

SCOTTISH RUGBY UNION

Minute of Annual General Meeting of the Scottish Rugby Union, held in the Edinburgh Conference Centre, Heriot Watt University, on Saturday 22 June 2013 at 10.30am

- Present**
- A J M Lawson (President) in the Chair
D A D Macleod (Vice President), G B Clark, J W Davidson, J Steele, I Barr, J Littlefair, J S Stevenson, W M McMurtrie, A J Forsyth, G T Kerr, M E Monro, F J B Neil, B K Thompson, K S Vass, R Lynch (Members of Scottish Rugby Council); E A Crozier and A Ferguson (co-opted member of Scottish Rugby Council)
- Sir Moir Lockhead and J G Millican (Members of Scottish Rugby Board)
- J H Wright, R G Young, A M Hosie, B Duffy, W G Dixon and G W Jack (Past Presidents)
- M Dodson (Chief Executive), R Howat (Secretary), A P Healy (Finance Director), D McKay (Director of Commercial Operations, Communications & Public Affairs), C Thomson (Director of Rugby Operations), G A Ireland (Head of Regulation), R G McGhee (Regulatory and Technical Executive) and N Bombrys (Managing Director, Glasgow Warriors).
- Club, Associate Body and Associate Club area representatives comprising 146 individuals.
- There were also in attendance: I T Rankin (Vice Presidential candidate); P G Laverie, D Ward, D Bradbury (Council Members elect); P Crozier (Championship Committee Convenor); D M Hunter (Standing Working Party on Governance Chairman); A Rae (Reserve League Committee Chairman); representatives of the auditors and members of the press.
- Distributed for Meeting**
- *Notice calling the AGM dated 30 May 2013 including Agenda, Motions and Amendments*
 - *Note on procedure at AGM*
 - *Minutes of 2012 AGM*
 - *Scottish Rugby Annual Report*
 - *The 2013 Financial Statements (extracted from the Annual Report)*
 - *The 2012/13 Championship Report*
- Apologies for Absence**
- G B Masson, J B Steven, Dr I M Todd, F C H McLeod, G D M Brown, J H R Wright, I H P Laughland, A R Irvine, (Past Presidents); W A Nolan and J Jeffrey (co-opted members of Scottish Rugby Council); I McLauchlan and C S Grassie (Scottish Rugby Board Members); Prof L D Crerar (Discipline Panel Chairman);
Clubs: Annan, Hyndland, Liberton, Mackie Academy FP and Ross High.
- Welcome and Opening Comments**
- The President welcomed all present to the Meeting and made special reference to Broughton FP as the 2013 AGM marked the 50th anniversary of their admission as a Full Member club.
- The President confirmed that the meeting was quorate, there being present more than one third of the total members and representatives entitled to attend and to vote.
- The President invited the Secretary to intimate any apologies, which were as noted above.
- The President paid tribute to absent friends and those from the Scottish Rugby family who had passed away during the year, including in particular Past President Robin Charters.
- Club Representatives**
- The President intimated that all of the club representatives present must be a member of the club which they were representing.
- Notice calling the Meeting**
- The President referred to the Notice calling the Meeting dated 30 May 2013, which is filed with this Minute, and proposed that it be taken as read.

Minutes

The Minutes of the previous General Meeting (held on 30 June 2012), copies of which had been distributed prior to the meeting, were unanimously approved, being proposed by the President and seconded by B A Sinclair, Portobello FP, and thereafter signed by the President.

President's Report

The President made his report to the meeting, this report including:

- paying tribute to the many hard working club officials, coaches, volunteers and local sponsors who contributed so much to the health of our grass roots rugby;
- welcoming the strategy documents which had been recently commissioned on Club rugby, the Women's game, Player Academies, Coaching, Schools rugby and Refereeing - stressing that the game in Scotland could not stand still and had to look forward;
- congratulating the league and cup winners across the men's and women's leagues and within youth and schools rugby;
- making special mention of the Cup Finals day and the Club Awards Dinner as being personal highlights of the year; and
- congratulating the national squad on their third place in the Six Nations, the Scottish representatives selected for the British Lions squad and the Glasgow Warriors on reaching the play-offs of the RaboDirect Pro12 league.

