

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Official Leinster Supporters Club  
Penthouse Bar, The Horse Show House, Merrion Road, Dublin 4  
4 October 2018 at 7:00pm**

## **Welcome & Outgoing Committee Update**

Jarrold Bromley of the outgoing committee welcomed attendees, whose number well exceeded the required quorum, and set out the agenda for the evening and described the housekeeping arrangements. Jarrold gave the outgoing President's (Sharon Levy-Valensi) apologies for her absence. No President's report was provided and as a result Jarrold provided a summary of activities in the past year. As there are 10 nominees for seven posts on the committee, Jarrold described the election process. He welcomed Kevin Quinn, Head of Commercial Marketing, and Marcus Ó Buachalla, Head of Communications, from Leinster Rugby and told the meeting that they would speak later. He also pointed out that the two trophies, the European Cup and the Pro14 Cup were at the back of the room for those who wished to be photographed with them.

Jarrold thanked the sponsors of the OLSC including Bank of Ireland, Aircoach and the various sponsors who provided spot prizes for the charity event such as Best menswear and Cityjet. He thanked the volunteers who have helped out during the season and were helping at the AGM itself. Finally, he thanked Leinster Rugby for their help and support throughout the year.

The main points made in Jarrold's address were:

- It was a great season for the team and supporters alike with two trophy wins.
- The charity event, based around the launch of the Jonny Sexton legends tee-shirt, raised approximately €7,000 and every cent raised went to the two official Leinster Rugby charities, DEBRA and Aware.
- The OLSC continued to provide away guides for trips overseas and ran a bus for the Exeter game and also dealt with relevant airlines to advise them of supporters traveling and, in some cases, successfully getting schedule changes to make traveling easier for supporters.
- It continued to operate buses to the interpro away games. Numbers of supporters travelling were down slightly.
- The OLSC presented engraved crystal mementoes to stalwarts of Leinster rugby retiring during the year: to Jamie Heaslip on the pitch at the Aviva and Isa Nacewa and Richardt Strauss by photo.
- Jarrold spoke about the club's merchandising mentioning that 250 women's jackets were sold in the four-day window allowed to sell these; this was not profit driven. He also said that Kevin Quinn would address the commercial constraints that limit the OLSC selling OLSC branded goods.
- The OLSC was unable to produce a commemorative tee-shirt in the desired design following the double trophy win because of commercial restrictions.
- The OLSC communicated to supporters through the Leinster website and weekly contributions to the ezine. The ticket office also help us send out selected messages on behalf of the club (inter pro buses, away ticket recommendations and AGM updates).

- Social media continues to be important (65,000 followers on Facebook, 29,000 followers on Twitter and 3,000 on Instagram) but cannot be solely relied upon. Given social media is now 'pay to play' key messages for the club have paid advertising so that they are visible in people's newsfeeds. Matchday programmes are also important for the club's communications.
- Adidas are the new kit supplier and there has been feedback about the range and sizes which Kevin Quinn will address.
- Jarrod spoke about the initial lack of nominations for the committee and how this nearly forced the club to dissolve. It has changed since its foundation as more supporters travel and have different needs. The new committee will have to address the changes needed to serve the Leinster supporters' community in the future.
- A meeting with Leinster Rugby discussed the changes needed. Leinster Rugby have added a new paid intern to its staff who will help liaise with the supporters' club. Those nominated for the incoming committee also met Leinster Rugby for a pre-election briefing.
- Jarrod then thanked Leinster Rugby and the OLSC for 13 great years while he looked forward to being a normal supporter once again.

## Approval of Minutes

Aisling O'Connor proposed and Declan Lyons seconded the approval of the Minutes of AGM of the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 2017. The meeting then approved these.

## Treasurer's Report

Rebecca Leggett presented the OLSC's annual accounts as of the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018. She informed the meeting that the club continues to have a healthy balance. Net income increased by €3,000 on the previous year while outgoings are in line with previous seasons. The club's assets remain strong with a special savings account for the development of a club house at the time of the meeting being €8,500 but to be increased to €10,000. This will be used for a new club house development when the RDS site is redeveloped. The projected opening balance is €1,977.87

Rebecca informed the meeting that in addition to the surplus, Bank of Ireland have paid their annual sponsorship for the away guides and this amount has been lodged to the account.

Dave Cahill proposed the acceptance of the annual accounts and Miriam Cahill seconded the motion. The accounts were accepted unanimously.

## Motions Tabled

There was one motion tabled by Jarrod Bromley and seconded by Alison Bromley. It was:

*To create the position of a Custodian for the various club assets. The role differs from the treasurer as he/she would have no input into the day-to-day running of the club but would report to the AGM each year that all assets remain intact. When the club was formed in July 2007, it was not expected to hold assets such as cash, memorabilia and electronic assets. The person should be someone with a good knowledge of the club so perhaps a former officer of the club for a two-year term.*

The concept was checked with Tara Doyle who is a founding committee member and partner at Matheson and she has confirmed that subject to the motion being passed this could be effective immediately.

