where it is overstaffed for the numbers using it. Tony Halford also commented that the results showing an operational deficit of £157k for the year are worrying. The Treasurer commented that £98k of this was in financing payments and depreciation.

The Chairman agreed this was not a position the club wants to repeat and it is sometimes difficult to balance the desire for improved service and facilities with the associated costs. Despite this some members believed the visitor and spectator experience on match days can be improved, particularly noting long wait times at the Half-Way House. Ian Cope said he has some thoughts on improvements and offered to set up a visitor/spectator experience working group with key members of the Club. Collette Cartwright noted she meets many Lymm locals coming to matches and we should endeavour to get them to become members.

### **Senior Rugby Report - Adam Fletcher/Andy Davies**

#### Overview

This rugby season has been nothing short of outstanding for Lymm Rugby Club. Our 1<sup>st</sup> XV finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in National League 2, showcasing some excellent rugby, highlighted by thrilling victories over Leeds and Sheffield at home. The 2s had a solid season, finishing mid-table and reaching the semi-final of the League cup. The Eagles had a fantastic season, challenging for the title right up to the end. The dedication of our players, coaching staff, and supporters has been unwavering, contributing to a season filled with memorable moments and growth.

#### 1st XV Team Performance

Our team has shown exceptional skill and resilience throughout the season. Some key highlights include:

- Winning 15 out of 16 matches in the regular season.
- Securing a top-three finish in the league, ensuring our highest ever league position.
- Achieving a record high number of try bonus points.
- 45 players selected, with 16 making their debuts.

#### Player Achievements

Several players have stood out with their extraordinary performances:

- Nathan Beesley, Sam Wadsworth, and Paddy Jennings made it to the league's top ten try scorers.
- Cal Morris was selected to represent the Barbarians in two games.
- Matty Hand and Nathan Beesley were selected for the National League Team of the Season.

### Challenges and Learnings

The season also presented several challenges:

- Injuries to key players affected training and game performance.
- A lack of squad depth impacted the whole senior section.
- Getting three teams out each week was a challenge.

These challenges have provided valuable lessons, and we have developed specific strategies to address them in the coming season.

### Future Outlook

Looking ahead, we are committed to building on this season's successes. Next season will be impacted severely with the RFU's decision to put us into National 2 West but our priorities include:

- Strengthening our squad with new talent through focused retention and recruitment efforts. This will be particularly difficult in the West league.
- Developing a stronger relationship with the Colts Academy by providing coaching and support to them all year round.
- Continuing to foster a strong relationship between the 2s and Eagles, with positive steps taken this year in relation to Eagles players playing up.
- Continuing to offer the most professional environment and experience we can as an amateur club.

We anticipate another exciting and successful season ahead, and we thank everyone for their continued support and dedication to Lymm Rugby Club.

### Appreciation

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the committee, supporters, and volunteers for their incredible efforts and unwavering dedication throughout the season. Your contributions have been invaluable and have significantly impacted the club's success. Thank you for your tireless support and commitment to Lymm Rugby Club.

A massive thanks to Alan, Lydia, and their team for keeping the boys fed and watered. Your efforts have ensured that our players remained energised and well-nourished throughout the season.

Special thanks to Peter Millachip and Olly Brown for their huge input to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> teams respectively and to Vicky and her medical team, Andy Jackson for being a genuine superstar, and Malcolm Kimber for his role as the 4<sup>th</sup> official.

## **Mini & Juniors Rugby Section Report - Will Hind**

The M&J section has grown to have 455 playing members.

The Club hosted the U16 Cheshire Finals, Junior and Colts Cheshire Finals which all raised funds.

### Colts

First full season of two colts teams in a few years. Senior Colts got as far as Cheshire Cup final and were runners up. The Junior Colts had a good run but lost in the Cup semi-finals.

### Academy

U16 progressed well this year too and well set for the season to come. The Academy are growing in stature and from September will have a new lead coach, Toby Philips. Toby will be taking his coaching badges and of equal importance to our retention plans he also has a management role in the senior team, particularly helping out in the 2<sup>nds</sup>. This will ensure that we have similar coaching and playing principles between senior teams and the Academy and also that there will be a clearer route to help them into the senior squads and to be able to play up when they are 17. Toby will also be enlisting the help of senior squad players to come down and run specific sessions through the season. This will not diminish the role of the parents and coaches who have been running the teams for years but add to it. The Academy will continue to train on Thursday nights but will all train together until there are specific needs of any of the teams, to improve cross-age bonding.

We will have both Junior and Senior Colts teams for upcoming season so the need for coaching will be high.

Tuesday nights are still training night for the junior ages, U12 -15, and have had good successes this year with Cheshire Cup (U14 and Cheshire Plate U13). Younger age grades are doing very well - and training Friday nights is positive for the teams wanting it as well as offering us some flex should we wish to have a senior game on Fridays or Womens rugby

#### DBS

95% of coaches are DBS checked, if not higher, and made great strides in making sure we have good compliance

#### Coaches and training

Adam Breeze has done a great job of co-ordinating training resources and the links to all these are on the website with a defined pathway for both player and the expected work for coach/volunteers.

