



# Eccles Rugby Football Club

Founded 1897

President: A. Brunt

Ground and Clubhouse: Gorton Street, Peel Green, Eccles, Manchester M30 7LZ  
Telephone: 0161 789 2613 Website: [www.ecclesrfc.org.uk](http://www.ecclesrfc.org.uk)

*Chairman:*  
P. Thorpe  
Linnshaw Moss Farm  
Moss Lane  
Worsley  
M28 3NE  
07766 512552  
[paul.thorpe@isgwebb.com](mailto:paul.thorpe@isgwebb.com)

*Hon. Secretary:*  
M. Greenhalgh  
1 Isobel Close  
Eccles  
M30 7JG  
07525 434790  
[mark.greenhalgh@outlook.com](mailto:mark.greenhalgh@outlook.com)

*Hon. Treasurer:*  
G. Wilson  
1A School St  
Winton, Eccles  
M30 8DJ  
07944 222083  
[g\\_t\\_wilson@hotmail.com](mailto:g_t_wilson@hotmail.com)

*Fixtures Secretary:*  
D. Edmondson  
43 Coll Drive  
Davyhulme  
M41 7FX  
0161 747 6697  
[dwedmondson@sky.com](mailto:dwedmondson@sky.com)

## Minutes of Eccles RFC Annual General meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017

### Welcome from the Club President (Andy Brunt)

Andy Brunt opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the 2017 AGM. A minute's silence was held in memory of the club members we have lost this year, and other recent events. After it was observed he then handed the meeting over to Chairman Paul Thorpe.

### Apologies

Apologies were received from Paul Newton, Ray Cook, Katie Houghton, Andrea Arnold, Steve Sarno, Glen Cahill and Greg Wilson.

### Minutes from Previous AGM

Paul Thorpe suggested that the minutes from the previous AGM should be accepted unless anybody had any questions or objections.

The acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Mark Dutton and seconded by Tom Chapman.

### Treasurer's report (Mike Bateman)

The Treasurer, Greg Wilson, was absent from the meeting but as Mike Bateman has been taking on many of the responsibilities this year, as part of a hand over, he presented the Treasurer's Report.

Draft accounts had been produced for the meeting but unfortunately these had not had chance to be reviewed and corrected so contained multiple errors. But one point that was correct is that the bar take was down 30% on the year due to fewer socials and generally people spending less at the club. Members were encouraged to review the information provided and ask any questions they might have, or email them through later. Paul Thorpe proposed that the meeting delegate authority to the Finance Committee to sign off the accounts on behalf of the club once they were finalised. This was seconded by Mark Greenhalgh and approved.

Andy Brunt suggested that we don't request an accountancy report ("be audited") as this would be expensive and of little value. This was seconded by Mark Greenhalgh and approved.

*Junior Section Chairman*  
Paul Fleming  
07889 601558  
[Paul.fleming2@baesystems.com](mailto:Paul.fleming2@baesystems.com)

*Safeguarding Officer*  
Heather Thorpe  
0161 790 2622  
[heather.thorpe@btinternet.com](mailto:heather.thorpe@btinternet.com)

*Women's Section Secretary*  
Katie Houghton  
07725 608717  
[houghton\\_katie@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:houghton_katie@hotmail.co.uk)





### **Hon Secretary's report (Mark Greenhalgh)**

Mark Greenhalgh gave some points of note from throughout the year before highlighting some key points at the end.

At the start of the season the Ground & Pavilion Committee installed a new path linking the pedestrian gate to the car park so that paying visitors on a Saturday could avoid getting their shoes wet. The girls section recruited a number of new coaches from within the club. And Mike Bateman started to get involved in the Finances of the club with a view to taking over as Treasurer from Greg.

As the season progressed unfortunately the astro pitch failed its assessment meaning it would have to be replaced, however it was declared safe to use pending a common sense safety assessment at the start of each session and at regular intervals, which has been done. A lot of work has gone on since then to try and find help with funding the replacement and ensuring we get the work done in the best way possible. This is still ongoing.

