



Preston Grasshoppers RFC Ltd
MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date	29 th July 2021 @7.30pm
Venue	Wiseman Room
Present	23 members were present
Apologies	Mike Forshaw, Keith Aitchison, John le Page, Brian Hexter, Phil Watmough, Paul Carroll, Michael Lough, Gareth Dyer, Les Bray, Richard Ellis, Andy Donovan and George Erdozain, Bob Lonsdale.

Ref	Minute	Action
1	<p>President's welcome:</p> <p>Keith Brierley welcomed members to the meeting and started by giving a vote of thanks to staff, the executive and volunteers who have kept the club running during the pandemic. Keith also advised that the club had been advised of a number of members who have passed away during the past 12 months including Les Anson, Dave Worth, Bob Satchwell, Peter Nixon, Dave Treasure and Bob Clayton. Members stood for a minute's silence in memory of these members.</p>	
2	<p>Apologies for absence:</p> <p>The president reported that 12 members as identified above had given their apologies for the meeting.</p>	
3	<p>Approval of Minutes of 2020 AGM:</p> <p>The minutes were proposed by Martin Hothersall and seconded by Neil Ashton. Members unanimously agreed.</p>	
4	<p>Matters arising from the 2020 minutes:</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
5	<p>Chairman's Report:</p> <p>Martin provided his report on the past year and what a year it was. The Covid pandemic had affected the club in a massive way. There had been no rugby</p>	

matches, only training. No squash matches only limited social games. The same was true for shooting, archery, cricket and cycling. During the year, Ingol CC had de-camped to another ground.

On the commercial side of the business, trading had been severely limited with long periods of closure and no major events such as Hopfest and Bonfire Night. Even now it is hard to plan with any confidence but we have survived and are in a better place than we were 12 months ago. The resilience of the club has been severely tested but staff and volunteers have rallied round. Alternative income has been received from the Terrace Bar and the Vaccination Centre, whilst significant grant aid had been received. However we missed out on an RFU grant of £50K that other less prudent clubs had received. Covid has demonstrated that we should be concentrating commercially as much on the pitch side of the club as the traditional “front”.

Consequent upon the recent land sales, investment in capital expenditure at the club has proceeded with the aim of completing all but one possible project prior to the start of the new season. Much of the work was vital but unseen such as new roofing, boilers and kitchens as well as a lot of electrical health and safety work. Photos of the work were shown to members and covered projects for new offices, improvements to the Wiseman Room, a new children’s playground, new ladies and gents toilets adjacent to the changing rooms along with new storage and new ceilings in the showers, refurbishment of the Wainwright Bar, its entrance and the south east entrance to the club and relaying and drainage of the 2nd team pitch. The Flat had been improved for letting, the back courtyard tidied up and the area between the pond and squash courts had been improved. Work to car park surfaces was still to be undertaken.

A scheme to add a pergola to the patio area between the Dooley Suite and the pitch was being prepared but was likely to be reliant on the RFU Winter Survival Fund loan, but the outcome of the application for that loan had been delayed.

In other initiatives, the club lottery now managed by Neil Ashton had generated a net £3.5K in the first 5 months. A partnership agreement had been signed with UCLAN and the sequicentenary golf tournament had illustrated the level of support for the club. Discussions with sponsors indicate that most of them will renew their support of the club.

However, there were challenges ahead mainly due to the uncertainty resulting from the pandemic. This affects the return of confidence and bookings at the club whilst there are great difficulties in the appointment and retention of staff.

Martin reported that the majority of members of the Management Committee had served for many years, although there had been some new blood such as Emma Pooley and Neil Ashton who have contributed greatly. However, there was need for more new blood, in particular a Treasurer or chairman and he was happy for individuals to come along and see what is involved and shadow a role with a view to taking over in due course. Members were thanked for their generous support throughout the pandemic for little or none of the usual

