

ABERFELDY RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at Breadalbane Academy Community Campus on 5th September at 7.30pm

Present: Chairman Bill Bruce, Development Officer Laurie Dempster, Head Coach Steve Brown, Secretary Suzanne Morrison, Grace Norton, Ali Nash, Ali Henderson, Keith Moncrieff, Jim Anderson, Caleb Eady, Geordie Broad, Angus Broad, Toby Broad, Lewis Lambie, Ross Dempster, Kyle Harrison, Lochy Brown, Hamish Brown, Richard Sinclair, John Anderson, Ciaran Cassidy.

Apologies: Treasurer Stewart Mcneish, PR Officer Hamish McBride.

Chairman's Report:

"The various Club officers will report on the Club's activities so I will give only a brief overview.

At the initial general meeting we looked forward to running a team to compete in Sevens tournaments. That we have done with some success and we look forward to further progress in this area. In addition, we have found ourselves able to raise a team to compete strongly in 15 and 10-a-side games; in 2015 we won the Bannockburn 10-a-Side Competition at the first attempt and last month we won a hard fought victory in our first league match.

So we have surpassed our original expectations but in order to progress we need:

- More funding;
- More players;
- More social members;
- More sponsorship;
- More trainers;
- More helpers – on the committee and with hands-on tasks.

The other committee members will go through these points in more detail- first Steve Brown."

Head Coach's Report:

Steve presented a list of fixtures (copy below in Italics) played with results which evidenced a very good year; starting from zero to build a Sevens team we have evolved to a club able to field a 15-a-side team which other coaches now acknowledge represents a real challenge. Thanks to cooperation from the Kenmore and District Sports Association, ARFC have been able to host some home matches at the Kenmore playing field, now suitable for rugby thanks to grant funding for posts and other equipment. We have also received generous sponsorship from a number of local organisations and businesses.

List of Fixtures - Season 2015/16

GAME	DATE	RESULT	LOCATION	MOTM
St Andrews 7s	18 th Apr '15	Finished in Pool round	St Andrews	-
Crieff 7s	25 th Apr'15	Finished in Pool round	Braidhaugh, Crieff	-
Oban 7s	16 th May '15	Finished in Pool round	Glencruitten Park	-
Islay Beach Rugby 5s	June '15	Bowl Semi Final	Port-Ellen	-
ARFC v Kintyre RFC - 15s	1 st Aug '15	ARFC win (24-0)	Oban	Lachlan Menzies
Bannockburn 10s	8 th Aug '15	ARFC Vic win (12-0 v Annan RFC in Final)	Bannockburn	Lochy Brown
ARFC v Argyll & Bute RFC - 15s	22 nd Aug '15	Argyll & Bute win (36-22)	Kenmore	Geordie Broad
ARFC v Crieff & Strathearn RFC - 15s	13 th Sep '15	Crieff win (26-17)	Braidhaugh, Crieff	Kyle Harrison
ARFC v Kintyre RFC - 15s	27 th Sep '15	ARFC win (58-5)	Campbelltown	Duncan Menzies
ARFC v Kintyre RFC - 15s	1 st Nov '15	ARFC win (92-5)	Kenmore	Jack Stewart
ARFC v McLaren RFC - 15s	27 th Feb '16	McLaren win (46-15)	Callander	Angus Broad
St Andrews 7s	16 th Apr '16	Finished in pool round	St Andrews	-
Crieff 7s	30 th Apr '16	Shield Semi Finals	Braidhaugh, Crieff	Hamish Brown
Perthshire 7s	7 th May '16	2nd in Bowl Final v Morgan RFC	North Inch - Perth	Caleb Eady
ARFC v Currie RFC - 15s	21 st May '16	Currie win (26-24)	Kenmore	Niall Ramsay
Islay Beach Rugby 5s	10 th June '16	Semi Final	-	Alan Brown
Bannockburn 10s	30 th July '16	Shield Final v Clydesdale RFC	-	Paddy Barbour

List of Fixtures - Season 2016/17 (SO FAR)

GAME	DATE	RESULT	LOCATION	MOTM
ARFC v Morgan RFC - 15s	6 th Aug '16	Morgan Win (32-5)	Dundee	Lewis Lambie
ARFC v Perthshire RFC 2 nd XV - 15s	26 th Aug '16	ARFC win (36-19)	Kenmore	Ross Dempster

The main challenges now are:

- **Establishing a larger pool of players;** we hope that our status as a league team will now encourage players from Pitlochry, Blair Atholl and further afield to join. All team members are aware of the need to encourage potential recruits.
- **Establishing a more reliable and better training regime;** this needs more trainers, a formal schedule of training regimens and potentially, training offsite at Pitlochry if this will encourage recruitment. If funds could be found to install floodlights, this would help a lot with winter training.
- **Establishing a rugby culture:** an aim we have yet to achieve is the setting up of a Junior Club so as to have a feed of players from junior to senior level. This would help mitigate the constant drain of players moving away for work etc. We need more help from persons willing and qualified to work with children.

