



Guy's King's College & St Thomas' Hospitals

Rugby Football Club - Est. 1843

Meeting of the Committee, Guys Hospital Rheumatology Department. Tuesday 20th May 2008, 6pm.

Presiding: Dr T Gibson

Present: Johnny Elias, Marcus Pemberton, Oliver Howlett, Frazer Barnes, Charlie West, Anthony O'Rourke, Thomas Goddard, Harry Gasper, Mike Forsythe, John Kendall, Lucas Rehnberg.

1) Apologies for Absence

Rhys Davies, Oliver Laird, Rauri Haddlington, Geoff Koffman, Pat Gush.

2) Last Meeting's Minutes

The last meetings minutes were presented and all agreed that the accuracy of the document was only paralleled in its volume by the lateness of its delivery.

3) Ball Report 2008

The Ball Secretary presented a sombre and unwelcome report regarding losses attained by the club following the recent summer ball. Losses made from ticket sales were exacerbated by the shocking revelation that a theft of property occurred during the ball and from the Ball Secretaries wallet, a sum of money in Cheques and Cash were stolen, making the losses from the ball much larger. Fortunately the extent of the losses was prevented from spiralling beyond this because of the well mannered behaviour during the ball leading to the bill for damages being the small sum of £13-of particular note in this bill is the damage to a plate incurred by the actions of a particularly rowdy ball attendee, but the culprit, one Dr T Gibson has refused to comment.

On the very serious topic of the ball losses it was noted that the thefts of cheques are of no use to the miscreant who took them and cannot be cashed, therefore the committee as a whole were asked to encourage those who had their cheques stolen to provide a new cheque. A list of those people will be provided by the outgoing Ball Secretary Marcus Pemberton. However it can only be hoped that at the most half of the amount which was stolen can be reclaimed as the amount of money in cash can only be estimated. Sadly the theft is not covered by personal or property insurance.

As a result of the losses a gift from the supporters club towards the Barbados tour can now no longer be made. Dr T Gibson made it clear that the supporters club would bail out the club on this occasion; however this has to be the last time such a thing happens as the supporters club in unable to take such hits as this. Lessons to be learnt from the future are that

the ball must be a profitable event from the start and that the organisation of money must be watertight.

Members of the committee raised the idea of fundraising as a possible way to regain some of the funds lost in this ball. It was agreed that we should look into this and the Social Secretary should consider opportunities for fundraising to occur. It was also agreed by those on the committee that the subscriptions could be raised next year and that, in line with inflation, the “stash” sold by the club could be sold at a higher price. The Treasurer shall be left in charge of setting the price of subs and the “stash.” It was also pointed out that those leaving the club this year should be gently nudged towards the supporters club as the funds available from the supporters club are dependent on keeping a healthy subscription from past players.

4) Ball Ideas 2009

Both the incoming Ball Secretary and his mini-me from the student body were unavailable for the meeting, however it was reported that Pat Gush has already set about designing a grand return to old ideas for next years ball. In a retrospective speech Dr Gibson told a tale of a happier time, when the ball was held in a hotel, and bringing a date to the ball was advisable, nay inexcusable. All agreed that a return to this style of ball would be welcome and furthermore if the hoped numbers of 200 could be attained then that would make for an excellent occasion.

It was pointed out that the medsoc and smec committees had managed to put on a ball in a good hotel for a sum half of just £30, however this was attributed to the pots of gold that are received by those committees. However it was worth bearing in mind.

The important decision as to the date was made and the current format of having the ball after the Scanlan cup game was kept making the date for next years ball April 25th 2009. Of note is the date for the London Marathon-26th April 2009, which may present difficulties for arranging the ball and for those among the club with long distance aspirations-any non attendance to the ball for this reason would of course be regarded as weakness.

The ball appears to be in safe hands and we look forward to hearing ideas at the next meeting.

5) Treasurers Report

As proof that it is never too late to pay your subs, a late payment was received by the treasurer for subs this year. In terms of the accounts, there was surprisingly no reported change on two weeks ago at the AGM.

Our sponsor, Cavendish Medical, has failed to pay the second part of the invoice for the kit. Dr Gibson has paid the invoice for the moment however Lucas Rehnberg has been charged with the task of confirming Cavendish as a real company, and confirming that they will pay the amount owed.

6) UH Cup 2009

- The dates for the UH Cup 2009 are as follows:

1st XV and 2nd XV Semi-Final: 25th February 2009

2nd XV and 3rd XV Final: 5th March 2009

1st XV Final: 8th March 2009*
(subject to conformation by London Welsh RFC)

- The inclusion of RVC does not alter the format of the competition.

- UH sevens will take place on Sunday October 12th 2008.
- That's it.

7) Fixture Cards

The importance of having the cards ready was highlighted by Dr Gibson as the cards are supposed to be included in the start of season letter to the supporters club. It was asked if the cards could be glossed up a little as the current card is a little plain for such a large price. The committee looked over the card and paid tribute to the internationals of the club, particularly to the endeavours of Mr G Brigstocke in his marvellous ten year playing career for Wales in the early 20th century.

In light of our inability to fulfil fixtures this season, Club Captain Johnny Elias has taken the decision to withdraw from the EDF energy vase for 1 season, making it clear that we may re-enter the competition in forthcoming seasons of the clubs fortunes improve. Furthermore to this regarding the appeal, nothing has been heard and Captain Murse will endeavour to chase this up. Meanwhile it was agreed that a club presence at the Kent RFU AGM on June 11th would be advisable.

Conclusions drawn from the discussion were that the cards should be ready by September and an effort should be made to get more for our money.

