 **MINUTES OF THE ARMY RUGBY UNION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**HELD AT 1330 HRS ON FRIDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2021**

**VIA MICOROSOFT TEAMS**

**PRESENT: A LIST OF ATTENDANCE IS ATTACHED AT ANNEX A**

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| **ITEM** | **Action**  |
| 1. **Chairman’s Opening Remarks**1. The Chair opened the meeting via MS Teams at 1332hrs and thanked all for attending. He noted and reflected on the excellent support by the ARU Secretariat; the Management Board and Council, without all three we would not have an Army Rugby Union.He reminded in attendance why we have the AGM - **The AGM shall be held annually as directed by the Management Board. Each club within the Union may send one representative to such meetings, exclusive of any member of their club serving on the Council, who shall be entitled to vote.**2. The Management Board, also known as the Board of Trustees, for which I am the Chairman, is accountable to a variety of different organisations in varying degrees and areas including the Charity Commission, Companies House, the Rugby Football Union, the Army Sport Control Board and to you, our members. The purpose of this AGM is to brief you on our strategic plans and intentions so that you can endorse them where appropriate and question where appropriate in order for the ARU to deliver them on your behalf. Therefore, as we finish each section please do ask any relevant questions you may have.3. A reminder of what the **Aim** of the ARU is:The aim of the ARU is to promote and foster the game of Rugby Union in the Army and its local communities in accordance with the Laws of the Game promulgated by the World Rugby (WR) and rules, regulations and bye-laws issued by the Rugby Football Union (RFU).4. The Management board executes this task on your behalf. Our **Mission** is to:Management Board Mission Statement is to promote and govern Rugby Union in the Army through the maintenance of stable structures for the game that enable its successful development at all levels for the benefit of all its participants.5. If you remember from previous AGM’s and the reports that are published on the ARU’s website we have been in a sound financial position for several years, however with no income from any Inter Services matches for two years and restricted sponsorship revenue we clearly are having to tighten our belts until we return to income generation hopefully in March and April next year. I can confirm that the Board remain transparent and financially compliant as a registered charity; that the Trustees and directors remain accountable, that the ARU have once again been subject to an independent audit, and that the Board deliver the best possible value for money as one of the National Constituent Bodies of the Rugby Football Union, importantly focused in every respect on our Charitable objects.6. The Management Board, also known as the Board of Trustees, for which the Chairman, is accountable to a variety of different organisations in varying degrees and areas including the Charity Commission, Companies House, the Rugby Football Union, the Army Sports Control Board and to you, our members. As I mentioned at the start, the purpose of this AGM is to brief you on our strategic plans and intentions so that you can endorse them where appropriate, question where appropriate in order for the ARU to deliver them on your behalf. Therefore as we finish each section please do ask any relevant questions you may have. 7. With regard to maximising rugby for all, I do have some significant concerns. While I believe our representative teams and the men’s Corps sides are in a reasonably good state, I get the very strong sense that we are facing significant challenges with availability of players and teams in our Community Rugby and therefore the rugby being played at Premiership, Championship, Garrison and women’s Corps levels. The last 20 months have indeed been taxing however this summer saw our men’s and women’s VIIs team in full action, we had a fantastic Armed Forces Day GB7s and ARU Community Festival on Armed Forces Day day and a great start to the Corps Competition with an excellent day in Aldershot and are now half way through the Corps competitions.8. Following the last strategy planning days in Twickenham 18 months ago the Board produced our revised strategy and associated plans for the next 5 years, the Strategy is linked directly to the Management Plan and reflects what we as a Board feel is important on how rugby union is developed within the Army. Our Strategy is based on the following building blocks: Maintain, Sustain, Develop, Grow, Evolve and Succeed. 9. I believe we have the best people working within the representative game; coaches, match officials, medical staff and administrators, however we are always after people to fill numerous positions as individuals step down from the supporting and management roles. 10. Turning now to the Inter-Service matches I just want to cover the somewhat difficult and dynamic situation we find ourselves in. Following two lost years of the Army v Navy match at Twickenham many of you may have noticed and come across several negative reports from Richmond Council focusing on post-match behaviour in the vicinity of Twickenham and Richmond, these reports went National and even onto the BBC Sport website. As a result, the Match Committee have met on several occasions with the Council and received strong support from the RFU and the Met Police. The Council have the ability to control spectator capacity attending the game and even the licencing arrangements. As a result of these meetings the following changes to the 2020 game have been implemented. A 3 tiered ticket pricing system. (£37.5 - £32.5 & £27.5) syncing the match in line with pricing points for International Matches, but noting you will still only pay £37.5 for a top Army v Navy match ticket and not £136 to watch England, yes the teams are at a different level but we do feel this still displayed very good value for money. Dedicated ‘family’ seating blocks in the East stand, these will be ‘no alcohol areas’. A family activity area in the west grassed lawns with inflatable ‘have a go rugby related activities’. The Army Masters v Royal Navy Ancient Mariners game will be played in Aldershot on the Friday with a 1400hrs kick off. The Army Women will play the Royal Navy Women in the stadium following the men’s game, kicking off at 1630hrs. Let’s get as many people to stay and support them as we did when the game was played at Kneller Hall a few years ago. I do need to inform you that DCGS has taken a personal view in this year’s game, please do all you can to emphasise the importance of spectator behaviour at Twickenham so we can best protect this important day in the rugby calendar, pass the message far and wide that this could be the last chance for us to ensure we retain this iconic service sporting spectacle. 11. You will now receive reports from the following:* Finance Report.
* Representative Rugby.
* Community Rugby.
* Rugby Development - (Coaching and Referees)
* Discipline.
* Approval of the ARU Management Board and Council ·

