Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2026

Wednesday 21st May 2026 at 7.00pm, Priory Park Clubhouse.

1. Introduction & Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the members and declared the meeting quorate (**Appendix 1**)

Apologies for absence: **Appendix 1**

2. Remembrance of members deceased this year – Bob Cooke, Chairman MRUFC

A moment of reflection was held in remembrance of the following past members:-

Eileen Roddy
Peter Hall
Pete Mannion
Wayne Connolly
Rick Stockwell
Pete Harper

3. Approval of the Minutes of AGM held 28th May, 2025

The Minutes of last year's meeting were formally presented. Whilst the the Minutes were approved as an accurate and complete record of the meeting [**Proposed:** Clive Hammond, **Seconded:** Paul Jakubowski, **Vote:** Unanimous], a question was raised by A. Willson as to why the Minutes were not on the Club Website. The Secretary apologised for the unapproved Minutes from 2025 not being on the website when they should have been and indicated that going forward, a draft set of minutes would be placed on the website in good time for future AGM's.

Draft

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman, Mr Bob Cooke, presented his report for the season to the Members present (**Appendix II**). The Chairman made thanks to the playing squad, the coaches and specific thanks to Matt Coleridge (DoR) for an exciting and successful season finishing 3rd in National 2 North. RC reminded the members present that the Club was still unaware as to which National 2 league we would be playing in for 2026/7. The Club and the Directors have already made strong representations to the RFU, National Leagues and Cheshire to remain where we are as a northern Club.

Similarly, the Chairman congratulated the Women's Team on their very successful season and to the continued efforts of James Keep, for keeping the social rugby side playing.

The Chairman also informed the Members that the Executive had been very busy with aspects of governance of the Club and he was pleased to announce that we have a new Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO) and a new Deputy Safeguarding Officer.

The Chairman indicated that Project Priory was gathering pace with the detailed planning Application hopefully being submitted before the end of June.

5. Finance Report

The Financial Director, Mr. Simon Barriskell presented a financial update to the Members outlining the year-to-date as at the end of April 2025 (**Appendix III**). The Chairman reminded Members that the full financial report would be made at the Financial AGM held in September.

Simon indicated that while we now have better visibility and control of our finances, we were still subject to higher cost pressures across the board. While our overall revenue is up, notably from sponsorship, bar sales and events, membership and gate revenues are lower and unexpected costs as well have committed more funds than budgeted e.g. higher bar costs (wages and lower profit margins), higher utility costs and higher interest costs. He indicated that while we returned to profit last year, we may not achieve that this year.

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During questions, Pete Harper (via Clive Hammond) asked why the playing budget had been overspent and why? It was explained that year-on-year players rates had increased resulting in an overspend from when the budget was set. The Chairman reminded the meeting that in the 2024/25 season when we were in North 2 West, the players had agreed to take a cut in payments to help the overall playing budget. The other question that Mr. Harper had asked was about the 150th Anniversary events monies as it related to 'grow the grass' - how much had been raised, what was it being spent on and what was being consolidated for later 'pitch works'. SB indicated that approximately £18k had been raised and some of that sum was currently being spent [the main pitch had been fertilised and was about to be drilled and seeded (external contractor) and would be fertilised later in the year]. SB admitted that the 'float' from this sum had helped the current cash flow situation but it was recognised that such monies needed to be sacrosanct in 2026/7.

P. Jakubowski asked about the reported increased interest payments and SB indicated that the Club had taken an RFU loan when the Astroturf pitch had been relayed. The loan was for £85k over 10 years and the interest was rolled up for the first 2/3 years. When we started to pay the interest off (last year), we had to pay two lots of interest in the 2025/26 financial year. The loan has 6 years to run and interest cost will be lower across this time.

6. Chairman of Rugby's Report

The Chairman of Rugby, Mr Steve Burnage, indicated that the 'managers' of the various teams would reported on their teams performances throughout the 2025/26 season.