8) Website Updates

The change of personnel this season will require a number of changes to the website. These are too numerous to mention in detail- Club Captain has elected himself in charge of sorting out the changes. Notable amongst the changes was the confirmation of the confinement of Puzzlenut to the waste basket of history, a link to the new UH website and a general updating of pictures, match reports and meetings minutes. On the subject of meetings it was advised by the elder of the club that it is better to organise a set of meetings throughout the year rather than trying to do it month by month. I have taken that on board with thanks.

9) Sponsorship of Shorts and Socks

Rumours of a sponsor for shorts and socks were confirmed to be true. Designs from Kukri were presented and it was agreed that we should stick to the stipulations of the constitution and have all navy blue shorts with a badge and have blue socks with two gold bands around the top.

The format of shorts and socks allocation, in light of the increases in subscriptions coupled with the effects of the credit crunch, has been decided to be the following: Upon payment of subscriptions club members will receive courtesy of our generous benefactors, a pair of shorts and socks.

Dr Koffman is already hot on the tails of the sponsor and we hope to instate this for the coming season.

10) ELV's

The new laws coming into effect for a trial next season were passed around. All agreed that they present an interesting new format to the game, and we hope they will encourage a more enterprising element to the game of rugby. A bravery award was mentioned to be given out to any soul brave enough to pull down a maul in a Kent game.

The ELV's will be published on the website and it was also considered wise to get the famous Men Donka down to a training session to take us through a practice match using the new rules.

It was noted that if we do gain promotion into the elite leagues of the game, there are a number of extra rules being trialled, however somewhat pessimistically; some members of the committee did not see this as posing a problem for at least a few years.

11) Referee's/Coaches Courses

A big factor in the great number of 3rd XV fixtures being cancelled is the provision of referees. Apparently our payment to the London Society is not large enough for us to merit a referee for a 3rd XV fixture and even if we did pay more, there aren't enough referee's anyway. Therefore the best solution is for the club to train some referees. There are course each year however the numbers aren't always great and therefore many are cancelled. The club must encourage those who show interest in refereeing to take up this vocation and Johnny Elias has promised to investigate when courses available.

12) Player Selection Process.

We should attempt to put into process a captain's meeting after each Monday training session in order to make selection integrated within teams and enable players an equal opportunity to break into higher teams and upon relegation into a lower team to enjoy and understand the experience. It was pointed out that the website is an excellent resource for this, and that a notice board in HOP or the union could also be a useful resource for putting a team list on.

It was agreed that selection by text is inadvisable and should be avoided if possible and that we need to promote a culture of playing for the club in order to destroy the current culture of playing when you feel like it.

A note of caution was raised by T Gibson. Often such meetings can result in the 3rd XV and 4th XV being left with no players. Also the nature of university, especially medical courses, is that players are not always able to make training, but may be good enough for teams. Possible solutions were having a reserve pool of players who could be called upon if needed and to use an amount of digression in player selection.

It was agreed that an e-mail at the start of the week confirming fixtures for the coming week will be sent out to all members of the club in order to keep Rugby in people's minds lest they forget about fixtures.

The problem of away games was mentioned and it was asked if we would use the KCLSU minibus for transport to away games. Sadly this idea was slammed to the floor by Lucas, who provided the sad but vital revelation that the minibus seats ten people.

13) Recruitment 2008

It was the unanimous opinion of the committee that following the disastrous season which precedes us, a fresh start should be implemented this year. In particular Freshers trials 2008 should be a proper organised training session, with all members of the club attending and wearing proper attire. It was also brought to attention the intentions of KCLSU to have one big freshers fair. It was agreed that we need to get in early with postering of halls, flyering and speaking in lectures.

It was agreed that Harry would speak to KCLSU and the powers that be regarding the inclusion of a letter of flyer in the freshers welcome pack.

It was also agreed that an early social after a Saturday game may be a good event to bring together the club from an early stage. It was agreed that the first whole club Saturday fixture would be followed by a BBQ and Lash at HOP, regardless of which teams were at home. A tour is also in the pipeline for October or November coinciding with the Autumn Internationals. Social events can be included in the fixture card, if we get something sorted before July/early August.

14) Any Other Business

Thursday Training:

Thursday training too many of us has consisted in the last year of mental recovery from matches. Sadly this cannot continue. It was agreed that from next year a fitness session should occur on Thursdays. We should look into the Tabard Astro or Burgess Park as possible venues; furthermore the Tower Run should feature. Captains should be responsible for encouraging players to attend this.

Barbados Tour:

Have we asked permission from Kent RFU to go on tour? It is believed the answer to this will be negative, therefore we were asked to raise this with Rhys Davies STAT. It would not be a good idea to give Kent any more reason to hate us!

Insurance:

Our insurance policy for Saturday leagues requires players to be registered. It was pointed out that last year no new players were registered. Therefore from next season Johnny Elias has been charged with the task of sorting this out.

Coach:

Johnny has spoken to Steve Beckett, head coach of GHRFC. It was made clear that we are pushing him close with our "taking the *****" this season and whilst he will be our coach next season, attitudes must improve in the coming season. Promotion is the key and sole aim for next season.

15) Date for Next Meeting

A set of dates for meetings throughout the year will be agreed and published shortly. Until then watch this space.

Dr Gibson ended the meeting encouraged by our plans for next season. He retires from the post of President, after his second term in the position, in order to concentrate on playing. We wish him well in the future and acknowledge the considerable contribution to Guys Hospital Rugby Club made by Dr Gibson. Thank you very much. We look forward to many good times ahead under the stewardship of Dr G Koffman.