2. **Finance Report – Steve Bates – Director of Finance** – * The current cash in bank is - £853,00K.
* Audited accounts project an expenditure over income circa £27,700K.
* Investments - £362,463K.

Income Revenue Streams: (for this financial year)* Sponsorship - £100,200K.
* Income - £5,600K.
* RFU - £4,200.
* Investments - £47,060K.

Financial Season Spend: (for this 2021 – 2022 season)* Opening Account - £853,000K.
* Representative Teams - £342,500K.
* Governance & Community - £200,000K.
* Additional Expenditure - £198,500K.

Financial Overview:* Army v Navy – Twickenham - potential revenue - £1,089,915K.
* Army v RAF – Gloucester – potential £25 – 30 K.
* Samurai Royalties – to recommence post new contract.
* Sponsorship revenue - £100,200. +
* IMS and Affiliation Income - £5.2K.

Summary – look forward:* Twickenham – potential reduced capacity due to COVID.
* Will everyone wish to attend?

Are there any questions?1. Major Andy Kerr RE - Would the Corps receive any funding from the ARU from the ticket sales from the 2019 Army v RAF games at Gloucester? – Reply – Steve Bates replied saying that the requirement for any funding to be issued was based on Corps supplying audited accounts to him at the end of the 2019 season, despite several reminders this never occurred. JB asked AK to email SB and CC him in.