The motion was passed unanimously on a show of hands. Jarrod Bromley was then nominated as Custodian and this was passed by a show of hands.

## **Election for 2018/2019 Committee**

The following were nominated to serve on the committee:

Andrew Prior – restanding after four months' service

Declan Lyons – restanding after four months' service

Aisling O'Connor – restanding after a five-year break following two years of service

Niall Meade – new

Laura Lysaght – new

Hazel Brown – new

David Pierpoint – new

David Ryan – new

Eugene Canavan – new

Hugh Sullivan – new

The candidates were allowed to address the meeting. Nine addressed it in person and a friend of Hazel Brown spoke on her behalf in her absence.

Following a ballot of the season ticket holders present at the AGM, the seven people elected to the OLSC Committee were:

Aisling O'Connor

David Ryan

Declan Lyons

Eugene Canavan

Hugh Sullivan

Laura Lysaght

Niall Meade

## Update from Leinster

Kevin Quinn, Head of Commercial Marketing for Leinster Rugby addressed the group and was joined by Marcus Ó Buachalla Head of Communications.

Kevin gave a description of his role, what Leinster Rugby office does and how it operates. He made the following points:

- They have a small team of eight people in commercial and marketing department.
- There were five matches in the Aviva stadium last year – the same as the Irish team and Leinster Rugby organise these.
- Apart from the European and Pro14 trophies, Leinster won the women's trophy and got to the B+I cup final.
- Leinster Rugby relies heavily on its sponsors.
- The release of international players creates extra pressures and so Leinster needs a big pool of 65 players.
- Leinster Rugby recorded a modest budget surplus this year.
- It puts back €4million into community, schools and domestic rugby.
- Small team has to generate all the revenue between ticketing, sponsorship, sales etc.
- Migrating from Canterbury to Adidas was a huge transformational project over the summer and it occupied the commercial and marketing over that period.
- The new jerseys have been well received and are selling very well.

Kevin told the meeting that Leinster had a new sponsor, the management consultancy, BearingPoint. It is an innovation partner and will support Leinster Rugby achieve its goals by providing digital transformation, technology implementation and consulting services.

Bank of Ireland will continue as our sponsor until 2023. The team also worked with the six senior sponsors BearingPoint as mentioned, Laya Healthcare, Energia, Guinness, Adidas and Life Style Sports and these are locked in as sponsors for five years or more giving medium-term financial security.

Kevin referred to Leo Cullen's repeated comments about seeing the blue flags as the team bus entered Bilbao and how important this was for the team. So when the OLSC organises people to make the bus journey blue and makes itself heard inside in the stadium that is very much appreciated from the top down.

He thanked Jarrod and Rebecca again for their tremendous service over the years and said that this would be recognised and was deeply appreciated.

He confirmed Jarrod's comment that Leinster is in the process of hiring an intern to work with the committee.

Marcus Ó Buachalla felt that there have been positive developments following from last year's AGM. This involved the CEO's personal commitment to improving contact and communications between the OLSC and Leinster Rugby. He acknowledged the difficulties that had arisen and hoped that these were being

addressed and felt that the appointment of an intern reflected the underlying commitment to building a better relationship.

## Questions and Answers

Kevin and Marcus then answered questions for the members present.

### *Redevelopment of the Anglesea Stand*

The first question raised was about the current situation regarding the upgrade of the RDS and specifically the Anglesea Stand. Kevin explained that the process is still open. Everything has been agreed with the RDS and the stakeholders but is dependent on an allocation from the Government's capital fund for sporting infrastructure.

The North and South stands' capacity will be increased during the renovation. The works will be staged so that different blocks of season ticket holders in the stands will be moved at different times.

Kevin explained that Leinster Rugby have met all stakeholders and progressed the project as far as possible subject to the final decision from the government.

There will be a bigger terrace in the new ground.

The Anglesea stand will be redeveloped in blocks and only a portion of season-ticket holders will be discommoded at any one time.

There followed a discussion about how the process may be changed to accommodate Anglesea season ticket holders.

Marcus stressed that the funding is still not in place but he promised further consultation with season ticket holders when this happened.

Apart from the seating in the stand, the new development will improve dressing rooms, bars, toilets and VIP facilities.

