

Treasurer Report

Devizes RFC Ltd & Devizes RFC Facility Ltd

My report will review the current position of the rugby club (Devizes RFC Ltd) as well as Devizes RFC Facility Ltd (a subsidiary of the Devizes RFC Ltd). I'll touch on some of the financial aspects of the club Devizes RFC Ltd (DRFC Ltd) and Devizes RFC Facility Ltd (DRFC Facility Ltd), however I will concentrate on the challenges during the last financial year and areas of focus for the year ahead.

The accounts are on the website as well as being provided at the AGM itself. Devizes RFC Ltd (DRFC Ltd) is the parent company of Devizes RFC Facility Ltd (DRFC Facility Ltd) DRFC Ltd has the only share in the company. Both companies share the same year end (30th April).

There have been many challenges for the club to overcome since 2020, I'd like to recognise the fact that many members understand those challenges however, it's important to restate where we are to ensure all understand that DRFC Ltd can't exist without the support of its members and our sponsors.

One of the primary purposes of the AGM is to give the Management Committee the opportunity to seek support for their actions and to set the direction of the future. We endeavour to ensure we create a wider understanding of how a constantly evolving situation can change the requirements of what is needed to operate a club successfully.

Without going over old ground we didn't look to take over the 'Sports Club'. The reality is we were the only rider in a "one horse race" as no one else wanted or needed the building to operate and couldn't afford the costs associated with it. And that must always be remembered as there was "no smash and grab". The failure of the Sports Club was evidenced with unfilled committee roles, no investment in the building (no sinking fund) and lack of use of the building by all constituent clubs.

The Rugby Club through DRFC Facility Ltd has agreed to take on a lease of the building, this was agreed amicably with all. In fact, the first principle, that all clubs acknowledged was the benefit of a single club taking the responsibility for the running of the building.

We have operated the Facility since Sept 22. The period 1/5/2023 to 30/4/2024 sees our first full year in charge.

Devizes RFC Ltd

The rugby club has had a challenging year on the pitch with the Men's 1st XV dropping back into Level 7, the Men's 2nd XV maintained their Level 8 status having produced some encouraging performances and our Ladies win the senior rugby bragging rights by coming 2nd in their league. The juniors report highlights their successes and challenges over the last 12mths.

Looking at the club and its income we have two key sources to ensure we can operate namely, Membership and Sponsorship. Without the income from these sources the club ceases to exist.

The club maintained its membership income in 2023-24 compared to the previous year. Although numbers are down by 40 overall. The cost of membership increased by providing benefits back to the

juniors and our team coaches/team management of circa £6,700. We have been looking for a club membership secretary for some time and this will be key to driving membership numbers this year.

We are in the process of a review of memberships and the benefits received. We haven't yet set memberships for 2024-25 however, will do in the next 4/6 wks.

Our Sponsors stuck with us we're delighted we maintained similar levels of income as 2022-23. Our sponsorship income is currently greater than our membership income we're acutely aware of the challenges that can create if relationships aren't maintained. We're incredibly indebted to all sponsors whether they be kit sponsors, 'sponsor a board or a player' or continue to be key supporters of the club in terms of their contribution to the club over many years (Renelec and Gaiger Bros).

I sincerely hope they all feel value in terms of the link with the club, as much as the club value being ambassadors for their company. We undoubtedly have work to do to improve the understanding within players/team management as to the importance of sponsorship and the part sponsors play in keeping the club going.

In terms of building relationships with sponsors, we have had a number who have attended VP Lunches which is great to see them round the club. We had a Ladies and 2nds combined VP's lunch with sponsors and although we have a few lessons to learn it was a good event. However, overall VP lunches were more modest affairs than in previous years. There are of course many reasons given for the drop in numbers particularly if you ask the alickadoo's.

We are working with sponsors and in-house to ensure we can provide benefits to membership whether as a player, VP, saddleback or as a parent of a junior member. We developed a great partnership with Snap Fitness which allowed our senior squads to train at a quality gym with discounted membership. With the club running the Facility we were able to balance the need for income at the bar with providing benefits to members and we took the decision to provide a 10% discount for members.

In terms of our focus, we continued to make improvements around 'Chivers Ground'. We completed renewing fencing around the pitch as well as levelling the pitch and moving the dugout to scoreboard side of the pitch. This has increased the space available for advertising hoardings around the pitch.

The accounts for DRFC Ltd 2023-24 show continued challenges with costs at £100k. Overall we now have sufficient security, to meet around a year's operating expenses, back in April 2020 we had around 2 months.

We continue to look for ways to develop and towards investing where we need to however, we are still acutely aware that costs will continue to be challenging and therefore need to be realistic about what is and isn't a priority.

Devizes RFC Facility Ltd

It is important to remember that we set up the Devizes RFC Facility Ltd to run the Facility. It was felt that if we'd run it through Devizes RFC Ltd there would be potential dangers. One benefit is that it means the rugby club does not need to register for vat and the additional costs that attracts to the club and members. It also means that a separate company is running the facility and that protects DRFC Ltd should it fail.

It's been a year of investing where we can as we have continued to improve what we provide and ensure we are more efficient. For example, we bought our last beer fridge to ensure we can offer 500ml bottles (pint) whether it be lager, IPA or cider to meet demand. The ability to offer a 'bottle bar' on less busy occasions has paid dividends in terms of reducing wastage and making it easier to run a 'volunteer' bar when needed. We've also spent on repairs to the driveway, another responsibility with taking on the lease and picked up some of the costs around the ground maintenance. By picking up more of the cost relating to maintaining the infrastructure around the building this has meant some reduced costs to DRFC Ltd.

Income from hire and wet sales has increased on last yr as expected. We have good usage from NHS Leg Club and Wilts Police over the last 12mths and others, however we'd like to see that increase this year particularly from other companies to spread our risk of those that hire.

One area for focus over the summer is to look at the solution for delivery of food at matches and for senior and junior match teas. With regulations it is getting more difficult to see how volunteers (even with appropriate level 2 certs) will help us delivery this.

We continue to invest when we can. This summer we'll review appliances in the kitchen over the summer to take a view on their longevity. We also have some other electrical maintenance to complete.

In terms of working on reducing costs we are in the process of looking for some financial support in relation to installing "batteries" so that we can benefit from the solar (floodlights/evenings). This would be a £20k+ investment for the club. Broadly the period to recover investment may be as short as 3yrs but more reasonably 5yrs (depending on energy costs). This would have a massive impact on our cost base and help our cashflow position.

We will continue with some projects over the summer on general maintenance.

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Overall we have started to see some benefits in terms of investing in the building and ensuring we are able to develop our 'home'. We have had some great support from sponsors again and there appears a desire to help from members. The challenge is getting that support to become action.

The club needs all those lapsed Members to rejoin, we need a strong playing set up to ensure players become members and we would like to see a growing junior section.

The reality however, is If everybody wants a great pitch to play on, a fantastic clubhouse and everything that goes with it in terms of the bar, 'big screen' the match teas and great kit etc, then more members need to be more active in terms of how they support the club.

So this year, we will be asking for help with some works, inside and outside the building. Steve Morgan will be sending out details to ask for support in the next week or two.

We have some major costs that are likely to impact on the clubs finances this year. The degree to which they will, depends on volunteers coming forward. We need help re pitch management as Julian has transferred his allegiances from 'Chivers Ground' to the Rec, Bath. I'm sure he'll keep a watching brief we need to understand that this is likely to be an additional cost. Julian has obtained an estimate so we're aware of the implications. A fully costed option will impact on all parts of the club.

So please come forward if you feel you can help out.