3. **Representative Rugby** – **Briefed by Brigadier Adam Griffiths** * Thank you to the Chairman for the overarching introductions to the 2021 season. The highlights and a bit more detail on the 2021 representative season so far.
* The Army Men and Women’s 7s season was highly successful in 2021 and trail blazed the Army Rugby Union back into the sporting arena, back into the public eye and competition at the highest available level. The men played six tournaments, won 3 of them, were runners up in two and quarter finalists in one. They ended joint top of the Super Seven Series only losing out on points difference. The Women’s team is in the early stages of development but is hugely exciting. They made 4 plate finals in the super series and progressively improved with each leg of the series.  The opportunity for both squads to coordinate with the GB 7s were foiled by COVID but links were definitely deepened for next season.  England will return for the Commonwealth games and preparation for the World Cup Sevens. I would hope that we can exploit other nation’s arrival by hosting, playing and developing alongside national level quality players next year.  So for the representative 7s it is SUSTAIN and GROW for the Men (and I am looking to establish a development squad for the 2022 season) and continue to GROW for the Women.  I would like to recognise and thank Major Jon Lord and Rifleman Matt Duncan in particular for their commitment to Army 7s.  Without individuals like these it would be simply impossible to compete at this level.
* Turning to the Army U23s. Our Army U23s are the Inter-Service champions for 2021. A magnificent result. Despite a reduced preparation timescale because of COVID and ASCB and Army policy direction/restrictions, the U23 squad delivered this year. There were 157 expressions of interest (following a QR code splash) that enabled a new post C-19 squad to be established.  Note only 3 players were returnee capped individuals. Equally the new management and coaching structure in place since May 20 but without players or permissions for 16 months, has delivered an outstanding shift in delivering an environment for soldier athlete development. The commitment, ethos and fitness of the squad set an example to all. It is also of note that 70% of the current squad should be eligible for next season. Deconfliction with the community game and competition is probably the biggest issue in the Sep to Nov timeframe.  Colonel Sandy Fitzpatrick (Director Senior Men), and Tim Osman (Director U23) will look at how to stretch the U23 season. Initial thoughts are to bring the squad together pre summer to establish a player base and set out the season requirements for 22 for a sharper start post summer leave.
* Turning to the senior squads.
* The Masters had 55 trialists turn up. Through an open trial and a pair of matches against the Wooden Spoons in Oct, a squad of 34 players was taken to the first match in Nov against the Pacific Islanders.  Of the 34, 16 are returning masters. The squad will reduce down to 30 for the IS championship.
* Our Army Women’s season was delayed until early Nov 21 to allow the community season to bed in. They have a 60 player training base (to enable a combined senior and development squad) and will follow a similar format to the Senior Men.  They will play a number of Development games culminating in a match against Germany on 29 Jan 22 in Aldershot.  They will then reduce down to the IS squad for the run up to the Championship games.  I would also like to congratulate Sgt Jade Mullen AGC (SPS) and Bdr Bethan Dainton RA for their selection and international representation for Wales over the past few months. They are setting the standard and providing a role models for the developing and aspiring female cohort behind them.
* Finally, our senior Men. The senior men saw over 65 players turn up to be part of the ARU Development XV.  Going forward there will be three development fixtures until early February, thereafter the IS squad will be identified to allow a coherent run into the IS competition. All the management and coaches have been integrally involved in the U23 development and their success bodes well for the senior season.
* My last point is that of the lived experience. Sport is fundamental to this lived experience and as such all talented sports people should be allowed to compete at the highest level. So, I really welcome the closeness of the community and representative set ups. The representative teams could not exist without the community game developing players, coaches, referees and management.  I would also like to thank the chain of command who provide our volunteers and players throughout the year. Without your commitment, understanding and support we would not be able to deliver the quality of performance that we are able to do. Important to the Directors, management and coaches is the development of our players as leaders, characters and role models.  We want them to return to you stronger, fitter, more developed and able to add value as leaders and role models in your units. Finally, I would like to recognise the commitment and engagement of all the volunteers that enable the Representative rugby to happen. All have full time jobs but engagement with players, units, Corps, clubs and other agencies is like having another full time role.  I genuinely thank them all and am inspired by the selfless commitment of the Directors, Management and Coaches of the Representative set up. Thank you.

4. **Community Rugby – Major Marc Wilding.****Army Corps Rugby****Men*** Very successful Corps Festival in Sep which re-started Corps rugby following the impact of C-19 last season. Support by match officials, Izzy Camfield and Kim Fowke were superb.
* New format – 3 x Leagues of 4 rather than 2 x Leagues of 6 is proving very popular.
* New format includes home and away matches and heightened focus on promotion and relegation opportunities/threats.
* Three rounds of the Corps season completed (halfway through) and some excellent, competitive matches across all three leagues.
* Top of the table at the halfway stage: League 1 – RA; League 2 – Infantry; League 3 – AGC (on points difference from the RAPTC). All very much to play for in all three leagues.
* Corps Finals day scheduled for 18 May 21 at the Army Stadium.
* Scoping potential Inter-Corps Sevens Festival for May/Jun.

**Women*** Managed by Jules Parke-Robinson and Wanda Barkess.
* Successful Corps Festival (10-a-side).
* Insufficient players to contest an Inter Corps competition this year.
* Matches centred on Corps Development Camps, which are hosted by different Corps.
* Intent, according to Jules P-R, is to continue this format next season (ie Development Camps not a Merit League) based on RA, AGC, RLC and AMS.

**Masters*** League 1 Corps Masters Teams are contesting a full competition. Current leaders are RA.
* Corps in Leagues 2 and 3 have declared they have insufficient Masters player base to compete a full competition, but will look to entertain specific fixtures, self-arranged.
* Consideration taking place on alignment of Masters with Men’s Corps Leagues.  The Masters’ fixtures mirror the Men’s League 1 fixtures. With promotion and relegation there will be different Corps in different Leagues next season. Work in progress to identify best way forward (which is focussed on maximising Masters fixtures).

**Development Fixtures*** Mixed appetite to host Development XV fixtures – some Corps can always put out a Development side, some Corps can sometimes put out a Development side, some Corps will never be able to put out a Development side.
* Plan is to leave Development fixtures to be arranged by individual Corps when opportunity to hold them exists.

**Affiliation, Registration and Accreditation*** Corps are all registered and affiliated.
* Info will be cascaded about the need for Corps accreditation to the ARU (as per your last e-mail below).
* Ack to press for greater engagement with GMS.
* The ARU currently have 77 clubs affiliated to the RFU.

