

AGM Minutes from Thursday 24 August 2017 Penthouse Bar, Horse Show House, Merrion Road, Dublin 4.

OLSC President Rebecca Leggett opened the meeting confirming that a quorum had been reached.

Minutes from 2016 AGM

These were taken as read. Approval was proposed by Myriam Cahill and seconded by Jarrod Bromley.

Motions

Motion 1 from Rob Hall - Use a fan competition to be Leo the Lion in the RDS
Motion 2 from Rob Hall - Put words to songs on to big screen in the RDS to encourage singing

OLSC Response: Both of these items are out of the OLSC's control however we will raise these at our first Leinster Rugby meeting this season to see what may be possible.

Motion 3 from Jarrod Bromley - To reduce quorum to hold AGM in the future from 20 to 10 people. Proposed by Liz Power and seconded by Nicki Volahen. **MOTION CARRIED**

Motion 4 from Mike Whelan – The timeliness of fixtures being released and recent changes to the Guinness PRO14 should be addressed.

OLSC Response: We have raised both items to Leinster Rugby during our conversations prior to the PRO14 announcement. Marcus will elaborate later in the meeting.

President's report

Leinster had a disappointing end to the season after a season of 22 wins, 7 losses and 2 draws.

The season ended with disappointment in both the Guinness Pro12 and the European Champions Cup campaigns with Leinster losing out the semi final in both competitions. We said goodbye to another two great servants of Leinster Rugby, Mike Ross and Mike McCarthy.

The Club was unable to make a presentation to both players at the end of the season but hope to be in a position to do so at the start of the coming season as we feel it is important for supporters to be able to thank them for all their memories during their time in Leinster.

We saw the departures of Dominic Ryan, Billy Dardis, Zane Kirchner and Hayden Triggs we would like to wish them well in their future careers.

Sadly, we also had the passing of a true gentleman and legend of Ireland and Leinster Rugby, Prof Arthur Tanner. Arthur was well known and liked by supporters.

The Leinster office saw the departure of its Commercial Manager Paul Dermody recently, we wish Paul well in his new role with Horse Racing Ireland.

Funding

I will shortly present to you the accounts up to 31 May for approval. The Club's income dropped during the year as a result of one less Legends Tshirt being launched, combined with a reduction in merchandise sales and interpro bus demand.

The OLSC continues to operate without any levies or subscription fees being applied to the cost of your season ticket.

We would like to thank our biggest financial Supporter: Bank of Ireland. Special thanks to the team in Bank of Ireland for their continued support and commitment to the work completed by the OLSC. In addition we would also like to thanks The Bridge and Aircoach for their support.

OLSC Buses

The Club ran buses ran for all three Interpro fixtures. It is an important service given public transport does not normally cater for supporters to easily get to/from some games given the evening kickoffs. We feel the current pricing of €20 per person 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.

In addition to the Intropro games the Club also ran a direct airport bus service for the away Montpellier away game.

Merchandise

The Club continues to produce a small amount of branded merchandise as well as our popular legends t-shirt. The t-shirt released last season was for Luke Fitzgerald and had a great 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 freshen these items up, suggestions are always welcome now what can be sold. The club was able to secure some babywear items at the start of last season. This proved very successful. We are still looking into new suppliers for this range and hope to develop this further.

The Club continues to discuss with Leinster and our retail partner Lifestyle Sports other clothing options for supporters and in particular the lack of ladies clothing. We hope to arrange a session with both Lifestyle and Adidas ahead of the new arrangement coming into place to discuss the possibilities available of extending the current range available.

Season ticket holder discounts

The Club continues to negotiate discounts for season ticket holders with Leinster Rugby sponsors along with businesses with a connection to a player past or present. A new list is being finalised and will be published shortly effective 1 September 2017.

International broadcast information

The Club researches and publishes its information for every Leinster Rugby game, it seems popular as the click rate can be in excess of 1,000 for some games from up to 50 countries. We also extend this to Ireland and the B&I Lions tours during the season.

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 a small level of followers. Free advertising on facebook is a thing of the past we have spent a small amount for paid advertising (to get important items into people's newsfeeds). We continue to rely on the weekly ezine, ticket office emails issued by Leinster Rugby, Match Programmes and most importantly www.leinsterrugby.ie as we try to reach as many supporters as we can.

Away Guides

The production of the away guides and travel information continued throughout the season. I would like to thank Jarrod Bromley & Terry Quinlan who together prepare these. These guides take a lot of time to produce (research, edit, design and layout). The OLSC produced its 42nd 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 our away guides.

The Laighin Out

We continue to see the growth in attendances in the Laighin Out with new Leinster supporters and away team supporters visiting both before and after matches.

