



**MINUTES OF THE  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
Wednesday 19 June 2024 – 7pm  
at Longlevens RFC**

**Present:** 66 people attended the meeting including:

- GRFU Executive Board/Team GRFU/Life Members – G Beaumont, S Bevan, S Collyer-Bristow, A Dankes, K Davis, K Gee, N Gillingham, L Gomer, A Grant, D Guyan, S Morgan, L Newman, M Parcel, D Parry-Jones, T Perris, R Parsons, S Partridge, C Ravenhill, E Ryall, A Siddorn, N Smallcombe, S Thornton, R Wilden,
- Representatives from Clubs, Schools, Combinations, Referee Societies – Avonmouth Old Boys RFC, Bream RFC, Bristol Combination, Broad Plain RFC, Brockworth RFC, CSS RFC, Cheltenham North RFC, Chipping Sodbury RFC, Chosen Hill RFC, Drybrook RFC, Dursley RFC, Forest of Dean Combination, Frampton Cotterell RFC, Gloucester & District Referee society, Gloucester Old Boys RFC, Gordon League RFC, Hucclecote RFC, Kingswood RFC, Longlevens RFC, Matson RFC, Minchinhampton RFC, North Bristol RFC, Old Patesians RFC, Old Richians RFC, Painswick RFC, Southmead RFC, St Mary's Old Boys RFC, Stow on the Wold RFC, Stroud RFC, Thornbury RFC, Widden Old Boys RFC.

**Welcome** - GRFU President, Adrian Siddorn, welcomed all attending, and started the meeting on a sombre note, asking those who could, to stand to observe a minute's silence in memory of those rugby colleagues and friends who, since we last met, have sadly left us. Names listed on our [Wall of Remembrance](#)

**1. STATUTORY BUSINESS ITEMS:**

- Approval of the Notice of the Meeting** – AG confirmed calling notice sent 9/5 with follow up reminders 30/5, 6/6 and 18/6 – approved [proposer Rob Beswick, Seconder Dave Guyan]
- Apologies:** 7 Bamboos, R Ankerson, Ashley Down Old Boys RFC, Berry Hill RFC, Bristol Saracens RFC, Caincross RFC, J Darlaston, G Davies, N McCombe, T Pickard, Old Cryptians RFC, S Silk, A Stephens, S Sturdy, Tetbury RFC,
- Approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023** – approved [proposer Dave Fox, Seconder Steph Morgan]
- Matters arising from the Minutes of the last AGM on 6th July 2022** – none
- Financial Statement** – GRFU Treasurer, Simon Thornton read the following: Having gratefully announced my successor as Treasurer at last year's AGM, you may wonder why I am stood here yet again. I blame the English weather -Chris Cooper, shortly after being elected, fell in love with a property in Spain - who can blame him, and quickly realised he would not be able to devote sufficient time to GRFU business. So you're stuck with me again. The good news is that Adrian, as Volunteer Lead, managed to find a new keen & very able candidate to take over for next season, Kev will be introduced later in the meeting.  
I will now run through a summary of the accounts for the last completed year (to 30th June 23) and my estimated outcome for this season. You should all have received a full copy of last year's accounts

by email. If anyone has any questions don't worry about waiting to the end, please interrupt me at any point.

Our Income for 22/23 included post a Covid Re-boot grant from RFU which we did not receive this year, hence the reduction in RFU grant funding. Most other lines show a modest increase from last season. Since these slides were finalised yesterday I did receive notification of an extra £1840 of RFU competitions funding as a reward for the hard work of Stuart Gilbraith and all those involved in running a successful District League programme. The total income for both years is somewhat distorted by our investment performance with the value of our shareholdings rising approx. £4k last year and around £9k this year. With these stripped out our income for both years is roughly similar at around £104k.

Moving on to how this is spent. Firstly on Representative Rugby. Immediately after Covid in the 21/22 season we opted not to enter any of the adult County Championships for economic reasons. We hoped that other Counties would take a similar view and put pressure on RFU to increase the funding for these competitions. That did not happen, though several counties did pull out at a later stage when financial realities dawned on them. We re-entered the competitions last season moving the Senior Men down a level to Division 2 – That helped to control costs, which for the 3 programmes are approx. £22k per season against which we receive a grant from RFU of only £6k. Some of that expenditure has been incurred to purchase new playing kit which should now last for several years. Costs should be able to fall next season.