The President then commented on the improved financial situation at Scottish Rugby and encouraged all involved in Scottish Rugby to unite to help to realise our ambitions to compete at the top level of the game.

Finally, he thanked everyone who had helped him during his year of office and wished the incoming President all the best for the season ahead.

Scottish Rugby Update

The Board Chairman, Sir Moir Lockhead, advised that good progress was being made towards achieving Scottish Rugby's strategic goals, including a further reduction in debt of £1.25m. In addition he referred to:

- increased attendances at Murrayfield (to over 500,000 in 2012/13) thanks to a more customer friendly atmosphere and better value ticketing;
- the planned rugby initiatives for grass roots including Academies, links between school and club rugby, coaching pathways and the Women's game; and
- he welcomed the fact that the game was becoming safer through the Are You Ready to Play Rugby initiative.

Finally, he thanked J Millican, who was standing down as an independent non-executive director, for all his hard work and commitment throughout his time on the Board.

The President then invited M Dodson (Chief Executive) to present his report.

M Dodson provided a comprehensive report incorporating a review of the previous 12 months. Key points noted in the review included:

- A record turnover of £39.3m, with a surplus of £0.9m and debt reduced to the lowest point in over a decade (at £11.2m);
- Increased investment in both the professional and grassroots game, with a reduction in commercial and operational costs;
- The threats posed by the wrangling over the European Rugby Accord and the risk to Scotland's participation and income from ERC;
- The pressures faced by clubs, and the increased direct and indirect financial support provided clubs at £1.9m (with a further £100k provided to supplement the facilities fund and £100k going to Premier clubs to cover medical, conditioning, physio and other game related expenditure);
- £1.25m secured from government to improve local club facilities and an

additional £3.1m to fund the development of artificial pitches;

- A clamp down on referee abuse and an instruction to the Discipline Panel to apply enhanced sanctions for offenders in this regard;
- Congratulations to those clubs which had been growing and developing the game, especially the RBS Club of the Month award winners;
- A review of the playing performances of the national teams and the two professional teams;
- The policy initiatives being developed in relation to Academies, Coaching Pathways, Schools, Club and Women's Rugby;
- An update on progress on the Museum, including plans for a virtual museum using the latest software and social media frameworks, along with an audio/video archive. The fixed displays at Murrayfield had also been updated ; and
- An update on staff changes, both in senior management and the national coaching team.

M Dodson concluded by thanking President, Alan Lawson, and Board Chairman, Sir Moir Lockhead, and the SRU staff and all the volunteers for their support and hard work over the year.

Adoption of the Financial Statements for year ended 30 April 2013

The President then presented the Financial Statements for year ending 30 April 2013 and invited any questions on these or any of the topics raised in the Chairman and Chief Executive's presentations.

A number of questions had been submitted in advance:

Cumbernauld RFC: Now the precedent has been set in moving the AGM from Murrayfield, would there be any merit in rotating the AGM through the four regions on an annual basis? In particular in staging the AGM in Glasgow in 2014 to show our support for the city as the host city of the Commonwealth Games?

M Dodson replied that whether this would be technically possible was related to whether Motion 2 was approved later in the meeting. Assuming that Motion 2 was approved the Board would give the matter its full consideration.

Hillhead/Jordanhill RFC: Why, when Scotland played Japan on 9 November 2013, was there a programme of Cup games scheduled?

