



ECCLES RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Founded 1897

Ground and Clubhouse: Gorton Street, Peel Green, Eccles, Manchester, M30 7LY
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Minutes of Eccles RFC Annual General Meeting – 5th July 2021

Technical introduction – Mark Greenhalgh

Mark explained that this evening's meeting would be 'hybrid', taking place both in the room and broadcast via Zoom for those who are unable or do not want to attend. However, it appeared that the majority of attendees had showed up in person.

Welcome from the Club President – Mark Dutton

Mark opened the meeting proper by welcoming everyone to the meeting and saying how he pleased he was to be doing the meeting face-to-face again. He then handed over to Paul Thorpe to chair the meeting.

Minutes from previous AGM – Mark Greenhalgh

Mark explained that the minutes of the previous AGM have been published to the club website, alongside all the reports, as people were advised in advance. He asked that anyone who had read them propose them as accurate. Proposed by Chris Gaffey, seconded by Mark Dutton.

Treasurer's report – Mike Bateman

Mike said that this was probably one of the most difficult years in the club's history. With so little activity possible we had lost most of our main income streams such as the bar and international tickets. Luckily, we were successful in gaining support from the government while subscriptions and sponsorship monies continued to come in. As a result, the club's balance sheet was looking surprisingly healthy.

Further detail is available in the Treasurer's Report published on the club website.

Mike suggested that we continue normal practice and vote to not have our accounts externally audited. This was proposed by Alan Bent and seconded by Sam Simpson.

President: Mark Dutton	07802 345380	Fixtures Secretary: Don Edmondson	07821 683516
Chairman: Paul Thorpe	07766 512552	Sponsorship Secretary: Andy Brunt	07743 825459
Hon. Secretary: Mark Greenhalgh	07525 434790	Communications Officer: Chris Gaffey	07971 817375
Hon. Treasurer: Mike Bateman	07843 756160	Safeguarding Officer: Heather Thorpe	07762 081105
		M&J Section Chair: Paul Fleming	07889 601558
Director of Rugby: Sam Simpson	07935 403171	D of E Award Chair: Mark Baines	07850 082122



ECCLES RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Hon. Secretary's report – Mark Greenhalgh

Mark spoke about how challenging the year had been for himself and the other members of the committee. While there had been precious little activity to show for it, a fantastic amount of effort had been required to stay abreast of a tumultuous situation and try and have the club ready to go should an opportunity occur.

He picked out a number of positives that had happened:

- The volunteer reward programme had proved popular with volunteers and the general membership
- The Eccles Peak Challenge and Ecclesathon had been successes
- Online activity sessions for both coaches and players had allowed the club to 'keep going' while others had not.

Further detail is available in the Secretary's Report published on the club website.

Mark announced that he would be standing down from committee at the end of the night. He expressed his thanks to all those he had "worked" alongside during the past 10 years and wished success for those who would come next.

Communications Officer's report – Chris Gaffey

Chris continued in much the same vein as Mark, in how challenging the last year had been. Communication had played a key part in that; knowing what and when to relay had become a daily if not hourly task.

He picked out a number of positives that had been received warmly on social media:

- Eccles Peak Challenge
- Eccles Touch
- Coaching CPD courses
- 100 Years of Hoops
- Covid Recovery Crowdfunder

Further detail is available in the Communications Report published on the club website.

Chris announced he would be standing down from his role as Communications Officer after three years in the post. He thanked those who had helped him during that time. His recommendation moving forward is that the role was devolved into separate sections of the club looking after themselves, rather than relying on one person to do it all.



ECCLES RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Rugby Reports

Walking rugby – Alan Bent

Alan reported that despite the restrictions of the last year, the numbers for walking rugby were better than ever, with new recruits both male and female, from within the existing membership and some new to the club. He encouraged everyone to join them on a Monday evening or to get in contact with him for more information.

Men – Sam Simpson

Sam informed us that due to us being unable to start our normal activities at the start of the season we put the focus on being “fit for life” and encouraged players to come down for whatever activity was possible. This ‘whatever was possible’ became a theme for the season as we attempted to move forward before new restrictions pulled us back. We were able to play a small number of fixtures, both over the Christmas period and in May, and it was good to see people back on the field again.

Further details are available in the Men’s Rugby Report on the club website.

Women & Girls – James Wright

James spoke about the need to be resilient and creative over the last year in order to produce results. While it has obviously been a difficult time, it has been quite successful for the women and girls’ section. The girls, under the coaching of Glen Cahill, have gelled together as a group and formed a new team. The women had been as active as possible, particularly with their participation in touch rugby, and have grown their numbers ahead of next year.

