



Reading RFC AGM 28th April 2010

Chairman Report

Introduction – I would like to thank everyone for their support in this my first year (after this meeting quite possibly my last Season) as Chairman. Despite the obvious disappointments and frustrations, which we will hear about, I have enjoyed it immensely.

During the evening we will be hearing from fellow Executive colleagues as well individual team captains, so will try and not duplicate things in this report. What I would like to do is highlight, from my perspective, things that have not gone as well as we would have liked and successes over the last 12 months.

Whilst highlighting these points I think we are quick too quick to discuss the negatives and forget the positives about RRFC. Having visited many clubs over the years and during the course of the season, I have to say RRFC is a great club, with great members and compared to a lot of clubs we have a great facility.

I must state up front I do not blame or point the finger at one person in particular for things that do not go as well as we would like, we are a club and as such have to share the responsibilities – in the good times and bad:

Rugby – this is the reason I am here - over many years and definitely the last 12 months whilst I have been Chairman, due to other pressing matters we have had to address first, little time has been focused on Rugby and development of rugby, for which I apologise. Therefore we have seen an inevitable decline in rugby as a whole. This is something we will be addressing moving forward. Kevin and others will mention later we have held meetings with team captains, coaches and players to understand the reasons for the decline. There were many comments made but the biggest issue by far has been with the lack of investment in local and home grown players.

I hope you will have seen documentation circulated over the last few weeks from the current Executive, copies are here tonight, of a proposed Rugby structure. We must create a Rugby development plan for the whole club from U6's through to future 1st XV players who eventually end up as Vets – not a bad place to end your career. In this structure we include our highly successful Ladies and Girls rugby sections. To help create this structure, we have used guidelines from the RFU, however this is not set in stone it has been created to be flexible and adapt to the needs of Reading RFC. It does however work in conjunction with RRFC Executive Committee under the Club Rules.

This structure also forms part of our successful application for the Whole Club Seal of Approval, which we have recently been awarded. On behalf of the Club and Exec Committee I must thank Dave Swan for his commitment, effort and time for pulling this together to a successful conclusion. Thank you Dave (pause for applause).



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Working with the all teams, managers and captains, we will be investing time and effort into putting this right. We are not against players travelling from afar to play for us but we have to create a team ethic, and this comes from training together regularly. This therefore means working with and developing our own players who come through from the Youth section. We will be putting together a recruitment plan to attract new players to the club, but also encourage players back to the club who have left us for various reasons.

Membership – this is one area we have had to put right – membership has been declining for the last few years. Matt Healey has done a great job this year understanding firstly who our members are and more importantly who has not been paying. We have made mistakes and we are making changes to put this right. Matt will explain in more detail later.

Facilities – like Rugby & Membership due to lack of investment of money and time over many years the facilities are not as we perhaps would like. However through the excellent work of Mark Everett, Facilities Chairman and others we have started to make some progress. Mark will be able to provide further information soon.

Audited accounts – Thanks to the hard work by Julie Blakey, supported by Peter Chidgey and Graeme Hobs, the new Club Auditor, we are now up to date with Audited accounts, details you will hear about later. This includes paying off our previous Auditors and our new Auditors. I would like to document our thanks to Roger Pearson from Pearson Bucholz who have been RRFC Auditors for many years.

3rd party loans – the large 3rd party loan, that was interest bearing, has been repaid in full. I take this opportunity to thank the person who helped us with this loan for his support and patience whilst we paid this back.

Youth Section merger – later on tonight, Dave Swan, current Youth Chairman, will update us about the status of merging the Youth section back into the main Club. I am aware that there are still some youth parents, members that are apprehensive about merging fully back into main club. If re elected tonight as Chairman I will commit to ensuring that we put in place checks and balances to ensure money collected by the youth to run the youth will be managed accordingly. **However** there is a cost to run RRFC and we need all sections to contribute to the running of our Club accordingly. Again as part of the WCSOA, the RFU stipulate we are one Club and managed under one constitution, this also enables us to apply for grants for facilities projects as a club.

Volunteers – there are many volunteers at RRFC but we need more – there are many jobs to be done that need your help so please step forward – you may only have an hour a month but if every member offered that we could get lots more things completed. The following members have offered their help during the summer and next season already, thank you to Mike Brooks, Mac Coveney, Keith Dugdale, Donna Clark, Graham Emmerson, Toby Jessop. Apologies if I have missed anyone else.

To finish I would like to personally thank the following for their support and hard work this season:

Fellow Exec Colleagues for their time and commitment on behalf of RRFC, even if not seen at the Club, they spend countless hours every day doing work on behalf of the club and you as members.



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I also thank **Gina and Mel**, for their hard work and for putting up with me.

Alan, Wayne, Bar Staff and Ladies who work in the kitchen.

Mark, Carole & Ben Sessions for turning up every Sat morning to clean the patio and pitches, without a fuss or complaint;

Lorcan Mullally for stepping in to help with programmes and match reports in Ted Goodhew absence— and for sending me countless emails mostly in Gaelic.

Last but not least to all of you here tonight thank you for your support.

Craig Hunter

Reading RFC Chairman 28th April 2010



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