The amount of money invested in the Laighin Out this season was small and only for essentials needed. For the coming season the committee intended to have a small amount set out for any further essential work needed in the bar.

The club has already set aside €2,000 in a separate deposit account towards the new Laighin Out in the new RDS Development and this will be increased by a further €3,000 in the coming weeks (this represents a contribution from the last two seasons).

RDS Development

The OLSC continues to seek updates from Leinster on the progress of the plans for the new development. The club is seeking engagement at every opportunity to ensure that all season ticket holders are represented accordingly.

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. For the coming season flagging will continue to be a focus to ensure as much blue as possible is seen around the RDS.

Last season we kept with our tradition and handed out our Blue Santa Hats before the Pre Christmas matches with Northampton and our blue baseball caps in Lyon. These were a big hit as always.

Charity Partner

Due to restraints within the committee last season we were unable to run an event as we planned. The new committee is committed to ensuring this is rectified for the coming season in support of Debra Ireland and Aware. Last season nearly €17,000 was raised for the two charities at their respective match day 'takeovers'.

Leinster Rugby & The OLSC Committee

During last season the committee faced a number of challenges. The committee said goodbye to Janine Ryan and Eoin Kilkenny and Robbie Fahy was co-opted onto the committee to assist in a writing capacity. The remaining two places were not filled.

The committee once again came up against the on-going battle of trying to find people who are willing to commit to joining the OLSC in order to help supporters and run events, bus etc. This on-going challenge is a major concern for the outgoing committee and has been raised with Leinster Rugby on a number of occasions over the last couple of seasons.

Before I go into the other issues the committee have faced, the outgoing committee would like to thank Marcus Ó Buachalla who is present here tonight (and not just because he is here) for his continued help and assistance during the season but also for his understanding of the OLSC and its importance of what we do for supporters. It is much appreciated.

There has been a lot of changes within the Leinster Rugby back office staff over the last couple of seasons and this has brought its own challenges for the committee. The relationship between Leinster and the OLSC at times has not been the way it should be, or has been over the past ten seasons.

The OLSC at times were not consulted before communications or changes were issued to supporters, simple requests to include OLSC messages in communications were not followed through. Also the support promised to help the committee to promote the OLSC amongst supporters and to try and encourage new supporters to get involved did not come to fruition. The committee did raise these issues with Paul Dermody just before he left, as we did this time last year but sadly we have seen no improvement.

In recent weeks the Club requested a formal meeting with CEO of Leinster Rugby, Mick Dawson. We met with Mr Dawson yesterday evening and briefly discussed our concerns and the issues that the Club is experiencing. The Club will be putting together these points in writing to Mr Dawson in the coming days.

(Note: Mr Dawson has taken our points on board and will be discussing these further with the administration team at UCD).

We feel that the work carried out by the OLSC is vital for supporters and deserves the recognition and assistance from Leinster Rugby.

Volunteers – Thank You

Lastly, and most of all, I would like to say thank you to the outgoing committee and to those who have decided to return.

To those who volunteered to help out during the season be it with helping out with flagging in the RDS or at away European games, we thank you for giving up your time to help us out and it is much appreciated.

To those who have helped the committee Dave Cahill, Terry Quinlan and Barry McHugh we thank you for your time and assistance.

The Club is always looking for people to volunteer and new people to join the committee each year. The activities completed by the club are not set in stone and can vary and new ideas are always welcome. The Club tries to keep its activities relevant to season ticket holders and the wider supporter base. If you would like to help out please let me know your email address before you leave this evening so that we can make contact with you.

Today we will see Robbie Fahy and Berty O'Neill stepping down from the Committee. I thank them for their contribution.

That concludes the President's Report for the 2016/17 Season.

FINANCE REPORT

I will take the reports as read as these are broadly in line with previous season in regards to expenses, as noted earlier our income was down last season for the aboveformetioned reasons.

The Club is set to begin the new season with a cash balance of €5,554.31 and this includes €3,000 being put aside for a future new Laighin Out bar, this represents an allocation for the last two seasons.

The Finance Report as proposed by Dave Cahill seconded by Sharon Levy-Valensi.

COMMITTEE ELECTION

Given just six people came forward for the seven open positions the following people will be elected by a simple show of hands.