	<p>“return”. For 2021/22 all subscriptions will move to a year commencing on 1 September with no increase in the subscription amounts.</p> <p>In conclusion, Martin thanked everyone for attending, thanked all those who have volunteered throughout the year and hoped that everyone would be able to enjoy the coming year.</p>	
6	<p>Treasurer's Report & presentation of accounts:</p> <p>In the absence of the Treasurer, Martin Hothersall provided a summary of the accounts.</p> <p>A member commented that whilst the report seemed very reasonable were the management committee happy that the treasurer was leaving the committee. Martin responded by saying that we were unable to carry on in the long term without further volunteers. On behalf of the management committee, John Chesworth advised that the committee and executive are all volunteers none of whom received any payment, and we are reliant on a continuous flow of volunteers coming forward. There is a need to recognise that the club must support our valuable volunteers.</p> <p>The treasurer's report was proposed by John Chesworth and seconded by Neil Ashton and members unanimously approved the report.</p>	
7	<p>Reporting Accountants Report & Appointment of Reporting Accountant:</p> <p>In the absence of the Treasurer, Martin Hothersall advised that the accountants should be re-appointed. No comments were made, or questions asked about the report.</p> <p>The report was proposed by Emma Pooley and seconded by John Potter. The majority of members at the meeting voted for the appointment.</p>	
8	<p>Rugby Report:</p> <p>Gareth Dyer was not present at the meeting and had not presented a report. A member commented that there had been no details made available to the club about retention of players and the ambition of the first team for the coming season. Keith Brierley advised that from what he had seen during training sessions players are looking sharp and were determined to do well with some difficult games ahead of us in the coming season. We had good support from Byron McGuigan to coach the backs and various other Sale premiership players were coming down to coach specific training sessions. A member asked whether we had a good flyhalf for the coming season to which the answer was provided as yes.</p> <p>Emma Pooley advised that we had to look at local players coming through the system who were more club type players and potentially starting their game in the social sides. Neil Ashton advised that we need to improve communication regarding players coming through the club and playing for the first team.</p>	

	<p>Emma Pooley advised that the women's team was on the rise and were training with up to 40 players prior to the season. They have talented new coaches which is resulting in players returning to the club and they are looking for a big season ahead with the hope that promotion will result. It was also advised that the men's social teams now have a six teams and that we are working hard to ensure that we are all one club. Hugh Duckworth gave an update on the Colts and mini juniors which are showing very good signs of progress for the coming season.</p>	
8	<p>Election of Officers:</p> <p>The agenda set out the proposal for election of the officers for the coming year: Keith Brierley (President), Martin Hothersall (Chairman), Graham Cox (Honorary Secretary). There was no proposal for an honorary treasurer and Graham Cox advised that there had been no volunteers coming forward.</p> <p>The meeting voted unanimously for the appointment of the officers.</p>	
9	<p>Election of Committee:</p> <p>The agenda set out the proposal for the election of committee members for the coming year: Michael Lough, John Chesworth, Hugh Duckworth, Michael Bailey, Robert Lonsdale, Neil Ashton and Emma Pooley. No further names had been put forward by members. Graham Cox advised that John Potter had decided to stand down from the committee due to work commitments and he thanked John for the work he had put in over the past year.</p> <p>The meeting voted unanimously for the appointment of the committee.</p>	
9	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <p>A member questioned whether the Club was having difficulties appointing staff - there had been a number of new appointments made but those members of staff had left after only a short period despite the interview panel including external members with considerable hospitality experience. A discussion followed with the chairman highlighting difficulties of appointing staff within the hospitality industry.</p> <p>The future use of the Wainwright bar was also discussed, understanding that the members needed to respect the use of the bar as a lounge bar that would be suitable for local residents to be made welcome. It was a separate entity to the Terrace bar where all members and their families were welcome. Concern was expressed that staff did not understand the rules of the club and they do need to have the authority to ensure that those rules were followed by all customers.</p> <p>A view was also expressed that we need to make with and attract the new local residents that have moved into the area.</p> <p>A member advised that Graham Thomas, a former junior player, had today rowed in the Olympics. All members present congratulated him on his efforts.</p>	

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President's conclusion:

Keith Brierley brought the meeting to a close by thanking all members present for attending and hoped that we would get a full season of rugby to look forward to.

The meeting ended at 8.44pm

Minutes recorded by GC