A new till system was introduced at the club bringing the kitchen and coffee shop in line with the downstairs bar. There have been some teething problems but is certainly the best it has been. The RFU provided support for the new girls coaches, so we'd like to extend our thanks to them. The MacMillan coffee morning, led by Shelley Maddocks and Nina Martyn, was a success again, raising over £760 for a worthy cause.

Over the winter period the new junior fund-raiser, the joker game, started and raised funds throughout the year before being won on the last day of the season. A new physio, Piers, started working with us as a long term replacement for Siobhan, who stepped down after five years service to the club. The club's phone, broadband and other utility providers were reviewed to ensure we're getting the best deals possible.

Towards the end of the season we held a successful sponsors day, also attended by local MPs and councillors, where we were able to showcase all we do on a weekly basis. At the final committee meeting of the year it was agreed that bar prices would be reviewed over the summer, but that annual subs would remain the same.

The club was once again named CAMRA Salford branch Club of the Year. This was the fourth consecutive year and testament of the hard work done by Marie and her bar helpers.

EasyFundraising continues to be a good source of income for the club, now passing £10,000 since it started. Thanks to Carolyn in particular for her contributions. However we could still raise much more if more people would take the time to use the service and earn us money for nothing.

The proposed structure of Lancashire leagues at levels seven and below was ultimately changed to affect only levels eight and below so has no affect on us for now.

Attendance at club socials throughout the year has been poor, whether that be special events or watching international matches. All members are asked to make more of an effort in supporting the club next year. If individuals have any ideas to improve this or issues to address they can speak to Mark.

The club's disciplinary record was called into question by Lancashire after a number of indiscretions. However they were also satisfied that we were doing everything appropriate to address it.

To end on a positive, the club continues to thrive on the work of volunteers, some doing more now that they've ever done before. Massive thanks to everyone who contributes.



## Rugby reports

### Men (Nick Spooner)

Nick Spooner explained that it had been a disappointing season for the men, struggling for numbers throughout, resulting in the 1XV getting relegated and the 2XV and 3XV limping to complete their fixtures. He believes instability in the coaching setup was a problem but that will be better next year with Glen Cahill and Simon Donovan coming on board to support John Parrott. To continue the positivity, a number of new players have come to the club, which hasn't happened much historically, and a number of colts have already come through to play senior rugby. A big emphasis will be placed on keeping them interested as we start pre-season.

### Ladies (Katie Houghton)

This season both ladies teams played in competitive leagues. Both had mixed success.

Some of the less positive aspects of the season were some very unlucky close loses for the 1st team and the fact that the 2nd team had to concede a couple of games towards the end of the season because they were unable to field a team.

However, we're all about positivity! Highlights include some really strong, memorable performances from both teams. Just competing with two teams is an achievement and something that very few clubs in the country can do.

We have also recruited a number of new players this season, who are now not just valued players but a lot of them have also taken on roles to help with the running of the club next season.

Looking forward to next season the ladies section has had a bit of a reshuffle of leading roles. We have also now put in place a manager of the section (Nina) who will help oversee the running of everything. This evening we will also be seeking the ratification of the change in ladies 1st team captain from Katie to Igemi.

Next season we will also be putting a lot of focus in to recruiting and retaining new players. With increased competition of ladies rugby teams in the area it is becoming even more important to make sure our name is top of everyone's list when they are searching for a club. We are confident we still offer the best rugby experience in the area for all new players. We just need to make sure that message is out there.

On the whole this season has been a success for the ladies section and we have already put plans in place to make sure next season is even better.



### **Colts (Andy Waring/Chris Gaffey)**

Andy gave a summary of the written report provided by Chris. The full report is included below:

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee and club members, please accept my apologies, I am unable to attend the club's Annual general meeting due to work commitments in London. I hope these notes provide a suitable summary of the Colts' past season and plans, as they stand, for the season ahead.