Further details are available in the Women’s Rugby Report on the club website.

Mini & Juniors – Paul Fleming

Paul mentioned that it was good to feel the enthusiasm in the room for something of a return to normality. He also thanked those that had helped the club through the last season for their efforts. He reported that most age groups are reporting good numbers, although a couple that were struggling needed to think about what they can do to improve their situation rather than just look externally for answers. He picked out the good work that some teams had done via Zoom sessions as one way of improving engagement.

Further details are available in the Mini & Juniors Rugby Report on the club website.

Paul also announced he would be standing down as Mini & Juniors Chair and thanked everyone who he’d worked with over the last few years, especially Leeann Aspinall.



ECCLES RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Duke of Edinburgh – Mark Baines

Mark opened by pointing out this was the 10th year of delivering Duke of Edinburgh at the club and wanted to thank everyone who had helped out during that time. Moving on to the last year, it had been very difficult to plan or complete activities amongst all the restrictions, yet 11 people had completed their bronze awards. The Eccles RFC DoE centre continues to enjoy a pass rate of over 92% which is well above the national average.

Further details are available in the Duke of Edinburgh Report on the club website

Chairman’s comments – Paul Thorpe

Paul begun by talking about the financial position of the club; how impressive it was that we ended this year in a strong position considering the challenges we’ve faced. He expanded by talking about the projects that this has and will allow such as the CCTV security on the astro, new tills and card payment systems, refurbishment of the car park and the hiring of a Community Rugby Coach for next season. He said the next challenge for us was finding more volunteers to spread the load as current volunteers are being overworked. He closed by saying he believes the club is in a good position across the board.

Paul announced that he would be standing down from committee at the end of the night, although he would still be involved in his coaching role. He thanked all those he’d volunteered alongside for the last 20 years and wished success to those taking over the roles.

Election of officers – Mark Greenhalgh

Mark read out the list of nominees that he had received. As none of the roles were being contested, he proposed that all candidates would be successful unless there were any objections. No objections were raised so the following roles were appointed for the 2021/22 season:

Officers of the Club

Role	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
President	Mark Dutton	James Wright	Chris Gaffey
Chairman	Chris Gaffey	James Wright	Danny Nicholls
Treasurer	Mike Bateman	Chris Gaffey	Mark Dutton
Asst. Treasurer	Matt Nombela	Dave Nicholls	Mark Dutton
Asst. Treasurer	Greg Wilson	Mike Bateman	Andy Brunt
Secretary	Dave Nicholls	Chris Gaffey	Mark Dutton
Fixtures Secretary	Don Edmondson	Chris Gaffey	Dave Nicholls
Captain of the Club	James Wright	Mark Greenhalgh	Dave Nicholls

Other named nominees (Committee Members)

Role	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
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ECCLES RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

M&J Chair	Danny Nicholls	Heather Thorpe	Paul Thorpe
DoE Chair	Mark Baines	Hilary Berry	Marianne Coop
Rugby Chair	Glen Cahill	Andy Brunt	Mark Greenhalgh
Women's & Girls Captain	Rowanne Smalley	Rebecca Roden	Siobhan Mullen

Any other business

- *Will touch rugby continue in the future now that contact rugby is back?* – Touch rugby may take a break while we get contact rugby back up and running again but, dependant on numbers and interest, it is certainly still part of our plans for the future.
- *In our last active season we (the men's 1XV) were relegated. What are our expectations moving forward?* – It's largely down to the players. If they have the desire and commitment to get better, then we can support them in a "performance environment". But if they're not committed then we may have to take more of a "participation focus". This will be discussed within the rugby committee as we move forward.
- *Do we (men's 1XV) intend to stay in the ADM leagues in the future?* – We said that our decision at the time was based on the immediate needs of the club and we would review once the RFU's plans for restructuring were clearer. That remains our position, with no new information at this time. We will compete in the ADM leagues in 2021/22.
- *Will the beer festival be going ahead this year?* If there are no further setbacks, the beer festival will take place 20-22nd August.
- *We've reported that we're doing well financially. Are we aware of any other clubs that are not so lucky?* We aren't aware of anyone struggling at this time. All clubs have had support from the RFU and Lancashire in securing grants and loans to help them.

Closing comments from Chairman – Paul Thorpe

Paul thanked everyone for their attendance and participation, and wished good luck to the new committee.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was closed at 22:40.