#### RDO/School Liaison

We have been in discussions with the Headteachers at Lymm High School and they are keen to get additional support for rugby and also for girls in sport. A person could be a Teaching Assistant at the school for a given number of days per week (3 or 4) work additional to school time to help run school rugby training sessions (2 or 3 evenings after 3.30 for an hour or so – for which they would get incremental income) and then work for us in supporting the Academy with Toby and on release on occasion to support local feeder primary schools. Such a person would then have an integral role in in the development of Women's and Girls rugby

#### Women and Girls Rugby

By the end of this season we will have the beginning of a women/or girls rugby section. We have the infrastructure to be able to enable them to have separate changing facilities and have the support of the initiative through the RFU, and especially our CDO - Chris Hall. Through Chris (and thanks in part to support from Ian Cope and Keith Broadbent who went to a schools festival) we have been designated a focus club for W&G rugby for the next two seasons. We have now got links to Dave Ansel the SGO (School Games Organiser) for Warrington and Lymm. As it stands Dave works with 13 Secondary Schools, 68 Primary Schools and 5 SEN Schools across Warrington.

The entire rugby provision offered by the SGO is operated by Warrington Wolves with no Rugby Union offer available. Dave is happy to support the club with offering a T1 style (non contact Touch but with full lineouts, kicking and scrums) offering to schools which all schools within his region could be invited to however, their events are usually capped at 10 schools bringing around 12 participants each.

Going forwards, we have the option to run festival style girl's events at the club with a view to them becoming tournaments once the RDO is in post and delivering in schools. While there is an option to run mixed gender events, we'd like to focus on girls events and believe we can get three girls festivals completed over the next academic year.

A school's festival is an inclusive, carousel of Rugby & T1 activities ran by volunteers or the club's RDO with the support of the local college's young leaders. (They'll turn up an hour or so before the festival so they can be walked through their roles and responsibilities for the festival). This will usually involve 8 fun rugby activities.

Additionally, Chris has some resources and can help support the club in the planning of the first festival if we aim for September and we may also be able to send some Love Rugby banners and resources to support.

#### *What would help more?*

We think that the starting of a designated Academy coach who will act as go between for senior squad is going to be significant but more interaction between ages and more senior team dropping down to help Academy training on occasion will also be needed.

More publicity

#### Thanks

Thanks for the help and support to the volunteers:

- Ian Cope (Financial Advisor, STAR Financial Advice) for 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 lead safeguarding officer
  - John Case (aspiring golfer) for all the work on membership and digital support
  - Adam Breeze (International Expansion and Inward Investment specialist) for coaching co-ordinator and training support
  - Alan, Lydia, Matthew and team for all the catering
  - Jo for all the membership and purchase support
  - Rob and Lucy (congrats) for the excellent posters and adverts
  - Chris and the Grounds team
  - The Exec for all the support
  - ALL THE VOLUNTEERS who give up time, PARENTS who stand in the cold and act as the taxi service
- Please come to the marquee events so we can afford to do more of this great stuff!

Will added that it is his intention to stand down at the end of next season with Ian Cope taking over as Chair of Minis & Juniors.

John Millachip said the lack of teacher support at Lymm High School is resulting in the club losing players as they either move to the Private sector Rugby schools or stop playing altogether.

## **Squash Section - Alex Wigfield**

### Introduction

Firstly, as a Squash club we would like to thank the Rugby Club for continued support throughout the season in relation to facilities, food and beverage. The food post-squash is probably the best food on the squash circuit!

### Club Review

The Squash Club held an EGM in April where we formed a new Committee. As such we would like to put on record our thanks to Richard Membrey for his service over many years as Chair of Squash.

The new committee now comprises of Alex Wigfield (Chair), David Jordan (Engagement / Memberships), Andy Jones (Finance) and the two men squash team captains.

The initial aims of the new committee are to increase recruitment, make strides towards a junior section and improve the facilities and playing offer.

A membership recruitment drive will commence in the coming weeks.

### Season Review

Both teams showed significant progress in terms of final league position compared to 12 months ago.

The first team finished a very comfortable 5<sup>th</sup> position in Division 4 and avoided any relegation threat from the season previous. The level of squash across the Division seemingly improved and we fought hard against tough opponents generally from much larger squash clubs.

The second team are the success story of the season. Achieving promotion from Division 5 to Division 4 by way of securing 2<sup>nd</sup> position. This is the first promotion Lymm Squash has enjoyed for some years – big credit to all involved. Furthermore, the first team and second team will now face each other in Div 4 next season.

### Summer League

The squash club have entered one team into the summer league which will run from June through to September. This is a great opportunity to blood new players into league squash.