#### 2016/17 Season

- Surviving the season with all fixtures fulfilled may not sound like much of an achievement, but Eccles have succeeded where Preston Grasshoppers, Manchester, Warrington, Waterloo, Liverpool Collegiate, and 5 other North West clubs have failed.
- The Colts began with a combined U17s and U18s squad of 30.
- We actually had more players available than could be fielded in the first fixture.
- By Christmas were struggling to field 15 players.
- Numbers at training and playing saw a steady decline over the winter.
- Sunday employment was the greatest influence on player availability.
- Injuries, concussion, Lancashire county commitments and disciplinary action also all contributed to our reduced numbers.
- On more than one occasion we had to commence or complete a game with less than 15 on the pitch.
- Every fixture featured a unique team formation and performance was inconsistent.
- In total the Colts played 19 games in League 'C' of the Raging Bull Colts League:
- 4 wins, 15 defeats, 300 points scored (54 Tries), 591 points against.
- Very competitive competition.
- Victories were few but noteworthy – Rochdale 27-31, Sefton 20-18, Macclesfield 34-45,
- Season high point - beating Birkenhead 28-19 (they went on to win the League, otherwise undefeated).
- The importance of discipline and a strong squad should not be overlooked in Colts: 3 of the 4 colts' wins last season featured a full match squad of 22 players.
- The margins of loss were often narrow in the early season 22-30 29-22 12-13 10-13.
- Season low point - match abandoned in away defeat at Macclesfield due to two Eccles red Cards.
- Despite results the remaining committed players demonstrated a positive attitude with good character, grit, tenacity, determination and defiance- no more so than in the last game of season where 12 Eccles colts fought back to score two late tries in a heavy away defeat.
- Five Eccles Colts were selected to represent Lancashire County last season – Callum Baines, Leon Simpson, Reece Walker, Connor James, Ben Moseley.
- Seven Colts from the squad have played their first senior rugby games for Eccles.



#### Next Season

- Raging Bull Colts League registration was 20th May.

Due to unreliable numbers of committed U18s for next season the U16s have decided not to combine squads and instead will form a U17s Junior Colts team.

- Future plans for the remaining half dozen/dozen U18 Senior Colts for next season are currently undecided.
- It would be a great shame for them to drift away to other clubs due to the lack of opportunity to play at Eccles. The intention is to find them opportunities to play as U18s on an irregular basis. The potential of continuing with a series of Friday Night Floodlight friendlies versus local U18s is being investigated with Sam Simpson. Although not participating in a formal Colts League, the intension is to enter a team into the U18 Lancs Colts Cup.
- Ultimately the aim is have them playing Senior rugby in an Eccles shirt as soon as they are ready for it.
- However, many of them will not turn 18 until next spring/summer and we need to formulate a plan for their development because many of them are not yet ready for adult open age rugby in September.
- Many of them are forwards, but we need to consider the positions they could realistically play in a Senior team and with co ordination with senior coaching team prepare them for those positions.
- To build confidence, I'd like to propose that the U18 Colts continue training with the Seniors (Parental consent forms will need to be signed) and if possible they make Senior debuts as a group, when ready, perhaps in the 3rd / 2nd team, rather than as individuals 'in at the deep end'.
- I'd like to propose a mentor scheme, whereby experienced senior players act as individual advisors to colts, so the transition is less daunting.

Mark Greenhalgh added a further explanation of the process that led to the result of not fielding a Senior Colts next season. Andy Brunt commented that it had been a thorough process, where at all times the benefits to the club were prioritised above any individual preferences.

#### **Minis and Juniors (Paul Fleming/Andrea Arnold)**

Paul presented a report written by Andrea. The written version of the report is included below:

It has been a busy season in the Junior Section. We continue to go from strength to strength from U7 to U16. The minis are in action on Sunday mornings either training or playing matches. We have welcomed a number of 5 year old players this year. The juniors enjoy mid-week training sessions and play on Sunday mornings.

Our season's highlights include:

U14s reaching the semi-final of the Vase and having their team camaraderie captured in a great photo by Rob and shared on @englandrugby Instagram page.

The U15 returned from a successful and enjoyable tour of the North East. The boys played all of their closely fought matches with great spirit and were a credit to the club.

