**BURNTWOOD RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Thursday, 18th May, 2017.**

**Minutes**

**a) Present**

R. Forsyth, M. Smith, G. McGann, D. Jarrett, R. Gleave, A. Macey, D. Hazelwood, J. Canning, N. Peplow, S. Brennan, T. O’Brien, B. Brown, J. Brown, G. Johnson, B. Osbourne, A. Jarrett, M. Miles, B. Jones, M. Ottey, A. Dodd, L. Rookyard, S. Latham, S. Barker, R. Clague-Smith, C. Martin, B. Holt, N. Holden, D. Wharton, P. Rogers.

**b) Apologies**

J. Davies, D. Ward, O. Rookyard, M. Thomas, P. Bayliss.

**c) Minutes of BRUFC AGM 2016**

1) RF said that the 2016 Minutes were circulated at the end of July 2016 along with a copy posted on the clubhouse noticeboard.

2) S. Barker proposed and A. Dodd seconded that the Minutes be approved. Carried.

**d) Officers’ reports for season 2016-17**

**Chairman’s report**

1. My thanks to the current committee, coaching staff, clubhouse staff and volunteers for their hard work and dedication this season. Gerry is standing down as Hon. Treasurer and I would like to thank him for providing daily financial information which enables us to keep the club operating.
2. From a playing perspective, we have shown a major improvement on the previous season. At the start of the league campaign we would have settled for a third place finish but as the season progressed we set ourselves up nicely for a promotion place. Unfortunately, it was not to be as we fell away in the last few games. Improvements do not happen by accident. We have been superbly coached by Jim Davies and Graham Shelley and led on the pitch by two young players that really came of age – Sean Latham and Luke Rookyard. A special mention goes to Nick Peplow who managed to field a 2nd XV on a regular basis, notching up several notable victories. The change in commitment, attitude and application has been a revelation this season. All of our players have conducted themselves in an exemplary fashion both on and off the field.
3. Some of the negative issues that I highlighted last year have started to be addressed. We will be fielding a colts’ XV in the new Staffordshire League next season. Different volunteers have stepped forward to assist with events, ground maintenance and working the bar on match days. The atmosphere has been upbeat in the clubhouse even after the end of season defeats.
4. There is still room for improvement when it comes to paying annual subs and weekly match fees and also the selling of Xmas Draw and RFU Grand Draw tickets. These are a valuable source of income to us as a small community club.
5. In summary, we have made great strides forward but we cannot relax. Further improvement is necessary for the 1sts to gain promotion, the 2nds to top the Merit Table and, more importantly for us, to field a 3rds/Development XV thus integrating youngsters into senior rugby.

M. Smith.

**Fixture Secretary’s report**

1. This has been a difficult season for fixtures as far as the seconds and thirds are concerned. Whilst the seconds managed to play most of their merit table games many other games had to be cancelled, not might I add all because of us. We wrongly entered a third team into the merit table and ended up calling off the majority of the games. However, we are not the only club to have issues with lower teams. A meeting was held at Cannock Rugby Club to discuss how to continue with the merit tables moving forward because of so many cry offs within the county.
2. This season we will only be entering the 2nd team into the merit tables and the 3rd team fixtures will be arranged individually with local clubs. This will be done at the fixtures’ meeting which is arranged for Wednesday, 14th June at Cannock Rugby Club.
3. Macey.

**President’s report**

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone for taking the time to be in attendance this evening as I know for most of you time is one of those rare commodities and we don’t get many spare minutes in our busy lives.

Another year has gone by so quickly and I would like to thank all of the committee members for their work and commitment which, it goes without saying, benefits our club and all of us. As a committee we are fairly sparse for a club of this size and it would be unjust of me not to pay a special tribute to the two gentlemen that have worked tirelessly above and beyond the call of duty in their roles just to keep the doors open so we can all come and enjoy the wealth of friendship, pride and passion that the club offers us all.

Martyn, I seriously don’t know how you juggle everything in your life to do what you do for the club and still have time to check in on facebook at all the venues while looking after your young family but thanks very much.

Gerry, what can I say? The club is so very lucky to have found someone like yourself who walked through the doors several years ago to just watch your son play rugby and yet you have done so much from the time of joining the junior committee to the present time. We will always be in your debt particularly as recent times have been difficult financially for our club. You have been unselfish and with Brenda’s backing you have been the heartbeat of the club. I can only thank you sincerely for everything you have done and wish you all the very best from everyone here for the future.

So where are we going to find our new Gerry I ask myself?