### *Merchandising and exclusive sales agency*

The meeting spent over half an hour discussing this topic. Among the points raised from the floor were:

- Why can't the OLSC produce base-ball caps (for example) with four stars?
- Why did the club only have a four-day window to sell the women's jackets?
- The exclusive sponsorships limit the OLSC's ability to produce merchandise quickly and spontaneously
- If the OLSC wants to produce a Tadhg Furlong legends t-shirt can it do so independently?
- Where is the OLSC's independence?
- Women are losing out as regards jerseys
- Is it possible for the other jersey sales to subevent women's jersey's sales?
- I ordered a large ladies jersey but it didn't go over my head then ordered an extra large it still didn't go over my head
- Will there be more ladies' jerseys coming?

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- The reason that women don't buy jerseys is because they don't match the men's jersey or that don't fit.
- Why can't supporters have the option to buy a women's jacket as Adidas don't produce or sell these?
- Currently, the largest jersey is 14 which is branded as an XXL, but the average Irish women is a size 16.
- Could the OLSC committee approach Adidas and say that they want to produce 500 women's fit polo shirts without the four stars with the logo and something like double champion winners would this be allowed?
- How many season ticket holders are female?
- What is the thinking on a future club house?

Leinster Rugby are contractually obliged under the new sponsorship arrangements. Life Style Sports and Adidas now have exclusive contracts. Leinster Rugby have spoken to the sponsors about OLSC merchandise. While the sponsors are open to exploring and developing the relationship, they emphasise that the four stars can only be put on jerseys. The players and coaching staff agree with this and want to keep the four stars exclusively on the jersey and not on any other piece of equipment.

There was a sponsors' forum during the summer to encourage them to make the maximum use of their sponsorship and Kevin proposed that the OLSC should be represented at this meeting next year.

Adidas has just taken over the sponsorship and is committed to making the best of it. The four stars are an important part of this. There are now restrictions on the players and staff preventing them from wearing anything but the Adidas branded products. The old Canterbury gear was given to overseas charities as well as the Capuchin Day Centre during the winter cold snap earlier this year as Leinster could not use it any more. Any merchandise, including a legends tee-shirt, has to be agreed with both Life Style Sports and Adidas. The OLSC is the official supporters club and so is confined by this agreement too. The OLSC uses the crest and email etc. which confirms this link and anything using the Leinster branding must be passed by Leinster Rugby.

Marcus stated that Adidas had taken on board feedback from previous AGMs and focus groups. Previously, women had stated that they wanted a jersey that is the same as the men's. Adidas have brought in a women's fit tapered jersey but unfortunately there has been an issue with sizing which Leinster Rugby are working very hard with Adidas to rectify. However Leinster Rugby and Adidas acknowledged the issue and the frustrations of female supporters.

Kevin and Marcus gave an overview as to why there are fewer items for women on sale. The women's jersey has been the worst selling item historically and the sponsors are cautious as a result. Five seasons ago, focus groups identified three items that were wanted but then these didn't sell either. These numbers cloud current sponsors decisions on a women's range. Adidas have a wider women's range available and this is a positive step.

Leinster Rugby have informed the media of the issues for the women's jerseys and are working to have something available before the end of the season. Marcus stressed that the lead-in time is long.

Women at the meeting pointed out that they have bought men's jerseys for the past seasons but want to have a proper women's jersey that fits properly. Marcus again stressed that the new Adidas jersey had smaller and larger sizes than before and was now also a tapered fit as requested. The issues around sizing were hugely unfortunate but that Leinster Rugby and Adidas were working hard to find a solution that worked for all.

Kevin outlined that all OLSC merchandise including polo shirts or legends tee-shirts must be discussed with the sponsors first.

Jarrold added that OLSC couldn't use the four stars on a tee-shirt for commercial reasons. He pointed out that the club uses the Leinster Rugby website and this is essential for its operation. The point was made from the floor that the reason the legends tee-shirts work is because they are a joint initiative between Leinster Rugby and the club. Unofficial or unapproved tee-shirts wouldn't work or wouldn't be right as it would be leaching off a player's hard work. The legends tee-shirts are an identifier for the club and predate the OLSC but they are an important part of the OLSC brand.

Marcus informed the meeting that there is a 70/30 men to women split of season ticket holders. Both Kevin and Marcus stated that they had followed up on other items raised at the previous AGM and improved the bar offering as one example of changes made.

Jarrold told the meeting that the money kept for the future club house referred to when the RDS renovation took place and it would be used to kit out the new club house to make it our own.

The Q&A ended with a round of applause for the Leinster Rugby representatives.

## **Approval of the 2018/2019 committee**

The meeting formally approved the committee and Aisling O'Connor was confirmed as President as the only person who had put herself forward for that position among the committee.

## **Any Other Business**

Aisling O'Connor thanked everyone for attending and for voting in the election.

Aisling then thanked Jarrold for his commitment, dedication and hard work for the OLSC over the past 13 years. She presented him with an engraved memento as a token of the club's and supporters' appreciation for his invaluable service.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded.