

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
CHESHAM RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB
Monday May 19th, 2025**

PRESENT: Nick Jones, Elis Brown, John Moore, Sarah Hammond, Stephen Moore, Simon Harris, Paul Berg, Nicki Henson, Claire Moore, Tim Asquith, Cathy Edmunds, Sam Roburn, Daniel Rose, Dick King, Niall Wishart, Nick Brown, Emma Lynch, Jane Morris, Lou Collins, Richard Collins, Cliff Davies, Moray Hogg, Lee Russell, Michael Bouchier, Ryan Guinea, Debbie Guinea, Kate Smith, Suzanne Gorham.

Meeting started 20:05 pm

1. 2024 Minutes

To accept the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday 13th May, 2024 having been posted to the CRUFC website and available at the meeting as a true and accurate record. Unanimously accepted by all those present.

2. To receive and approve a report from the Committee on the affairs of the Club

A report was presented by Club Chair, Karl Cross, on the affairs of the club. A written copy of the report is attached.

3. To receive the Treasurer's report [Rule 33.2.1]b

Club Treasurer, Nick Brown, presented an overview of the Clubs finances for the past year. A copy of his presentation and report is attached.

Club President, Cliff Davies, presented an overview of the Deer Friends contribution to the Clubs finances. A copy is attached.

4. To announce the election (as appropriate) of the Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, President, and the Elected Directors to be appointed in accordance with the clubs Articles [Rule 33.2.4]

There were no proposals for the position of Club Chair and therefore this post remains vacant. The remaining incumbents were re-elected as follows:-

President – Cliff Davies
Chair – Karl Cross
Mini and Junior
Chair – Sarah Hammond
Treasurer – Nick Brown
Secretary – Moray Hogg

5. To approve the annual subscriptions for the year 2022/2023

No changes to the existing Rugby member subscriptions across all sections of the club. Our focus will be to increase our collection rate.

The motion was accepted unanimously by the members present.

6. To transact such other business as may be brought before it (including without limitation the appointment of Life Members (in recognition of outstanding contribution or long service to the Club) [Rule 33.2.5]

None

7. To vote on any proposals for additions or alterations to the rules or for any motion which had been submitted in writing to the Secretary in writing 14 days before the AGM.

A submission was received by Member – Jane Morris. In conversation with Jane it was mutually agreed that these were not voting matters and would instead be discussed in section 8.

8. To hear other matters for consideration by the committee, but on which no voting will be allowed:-

The following points were raised by Jane Morris and were responded to by members of the committee as detailed below.

1. As a Club should we be discounting primary school's boys from receiving rugby sessions delivered by Chesham coaches at their school? *MH replied of course not! We want to provide coaching for as many as possible irrespective of gender. This related to a specific funding that was specifically targeted to the recruitment of Girls into the sport. We are keen to have as many sessions for local schools as possible but we need a common structure and policy for coaching. This needs to be done as a club not individuals. A coaching co-ordinator has been hired*
2. Should the Club be blocking coaches who proactively want to approach schools to offer rugby development in their own time? *MH We need a co-ordinated plan as previously covered.*
3. Should the Club have someone coordinating this activity to ensure everyone is aware of which schools need assistance and to ensure we aren't bombarding schools with unwanted requests? *We have appointed a Club coaching co-ordinator to develop a plan. Chair will be chasing the coaching plan.*
4. Whether parents should be part of the decision process for a player playing

up/down. If relevant coaches agree to the move/trial, based on their experience of observing a player, then this should have a deciding vote over the M&J Chair who is often not a rugby player or coach. Any disagreement should be explained to the parents by the Committee. *MH- We are bound by regulation 15 of the RFU. It will include the parents, coaches and M&J team. We encourage people to talk to us if they disagree. We could have been better at communicating but we are very open to discuss any decisions we make.*

5. Whether there should be any difference between the processes for the boys and the girls. *MH - Lou Collins was thanked for her preparation of the On field policy document and it was noted that it shows a slight difference between play up and down decision for boys and girls. Age grouping in girls rugby means a different process. The On-field policy is a living document that will be refined over time.*
6. Whether additional sessions (such as fitness) should be offered by coaches who are willing to give their time for the betterment of the team and the Club. *MH – We only have so much space and we have to be fair in its allocation. Coaching Co-ordinator will look to develop a plan for the whole club. We also need to be mindful of pitch wear and tear and prevalent weather which has a factor on where we can train.*
7. Whether the opinions of the parents should be taken into consideration when determining the league and plate/cup entries. Should the M&J Committee not agree with what has been agreed at an age group level then the Committee would need to arrange a parent evening to explain the rationale. *We welcome an open conversation, but this is a club decision in consultation with club coaches. Available space is also a consideration.*
8. Should the Committee pass disciplinary hearings which involve or are against a committee member to the Bucks RFU disciplinary secretary. *We are reviewing our complaint process with the intention of moving to a representative panel comprising members from all sections of the club. We hope we never have to convene it. Club Chair is looking into this but Bucks and National RFU are involved as required in all cases for guidance and oversight.*
9. Should the paperwork from each of these cases be passed to the Bucks RFU disciplinary secretary to see if they have been undertaken in fair and proportionate manner? *That is for Bucks RFU to decide but these are confidential matters and it would require the permission of all involved.*

AOB

Who are committee members and how are they elected? – *The key officers are elected at AGM. Further members can be appointed. All applications are welcome.*

What is the Clubs 3yr plan - *A 5yr plan is being prepared by Club chair*

Will we be celebrating 35 yrs of Womens rugby – *Yes, a 35 year anniversary of*

Women's rugby at Chesham will be celebrated this year and all ideas and volunteers are welcome to ensure success.

Will the Club Coaching Co-ordinator work with lower age groups – Yes, Plan will include Bugby to Adult rugby.

Various conversations around fundraising and sponsorship which were welcomed.

Meeting closed 21:59

Chair Report – 2025 AGM

Over the past week as I prepared to write my first annual report as the Club chair, I have read through previous AGM reports. The common themes in recent years are about the many challenges that the club has faced but how we have had the ability to bounce back and move forward, showing amazing resilience every year. The underpinning message has always been about the need for ongoing development, to do this however, it's imperative we find more volunteers across all sections in order to survive and progress. The need for more help from the players and parents is essential as our current volunteers are often juggling more than one role, tasked with an increasing number of hoops to jump through.

This is quoted from Claire Moore's speech on **Monday December 4th, 2023 in her outgoing AGM message**

They are still relevant to many of the issues we need to focus on.

To begin with the committee would like to thank all of the volunteers that have dedicated their time to our club this season. Making sure that rugby is available to as many people as possible is no easy task. We are proud of everyone who has taken part. I would like to make special mention of Moray Hogg, Nick Brown and Dick King all of whom have been incredibly supportive their experience of our rugby club going back in Moray and Dicks case back to its inception has been vital in keeping us functioning over a challenging period. Sam Roburn has stepped down as our data officer and the committee would like to thank her for all her efforts over the years.

Since the last AGM, the club committees, in addition to the numerous everyday activities, have focused on the following additional projects.

- Committee members have been actively looking for options to ease the burden of space and availability for our minis and juniors sections. we hope that there may be some solutions in the future. This may involve some offsite training space locally. Although not ideal if we can share and rotate this space around our sections this could ease an issue that many members have raised over the years.
- Dick King has been fighting with the extremes of weather from the wettest January and February on record to the driest March and April. Renovations to the pitches are due to take place in September. We are looking to try and hold more social events at the rugby club and looking for good ideas for how to do that. The café on Sundays has run well so thanks to all those involved.
- The club has Secured some funding for the girl's legacy project based around the Women's rugby world cup this year. Sarah Hammond has led this, and we are incredibly grateful for her pursuit of this funding. This will help us in our aim to celebrate the 35th year of women's Rugby at Chesham and focus on growing numbers in the young girls coming into rugby. We are the oldest women's team in bucks and older than all but 2 of the Current premiership teams. For a small community club, we should be rightly proud of the forward-thinking membership that encouraged this long before many established teams ever came on board.

Club work party day will be announced soon to get us in shape for the new season.

Minis & Juniors

There are over 210 minis and juniors registered on GMS for Chesham. we have run teams in 18 age groups across the Minis & Juniors Section.

Of the registered players over 25% are females' players in the M&J

Our Minis have enjoyed attending and playing in several tournaments and have benefited from both joint training and tournaments with local clubs. Thanks to Ross Beech for his tireless efforts in arranging these opportunities.

The Junior boys' teams have played in the Bucks leagues, and we have fielded teams at U13&14, with boys playing down into this age group,

U15s and U16s. The U16 boys had a run of success in the Bucks plate, winning the final at high Wycombe in a game which was testament to their determination, hard work and grit. They were also awarded the team of the year at the recent Cygnet awards in Chesham.

Colts have also recruited some new players at U17 from Chiltern Hills Academy.