Questions from the meeting:1. Many asked why there had been a large reduction in affiliated Teams to the ARU / RFU. MW replied stating that he believed that it was COVID linked with the Army return to play for Sport. Many individual sports had been given the authority to start their activity before Team sports and some Commanding Officers hadn’t re balanced the situation when Team sports had been authorised. JB requested that members email JC if they had views on this subject.

5. **Rugby Development – Col Gary McDade** * Referees –
* **RFU membership**. The ARURS is now a voting member of the RFU, a really positive step forward.  We had been one of three ‘outlier’ refereeing societies and the only Service society not to be a member, therefore gaining the assurances we were looking for and becoming a member was good news.
* **Virtual training nights**. Although COVID meant no actual rugby, we didn’t stop training – and maximised the virtual environment.  Evenings with Danny Grewcock and Wayne Barnes, and also ran weekly reviews of the 6 Nations which were excellent.
* **ARURS in general.**
	+ 173 members in Sept 21, an increase of 14 from the last year, and have five new members this season. A solid core of officials but we need more because not all of these are active (Work, deployments, overseas postings, injury etc)
	+ The return from COVID has been satisfactory with barely anyone choosing not to come back. This is not the case in civilian rugby where a number of societies are struggling.  Community and Corps rugby going well with no specifics to report on discipline from a referees perspective.  We are using WTR to manage Corps fixtures, so thanks for the support.
	+ Strong showing at RN v RAF on Wed at IS U23 match.
	+ Communications with clubs remains a focus area.
	+ Importance of referee feedback forms. Available by QR code and on the ARURS web page.  Only by getting routine feedback will we be able to develop robust development plans for all our officials.
* **Capt Nikki O’Donnell and Pte Mike Todd.**
	+ Capt NOD now routinely officiating Women’s internationals.  Held in very high regard by the RFU. Was at Twickenham last week, with current English international referees (male and female) to be presented with an England cap.
	+ Mike Todd, Reservist with 6 SCOTS, officiating at the highest levels in Scotland. Great potential to go further.  Was part of SRU To5 for the Sco v SA match this month (joined by Dunx McClement, Chair RNRURS)
	+ Both selected for Talented Athlete Sponsorship Scheme. A great step forward that the scheme is now open to officials as well as athletes, so many thanks to ARU for their support in achieving this.
* **Training.**
	+ The Joint approach this season.  Positive move and shows strength of relationship with other societies.
	+ Had to cancel Nov course due to lack of uptake.
	+ Need for new officials – the game doesn’t take place without officials.
	+ 2 Days, fully paid for, RFU accredited. Dates are 6/7 Dec 21 (Portsmouth), Jan 22 (Wendover), 14/15 Feb 22 (Aldershot).  If interested, engage with:
		- Trg Offr: Bentley, Martin Capt (6REME-BnHQ-RCMO) Martin.Bentley794@mod.gov.uk
		- Recruitment Offr: Atterton, Johnathan Maj (AGC RHQ-Pers-SO2) Johnathan.Atterton100@mod.gov.uk
		- Hon Sec: Fetters, Mark Maj (SPO MSE-ISTE-Threats-SO2) Mark.Fetters882@mod.gov.uk
	+ Please help us to ensure you can play rugby!

**6. Rugby Development – Major Wayne Burnard.*** Coaching – The RFU coach development position. The RFU have over the COVID period re structured their Coach Education programme and staff. Clive Cashell (RFU) has been re appointed to assist the Services and had attended the ARU L2 course in Aldershot in Sep 21 that was fully subscribed. The RFU are content that the Services have the ability to complete a L2 course over a 1 week period. This would NOT be made available to non military clubs.
* What we are doing to try and deliver more opportunities to potential coaches. BB set out his vision to get as broader coaching base as possible, with experienced L2 coaches being rewarded with L3 (finance assisted) RFU courses.
* The next Services course is being run by the RFU in Portsmouth in Dec 21. Individuals wishing to attend this course should book via the RFU coaching porthole.

