

Minutes of the OLSC AGM held in The Horseshow House, Ballsbridge – Saturday 11th July 2015

Welcome and Introduction

Rebecca Leggett, president of the Official Leinster Supporters Club (OLSC) opened the meeting at 3pm by welcoming those members present to the Ninth AGM of the Official Leinster Supporters Club; the quorum of 20 was achieved.

Minutes of the AGM held in the Centurion Bar on the 26th July 2014, which have been available for the last 12 months on www.leinsterrugby.ie were approved by a show of hands.

Presidents Report

Rebecca remarked on Leinster having a challenging season, with 16 wins, 10 losses and 4 draws. But having made it through a very tough Group in the European Champions Cup only to be stopped by the Champions RCT Toulon in an incredible semi-final in Marseille.

It was also noted that supporters say goodbye to another two great Leinster legends Gordon Darcy & Shane Jennings and that it was a great honour for the club to welcome both Gordon and Shane to the Laighin Out on the night of their final home appearance for Leinster. The club presented its standard engraved Dublin crystal piece to both on behalf of supporters. The Club also said goodbye at the end of the season to Jimmy Gopperth, Brendan Macken, Ben Marshall, Andrew Conway, Sam Coughlan Murray, Marco Caputo and Matt O'Connor. We would like to wish them well in the future.

Rebecca also noted the enormous presence the Leinster players in the Irish Squad during the RBS 6 Nations Championship and that a magical day in Murrayfield when Ireland were crowned champions.

The OLSC Committee

During the year there were a couple of changes to the Committee, Ciara Conlan & John Martin stepped down due to unforeseen circumstances and commitments we would like to thank them for the work they did while they were on the committee. The committee in accordance with its constitution co-opted Martin Russell onto the committee as its Public Relations Officer.

Funding

Rebecca noted the club's income was down considerably on previous seasons as the club had seen a significant decrease in merchandise and bus seat sales.

We would like to thank our biggest financial Supporter, Bank of Ireland. Special thanks Ian Murray and the team in Bank of Ireland marketing for their continued support of the work completed by the OLSC.

OLSC Buses

The Club once again operated same day return buses for all three interprovincial fixtures, this included Connacht which often runs at a loss but is cross subsidised by the Ulster/Munster buses. The Club feels it is an important service given public transport does not normally cater for supporters to easily get to/from Galway, Limerick and Belfast given the evening kickoffs.

The current pricing of EUR 20 pp return is good value for a direct service to the ground and more importantly means buses do not have to be 100% full to run meaning no supporters are turned away.

International airport buses

Last season we also ran buses after the Northampton and Toulon games. The timing of scheduled flights after these games were not favourable to supporters, which is a problem supporters often face when travelling late at night or on Sundays in France.

Both these services were fully subscribed and unfortunately in the case of Toulon we were limited ((by stadium security) by how many buses we could run.

Blacklist for future bus services

Unfortunately some supporters forget we are unpaid volunteers and as such we've started having problems with people under the influence on our interprovincial buses. This isn't nice and can tarnish the club and season ticket holder's reputation. Because of this, a blacklist has been implemented from this season where offenders will not be allowed to travel with us in future.

Merchandise

The Club continues to produce a small amount of branded merchandise as well as our popular legends t-shirt. The shirt released last season was for Cian Healy, this had mixed results in terms of sales.

A number of OLSC items have been around for a number of years so the new committee will be looking to update the range; suggestions are always welcome on what can be sold.

On a related note, Brand Addition has been licensed by Leinster Rugby to produce a range of general merchandise items and we hope to have news on the first few items soon. Brand Addition were responsible for the season ticket holder packs last year and will also produce the 2015/16 packs.

During the season a small focus group was held with team kit supplier Canterbury in the Leinster Rugby offices to get views on the 2016/17 kit and a new alternative strip coming in future years. Participants were selected from the volunteer list as well as some committee members.

Towards the end of last season the club also had discussions with Lifestyle Sports who are the official retail partner of Leinster Rugby.

The lack of ladies wear continues to be an issue and this was raised. The club will issue a full statement shortly but in summary to date the limited range of ladies wear has not sold well, we mentioned to them that many woman and girls need to buy kids gear and this was acknowledged.

Lifestyle Sports confirmed that they buy and stock every piece of Leinster Rugby merchandise that is produced by Canterbury including some team kit that is added on to the team order (sub jackets, training vests etc).

Ladies Merchandise.

Other clubs ladies wear ranges was raised at the meeting with Lifestyle Sports. Given minimum stock quantities are required by Canterbury for items to be produced there must either be a proven track record of sales or someone must commit to covering the production cost.

Similar to what the previous Leinster Rugby Store used to produce, a range of standard Canterbury kit badged with the Leinster logo is now available exclusively from Lifestyle Sports. Whilst this is not the same kit available to men we see it as a move in the right direction and we will continue to monitor the situation on behalf of supporters.

Communication

The Club continues to be an important resource for supporters especially in the area of away travel and ticketing information. Facebook continues to be challenging with some of our posts only being seen by 800 people despite having nearly 60,000 followers. As free advertising on facebook is a thing of the past we have spent a small amount on targeted advertising (to get important items into people's newsfeeds).