M Dodson responded that this matter had been raised by the National Forum in early May and a very full answer provided to the clubs concerned at the time. For the purposes of the record the key points confirmed were as follows:

- the competitions each season are managed based on the wishes of the clubs and in the light of the complex history this involves;
- traditionally no league games were scheduled on international weekends. However, with the expansion of league and cup rugby over time - and an increase in the number of Autumn and 6 Nations internationals - this had become less and less easy;
- to this mix was added various AGM motions over the years involving the scheduling of games (including one directing not to schedule fixtures on Sundays - leaving little option other than to use certain international Saturdays);
- this did not mean that the games actually had to be played up against the Scotland game. The approach of some clubs to play under lights on Friday (if they could) or who chose to play on Sunday was to be welcomed. The option also existed to play at other times on the Saturday as long as the Kick Off time was at least 2 hours before the international;
- fixture scheduling was an art and not a science. There are those who want to try

and avoid international Saturdays – which we do where we can. There are those – especially club treasurers – who welcome a full after-match bar on an international Saturday; and

- it is a complex jigsaw, and one which Scottish Rugby did its very best to deal with.

There being no further questions the 2013 Financial Statements were formally approved, being proposed by the President and seconded by J Mathieson, Morgan Academy FP.

Motions and Amendments

The President pointed out that during discussion on any Motion or Amendment, the Motion or Amendment would require to stand or fall as put and could not be amended for discrepancies or otherwise at the Meeting.

Majority

The President pointed out that a simple majority of those voting was required for Motions and Amendments to succeed, other than in the case of Bye-Law changes or a special directions as to Finance (where a vote of two thirds of those present and entitled to vote was required). Of the Motions being proposed to the meeting Motions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5B and 6B involved changes to the Bye-laws, and therefore would require two-thirds majorities. Motions 5A and 6A required only a simple majority to succeed.

**Motion 1 :
Commencement
of service as a
Director**

The President proposed that the Motion be taken as read and invited questions.

There being no questions or comments the President moved that a vote be taken.

The Secretary called for a vote on the Motion. The Motion was clearly carried.

**Motion 2 :
Annual General
Meeting**

The President proposed that the Motion be taken as read and invited questions.

There being no questions or comments the President moved that a vote be taken.

The Secretary called for a vote on the Motion. The Motion was clearly carried.

**Motion 3 :
Management of
AGMs**

The President proposed that the Motion be taken as read and invited questions.

There being no questions or comments the President moved that a vote be taken.

The Secretary called for a vote on the Motion. The Motion was clearly carried.

**Motion 4 :
Date for
submitting
Motions and
Amendments**

The President proposed that the Motion be taken as read and invited questions.

There being no questions or comments the President moved that a vote be taken.

The Secretary called for a vote on the Motion. The Motion was clearly carried.

**Motion 5 :
League Structure
1**

The President proposed that the Motion be taken as read and invited Haddington to propose the Motion.

K Wallace, Haddington, said that a Motion changing the league structure had been agreed two years previously on the grounds of financial necessity. The two Motions now being tabled were also being proposed on the grounds of financial necessity. Haddington Rugby Club had been struggling financially and sponsorship was urgently needed to meet the costs of travel. However, the club struggled to explain to existing and potential sponsors what Divisions 'A' and 'B' actually meant. The fact that the two divisions were not split based on ability also affected the competitiveness of games and in turn on attendances. Furthermore, there was no way of knowing whether a team promoted from the top of one division was better than the second placed team in the other division. In regard to reducing travel – Aberdeenshire would still play Jed-Forest in the same regional division!

The President invited Selkirk to second the Motion and E Forster, Selkirk, formally seconded the Motion.

The President invited questions from the floor:

T Feasby, Cartha Queens Park, said that his club supported Haddington. He said that the division was not “regional”, it still involved a lot of traveling, and under the current structure revenue was down and it was difficult to sell games to sponsors.

A Farquharson, Aberdeenshire, said that the current structure had only been introduced two years before and it had not had a chance to bed in. He had not met anyone who did not understand what Divisions A and B meant; leagues were based on geography in many countries. He had made calculations of mileage which clearly showed that the traveling would be much greater in a linear structure.