The Age-Grade Representative and Development programmes are more fully funded, and with their efforts to raise sponsorship and contributions from parents for kit had a small shortfall of about £3k in 22/23 and are on course to at least break even this season.

Our financial ability to support Community Rugby is much reduced from where it was 4-5 years ago, reflecting the increased financial constraints that the whole game is subject to as a result of Covid. I will refer to how this may improve later in this presentation.

Our Overheads – the basic cost of fulfilling the functions delegated to us, have remained under control and have not risen as fast as general inflation. Communications is slightly higher this season than last due to the cost of our new website, however that will save money in the long term as the monthly cost of running the previous website has been considerably reduced. The tax figure almost entirely reflects the amount of VAT that we are unable to recover. Any club treasurers here will be familiar with the delights of Partial Exemption. Because of the way that International Tickets are now sold to members directly, and advice we received that club subscriptions are not vatable – we have much less vatable income to set our VAT paid against.

The next slide shows a simple summary of our Income and Expenditure. The key figure to look at is the deficit on Ordinary Activities – we have little control over investment performance and should not be relying on regular gains to subsidise our activities. As you will see we are currently losing around £14k per year – a figure we can sustain for a short period only.

The reason we can currently sustain these losses are the fact that we still have substantial reserves of around £150k, however, depletion of this by £15k per annum cannot carry on.

Thankfully the RFU Community Game Board, of which Keith is a member, have recently agreed the basis for next seasons CB funding. Basic grant funding will increase by 10% . There is also a £2k increase in funding for the County Championships. Most significantly it has been agreed that from season 25/26 every geographic CB should receive additional funding to allow them to employ a paid administrator. Final figures are not yet available but given the relative size of Gloucestershire as a CB, we can now expect a very significant contribution to the cost of employing Andrea in the role we have all found so valuable. If, therefore, next season we choose to do everything we have done this year we should be able to reduce our losses and then move to a break-even basis the following season. Simon then asked if there were any questions.

- f) **Consideration of Resolution to dispense with need for full audit [Annex 4]** approved [proposer Jim McGeough, seconder Lesley Gomer]

- g) **Consideration of Resolutions submitted under Rule 8.5** approved [proposer Jim McGeough, seconder Lesley Gomer]

## 2. BOARD REPORTS:

- a) GRFU Overview 2023/24 & Main Objectives 2024/25 - GRFU Chair, Simon Collyer-Bristow presented his **report**. Question asked under Rules & Regulations re vets rugby and adjusting the age; GRFU will feedback to RFU via Council Representatives. Ryan Wilden asked success of Egg Chasers to be noted, led by FCRFC's Andy Jarett with this seasons charity being MND.
- b) Matters relating to the welfare of the County – none

**3. ELECTIONS:** Adrian stated that GRFU is extremely proud to have Emily Ryall proposed as President and asked her to stand for those yet to meet her to know who she is. He then stated he was pleased to remain as an Officer for next season as Vice / Immediate Past President. He covered the list of Officers [see Annex 1] and asked Kev Davies to stand to introduce him as GRFU proposed Treasurer. All proposed by Adrian congratulated Simon on his re-election for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term and thanked both him and Keith Gee for their work.

- a) **Election of Officers** [Annex 1] – approved [Proposer David Parry-Jones, Secunder Steph Morgan]
- b) **Election of Executive Board** [Annex 2] – approved [Proposer Tricia Perris, Secunder, Steph Morgan]
- c) **RFU Council Appointments** - for noting only [Annex 3]
- d) **RFU Delegated Function Appointments** – for noting only [Annex 3] Adrian shared Steve Baines' apology due to recent knee operation.

## 4. AWARDS:

Before presenting the annual awards, Adrian shared that this season we had even more Honda Volunteer of the Year nominations [101 from 25 clubs] and congratulated all. He explained the process and how 5 nominated by Gloucestershire are referred back to the RFU/Honda panel for two finalists to be chosen. He presented Gareth Butler from Longlevens RFC and mentioned Lee Fortey for their work with age grade rugby [these two we omitted from RFU original list]. He then announced Ellie Langden from Kingswood RFC and Hazel Rayer from Gloucester Old Boys RFC as the two volunteers invited to Twickenham in September for the black-tie dinner. He urged more clubs to nominate their volunteer quoting sometimes recognition and a simple thank you from your peers can mean so much.