Their respective reports are given in **Appendices IV to VIII.**

It is worthy of noting that Harry Blackwell and Immanual Shute were included in the National League 2 North Team of the Season. Matt Coleridge paid tribute to Russ Tomlinson for the efforts that he had put in during the year across all levels of rugby.

MC recognised the challenges with the budget but indicated that we are losing Harry Oliver (who will be playing Championship rugby for Caldy next season) and the Club is conscious that Sedgley Park and several other Clubs are looking for (and approaching) new talent for the forthcoming season where they have been able to offer significant increases in appearance fees and, in some cases, jobs.

In the Women's XV, the team had an excellent season finishing as runners up in NC2 North building upon their success during the previous seasons NC3 North campaign. It is noted that seven players have been selected to train with the Cheshire Senior women's XV squad and Tanni Whalley has represented Jamaica at Rugby League.

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7. Mini & Youth Report

Nicky Griffin, Chair Mini & Youth presented her report and this is given in **Appendix IX.**

During the discussions following her report, NG was asked about RFU funding, especially for the girls being introduced to the game. Matt Coleridge indicated that there are are some funds but they are difficult to get hold of. In respect of introducing girls to the sport, NG indicated that we had now 'twinned' with two scout groups and was hopeful that this may help their involvement. The Chairman indicated that the RFU President is a lady and we are hoping that there may be a 'push' to get more girls involved. Matt Coleridge complimented NG on her efforts with M&Y and that these efforts will be reflected as players move through the 'pathway'.

8. Submitted Motions

There had been no submitted motions to the Secretary as of the closing date of Thursday 30th April, 2026.

9. Election of Executive Committee

Following the Rule changes (Rule 8.1.3, 12.3 and 12.4) at the 2025 AGM, the current incumbents of the Executive Committee have a further 2 years to serve. The Executive Committee is as follows: Chairman – Bob Cooke, Secretary – Keith Dobson, Finance Director - Simon Barriskell, Commercial Director – Rob Oliver, Director – Amber Owens, Chair, Senior Rugby - Steve Burnage and Chair, Mini & Youth - Nicola Griffin.

10. Any other Business

As no specific questions had been submitted to either the Chairman or the Secretary prior to the AGM, the Chairman indicated that he would take any questions from the floor following the formal Agenda.

10.1 Paul Jakubowski asked about the Club's engagement with schools, specifically (following earlier discussions above) with rugby events for girls. Phil Mason indicated that Fallibroome School has supported U12's and U 14's girls and other schools need to be encouraged. If MRUFC were to get involved, we need to recognise that, given the school curiculum, it would mean that coaches would likely to need to be available during the 'school day'. It was noted that the RFU recognises U11 and U12 girls.

10.2 James Keep raised the issue of player engagement and the understanding of the full player management cycle and whether the club had a Working Party to understand this and engage across the area covered by MRUFC including local Collages and Universities. Following discussion, A. Willson asked if this could be included in the Strategic Plan for the Club.

10.3 A. Willson indicated that the Women's XV were undertaking an end of season survey which would include sponsorship, the distribution of monies and what the membership covers. Rob Oliver clearly indicated that any sponsorship goes into the Club and is **not** specific to any particular group. Groups within the Club (e.g. First XV, M&Y, Women's XV, Ground Maintenance, etc.) then prepare a budget for the season.

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All funding raised from sponsorship must go through the Club, be invoiced and recorded into the Club's Bank Account and there must be a clear and complete audit trail of its expenditure.

10.4 A. Willson raised the question regarding the return from injury of Women's XV players and what support can they expect before returning to play. There was significant discussion on this topic but it was explained that there could be physio help if needed but finances needed to be considered and, as far as possible, this should be built into the budget put forward by the Women's XV.

10.5 Alex Willson also suggested that the Club should investigate the potential for funding to improve communication / website and suggested that a focused group is formed to look at this.

Given that there were no more questions arising from the floor, the Chairman called the 2026 AGM to a close.

The Meeting closed at 8.52 pm.

Keith Dobson,
Honorary Secretary.