Our Colts have continued to cluster with Drifters players and in a recent game where they also clustered with Camelot they showed the true 'Bucks friendliest club' spirit in welcoming those players and their parents and putting on an entertaining and strong game of rugby against a well drilled Beaconsfield team.

We had a great achievement of our players making up the front row for under 17s county where we had representation of 4 players 2 of whom only started playing in September.

We have a thriving Girls section, that has grown in number this season with many girls joining from Chiltern hills academy. Our girls have clustered at U14 and U16 with their counterparts from MK and played in the Bucks Invitational League – they have had growing numbers throughout the season and squad numbers for next season look positive.

Our U18s who this season have played with a number of different clubs in Herts, next season will play with Aylesbury to join their squad and ensure numbers for league fixtures.

We had County representation – 5 - U16G, 1 - U18G

Ayla Watkins was also an award winner at the Cygnet awards this year winning the dedication to sport award for her work giving up her time coaching at Chesham Grammer School.

The M&J Awards Day saw many of our M&J represented in the school hall and each age group Players and Most Improved Players winning awards.

This season an impressive 101 players attended tour in Great Yarmouth, with over 300 from Stags travelling to the seaside for the weekend.

This is a great achievement and very much a focal point and enjoyment for many players and parents alike. The Club thanks Tori Duncan-Anderson for her work with this.

In October Simon Heath had to take a step away from his role as Chair of the M&J, he left the reigns in the hands of the more than capable Lou and Sarah, who worked together on initially keeping the M&J and Sunday mornings ticking over on the lead up to Christmas.

Simon resigned in February, and the exec asked both Lou and Sarah to stay on until the end of the season.

The committee would like to thank Paul Berg for his dedication to the role of Coaching co-ordinator. Paul advised Lou and Sarah in February time that he would not be in a position to undertake the role next season.

The committee would like to thank Dan Rose for his work over the seasons as our safeguarding officer.

Next season – we welcome our new club coaching coordinator Chris Dodd who will be a great resource for all club members. From a personal perspective coaching has always been my true passion, Our coaches are a key part of our offering and often the first-person new members encounter. Being able to support them and help them develop is something I am passionate about and something I feel Chris's role will really support us with.

The committee would like to extend a big thank you to Lou and Sarah who took up the reigns of the M&J committee during a turbulent season and wish Lou all the very best as she moves North.

Sarah will be continuing in the role as mini and junior chair next season, and we are looking to expand our m&j committee to take on board the thoughts and views of more sections of our age grade community.

It is my intention to set up a youth panel for our rugby club. Having engaged a few of our under 18s and under 16s across both boys and girls in the last few months I have been struck by their maturity, insightfulness and commitment. I would like to give them a platform to communicate directly with us in the coming season and include in that players who have recently stepped up into senior rugby to offer advice and support for those players moving through the club age groups and into senior rugby.

Senior rugby

Chesham Women: Season Review

The 2024/25 season was one of resilience, determination, and battling through adversity for Chesham women. While the squad set out with high hopes following a strong preseason and an encouraging friendly, unforeseen challenges quickly reshaped the journey. A cancelled opening fixture and the sudden withdrawal of an opponent left the team without competitive rugby for an extended period, disrupting the momentum built early on.

When the season finally kicked into gear, Eaton Manor proved to be a formidable challenge. Their youthful squad and Chesham's game rust made for a tough outing, with the result showing just how much impact that period without matches had. A particularly painful reversal came against a team previously beaten 55-5, illustrating how injuries and availability issues took their toll.

The squad was plagued by injuries throughout the season, with several sidelined for the duration. This forced continual reshuffling, making consistency elusive. Every game felt like a battle not just against the opposition, but against the wear and tear on the squad itself. Despite this, the team showed remarkable resilience, adapting and fighting through adversity week after week.

Despite the setbacks, there were bright spots: the recruitment of six new players over the course of the season was a testament to the club's enduring appeal and long-term vision. Through it all, the commitment and perseverance of the squad never wavered. Now, with players set to return and Chesham preparing to take on NC2 next season, there is a strong sense of optimism for 2025/26. A transition period lies ahead, but the foundations are set for growth, squad development, and a fresh start.

The lessons from this season—grit, perseverance, and unity—will undoubtedly serve as a springboard for the future.

Chesham Men's Senior Rugby.

The committee would like to thank Greg Birbeck who is stepping down from his role as head coach this year. He has been a driving force in bringing back the enjoyment to our teams. Returning us to the ethos that makes our club so unique. Supported by the Chesham stalwart Nick Jones and Mark Holdsorth. We would like to thank them for their support.

