

It is a longstanding club tradition that as President I open our Annual General Meeting by asking all those present to stand in a minute's silence for members who have passed away in the previous season. I am including their names within the report this year because of the exceptional circumstances that the Coronavirus pandemic sees us in.

Please stand and remember;

Spencer Worley, Ron Bodily, Ian Baggott, Michael Saxby, Charlie Austin, Mick Basson, Nigel Wilson, Brian Johnson, Frank Booth and Tony Prescott. Plus Micky Prawl, who whilst not a member was a great friend of the club.

This is my fourth and final Annual General Meeting report as your Club President.

This written style of reporting to our AGM aims to be efficient with time at the meeting, as well as to help keep informed our members near and far who may be unable to attend our AGM in this challenging times.

'Unprecedented' is perhaps an overused term currently, but I will be referring to circumstances and terms that I believe have never before impacted our rugby club in its long and proud history, perhaps with the exception of no rugby being played during the two world wars.

My Presidents Report is on behalf of the whole committee. Later you will have a Playing Committee report from our Director of Rugby, George Shipman and the Annual Accounts spoken to by Anooj Shasikant, in his first report to you as our Honorary Treasurer.

Special thank you to Paul Hulse our past Honorary Treasurer and our longest serving committee member.

First, the positive side. The NatWest Rugby Force work day in June 2019 again saw many volunteers up painting, cleaning and repairing our club house and grounds.

The windows in the members bar, kitchen and function room have all been replaced. Many thanks to Glazerite.

The Annual Past Players lunch was again a success, with 100 attendees, well organised by Honorary Life Member, Bob Shaw. Thanks Bob.

Our members lounge project has now been completed. Thanks to many but especially to Keith Atkinson. Our function room has also been repainted. Both rooms now have name signs displaying the 'Bill Day Members Lounge' and the 'Brian Johnson Function Room'. Both have been commented on favourably, especially at the wake for Brian Johnson.

On behalf of the club I received our RFU Club Accreditation from the East Midlands Rugby Union President, Nick Powley in November.

The Rugby World Cup 2019 saw big numbers in our clubhouse watching the games.

We have changed our brewery from Marston's to Carlsberg.

Our Firework Display held on Friday 1st November 2019 was, in line with all outside events that weekend, impacted by the very wet conditions. Attendance was down about 40% on last year, but thanks to the hard work by our many club volunteers and the generosity of sponsors we still made a profit and that the overall benefits outweigh the impact vehicles have on our pitches in wet weather, Well done & thanks to our Mini Junior Chairman Karl McAndrew for all your hard work leading this important section of our club and for the extra

volunteering done by our younger members & their coaches led by Shaun Davies and managers, from car parking to serving at club meals, to helping out coaching younger teams. Many thanks to Nigel Higgins again.

A new concrete spectator path has been installed on the club house side of the main pitch over the 2019 Christmas break. Many thanks to T&W Civil Engineering Ltd.

Our club fund raising project 'Pitches 2020', led by Matthew Bland, Billy Gall and George Shipman (Snr) which saw all club fundraising directed to it and also saw members, friends and sponsors raise £18,000 towards a full renovation of the first team & training pitch.

Now the not so positive information.

Our club suffered another break in August 2019, smashed glass in a rear exterior door and then smashed our internal bar door and just months after the installation of new aluminium rear doors.

As a winter sport we know we can be impacted by the weather but our Mini and Junior section in particular has suffered more cancelled games and training this last season than most.

Two weather conditions, firstly storm Ciara and then storm Dennis, saw not only games/training cancelled but also our clubhouse closed when felled trees blocked the road to the club and damaged the phone line, removing our card system access at the club. A knock on to games played for players, club opening for members and of course, our club revenue.

Coronavirus Covid-19. This worldwide pandemic has of course had a huge impact on our country, many people, families, businesses and sport. It has also had a huge impact on our club, both financially, socially and the playing of rugby. For the safety of our members and club, we cancelled our annual Mini Festival, due to be held on 19 April 2020, for the first time since running it.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> March, the RFU suspended all rugby activity. On 20<sup>th</sup> March the RFU cancelled the 2019/2020 season with immediate effect, suspending the playing and training of rugby at all levels, with the sole exception of the Premiership. We were due to be the 'Community Club of the match' at Northampton Saints for the game v Bath, but this match has obviously been postponed at this time.

Our clubhouse has effectively been 'mothballed' since this time and our two paid staff members 'furloughed' as part of the Governments Job Retention Scheme. All rugby events and outside hiring's have been cancelled. With no usual revenue now coming into the clubs accounts, we are now acutely aware of how grateful we are to our many sponsors. Thank you to all sponsors for all your help in good times and bad.

The Ladies Afternoon Tea was postponed and moved to September and our planned summer Rugby X7's tournament is awaiting government health regulations on Covid-19 AND the RFU relaxation of no rugby activity.

The committee meetings since April have been held virtually, via video and phone conferencing software.

At the time of writing, I can't even tell members when we will be allowed to start our pre season training, let alone play games of rugby.

Your committee are not the only unpaid members who help to run and operate our club. Numerous other volunteer members give-up their time and skills, very often behind the scenes and asking for no recognition. I cannot mention all our volunteers and am conscious that many want no recognition and apologies to those I haven't mentioned. Thanks to our coaches and team captains. Bob Shaw up most Thursdays, Carl Tomalin for lots of ground work and keeping the memorial area presentable. House manager Keith Atkinson who has charged ahead on house projects, including kitchen and meeting room and much more. Groundsman Lee Huison

has been looking after and lining our pitches, both senior and mini junior, for the club all season. Steve Mackie and Pete Allebone for keeping the mower going and much more. Paul & James Maher for 'flattening' the carpark. Thanks to our club manager, Owen Tomalin for a challenging year and to Sarah Cox for her work in the kitchen and as ever to Mick Owen for all his hard work around the whole clubhouse. Richard & Brendon Leslie (and wider family) continue to remove diseased, dangerous & fallen trees, especially after this year's storms.

I would like to say a massive thank you from all our membership.

It has been a huge privilege to have been your President for the past 4 years and I look forward to another great year ahead for all involved with Wellingborough Rugby Football Club.

Ken Morse

President

21 May 2020