This means that the weekly ezine, ticket office emails issued by Leinster Rugby and the official website are as important as ever in reaching supporters. We also have access to the match programmes and Irish Independent Leinster supplement.

One highlight this season is the increasing popularity of the international broadcast times that the club researches and publishes for every fixture. For certain games this season these were read by in excess of 1,000 people in over 50 countries – this proves that the blue army is truly global!

Away Guides

The production of the away guides and travel information continued throughout the season. Our thanks to Jarrod Bromley and Terry Quinlan who wrote and prepared the away guides this season. These guides take a lot of time to produce (research, edit, design and layout). The OLSC produced its 34th away guide this season. The guides continue to get great feedback and are being viewed worldwide.

Other clubs also use these as a reference point for their supporters. Bank of Ireland continues to sponsor these.

The Laighin Out Supporters Bar

This season has continued to see the increased patronage of the Laighin Out with new supporters and away team supporters visiting before and after the matches.

The amount of money invested in the Laighin Out this season was small and only for essentials needed. The sound system required some repairs and upgrades. Our Club shop also had some minor improvements with new display cabinets for memorabilia & display purposes.

There was €2,500 allocated last season towards upgrade of the Laighin Out however €2,000 of this money was not spent and has therefore been put into a separate deposit account towards a new Laighin Out in the new RDS Development.

RDS Development

The latest update received from Leinster Rugby confirmed that the plans were still been finalised and drawn up. Derek McGarth is project managing this and pulling all the stakeholders together. Once the plans have been finalise the planning process can then start.

The naming rights partner will be announced ahead of our home pre-season friendly on Friday 28th August.

Season Ticket Renewals

Leinster decided to increase the price of some season ticket for next season. The club was not consulted at all during the decision making process by Leinster Rugby.

The club had requested an update prior to this but was told nothing had been decided fully and we would be updated before the renewal process begins. The club was only told of the price increases as the renewal emails where hitting supporters email accounts.

The club will be meeting with Leinster Rugby in the very near future to discuss this, plans for next season and any other issues raised from the AGM.

Flagging

Flags continue to be provided at key home fixtures as well as all away European Champions Cup fixtures. The club also ensures that at least 10 flags are at every single away game in the Guinness Pro12 fixture. The club handed out once again commemorative baseball caps at the European Champions Cup semi final and blue Santa hats were as always, a big hit at our pre Christmas matches with Northampton. The aim of this material is to add as much blue to the crowd as possible for the targeted fixtures.

Charity Partner

This year the club chose to continue to work with Crumlin Children's Hospital as our Charity Partner or Children's Medical & Research Foundation (CMRF) as it is officially known.

Due to changes with the committee the annual table quiz did not take place as originally planned, it is proposed that the new committee will run this at the start of next season.

Volunteers -Thank You

Rebecca concluded her report by thanking a few people on behalf of the OLSC.

To those who volunteered to help out during the season be it with helping out at the season pack distribution days or flagging in the RDS we thank you for giving up your time to help us out.

To those who have helped in hosting our Q&A events in the Laighin Out. Aisling O'Connor, Killian Byrne, Cian Nolan and Dave Cahill we thank you for your help and sometimes at short notice. To Terry Quinlan, Gwen Forde and Barry McHugh, we thank them for their help with the recording and photography of the Q&A events. We also thank Jarrod Bromley for his endless amount of help over last season.

Four people step down from the Committee at this AGM, Liz Power, Declan Doyle, Mary McKeever and Martin Russell. Rebecca thanked them for the work they did during their time on the committee.

Treasurers Report

The accounts were presented by the club treasurer, Declan Doyle. It was confirmed that there was a surplus of €3408 to be carried forward. There were no questions raised, the accounts were proposed for approval by Jarrod Bromley and seconded by Eoin McDermott.

Election of the OLSC Committee for the 2015/2016 Season

Rebecca advised that the required number of five members had put their names forward for election to the OLSC Committee. Returning members Rebecca Leggett and Berty O'Neill will be joined by Jarrod Bromley, Brian Delaney and Glen Clinton. The new committee was approved by a show of hands by all members present.

Rebecca Leggett was the sole member standing for president and was thus re-elected for the 2015/2016 season. Two more members will be co-opted onto the committee at a later stage.

Any Other Business

It was noted by members that the OLSC should be included as a stakeholder in the new RDS Development decision making plans, to ensure the supporter's voices are heard.

The issue of the OLSC not being fully recognised as a volunteer body and for work it completes was highlighted by members who attended the AGM for the first time. It was felt that the OLSC needs to be recognised and supported more by Leinster Rugby.

Suggestions were made by members that the OLSC should be highlighted more in and around the RDS, use of the big screens, across the Laighin feature, Leinster thanking the people that volunteer.

There is still a large element of season ticket holders who do not know what the OLSC is or what it does.

Close

With there being no further business to discuss, Rebecca Leggett concluded the 2015 Official Leinster Supporters Club AGM.