7. **Discipline** – in the absence of Captain Steward Scott the COO reminded all re the relevance of RED CARDED players not being allowed to play until they have been in front of a discipline panel.8. **Approval of Management Board and Council****THE ARMY RUGBY UNION MANAGEMENT BOARD*** Chairman – Maj Gen Jez Bennett CBE
* Vice Chairman - Brig J Cook OBE
* Director Marketing – Brig PJ Allison (Col G Malec – Apr 22)
* Chairman of Representative Rugby – Brig A Griffiths
* RFU Council Member – Brig J Cook OBE
* Director Community Rugby – Maj M Wilding
* Director of Rugby Development – Maj W Burnard MBE
* Non-Executive Director – Mr B Facer
* Non-Executive Director – Miss A Teasdale
* Non-Executive Director – Col D Rutherford
* Non-Executive Director – Mr A Leach
* Director of Finance – Mr S Bates
* Chief Operations Officer – Mr C Fowke

**THE ARMY RUGBY UNION COUNCIL*** The Chairman and Members of the ARU Management Board
* Director of Senior Rugby – Col S Fitzpatrick MBE
* Director of Women’s Rugby – Maj C Maxwell
* Director Academy – Lt Col T Osman
* Chairman Masters - Col M Beynon MBE
* Chairman ARURS – Col Gary McDade
* Chairman Corps Rugby – Col G Taylor CBE
* Chairman Discipline – Maj S Scott
* Chairman Premiership – Maj A Bennett
* Senior Medical Advisor – Lt Col S Gough

**AOB –** 1. JB noted that this was going to be Paddy Allisions last season serving as the Marketing Director of the ARU. He requested that a suitable tribute be afforded to him on his retirement.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1432hrs.  | AllAllAllAllAllAllAllAllAllAllAllAllAllAllAllAllAK / SBAll |

Annex A to

ARU AGM Dated

26 November 2021

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| Rank / Title | Initial | Surname | Unit | Appointment | Voting Member |
| Maj Gen | J  | Bennett | ARRC | Chairman ARU | Y |
| Brig  | A | Griffiths | ARRC | Chair Representative Rugby | Y |
| Brig | J | Cook | Project CASTLE | ARU Council Member | N |
| Mr | S | Bates | ARU | Finance | N |
| Mr | C | Fowke | ARU | Secretary | N |
| Lt Col | M | Beynon | ARU  | Masters | N |
| Maj | D | Pridmore | 1 Bn W G | D of R | N |
| Miss | A  | Teasdale | RFU | NED | N |
| Mr | B | Facer | British Cycling | NED | N |
| Maj | M | WIlding | MOD Lynham | Dir Community Rugby | N |
| Maj  | W | Burnard | MOD Abby Wood | Dir Rugby Development | N |
| Col | S | Fitzpatrick | MOD Glasgow | Dir of Rugby - Men | N |
| Maj | C | Maxwell |  | Dir of Rugby - Women | N |
| Maj | J | Vincent | 103 Regt RA |  | N |
| WO2 | C | Corderoy | 29 Regt RLC |  | N |
| Capt | M | Wray | Army Info |  | N |
| CSgt | D | Griffiths | ACC – Cardiff |  | N |
| Capt  | R | Smart | 5 Rifles |  | N |
| Capt | T | Rutherford | 1 RRF |  | N |
| Capt | S  | Fudge | 36 Engr Regt |  | N |
| Capt | C | Bentley | 104 Regt RA |  | N |
| Sgt | K | Bird | 1 Regt RLC |  | N |
| Capt | S | Smith | ! Bn RRW |  | N |
| Maj | R | Tremelling | 101 Bn REME |  | N |
| Sgt | S | Montague | 17 P & M Regt RLC |  | N |
| Maj | D | Lester-Morris | ARRC |  | N |
| CSgt | G | Hay | 3 Para |  | N |
| Sgt | J | Matavesi | Arty Cen |  | N |
| SSgt | T | Tamatawale | 4 Regt RLC |  | N |
| Maj | R  | Fidler | DES LE Arty-Req |  | N |
| WO2 | T | Jackson | HQ LONDIST |  | N |
| SSgt | R | Komaiyasa | 7 Regt RLC |  | N |
| Sgt | K | Dowding | 12 Regt RA |  | N |
| Maj | J  | Evans | 24 Cdo Regt |  | N |
| Maj | R | Crane | BATUK |  | N |
| Maj | T  | Howard | E Midlands UOTC |  | N |
| Maj | S | Maunders | 1 Rifles |  | N |
| Maj | M | Woodward | DMS |  | N |
| WO2 | D | Bates | 30 Sig Regt |  | N |
| Maj | A | Kerr | RE RHQ |  | N |
| Maj | J  | Omara | APSG |  | N |
| Maj | E | Moore | ATC (P) |  | N |
| Capt | G | Sterry | 47 Regt RA |  | N |
| Col | G  | McDade |  |  | N |
| Lt Col  | I  | Wood | HQ Queens Div |  | N |
| Capt | J | Brewerton | 27 Regt RLC |  | N |
| Miss | K | Fowke | ARU |  | N |
| Mrs | I | Camfield | ARU |  | N |