One of the points I made at the last committee meeting was that we need some new young blood to jump on board as there is a major requirement for a role to be carried out in marketing our business. I noticed photographs recently of a Rugeley game and the sponsor’s name on the shirt was Maer UK. Well, obviously they are either better than us at marketing or someone who plays for them works at Maer’s. They are – what - 150 metres from here I would guess but it’s that realisation that there are many small, large and very large businesses in Burntwood that we are missing out in terms of easy wealth that could make life here so much better for all of us. So I ask you to have a think about what you or someone you may know, on your own or collectively, can do to help promote the club in a more professional way to maintain and improve the standards we are always proud of. I think it is important that we share what we all know and feel to spread the word across the town and our community and beyond to the benefit of Burntwood Rugby Club. I think it is vitally important to remember that we are all in this together for the fun, enjoyment and sheer pleasure of rugby and to promote our club in the best way we can.

I would like to thank Ray Gleave for his organising of the Patrons again this year. Without doubt we have has two very successful days where numbers have grown and obviously much needed funds have been raised and used for the good of the club. Long may it continue, Ray.

Also, a special mention must go to Chris Martin, whom we all know as “Piff”, who has put endless hours in to the grounds maintenance programme and for the week to week marking of the pitches, filling of the dreaded rabbit holes and all the other day to day requirements.

I know everyone at the club appreciates Dani and our staff for their hard work too.

As far as the playing side is concerned I congratulate and maybe commiserate at the same time. Yes, we just missed out on promotion in the 1st team. Maybe our Achilles heel remains the tough away trips to deepest, darkest Shropshire but this season I have been proud to watch a relatively young side play some vibrant, committed, structured and entertaining rugby. I congratulate everyone involved. Jimmy, Shell and his team have worked well to give you players the confidence and vision to play the brand of rugby that has excited the spectators all year. I feel that there is something amongst you guys that has made a massive difference too and that is the fantastic change in attitude and commitment that you have shown which is a pleasure to see and fantastic to see the difference it has made on and off the pitch. So, well done and let us reach that goal next year. I would also like to congratulate the 2nd team for a successful season. The fixtures have been tough but the results have been tremendous. I understand that the support structure has not always been in place for the guys this year. It is an area I know myself and the committee is trying to put it right. Management and managers are key to our development of the 2nd team which obviously is only going to strengthen the 1st team squad. I think Jim would like to see more of the 2nd team training and it is up to us to help make this happen.

As for the junior section, I would like to thank Simon Barker for stepping up to the plate in difficult circumstances and all of the junior committee for their work in maintaining our young teams. I was lucky enough to attend the county U11s’ tournament which our junior section organised and was wholeheartedly overwhelmed at the professional approach taken to put on a special event like that.

As ever, thanks to Jo Gough and other photographers in the club who bring life and memories to what goes on here and to Rob Forsyth for the expression he puts in to his legendary match reports. I really don’t know where you find all the time, Rob, with all your county duties and your attendance at your beloved Edgbaston.

I would like to finish by wishing everyone a nice summer off season but also a reminder that our club still needs all the help we can give to put on functions, car parking and events like cricket matches, camping and BBQs as well as your hard earned pound notes over the bar. Good luck for next season!

P. Rogers.

**Patrons’ Secretary’s report**

A brief resume of the activities of the Patrons this year and basically how it’s going.

This time last year, in the 2015-16 season, we had 32 Patrons and 8 elder Patrons contributing £1,740 for the club. In the 2016-17 season we have 35 Patrons and 20 elder Patrons raising some £2,250.

This shows a 27% growth in membership and 23% in money raised which I think is reasonable but could be a great deal higher given the potential out there in the local rugby community.

This year we spent a little on upgrading the scoreboard, as the electronic one was very expensive, and £747 on a new line marker for Piff plus various other expenses. The line marker has already covered its cost and the club has now profited by £130.

The Patrons held two very successful lunches and each time we did our best to drink the bar dry and have a good time and we will strive to do even better next year.

R. Gleave.

**Hon. Treasurer’s report**

Copies of the Financial Summary for the Senior Section Season 2016-17 were provided.

Following the difficulties experienced with trying to run the same year ends for the playing sides and the limited company, it was agreed to revert back to April being the year end for the senior and junior sections. This finance report therefore covers the period from September to April. Year on year comparisons are difficult to correlate to so have not been reported.

Crossovers in year ends caused some confusion with our donors and sponsors as well as those in the club. In recognition of this confusion, no invoices for pitch boards were issued in the past period which has reduced some of the income we would normally have enjoyed. Two new supporters joined us this year raising a total of £870. Invoices for the existing boards for the coming season have already been issued.

Direct sponsorship from Central Power and JED Property Services raised a further £880.

The RFU Raffle was very poorly supported this year. Despite being able to keep 90% of the ticket price, as a club we only managed to sell £470 worth of tickets. The other £25 shown on the sheet was a late return from last year’s raffle.

