Minutes of Rutland Polo Club Ltd AGM 20th March, 2022

Venue;

Oak Room, Falcon Hotel, Uppingham

Attendees;

Robert Dale, Lesley Maxfield Gullet, Paul Maxfield Gullet, Camilla Speed, Edwin de Lisle, Mary Crouch, Hugh Crouch, Jos Habershon-Butcher, Claire Durrant, Jane Winterton, Elizabeth Penson, Nigel Horner, Louise Rambaut, Stevie Morrison, Anna Hunt, Polly Gillies Shields

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| 1 | **Chairman’s welcome** (Robert Dale) |
| 1.1 | Welcome given to all attendees by the Chairman Robert Dale. |
| 1.2 | Agreed that Polly Gillies Shields will scribe & issue the minutes. |
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| 2 | **Apologies for absence** |
|  | Apologies received from John Tinsley, Steve Brown, Edward Winterton, Guido Basile, Amanda Hawthorne. |
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| 3 | **Looking Back** (Robert Dale) |
| 3.1 | Explanation as to why there has been no AGM in the last two years due to Covid. |
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| 3.2 | **Audited Accounts** (Robert Dale) |
|  | Rent of £9,000 paid in 2021 |
|  | During 2020, hay was taken off the ground during the Covid pandemic & when play was allowed to go ahead only £2,000 ground rent was charged, which was carried over. |
|  | Bar purchases of £9,000 will seem high, but it includes £4,000 of Champagne for resale to Members. |
|  | The Club pays £7,000 pa in rent for the ground. This is normally balanced by the Charity Lunch, where the Charity pays a ground rent of £3,000 and the charity auction usually brings in an additional £3,500. |
|  | In 2021 it was not possible to hold a Charity lunch hence the loss of £5,600.  2022 the Club will hold a Charity lunch on behalf of the ABF and with more sponsors expected this season the Club is hoped to be more financial stable. |
|  | Hugh Crouch asked what the £10,000 Covid assistance grant had been used for & the Chairman’s response was that it was used for general expenses. |
|  | Approval of the Audited accounts was proposed by Anna Hunt & seconded by Lesley Maxfield Gullet. |
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| 3.3 | **Polo Manager’s Report 2020/21** (Camilla Speed) |
|  | As there was no AGM as explained by our Chairman, I will be doing a brief resume from 2020 as well. |
|  | **2020** |
|  | Due to the lockdown all polo below 8 g was severely restricted, so when we did start it was mid-season and non-contact 3 a side polo, all a very strange concept for a contact sport. But we got through it and were lucky to have the use of Launde Park’s ground initially, before moving back to Langham for August and September. We held a couple of tournaments, they were small but still good fun, as well as a Ladies clinic, and even managed an away trip to Silver Leys.  Despite it being a very lean year for RPC, we had a lovely atmosphere and strong support amongst members which put us in a positive frame of mind for the 2021 season. |
|  | **2021** |
|  | Covid once again hampered start of season, no spectators, & all visitors having to fill in track and trace forms which caused a lot of extra admin, so I for one was delighted by United polo and their wonderful track & trace app. |
|  | It was a cold & damp start to the season, I think we played chukkas in snow & sleet at one stage! This sadly led to the cancellation of the Spring Cup, but we then had plenty of time to give to working with our RPC Juniors & Members coaching opportunities. It was great to see so many people getting involved with this & helped us all think about our play more. PMG thank you from us all. |
|  | The Juniors improved so much they put on a little match before our first club match of the season. |
|  | By the end of the month, we hosted a full days Ladies clinic, but thanks to our grounds at RPC we managed to run (we just don’t mention PMG getting his truck stuck) & it was thoroughly enjoyed by all & I’ve already had enquiries & suggestions for this year’s clinics. |
|  | Our next scheduled tournament was at full capacity with 13 teams competing across the weekend, with players from north to south of the polo world in attendance, Cowdray in the South to Toulston in the North. |
|  | The Assam weekend was a slightly smaller affair than usual, without the hustle & bustle of charity lunch & lots of spectators, once again thanks to the dreaded Covid, but the players made up for it with a great busy weekend of polo, & the surprise result of the scratch Rutland team in the Findlay, not only making it through to the sub final but winning it & taking home the Findlay Jug. |
|  | Members also benefitted from fantastic HPA Umpire/third man training with our official VL Umpire for weekend Tristan, I really hope they will offer this again as it’s so beneficial for our members. |
|  | July, sadly saw cancellation of our 6g exhibition match, yes you got it due to covid infections in the teams. However, we saw plenty of action from our Juniors & coaching/instructional chukkas for members, with lots of input again from PMG, & opportunity for PC members to practice for the PC circuit. |
|  | August seemed to prematurely bring in autumn with a bang, however we kept ourselves busy, we sent a visiting team to Thoresby Park at their new ground for a great fun, competitive tournament where we surprised ourselves & ended up in the final, sadly we were beaten into second place, but all thoroughly enjoyed it. |
|  | We also held a joint club match with Thoresby at RPC, we all mucked in and put on a great BBQ buffet lunch which was appreciated by all. We plan to host more of the invitational club matches as they seem to be a great way of mixing it up a bit polo wise, which can only be beneficial for all with the small playing membership we have right now. |
