

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF CLUBHOUSE AND FACILITIES.

The AGM is a way of examining ourselves and look back at the year, to what has gone before and how successful or otherwise it has been.

One of the best achievements of the year for me was to agree to the employment of Vince Hayward as our Bar Manager. After a very short time it was obvious that Vince (or Vinnie) was the breath of fresh air the Club needed in this department. Soon after I was confident enough in his abilities to recommend a wider brief and that the position be elevated to House Manager. This meaning he would take on the responsibility for the whole clubhouse. The improvement in service, efficiency, helpfulness and enthusiasm in general are obvious and this coupled with an approachable style has led to a more settled environment and, importantly an increase in profits.

The installation of a new Fire Alarm system has led to some interesting comments and the occasional side bet as to whether it will self activate in the morning, afternoon or middle of the night. The Law of Sod usually meant the latter and I was less than impressed to receive a call from the Alarm company asking me to attend the Club at midnight one evening - especially as I was in a bar in Ibiza at the time....I'm happy to report that we now have a new organisation looking after our well being and this situation should improve considerably.

Water is something of a contentious issue at present now that it has been de-regulated by the Government with Companies fighting to supply us. An example of their desperation to please was shown just last quarter when our bill dropped from quite a lot to £13.....I'm sure it wasn't all down to our leaky toilet!

VP lunches continued to dominate the midday social scene. These occasions are, I believe unique to our club and always over booked. However, the days of preferential treatment for table bookings are now gone (apart from the President, Chairman.....and me.) and first come first served is very much the case and being 'squeezed in' will no longer apply. A combination of a sensible approach, experience from Vince and the professional abilities of Neil Morton, our Chef have ensured that the occasions continue to thrive and also raise an awful lot of money for the PAC and other worthy causes for which we are always grateful. Neil Morton is now working with the Club in his own right. He works extremely long hours and continues to produce food of the highest quality and in the way that all concerned prefer.

The 1st team home match meal deals attracted a lot of people and helped raise the numbers supporting the matches. I think I can safely say £10 for a lunch , glass of wine and entry to the match have got to be great value for money and will continue. Thanks to Jim Olsen, Peter Hancock and Barry Gray for their organisation, support and awareness of the needs for wine conservation and thrift in that regard....

At the other end of the social scale however, I was surprised at the lack of support for some of the musical gigs arranged by club members and Neil Tongre in particular. These musical extravaganzas, sometimes provided free of charge are again an excellent medium for an afternoons entertainment. I have to say though that I didn't need my hearing aid!

Quiz nights, meat draws and the bonus ball draw also continued unabated. Serial winners of each of these events have been noted and will doubtless be asked for yet another contribution to PAC if the trend continues.

Using my years of Golf Club Management experience to its best advantage, I agreed to take over responsibility for the main pitch. Saying "sorry No" had to become a regular event if the pitch was going to survive the season but my normal benevolence and need to help backfired when the County Colts were allowed to use the pitch one evening for over two hours when it was lashing with rain leaving the pitch somewhat worse for wear. However we survived and the closed season preparations are being closely monitored by me to ensure our contractors fulfil their side of the deal and earn the £12000 per year it costs us to keep the condition of the pitch up to an acceptable level. I will of course keep this going and although the first and second teams think I love watching them train on a Tuesday and Thursday evening, it's really to make sure they don't practice line-outs on the weaker areas - don't tread on the fresh white lines nor leave any footprints!

To that end I have to say that training and playing on the Main pitch is a privilege that has to be earned and I will continue to be strict about its usage.

Walking Rugby hit the headlines at the beginning of the year. I will take credit for starting it and everyone involved loves it. It is open to both men and ladies of a certain age (55+). We managed a National first in May when we hosted Bristol at the Beer Festival Rugby event. This was the first ever inter Club Walking Rugby tournament in the Country...and we won! They gave us a signed ball and that now resides over the bar. We continue to play every Tuesday at 5 Rivers after the council invited us to give it a go to promote the Club and WR to the community, and every Wednesday at the Club at 18.30. Not for this report but I have now played WR at Bristol, Reading, Twickenham and Berlin against German young players last weekend. Don't ask me for the result of the Berlin game because we were all thoroughly drunk....but I have it from a higher authority that the Germans won!

Finally, I believe the highlight of the year in house has to be the Beer Festival. The work involved to produce this event is quite amazing. Twice monthly meetings at 20.00 in the bar belies the theory that alcohol and committee meetings don't mix. Whoever said that had no idea who they were dealing with.....but after all the work involving all the setting up, committee members chasing sponsors and Steve Wright from Hopback organising the beers and ciders, the weekend realised an incredible £4,000 plus net profit of which 50% is likely to go towards PAC. The Colts vs Ex Colts match on the Sunday was played after a huge amount of work by Marcus Olsen. Thanks are due to the whole Committee but especially Pete Hancock, Jim Olsen and Steve Wright with the occasionally aside injected by Neil Tongre!!!

In finishing I have to thank my fellow Board members for their assistance and advice and also pay tribute to those who have held these positions before us who, having retired to the back benches can often be heard to say - "it wouldn't have happened in my day!!!!".

Pat Clash
Director Clubhouse and Facilities.