Other income has been even more difficult to manage this past season across both Annual Membership and Match Day fees with both significantly down on where they should have been. The exception to this has been the Patrons where, through the efforts of Ray, membership has increased. It just goes to show that if someone helps out we can achieve great things. More volunteers needed this coming year please.

Whilst on the subject of Patrons, this season’s Patrons’ Days were both well supported. Raffles on the day raised a total of £222. The Patrons also contributed to the upkeep of the pitches by donating £747.70 for a line marking machine.

Last year we held a Christmas Raffle organised by Jo. Many prizes were donated by local businesses and we sold tickets to the value of £2,050. Costs to run it were £172.

Match day costs amounted to £1,454 for players’ meals, £555 for referees’ fees and £1,049.50 for kit wash.

There were transport costs of £425 for coach travel to some away matches. £325 was paid by the Patrons for a coach to the Ludlow match. The remaining £100 was for deep cleaning the previous coach after it returned from a match last season in Northampton.

Contributions to students travelling back from university to play for our 1st team amounted to £1,440. This will be much reduced this coming year.

This past year playing sections, junior and senior, were charged for the use of pitches and, where used, floodlights and changing rooms for both training and match days. Senior costs amounted to £1,330.

A loan of £1,700 was made this year to the limited company.

All in all, a busy year and one we need to build on next year. Membership needs to be paid by everyone, match day fees paid by every player and not, which has been the case over the past few years, just the select few. Only by being positive about, and being proud of, our club with everybody helping and contributing will we be able to pull ourselves back up to where we should be.

G. McGann.

**Hon. Secretary’s report**

1. The sale of tickets for the autumn internationals was reasonably good. Sales for the Six Nations’ games were very good. Allocated tickets left unsold are now returned to Twickenham for sale on the Ticket Exchange. The club then receives the difference in price between the entitlement price (to affiliated clubs) and the standard or face value price. The club’s allocation for this autumn’s internationals is awaited. It will be posted on the club noticeboard and the club website plus e-mail notifications to the regular purchasers. Payment will need to accompany ticket applications from members. Tickets will be restricted to two per member for the Six Nations as demand is expected to be high given that England’s two home games are against Wales and Ireland.
2. Sales of tickets for the RFU Grand Draw were the opposite of last year regarding the senior and junior section efforts. However, the outcome was similar. Overall proceeds were close to £500 which was nearly all from the seniors. There may have been some conflict with the raffle organised by Jo. Future club raffles need co-ordinating with the RFU Grand Draw, if we continue to participate with it, and a clearly identified purpose/target would help sales.
3. Our disciplinary record was excellent. There was one red card but this was subsequently dismissed by the SRU Disciplinary Panel so we had a clean record for 2016-17, a stark contrast with our previous record which resulted in club officials meeting with the SRU Disciplinary Panel to account for our poor record of five red cards.
4. I was disappointed that we called off the national cup tie away to Mansfield. It is the first time I can recall the 1sts entering a competition and then failing to honour the fixture. My disappointment was eased when Mansfield themselves conceded a walkover in the next round. There is little incentive to enter the national cup and we won’t be eligible to enter next season anyway. Perhaps the state of the national cup comps reflects the RFU’s focus on the professional/elite end of the game.
5. Our links with the SRU have been less strong this season. The county Value the Volunteer Dinner and Presentation Evening was moved to Stoke and the Fixture Secretaries’ meeting relocated to Cannock. There has also been limited club representation at courses and county functions. Highlights were the celebratory lunch held in honour of Elfyn Pugh and the county U11s Festival which we hosted and was well organised by Simon and his team. We will be hosting the Staffs Clubs’ AGM next Monday (22nd May).
6. Thanks to those people who provided match reports when I was unavailable. Thanks as usual to Jo for her photos of the match action and also for volunteering to update GMS. The latter needs continual updating for communication purposes. It will also dictate our ticket allocation for Twickenham internationals in the future.

R. Forsyth.

**e) Main Committee Proposal**

1) Member’s Annual Subscriptions and players’ match fees for 2017-18 to remain unaltered. Carried unanimously.

2) MS underlined the importance of paying up and preferably early. Need to cover the costs of the physio. He thanked Jimmy who has helped to fund the treatment for some players.

**f) Members’ Proposals**

1) That Burntwood Rugby Union Football Club and Burntwood Rugby Club Limited become jointly incorporated as Burntwood Rugby Union Football Club Limited. The newly incorporated BRUFC Ltd to be managed by an Executive Committee representing all the organisation’s activities. The Executive Committee being elected/re-elected annually. The management and operation of the bar/clubhouse facilities be as a trading subsidiary. Proposed by R. Clague-Smith, seconded by J. Brown.