D Ward, Grangemouth, said that he supported Aberdeenshire. The clubs supporting the motion could not back up what they said; they did not have youth set-ups and paid players; travel was a key component.

K Macauley, North Berwick, agreed that it was too early to say that the changes hadn't worked. Linear leagues would involve more travel; his club had to pay £8-10k on travel when in the National League. They would not be able to pay a Development Officer if they had to pay this.

A Morgan, Dunfermline, supported Haddington, saying that despite being an East coast club they ended up playing in the West League because of the ‘postcode lottery’; and having been relegated to a truly Regional League they would now have to play Orkney!

R Jamieson, GHA, said that the clubs in Championship Divisions A and B unanimously wanted to revert to a linear structure and were being opposed by clubs not involved.

J McLaren, Cumbernauld, said that the Season Structure Working Party (SSWP) had not consulted his club and asked if someone from this group could give their views.

J Davidson, SSWP Chairman, said that at the first Council meeting of the year the SSWP had been asked to consult with clubs again at the request of the Championship Forum. The group met with the East and West and took soundings from the North. They concluded that there was no need for change at that time and they were still of this view.

The President asked whether Scotland was a nation which could support 40 clubs playing nationally, opining that travel was an issue.

D Harper, Kirkcaldy, said that his club had not been consulted but were one of the unanimous Championship Forum proposing a linear structure.

D Ward, Biggar, noted that Scottish Rugby was struggling to adapt to what goes between professional and club rugby and questioned whether it was possible to support a structure with 40 semi-professional clubs.

R Harris, Dalziel, stated that it was disingenuous for clubs who were not playing in these divisions to try to influence what happened, and noted that his club faced relegation which would effectively mean dropping two divisions to regional rugby.

P Bone, Livingston, pointed out that because of his club's geographical location they faced the prospect of bouncing between the East and West divisions. He added that linear leagues were more competitive and had fewer mismatches.

B A Sinclair, Portobello FP, stated that every club in Scotland could end up in these divisions and were entitled to make their views known.

J McLaren, Cumbernauld, asked whether the Council and Board had supported the SSWP recommendations. The President replied that this was not a question for the Board and there had not been a consensus on the Council.

The President invited K Wallace to sum up. K Wallace restated his main arguments and said that the issue was very important to clubs at that level.

There being no further questions or comments the President moved that a vote be taken.
The Secretary called for a vote on Motion 5(A). The Motion was clearly carried.
The Secretary called for a vote on Motion 5(B). The Motion was carried by a large majority.

**Motion 6 :
League Structure
2**

The President invited Haddington to propose the Motion.

K Wallace, Haddington, said that the National League and Championship Clubs were not proposing 12 team divisions above or below as this was not their business. He said that there were not enough home games in the second half of the season; his club had gone three months without a home game (with the exception of of a rearranged game on an international Saturday). They could not survive another season like that, with nine Cup Saturdays and three standby dates before March. If the Cup went to a straight knockout they could face an entire season with only nine home games.

The President invited Selkirk to second the Motion. E Forster, Selkirk, said that the National League Forum had considered this Motion and all clubs were in favour.

The President invited questions from the floor.

T Feasby, Cartha Queen's Park, said that his club's league season had been finished by the end of March and they could have done with the extra fixtures. His club therefore supported 12 team leagues.

There being no further questions or comments the President moved that a vote be taken.

The Secretary called for a vote on Motion 6(A). The Motion was clearly carried.

The Secretary called for a vote on Motion 6(B). The Motion was clearly carried.

**Championship
Report for
Season 2012/13**

The Chairman invited Sheriff P Crozier, Championship Convenor, to present the Championship Report.

