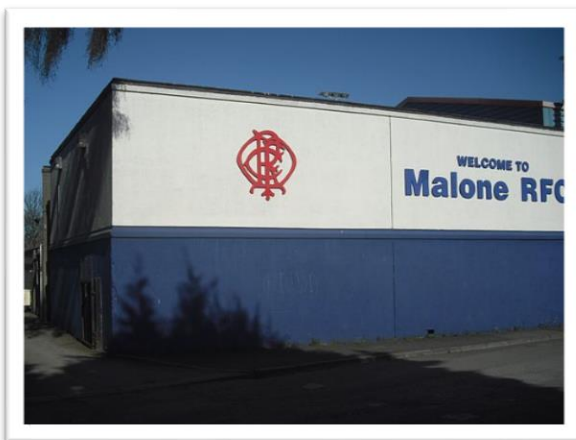




Malone RFC
6 Gibson Park Avenue
Belfast
BT6 9GL

www.malone-rfc.com



Clubs in Focus

Malone RFC: Bar & Social Room Refurbishment

Background to Malone RFC

Since establishment in 1892, Malone RFC has become one of the most successful rugby clubs in Ulster. Alongside their Men's 1st (competing in AIL 1B), 2nd and 3rd XVs, the club boasts a full youth section and approximately 110 mini rugby players. Their female section also continues to see growth in numbers across each age group, and now offers a pathway from mini to adult, with the ladies 1st XV competing in Ulster Women's Championship Division 1. Malone RFC also strives to be "more than a rugby club" and become fully embedded in their community, offering a range of non-rugby initiatives such as fitness boot camps and ballroom dancing. They were also the first club in Ulster to offer mixed ability rugby.

Gibson Park

The club gained permanent residence at Gibson Park in 1935, renting the grounds for 18 years before later purchasing the site in 1953. In 1967 the club built a new brick pavilion which has seen various additions over the past 5 decades.

Recent changes to the club's leadership alongside on-pitch achievements, growing numbers and the increasing popularity of Malone RFC locally has brought new life to the premises, and led to a more unified approach to the club's development.



Continued...

The stability and success of the respective sections and teams allowed the club to re-evaluate its priorities, and there has been a major drive for the physical re-development of the Gibson Park site. The suitability of the premises was brought into question by the club management, and as such, a plan was put in place to bring all aspects up to modern day standards. So far, the club have completed pitch and floodlight upgrades, installed an outdoor gym, given their indoor gym facilities a facelift, and completed a major revamp of their downstairs bar and kitchen. The club also added two additional changing rooms to help them cope with demand. This has all been made possible via a combination of grant successes and the club's own fundraising efforts.

How they have benefitted from the work?

The newly refurbished bar has brought increased appeal for members and supporters of the club. Not only has there been an expansion in the number of events taking place, but there has been a distinct increase in the number of people attending what's on offer. Furthermore, their upgrades have brought significant benefits financially, with bar takings up by around a third in comparison to previous years.

The club have also recently completed an extensive refurbishment of their main function room, the Gibson Park Hall, installing a suspended ceiling with new lighting, air conditioning, state of the art AV equipment and new windows and doors. This work not only benefits the club in hosting their own events and functions, but also in terms of income generation, as the space is available to hire for private parties, weddings and birthdays, thus bringing significant value in terms of long-term sustainability. Club President Patrick Baird commented:

“Support and enthusiasm for the club has built real momentum, and there remains a commitment to continually improve and develop all aspects of Malone RFC to meet both the demands of the sport and the local community.”



Next steps

The Club now has plans to install a mezzanine floor in their indoor gym to increase the space available for fitness training and community exercise classes, and give their upstairs bar and adjacent toilets a facelift. In the longer term there are also ambitions to add more changing and showering facilities for their ever growing female section, and convert one of their pitches to a synthetic 3G. This would allow the club to better meet their rugby demands, while also benefitting other local sports groups and the local community.



Some Key lessons

The club have reflected on some of the key factors which have contributed towards recent successes:

1. Realisation that the club needed to set a clear vision, establish a robust Development Plan with deliverable targets, and put effective leadership structures in place, including a small volunteer team to lead on their facility improvements
2. Club and community consultation has been central to all work, allowing for clear identification of what local people wanted, while also providing important evidence to support any future grant funding bids
3. Maximising available grant opportunities alongside various internal fundraising activities
4. Generating momentum, capitalising on the enthusiasm of volunteers when one project has been successfully completed and another exists in the pipeline

Key Contacts

For help and support with grants, funding and fundraising, and development planning please contact one of our club services staff:



David Johnston (Funding Manager)

Email: David.Johnston@ulsterrugby.com

Telephone: 07767168981



Matthew Holmes (Club Services Officer)

Email: Matthew.Holmes@ulsterrugby.com

Telephone: 07442490460