- a) **RFU League & GRFU District League presentations 2023/24** – Adrian asked Stuart Gilbraith to present the relevant plaques to league winners/runners up.
- b) **GRFU Coach of the Season** – Adrian introduced Steph Morgan as GRFU Coaching Coordinator. Steph then introduced the new award, presenting Coach of the Month certificates and announcing Dave Widden, Widden Old Boys RFC as the overall Coach of the Season.
- b) **Referee Societies Long Service Awards** – Fred Spong wasn't present and so Adrian Siddorn will present at a G&D Referee Society meeting. Adrian attended the recent Bristol & District Referee Society dinner and presented awards to those in attendance.

**d) Mike Shore U20 Player of Year Award** – Mike was unable to attend, and so Adrian explained the award is long standing and reflects the work that Mike did over a considerable long time with players under 20. The Award was presented to Riley Williams [Stow on the Wold RFC] and the following was read: *Riley has been the standout player for the 20s this season, through his hard-hitting tackles or his ability to break tackles in difficult situations, but what makes Riley stand out from the others is his off the pitch commitment. Out of the squad of 32, only 2 are not involved in full time education at university; Riley a bricklayer, travelling from Stow on the Wold, would be the first to training and matches and would engage with all the players as they entered into the room, asking them about their days and would set the tone for the group. This has been recognised with being selected for southwest 20s in the back row.* Adrian wished Riley good luck and acknowledged previous recipient Adam Hopkinson who played for Doncaster Knights and made an appearance for Leicester Tigers this season.

**e) Roy Phillips Administration of Rugby Award** – Adrian explained that Roy was a stalwart of our game at community, county and national level having served as Bristol Combination Treasurer from 1972-79. He was GRFU Treasurer from 1979-1993 and RFU Council Member from 1991 to 1997 and again in 1998 until 2003. He was honoured with GRFU Life membership in 2003. When he died, he left a legacy to be used to honour an individual who has delivered outstanding administrative service to the County. He announced “This year’s winner is person who works tirelessly behind the scenes as team manager for the Under 18’s and under 20’s. It gives me great pleasure to announce this year’s winner Chris Lane”.

**f) GRFU President’s Award** - Adrian stated this award was introduced to recognise a valued volunteer who gives prolonged and dedicated service to GRFU. He went on to say “Tonight, the individual being recognised has helped the County develop the female game over a period of time. He works quietly in the background but tonight I am pleased to recognise his work by awarding the President’s award to Natham Smallcombe”.

**g) Life Membership** - Adrian said “I now come to my last act as your President. The highest award the County can bestow on an individual is life membership. This is not given lightly indeed there have only been 18 full life memberships awarded since 1975. The individual being awarded tonight has worked over many years for the County. It is impossible to say how many lives have been influence in a positive way by the actions of this person. They like me are a believer in the positive effect sport and particularly rugby can have on individuals and turn their lives around. So, it is my great pleasure as my last act as your President to award life membership to Leslie Gomer”.

**5. CLOSING ADDRESS** – The President drew the meeting to a close by saying “Before I hand over to your new President Emily to close the meeting, I would like to thank you all for allowing me the privilege of being your President. The experience has been both pleasurable and at time humbling. To have the opportunity to see the great work you all do is one I will never forget. I would like to thank all those involved with the GRFU over the past years. This includes the RFU staff, County office and all the volunteers that make everything happen week in week out. Thank you all”.



**GLOUCESTERSHIRE  
RUGBY  
FOOTBALL  
UNION**

## **Annexes**

- **Annex 1 Election of the Officers for 2023-2024**
  - **President** – Adrian Siddorn
  - **Vice President** – Emily Ryall
  - **Chair** – Simon Collyer-Bristow
  - **Honorary Treasurer** – Chris Cooper
- **Annex 2 Election of Executive Board**
  - **On-Field Lead** – vacant
  - **Off-Field Lead** - vacant
  - **Governance & Welfare** – Stuart Gilbraith
  - **Volunteers** – Adrian Siddorn

- **Annex 3**

For noting only:

- **\*RFU Council Representatives for 2023-2024**
  - Keith Gee
  - Simon Thornton
- **\*RFU Delegated Function Sector Heads for 2022-2023**
  - **Discipline** – David Guyan
  - **Safeguarding** – vacant

\*appointed annually by the Executive Board to perform the relevant functions.