U13's stunning performance against Rossendale inspired a passing spectator to write a match report, which can be found on our website. The team now progress to the final of the Waterfall tournament.



Their record this season is played 27, won 24, lost 2, and drawn 1 – impressive! U13 also won the plate at the Harrogate festival.

U11s have had success on and off the pitch. They have played with gusto throughout the season, developing their rugby skills well, and thanks to Manager, Paula, have recently developed their canoeing skills too! They enjoyed a team building activity on the the Bridgwater canal.

U10s recently had a perfect morning of rugby at the Southport Mini Tournament. They played five tough games and had five fabulous wins! Their coach said it was a fantastic all round team performance. Well done!

U12s have continued to do well under the guidance of Del, Sally and Nick. Their coaches attended a coach development session with Sharks community coaches and the team will play in the final day of the Waterfall tournament on 7th May.

U9s have triumphed in a closely fought match v. Littleborough. They won 30-25, by playing a tough defensive game and working well as a team under pressure. We look forward to their future success.

The u18 girls have been given a boost by the return of Coach Sam. Matt is now looking after the U15 girls and John the U13 girls. Our girls' teams continue to be a great success and an asset of the club, achieving representation at county level.

U16s won the Lancashire development competition. They are in the process of “growing up” and moving into the Colts of the club. There are 20 boys making the transition from the junior to the senior section of the club. Our grass roots rugby really is the future of our club.

Congratulations also to the U13 and U14 boys who were selected for entry into the Sale Sharks Developing Player Programme this season, both in the Lancashire section via the club and Cheshire section via schools. Their rugby playing skills were recognised by the programme's coaches and they have been enjoying monthly training sessions with fellow players from across the county.

### **Girls (Declan O'Regan)**

Declan explained that the season started in difficult fashion with coaches leaving from all age groups. However replacements were found with Andy Stimson and Dan Aspinall joining the U18s, Matt Parkinson taking on the U15s, and John Brookes and Charlotte Harrison working with the U13s. The majority of those are staying in place next season which gives them a really strong foundation. They will also benefit from the last of the WaG funding which has been available for the last three seasons, with a number of courses being attended.

The U13s and U15s worked with Wythenshawe girls throughout the season in order to provide better numbers for fixtures. From this they achieved a number of good results including being Cup Semi-Finalists. Two girls were selected for Lancashire. Next season a big focus will need to be on recruitment as a number of girls are moving up to U18s.

The U18s had a very successful season, winning the National Plate and being finalists in a number of other competitions. They had five girls selected for Lancashire. Next year they are losing three girls to the senior section, who are all remaining involved at the club, but are gaining 10 players from the U15s. This should give them a squad of 24+ which is almost unheard of in girls rugby, and puts them in a very strong position.



### **Duke of Edinburgh (Mark Baines)**

As always I would like to Firstly say thank you to the extremely dedicated volunteers, without them it would not be possible to run the award at the club.

From the start in 2011 to date the D of E at Eccles is growing year on year, in total we have awarded over 160 medals including 26 Gold awards.

Approximate numbers are:-

Bronze – 80, Silver – 60, Gold – 26

12 of these received their certificates at the end of May, which was at Buckingham palace

We have an over 92% pass rate, which is fantastic, well above the national average. It is an even split between males and females.

We currently have 33 young people at different stages in there award.

Each year brings its challenges and we are still learning and still have lots to learn.

We also have a few volunteers who help out when required on expeditions, but we do require people to help out with the administration side, if you know anyone or wish to volunteer please come forward.

### **Chairman's Comments (Paul Thorpe)**

Paul said that while the men's section was 'finding its level' somewhat at the moment we should not be disheartened by that. All other sections of the club were thriving and performing better than they've ever done before. And more than that just short term success, each section's desire to retain players, or develop new coaches, or come up with new ideas was an indication of moving in the right direction.

We are still the only rugby club to offer a Duke of Edinburgh section, thanks to the hard work that gets put in, which is a big differentiator for us.