One of the significant challenges we encountered was player numbers, particularly the need for additional first team regular players. This would greatly benefit the club and help distinguish between the first and second teams more effectively. Currently, many players are stepping up to play first team rugby as a favour, despite probably having a desire to play more social rugby. This situation affects our training and

performance, as it's difficult to plan effective sessions without knowing the exact number of attendees. Moreover, some players who attend training may not play on the weekend, adding to the complexity.

We have a considerable group of second team players who could contribute more regularly if they were not expected to play first team rugby. However, we lack the numbers to sustain a full regular season for the second team, leading to player attrition as they retire from the game due to infrequent opportunities to play. Away games posed a distinct challenge this season, with some players only available for home games and the inexperience of others increasing the risk of injuries and dissatisfaction. It might be helpful to consider coach trips for more away games to generate interest and support, focusing on matches where we have a good chance of winning and creating a more engaging atmosphere.

Preseason numbers were lower than desired, with many attendees being university students or second team players, while first team players were inconsistent. Although the long season necessitates breaks, it's challenging to start the season strong without committed preseason participation. Despite these hurdles, we fostered a positive attitude both on and off the field, creating a social and enjoyable environment.

Emphasizing our unique brand of blue-collar rugby and enhancing game-day experiences, such as BBQs and pitch-side alcohol, could attract more supporters. Adjusting training schedules, such as reducing to one night a week during winter, proved beneficial.

Ultimately, increasing player numbers is crucial to addressing various challenges. Enhancing recruitment efforts, not just through social media but also by engaging with the local community at events, can help attract new players.

The club is in a great spot, and despite the challenges, We ended the season in a better place than we started. Our focus should be on creating a fun and enjoyable rugby experience, encouraging players to bring their friends and fostering a positive atmosphere.

Nick Jones will become our head coach for the next season. I look forward to him bringing his unique style to our senior men's teams.

Summary

Chesham Rugby Club has been a part of my life for a quarter of a century now. I came here at a time in my life where I wasn't sure what I was doing or where I was going, and I found a group of people who welcomed me in with open arms. Serving as Chair is a significant responsibility I do not take lightly, and I am grateful for the foundation established by my predecessors.

When I took on this role I was aware there were challenges, I was aware that in our current state we could function but to move forward we needed a clear vision and direction. We are working currently on a development plan and over the summer I

am hoping to share these ideas with you and most importantly listen to the members. I promise that we will be as open and transparent as it is possible to be moving forward and that we are working on how we communicate with our members and how we bring more views from more parts of our rugby club into our decision-making process. This openness and transparency is a two-way process, we need to know what is going on in our teams and in our club so that we can be best prepared to support you our membership.

We have not got everything right, and I am certain that we will not always get everything right, but as an executive body representing our rugby club we are accountable for the safety and wellbeing of all our members and that is always at the heart of what we try to do for the whole club.

We have learnt a number of lessons over this year and we are reviewing those with a view on how to move forward

Let's move our rugby club forward, leaving the past behind. Many teams, but one club. We need to develop our club for all players, members, and volunteers, I hope you can help me shape its future during my time in this role, however long or short that may be.

Karl Cross
Club Chair
19th May 2025



Chesham Rugby Union Football Club



Treasurer's Report – Nick Brown

2024-25 Annual General Meeting



2023-24 Challenges and Highlights

(Income & Expenditure for y/e April 30, 2024)

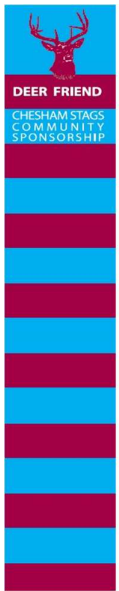
Challenges:

- Relocation of several senior fixtures led to additional costs and a loss of bar income
- Temporary loss of some revenue in switch from Pitchero to GMS
- Higher utilities and some major bar expenditure
- Issues with WorldPay temporarily limited our ability to take card receipts

Highlights:

- Funding from FA for pitch maintenance
- Deer Friends continues to provide the major source of income for the club, funding our clubhouse costs and some debt repayment

£000s	2024	2023
Membership subscriptions	32.7	33.4
Bar income	22.7	36.5
Other income	5.8	13.0
Donations and grants	44.5	36.7
Total income	105.7	119.6
Bar costs	30.4	27.8
Playing costs	44.5	49.7
Utilities	9.2	8.0
Other clubhouse costs	9.1	23.0
Other Expenditure	7.1	12.4
Total Expenditure	100.2	121.0
Operating Surplus	5.5	(1.4)