### Conclusion

The newly formed committee and wider squash club are focussed on improving the squash offering at Lymm Rugby Club and hopefully attracting new membership both young and old. We also look forward to the first team and second team locking horns in the same division next season.

## **Tennis Section - Stewart Freeman**

It has been a very busy year since the last AGM. Our main focus areas remain to increase our membership numbers, particularly in the Junior section, increase our coaching opportunities and promote Pay & Play to non-members.

### Membership

We currently have 154 members, including our two coaches, two life members, and four who are part of a complimentary package. Of these, 110 are Adults, and 44 are Juniors. The latter represents a 36%/76% increase from last May, which is encouraging. Our aspirational target remains at a minimum of 200, and I will discuss below our plans to achieve this.

Annual membership income is expected to pass £17,500 for the first time. This represents a 564% increase from four years ago, when we were based at the Manor Road site. An increase of 30 full-paying Adults and 20 full-paying Juniors will add around £7,000 in additional income and therefore, account for 80% of the Annual LTA Loan Repayment figure.

### Coaching

Luke Grantham, the Head Coach, left the club last summer due to personal reasons. However, we were fortunate enough to secure Mik Underwood's services to maintain our Wednesday Coaching programme. Numbers are showing improvement in 2025, and we were further boosted by the appointment of Oli Jones as Head Coach in April. With more time to invest, Oli has implemented further coaching sessions on Monday evenings and Saturdays, with further plans for weekdays. Oli has coached at a number of local clubs and has plenty of contacts which he enthusiastically believes will boost both coaching and membership numbers.

### Pay & Play

We have already surpassed the 12-month figures from opening our new courts in July 2023 to July 2024 (157 bookings/£1,741 income), as at April 2025 (268 bookings = +70%/£2,511 = +44% income), which is extremely pleasing and encouraging, especially as we have 3 of our busiest months to come.

Pricing was amended in August 2024, with an off-peak reduction to £5 per hour, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., from £10 per hour. Pricing has recently increased to £8/£12 per hour, and this will be closely monitored for impact on bookings. Immediate targets are to achieve 400 annual bookings, generating income of £4,000, representing a further 8% of the Annual LTA Loan Repayment figure.

### Looking Ahead

Various events have already taken place and more are planned to highlight our excellent facilities and influence all of the above:

- Family Fun Friday Night was introduced in April, and due to its success, we have agreed to run it monthly. The next one is planned for 6th June.
- The Annual Open Day on 5th May was very well attended. Around 50 juniors participated in free coaching sessions, and all were issued a voucher for a further free coaching session.
- 3m X 1m Banner is on order to be displayed permanently before the Marquee events start to promote the 50% Multisport offer, as we believe there are still big opportunities to attract new members from Rugby/Squash and Hockey. This will be supported by flyers to be available in the Marquee along with an email to everyone on our database to be organised by John Case.
- Coaching sessions have been organised at our Club and continue to be held in local schools, along with groups such as Beavers, Cubs, Rainbows, and Brownies.
- 2 Primary school festivals are arranged in May to promote tennis in schools and promote our Club.
- Walking tennis on a Thursday at 1 pm has grown considerably amongst both members and non-members.
- Regular social events including inter-club tournaments, Quizzes and Bingo, are much enjoyed and raise valuable funds whilst supporting Alan and his excellent team with Bar and Food takings.

### Opportunity Areas

Improve and increase our presence on social media outlets.

We are planning a much more structured approach to attracting M&J's and their families to play tennis. To promote the Multisport offer, we will collaborate with Ian Cope and Chris Blackwell, among others. We will start by offering FREE coaching taster sessions for each age group.

Pursue all available contacts locally to promote Tennis in schools, groups, organisations, etc. This will attract new members and execute our updated marketing plan.

Look at Sponsorship opportunities outside of those supporting Rugby.

Continue to promote competitive playing opportunities to new members to improve team performance, both Ladies' teams are currently first in their respective divisions, with the Men's first team second.

### Conclusion

A number of our key focus areas have moved considerably in the last 12 months, and thanks go to our members, new and old, and the committee, who continue to work hard to achieve our goals. As expected, we have faced challenges since our move to the Rugby Club two years ago. However, we remain adamant that we are in a strong position to progress further in the coming years, so why not come along and give it a go?

And remember, tennis is like a relationship: you need to practice, communicate, and deal with the occasional serve that goes way off the court!

### **Election of Officers/Directors**

The following appointments were confirmed at the meeting:

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

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

Secretary - Rick Johnson; proposed by Steve Ashall, seconded by Jim Sproats

President - John Cartwright

### **Any Other Business**

Marquee Events - The club is putting a marquee up for the whole of June and has put together a large programme of events aimed at both members and the general public. Some of these are in conjunction with the Lymm Festival. Will Hind urged members to push ticket sales. The current sales should yield a profit of £20k but with a sell out of all events this would rise to £40k.

Rick Johnson  
Secretary, Lymm RFC