Rebecca Leggett (returning)
Jarrod Bromley (returning)
Sharon Levy-Valensi (returning)
Killian Byrne (returning after a recent break)
Jamie Barbour (new to the committee)
Alan Mooney (new to the committee)

The election of new committee was proposed by Laura Lyscat seconded by Carmel Kelly

Marcus Ó Buachalla, Head of Communications at Leinster Rugby addressed supporters,

- First time in a number of seasons STH sales hitting the 12k mark
- Autograph alley a success last season
- Charity event - public tender process; only charities in Leinster are considered where funds stay in Leinster
- Players pick the charity partners
- €17k taken for the charity partners (Aware and Debra Ireland) on match days last season
- Outlined the process undertaken by Celtic Rugby and the timelines for the expansion of the new Guinness PRO14

- Acknowledged that it was not without its challenges and issues but that Celtic League and clubs were limited in terms of what they could say and do until all was signed and official

Q&A

Offering a free ticket to compensate for one home game fewer this season:-

- What is the benefit of offering a North or South stand ticket as a replacement for the reduction in the home matches if STH in Anglesea or Grandstand? Marcus stated it can be used for all home Guinness PRO14 games (subject to availability) and this included the Munster game in the Aviva and if more than one ticket on the STH account the option is there to group these free tickets together for the same match e.g three tickets on your account equals three tickets in lieu of the home game missed.
- Is there a way of looking at another benefit to replace this ticket? - Marcus's response; difficulty in comparison to other clubs who maybe are not at capacity is the popularity of Anglesea & Grandstand which are nearly completely sold out so you can't offer a ticket next to your allocated ticket. As Anglesea and Grandstand STH already assigned seating it becomes an issue to allocate free tickets which impact then on other STH.
- Marcus outlined that a full refund was available and also gave the example of Glasgow who have no capacity at all in Scotstoun and are as a result offering free ticket to an away game in Murrayfield whereas other PRO14 clubs are not offering a refund at all.
- Voucher for Lifestyle Sports and credit on the LR account for future seasons were suggested and noted by Marcus who would address with the rest of Commercial & Marketing team but Marcus noted that unlikely to be any further gestures ahead of the 2017/18 season starting.
- Eight refunds & 33 emails complaining about the gesture and about the PRO14.
- Season Ticket Holder gift sets: it was asked could the scarves be replaced? - Resounding 'no' from the attendees.
- Going forward early July for Pro14 fixtures as per previous seasons
- When is app going to be updated? Still showing last year's fixtures - work in progress by LR digital team.
- How many fans do you expect to go to SA and from SA to travel to IE? No figures available
- CCRO volunteer event clashing with the OLSC AGM - no link to the professional side of LR with regards to event planning.

RDS Development

- RDS Development - no update, at Government level at the moment. Hopeful, has to work around the horse show for minimal impact.
- is there a contingency for Anglesea STH to move while construction is ongoing? Yes the RDS will not close while construction is ongoing.

Female Rugby Gear

- Marcus explained the difficulty that Life Style Sports and Canterbury have and that the demand is not currently matching minimum orders and is in some cases up to 75% off a minimum order .
- LSS operating a loss on Leinster female range at present and this very difficult to justify
- Marcus outlined that in Sept 2015, Life Style Sports ordered embroidered LR kit, Hoodie, Fleece on the back of OLSC feedback but it didn't take off at all.
- Last season sales were very low.
- Members from the floor suggested that female supporters not reflected in those statistics as most were buying the male jerseys.
- They want a female replica jersey not a jersey altered to look like a different jersey
- When signing up as STH, look at recording the sex of the purchaser to highlight the correct volume of male v female STH.
- Option to add a second email address for every person on the STH account
- Focus group to highlight that ladies want: replica gear fitted for women and not token pink rugby wear.
- Marcus outlined that this had already happened in Sept 15 but no consistent upturn in sales despite initial spike.

AOB

- Magazine TV programme does not exist for the PRO14 - would the league not make their own? This is something that is being looked at for the new league.
- Tannoy system in the Anglesea sound - are improvements going to be made? Will bring it to the attention of RDS.
- Will Hop House lager be available in the RDS next season? Will revert to Guinness
- Awards ball - will it be open to supporters to attend? Marcus outlined that the players have two nights out a year officially, ball is one of them. It's a players' night and team night and unlikely to change.
- OLSC could not sell the tickets on a social platform and therefore could not sell tickets to the ball - not a Supporters night - will bring it back to LR but at present one table with the option of a second will stay the same.

- Proposal for LR to be seen backing OLSC for the work they do and that the Match day experience is down to the OLSC and needs to be acknowledged by LR.
- Send email for volunteers earlier than same week of match to give people time to organise and then send remainder email week of match.
- Away games for for European games - Expressions of Interest emails invited for Exeter
- When do Leinster hope to have Commercial manager in place? Interviews being held currently.

As there were no other matters raised to discussed, the meeting was closed.