2) Amendments (x20) to draft proposal for BRUFC Constitution and Rules. Proposed by R. Clague-Smith and seconded by J. Brown.

3) RCS spoke to proposal **f)** 1). When I joined BRUFC in September 1973, the club met at The Drill Inn and played its home matches at Chasetown Comprehensive School and trained in the gym at the same venue. Over the next 20+ years the club led a nomadic life meeting at various pubs and clubs, even renting the Old Meeting House (Point) in Chasetown High Street, whilst playing at various sites in the area. Finally, in early 90s it settled on this site which it leased from Lichfield District Council, the term being 30 years. In order to enter into an agreement with the local authority, the club being unincorporated and unable to hold property in its own name, Trustees had to be legally established. The Trustees hence hold the title to the site on behalf of BRUFC. Likewise, when the clubhouse was built in 2001-2 the Trustees held the deeds to the property. We currently have a situation where i) BRC Ltd (being incorporated) manages the clubhouse facilities, ii) BRUFC, (being unincorporated) manages the playing of rugby and iii) the Trustees hold title on the land and building on behalf of BRUFC. When the Trusteeship was established BRC Ltd did not exist. If and when the club is fully incorporated, as the proposal states, the Trustees would then formally and legally discharge their duties.

Some here might be asking why incorporate? (Here RCS quoted from RFU document The Importance of Your Club Constitution). “The RFU’s Governance Committee continues to be concerned about the number of rugby clubs that continue to have unincorporated legal status and the consequent personal financial risk to their committee members and officers.” RCS then referred to supporting RFU document PDF 171KB. “Would you bet your house on the chance that nothing untoward will ever happen to your rugby club? If you are a committee member and your club is an unincorporated club you may be doing just that. Without rugby’s volunteer club administrators, the English game as we know it would not exist. The RFU does not want to see those very same people unnecessarily running the risk of personal financial disaster because of their commitment on behalf of the game and their community. Rugby is an inherently risky sport and any player who suffers a serious injury may claim against his club or against the club of the opposing team, or against individuals at such clubs. It is therefore advisable for clubs to check that their structure protects them against such claims. Many rugby clubs are set up as unincorporated associations. These unincorporated clubs are not legal entities in their own right and therefore any legal claim made against the club would be brought against the committee members (who would be personally liable if the club has insufficient assets to meet the claim).”

In submitting the proposal before you I am in no way criticising the current officers of either organisation.

Finally, I realise that implementing the proposal will take time and certain expense but be assured that after 43 years’ association with the club my only wish is that the club is set on a proper footing for the generations that follow us.

1. MS asked why the Trustees didn’t relinquish their position when BRFC became incorporated. Mick Miles replied that he had contacted Twickenham for advice. He said that the current agreement is not worth anything and needs sorting legally. He outlined the way ahead and the procedure to be followed, adding that the Trustees would be happy to hand over as long as the procedure was followed.
2. MS said that the new lease agreement was lying on the solicitor’s desk but the fees due were unpaid.
3. Bob Osbourne suggested that a group of interested parties meet up to sort out the situation. MS agreed and invited RCS to meet with Allan Jarrett, Mansel Thomas and Rob Forsyth. There was a need to consult with Trustees and Directors to come up with proposals.
4. A heated exchange followed including various accusations and allegations relating to the past.
5. RCS said that he and John Brown were happy to withdraw their proposal if the governance group met, investigated and reported back to the members.
6. The second proposal **f)** 2) on amendments was postponed until proposal **f)** 1) was sorted as there will be conflict between the Club Constitution and the limited company Articles of Association to resolve.

**g) Election of Officers and Captains for Season 2017-18**

1) Martyn Smith (Chairman), Rob Forsyth (Hon. Secretary), Andy Macey (Fixture Secretary) and Ray Gleave (Additional Member – Patrons Sec.) were all prepared to stand for re-election. There being no other nominations, the four were re-elected en bloc.

2) Club Captain – Ben Holt – proposed by Rob Forsyth, seconded by Josh Canning. Carried.

3) 1st XV Captain – Sean Latham – proposed by Paul Rogers, seconded by Andy Macey. Carried.

4) 2nd XV Captain – TBA.

5) 3rd XV Captain – Stuart Maguire - proposed by Simon Barker, seconded by Tony Clements. Carried.

**h) Any other business**

1) RCS asked whether any amendments could be taken on the Club Constitution. MS said that there was no point until the governance group had met.

2) Mick Miles referred to his ban from the club stating that he maintained his innocence. He took advice from Twickenham after waiting 15 weeks for his appeal to be heard. He was advised that he was entitled to enter the club and did so despite his ban.

**i) Close**

1) There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55 pm.