Steve finished by thanking all the players for their hard work and commitment and in turn received thanks from the Chairman and members for his essential role in getting the club started.

Development Officers Report:

Laurie's comprehensive report (copy below in Italics) was circulated to attendees as they arrived and it was agreed that this was both an excellent analysis of the present situation and a useful template for the future.

Aberfeldy RFC Development Report - September 2016

Firstly it has been a real pleasure to be involved with the club over the last year or so and to watch the team developing and indeed improving with every outing. The commitment shown by the players and coaches has been immense.

In our inaugural season we were hampered in the number of games we could organise as a consequence of potential opponents having fixture backlogs due to the appalling weather over the winter. The Players and coaches showed great fortitude continuing to attend training sessions without many, or sometimes any, actual fixtures in prospect! We are also hampered by our inability to play many Saturday fixtures during the shooting seasons. This season we have the league fixtures programmed on Saturdays and we will need to rearrange the bulk of these. We will update members when fixtures are changed.

The club has in its short history already many positive milestones to report and those on the playing side will be covered by others. It is important to be recognised as a friendly and welcoming club (off the pitch) and the feedback we have received from visiting clubs and referees in this regard has been heartening and something we must strive to maintain.

We ran three successful functions over the season with the consensus being that these were well received by both members and non-members. These functions were designed primarily to increase awareness of the club locally rather than as fundraisers and suspect that the overall result financially was about breakeven. They however did succeed in their primary aim of increasing awareness. Thanks must go to the Chraggs and Moness for helping to

make these evenings so successful. The players have helped in several fund raising initiatives such as organising parking at several local events. It is the intention to run several functions over the coming season although we currently do not have any in the diary.

The support we have received from local business and individuals has been reassuring and this help will be acknowledged elsewhere. We were invited to run the raffle at Kenmore games and attracted prizes worth an excess of £1200, disappointingly our share of the proceeds fell well short of this figure.

Every home game costs us around £350 to stage and if we assume ten home fixtures we need to raise £3500 just to pay for these. In addition to this amount we will need funds for essential rugby equipment. We do not ask the players to pay match fees and indeed the players chipped in to pay for training facilities last winter. Our aim this season should be to raise at least £5000 through fundraising and sponsorship to meet our basic running costs.

We have from a standing start a current membership of over 20 playing and over 40 social, which is encouraging for a start-up club but more of this later. The bus organized to the French game at Murray field was a success as was the team's first bus trip to Oban to play in a three way tournament. It is the intention to run buses to Six Nations home fixtures if the demand exists in the coming season. Once again the Murray field trip broke even but did attract several new members to the club. These trips are integral to the spirit of the club.

The creation of the pitch at Kenmore was a major step forward and we must have one of the bonniest grounds in the country. The assistance we have had from the Kenmore Sports committee has been very welcome. We must work with them to improve the facilities particularly changing facilities. We on several occasions at home fixtures have run a bar but at best this has broken even and given the effort involved will not be repeated this season. We now have a shipping container at Kenmore, which is used to store our kit.

The ground at Kenmore does not have floodlights and from mid-September onwards we need alternative training facilities. The Astro turf pitches at the school are not suitable for contact training. Breadalbane FC hopes to install a suitable Astro turf area and are currently fundraising for this.

Good relationships have been established at Murray field and we must continue to foster these. In reality our governing body pays a lot of lip service to encouraging new clubs but other than some advice are not in a position to help further. Brian Bell the development officer allocated to us by the SRU is particularly helpful but is based in Inverness.

We have had informal discussions with local schools about introducing rugby or assisting the existing rugby programme. The fact of the matter is that we do not currently have the infrastructure within the club to move this forward. Developing our own senior players through youth rugby would be ideal and something we must view as a priority. The easiest way to short circuit this would be to employ a youth development officer who would be tasked with coaching and developing rugby in both primary and secondary schools in our area. Various grants and support is available to help with a development officer but the club would have to part fund this appointment. A report will be tabled to the committee before

the year end detailing the financial implications of such an appointment. We must also instigate Child protection policies within the club and once again we must give this priority.

It had been hoped that we would run over the summer months regular over 35/40 touch rugby sessions (if enough interest exists) and we will have a bash at these summer 2017.

This season we have joined the league set up and are proud members of BT Caledonia Midlands division three north. The certainty of a fixture list for the season will help in our efforts to increase player numbers.

The club has an established presence on Facebook and for those members who do not use Facebook we communicate by email. We also have a club website which needs to be updated more often. It would be ideal when the website is fully operational that members refer to it for changes in fixtures etc. rather than relying on email updates.