Current Situation

(Balance Sheet at April 30, 2024)

The club remains in good financial health, but there are significant areas for improvement

- Long-term debt of £312k outstanding from the clubhouse build
- Monthly and quarterly repayments being met, reducing debt £28k each year
- 2024 bond repayment deferred to current year
- Cash balance of £16.7k, down from £29k at April 2023

£000s	2024	2023
Fixed Assets	1,024.0	1,029.5
Cash and other current assets	23.3	33.1
Current liabilities	41.7	30.2
Long-term creditors	349.9	381.6
Total Net Assets	655.7	650.9



The future

- The club has taken some proactive steps to improve our financial resilience including:
 - Changes to the senior men's coaching structure
 - Proposal for a modest increase in M&J subs
 - A significant push, led by Tim Asquith and supported by the Men's and Women's sections to improve our senior membership subscriptions
- Over the summer, we shall be carrying out a full financial review to update our long-term financial framework and to improve the focus on our commercial activities across all sections of the club
- We are also exploring ways to expand the reach of our successful Deer Friends fundraising scheme



Chesham Rugby Union Football Club



Deer Friends Report – Cliff Davies, President
2024-25 Annual General Meeting

Deer Friends Report

Deer Friends began in Sept 2013 and is now in its 12th year
We have two types of Deer Friends

Corporate Deer Friends

Businesses who kindly pay a minimum of £20 per month
Some pay more and others prefer to pay occasional lump sums
Their logos can be seen on our website, clubhouse and in the weekly Deer Friend emails.

Businesses quite often say that they're Deer Friends because they want to be seen supporting their community rugby club and proudly display our scarf in their shops and offices.

Individual Deer Friends

They pay a minimum of £5 per month, some pay £10, a few pay £25 and one pays £30!

Every £5 earns a place in our monthly Prize Draw

20% of the individual payments received each month is the prize fund.

Last month's winner received £370

All Deer Friends get to own an exclusive 100% acrylic scarf and they soon start to meet lots of famous people.

Since the last AGM - Bradley Wiggins, Kevin Keegan, Paul Merson, Rob Becket, Tony Hadley, Rishi Sunak plus Jason and Ness from Gavin & Stacey are just some of the celebrities who have asked for a photo of themselves wearing a Deer Friend scarf

Incomings from the last AGM in May 2024 – April 2025

Corporate Deer Friends - £13,014

Individual Deer Friends- £23,164

Total income £36,178

Outgoings

Prize money £4073

This should have been £374 more but one winner donated his winnings back to us, we then claimed Gift Aid so the total paid back was £467

Mailchimp subscription for the weekly Deer Friend email: £240

100 new scarves = £568.80

Total Outgoings £4881.80

Profit since last May = £31,296.20

Total profit since 2013 is just over £300k

The vast majority of Deer Friends are from our senior section along with their families and friends.

When many of these started paying it was to help with our general running costs,

the monthly revenue kept increasing and after a few years, thanks to their continuous generosity, the building of a new clubhouse became a viable proposition.

Deer Friends was just one of the many ways we raised the necessary funds.

It was quite an easy sell in those days as everyone wanted to see this new clubhouse built – despite the love they had for the bar in our old garden shed

Many of the original Deer Friends continue to pay even though some are no longer involved with Stags, they still want to support us financially

With the ever-increasing running costs we incur at Chesham Stags the challenge over the next 12 months is to find even more Deer Friends who'll volunteer their financial support towards the funding of our Future Building

One of the potential growth areas is our Mini & Junior section where members might be unaware of how much the Deer Friend scheme has become the financial lifeblood of our Club

I have no idea how many parents own or work for businesses that, from a minimum of £20 per month, may want to become one of our Corporate Deer Friends.

Or, how many parents, grandparents plus their family and friends would like a chance to support us financially by paying £5 per month, they could win our prize fund and don't forget every £5 payment wins a place in the monthly draw.

With this in mind, I'm looking for some extra "Deer Friendship Makers" to help me find the next generation of Deer Friends

If you'd like to help please let me know after this meeting has finished

Finally, I'd like to say two very big thank yous

Firstly, Tim Asquith who kindly reconciles the Deer Friend bank account each month, with over 300 payments it's no easy task to keep track of everything

Secondly, all our Deer Fiends, if it wasn't for their generosity over so many years there would be no Future Building

Document ends

Moray Hogg, Secretary, Chesham Rugby Club