He also thanked Greg Wilson for eleven years of service as Treasurer.

### **INTERVAL**



### Election of Officers

Mark Greenhalgh proposed that as none of the roles were being contested he would simply read out the names of the nominees and if there were no objections they would be elected. He also noted that he was satisfied that each candidate had been nominated appropriately.

| Position                          | Nomination      | Proposer        | Seconder         |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| President                         | Andy Brunt      | Paul Thorpe     | Mark Greenhalgh  |
| Chairman                          | Paul Thorpe     | Mark Greenhalgh | Andy Brunt       |
| Secretary                         | Mark Greenhalgh | Paul Thorpe     | Ted Nicholls     |
| Treasurer                         | Mike Bateman    | Greg Wilson     | Andy Brunt       |
| Senior Fixture Sec.               | Don Edmondson   | Andy Brunt      | Mark Greenhalgh  |
| Junior Chairman                   | Paul Fleming    | Mark Greenhalgh | Paul Thorpe      |
| Duke of Edinburgh Chairman        | Mark Baines     | Marianne Coop   | Hilary Berry     |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> XV Captain        | Nick Spooner    | Glen Cahill     | Mark Greenhalgh  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> XV Vice (co)      | Freddie Oakey   | Nick Spooner    | Mark Greenhalgh  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> XV Vice (co)      | Tom Waring      | Glen Cahill     | Nick Spooner     |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> XV Captain        | Alun Davies     | Nick Spooner    | Freddie Oakey    |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> XV Vice           | Alex Binnington | Alun Davies     | Freddie Oakey    |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> XV Manager        | Andrew Maddocks | Alun Davies     | Freddie Oakey    |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> XV Captain        | -               |                 |                  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> XV Vice           | -               |                 |                  |
| Ladies 1 <sup>st</sup> XV Captain | Igemi Ekoku     | Katie Houghton  | Rowanne Smalley  |
| Ladies 1 <sup>st</sup> XV Vice    | Rowanne Smalley | Igemi Ekoku     | Shelley Maddocks |
| Ladies 2 <sup>nd</sup> XV Captain | Sophie Clements | Igemi Ekoku     | Rowanne Smalley  |
| Ladies 2 <sup>nd</sup> XV Vice    | Katya Georgieva | Sophie Clements | Igemi Ekoku      |

The 3<sup>rd</sup> XV Captain and Vice positions were deferred to election by the Rugby Committee at a later date.



Due to an administrative oversight the General Committee Members were not covered by the elections on the night. They will be recorded here and ratified by the committee in their next meeting.

| Position                 | Nomination     | Proposer        | Seconder        |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| General Committee Member | Ray Cook       | Paul Thorpe     | Mark Greenhalgh |
| General Committee Member | Ted Nicholls   | Mark Greenhalgh | Andy Brunt      |
| General Committee Member | Shelley Powe   | Paul Thorpe     | Ted Nicholls    |
| General Committee Member | Katie Houghton | Mark Greenhalgh | Andy Brunt      |
| General Committee Member | Hilary Berry   | Andy Brunt      | Mark Greenhalgh |

**A.O.B.**

Beer Festival, Martin Parkinson – Martin announced that the Beer Festival would be back this year, from 4-6<sup>th</sup> August. However he will be looking for additional volunteers to help organise things. He offered thanks to those that have come forward already.

EasyFundraising, Mark Dutton – Mark reminded everyone what a good source of income it was for the club, and asked that everyone try to remember it when making an online purchase, and spread the word to others. He also thanked the Duke of Edinburgh committee for all the work they continue to do.

International Tickets, Mike Bateman – Mike asked if we were going to make an announcement regarding the new international ticket policy. Mark Greenhalgh said it wasn't a new policy, just a written statement of what should have been followed all along. As such it didn't require a big announcement. Any questions can be directed to him.

**Closing Comments from the Club President (Andy Brunt)**

Andy thanked Marie Wilson for her continued service, going above and beyond what she is contractually obliged to do.

With no further business to discuss, Paul Thorpe closed the meeting at 21:46.