Looking forward we must take steps to broaden the structure of the club and seek to increase the number of players, coaches, committee members and helpers. We have not been particularly good at asking for assistance but don't worry we will do so now!

In discussions with clubs who draw their players from communities similar to ours they advise that a playing pool of around 35 is required due to work commitments to field regular Saturday teams. We therefore need to increase playing numbers and to do so need to look at ways we can attract players from throughout the region and not predominately the greater Aberfeldy area. Is Aberfeldy the correct name for the club or should we look to have a name that could be identified with the area encompassing Pitlochry and Dunkeld? For instance would Breadalbane RFC or Highland Perthshire RFC be more inclusive and help? We have only attracted two players from the now defunct club in Pitlochry and must do more to attract others. Perhaps regular training sessions held in Pitlochry would help. If we rename the club and cast a wider net for players we might run the risk of losing the community feel the club currently has. The thoughts of the membership would be welcome on the name issue because if we are going to change it we should do so sooner rather than later.

It would be helpful if we could also increase the number of coaches within the club as once again Steve and Ross due to employment commitments cannot make every session. Jason Logan has offered to assist but if anyone else would like to help please let us know. Grace Norton has also given freely of her time taking fitness training sessions and our players are generally fitter than their opponents! If we at some stage in the future have a youth development officer part of the remit of that position could be assisting senior club coaching. Our club has come a long way in a very short time but to continue our development we need help in many areas. We understand that you all have commitments elsewhere but a lot of people doing a little to help would be of great assistance. It would be helpful also to increase the numbers on the committee.

The areas where assistance would be very welcome include:

- Child protection*
- Ground maintenance*
- International ticket coordination*

- *Coaching*
- *Sponsorship*
- *Social*
- *Fundraising*
- *Medical cover at home games*
- *Website*

If you are in a position to help in any of these areas please let us know.

Questions from the floor resulted in several useful suggestions, including:

- To ensure there was always purposeful activity with someone in charge, that players take it in turn to manage training sessions whenever an appointed trainer was not available;
- To approach SRU to look at holding coaching training/certification up here for any players interested in gaining those skills to help out the club;
- To use a contact at Glasgow Warriors to source any surplus /redundant equipment

The Chairman thanked Laurie for his hard work and enthusiasm plus his invaluable role in connecting the club with his wide contacts in the Scottish rugby world including a match with his Edinburgh Club to 'blood' our home ground.

Treasurers Report;

In the absence of Stewart Mcneish, the audited Income and Expenditure Account was presented by the Chairman (a copy is available on application to Secretary). The accounts show significant expenditure on equipment funded by grants and donations largely sourced through excellent work by Stewart. The club had funds of £3940 as at 31 March 2016 and thanks to some fund raising activities, e.g. car –parking at the Aberfeldy Show and Fortingall Art Exhibition, had risen to £4971.02 at the date of the AGM.

For the future, the focus must be on search for a significant sponsor and close management of cash flow; whether at home or away each game played is a drain on funds. The committee will liaise with the Treasurer to set a budget for the coming year and will monitor progress carefully. Subscriptions are now due for renewal and the Club hopes that all members will renew promptly and do their best to encourage friends to join. The best way to pay subs is via standing order as will reduce the burden of administration.

As he is now living at some distance from Aberfeldy, Stewart has indicated that he wishes to stand down as Treasurer but he will continue as a committee member. The Chairman thanked Stewart for all his hard work.

PR Officer's Report;

No report sent by Hamish who has unexpectedly found himself unable to attend the meeting. Hamish has jotted some entertaining match reports, which have helped to raise

the ARFC profile. These appeared mainly in the Heartlander and Heartland Buzz. Both organs are now defunct (doubtless coincidentally) but we are confident that other outlets can be found to publicise ARFC – our first league result was reported in a cranny of the Scotsman.

Election of Committee for 2016-2017

The following office-bearers offered themselves for re-election and were elected unanimously:

Chairman – Bill Bruce

Head Coach – Steve Brown

Development Officer – Laurie Dempster

Public Relations Officer – Hamish McBride

Secretary – Suzanne Morrison

Stewart Mcneish resigned his position as Treasurer but was elected unanimously to the Committee as a general member.

Ali Nash was proposed by Stewart Mcneish as Treasurer, seconded by Bill Bruce and elected unanimously.

Caleb Eady was proposed as Players Representative by Steve Brown, seconded by Hamish Brown and elected unanimously.

Award of Trophies to Players

The following trophies were awarded:

Dempster Cup	Most Committed Player:	Lewis Lambie
Bruce Cup	Most Improved Player:	Duncan Menzies
Macneish Cup	Outstanding Performance:	Angus Broad
Mains of Taymouth Trophy	Player of the Year:	Hamish Brown

A.O.B

The new committee seconded Ross Dempster to the committee as Child Protection Officer. The Chairman thanked Ross for agreeing to take up this important duty.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45 pm.