P Crozier proposed that the Championship Report be taken as read. He thanked the members of the Championship Committee and the competitions staff, with a special mention for Championship Secretary, Neil Crooks. He noted that a further review of the Competition Rules had been undertaken and urged clubs to familiarise themselves with the rules prior to the start of the season. He stressed that without a healthy and vigorous club game the professional game could not survive. He highlighted the importance of 2nd XV rugby and asked clubs to be realistic about the season structure. With competing interests modern players did not want to play on International Saturdays and at Christmas. A season stretching from August to April with fixtures every Saturday could not work.

The President thanked P Crozier who was standing down as Championship Convenor for work related reasons and welcomed A Rae who would be taking over.

The President moved adoption of the report. B McHarg, Ayr, seconded its adoption and the report was duly approved.

**Election of
Members of
Council for
2013/14**

The Secretary advised that the following representatives had been elected to serve on the Council:

Premier Division – P G Laverie (Ayr) elected for 1 year term 2013/14

National Division – D Ward (Biggar) elected for 1 year term 2013/14

North Regional League – M E Monro (Aberdeen Wanderers) elected for 2 year term 2013/14 and 2014/15

Scottish Rugby Referees' Representative – F B Neil (WRRS) re-elected for 3 year term 2013/14 to 2015/16

Scottish Schools Division Representative – B K Thompson (Strathallan) re-elected for 3 year term 2013/14 to 2015/16

Scottish Women's Forum Representative – D Bradbury (Oban Lorne) elected for 3 year term

2013/14 to 2015/16

Exile Clubs' Representative – R Lynch (London Scottish) re-elected for 3 year term 2013/14 to 2015/16.

Election of Vice President for 2013/14

The Secretary advised that three nominations had been received for the position of Vice President – A Ferguson (Lenzie), J G Millican (Heriot's) and I T Rankin (Dundee HSFP).

The President called called for a vote and the following votes were cast:

A Ferguson 35

J G Millican 34

I T Rankin 91

The President therefore announced that I T Rankin was duly elected to serve as Vice President for season 2013/14.

Election of President for 2013/14

The President invited the meeting to approve the appointment of D A D Macleod (Selkirk) as President. The meeting approved the appointment by acclamation and D A D Macleod was therefore duly elected to serve as President for season 2013/14.

Applications for admission to Full Membership

The Secretary intimated that there had been no applications for full membership.

Any Other Business

The Chairman invited intimation of any other competent business.

B Mitchell, Hillhead/Jordanhill, expressed concern at the scheduling of club matches on the same days as internationals, saying that many club members bought tickets for Murrayfield in advance and were then conflicted between club and country. He asked the Board to find a way of maximising revenue for both.

M Dodson expressed sympathy with B Mitchell's views. He said that he wanted everyone to come and support Scotland and assured B Mitchell that the Board would take the matter forward.

P Crozier also expressed sympathy with Hillhead/Jordanhill on this point, adding that the introduction of 12 team divisions would only exacerbate this problem.

R Long, Broughton FP, expressed disappointment that there was no mention of the Women's team in the 'Towards 2015' video. M Dodson stated that the video was a specific sponsorship video for the World Cup in 2015 and the President pointed out that there was good coverage of the Women's game in other promotional videos.

Closing Remarks

The Chairman invited the new President, D A D Macleod, to address the meeting.

D A D Macleod congratulated I T Rankin on his election as Vice President and offered commiserations to the two unsuccessful candidates. He promised that he and I T Rankin would work together to grow the game, promote rugby's best interests and the ethics of fair play and respect.

D A D Macleod paid tribute to the outstanding commitment and service offered by the outgoing President, A J M Lawson, over the previous year commenting on his leadership of the Council, his work for the Bill McLaren Foundation and Positive Coaching Scotland and his commitment to the clubs. D A D Macleod thanked everyone for their attendance and wished all club representatives a pleasant Summer and a successful season in 2013/14.

The Meeting, which had commenced at 10.30am, closed at 12.50pm with a vote of thanks to the Chair.