|  | The Gilks 0g, Sandicliffe 2g and WIP 8 & 4g proved another very busy weekend with 14 teams overall & I think I’m right in saying all of our members played in one level or another, we also had Cacho’s brilliant Asado that was devoured with remarkable speed by visiting players on the Saturday night. |
|  | We had another well attended & amusing Junior clinic during the summer hols, that saw several juniors that had never played or even been to polo before benefit from PMG’s polo coaching, Excellence Physio strength and mobility, Jane’s fantastic welfare knowledge & Lesley & my running skills. Not to mention Mr Whippy (who in fairness was probably the most popular person on site) we hope to get many of these back to polo this season. |
|  | The Ruddles weekend was a 1 day tournament, with a relaxed club match on the Saturday. Two local teams competed for the Ruddles & two in the lower level Twidale & we also put on a polo demo and talk by our own Ed W and HB on the mic. |
|  | We sent a Rutland contingent to Suffolk Polo Club to support them as they’d been at virtually every tournament of ours in some guise or other, sadly this didn’t go as smoothly as might have been ideal. However, thanks to the many Dr’s, surgeons and vet’s that make up their membership I lived to tell the tale! |
|  | We finished the season playing for The Wilkinson Sword & our newest member & beginner Steve Brown made his official tournament debut & if my memory serves me correctly he even scored a goal. |
|  | We had a great collaborative tea party for playing & social members to finish off on a great note. |
|  | In October we hosted what we hope will become an inaugural event, The End of Season awards/lunch, lots of silly awards & a chance to eat lots.. |
|  | We must say a huge thank you to all our members but particularly to our new members, last season. Steve who threw himself in right away after his first lesson & with the help on many members had bought his first horse within a couple of months, not to mention stepping in & sponsoring an Assam Team. |
|  | Polly fantastically, returning after approx. 25 years absence & Linda not dissimilarly, after about a 20 year gap, took the bull by the horns & got out there, got ponies & got stuck in & involved with the club as much as they could, & for that I’m incredibly grateful. |
|  | **The next phase** |
|  | We are delighted to be taking on RPC from the 3 outgoing directors who have tirelessly put more hours in to keeping Rutland going over the years than any of us could ever appreciate, let alone calculate. |
|  | We feel the real importance for a small, rural club like Rutland now lies with you the members, we plan to be very much a grass roots, member focused club who will strive to encourage new & old members to take up and enjoy polo, but also to keep progressing wherever possible. We would love you all to help & guide as all as much as possible, & on that note would really encourage as many as we can to join the club & pay their subs as soon as they can. We do have a couple of new Membership types on the list, these are all on website, so if anything needs explaining please don’t hesitate to get in touch with myself or Polly. |
|  | Other than that, it just leaves me to say we’re looking forward to the start of the season and getting out there, travelling to different club & welcoming as many players, old & new, to play at RPC this year. |
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| 4 | **Looking forward** (Robert Dale) |
| 4.1 | Major organisational changes are best introduced from an AGM, but as we had been unable to hold AGMs over the Covid period, it was important to take this opportunity for a major restructuring.  For many years now there have been three Directors: John Tinsley, Edwin de Lisle & Robert Dale. They have been responsible for the club’s assets & the club’s liabilities.  They have been the stewards of the club for many seasons & they have worked tirelessly to keep the club going.  They are delighted that there is a new and younger generation that are keen to take their places.  John Tinsley’s & Edwin’s involvement with the club stretches back more than 40 years. In addition, John Tinsley’s comprehensive knowledge of polo across the UK has allowed him to provide invaluable advice & guidance on many occasions. Edwin de Lisle, apart from being a very enthusiastic playing Chairman for many years, has provided essential funding for the club.  This has been by finding sponsors & through finding charities that will not only pay a ground rent of £3k, but are the vehicle for attracting deep pocketed guests willing to pay substantial sums for the auction items, which have often been found by Edwin.  Robert Dale will also be standing down as Hon. Secretary. |
| 4.2 | What needs to be done: |
|  | Amendment to Articles of Association  Clearance of Loans.  Possible sale of assets to cover the clearance of loans & running costs. |
|  | Possible sales of assets & old stand to cover loan clearance and running costs. |
|  | It may be conceivable that it might be necessary for the new committee to sell some of the trophies. There is a Protocol in place should this need to happen, where donors’ of the trophies permission is sought. Not all trophies are owned by the Club. |
|  | Hugh Crouch comments that as he sees it there are two decisions;   1. The stand – happy for this to be sold. 2. The trophies – the sale of any trophies only to be done by an EGM |
|  | Polly Gillies Shields replies that it is not the Directors nor Committee’s intent to sell any trophies, this would only ever be considered under extreme circumstances. |
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|  | Proposer for the small loan repayment of £2,000 & sale of scrap metal in the stands Paul Maxfield Gullet, seconded by Jane Winterton. |
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|  | Change of Directors to;  Ed Winterton, Camilla Speed, Steve Brown, Polly Gillies Shields |
|  | Proposed by Jos Habershon-Butcher  Seconded by Hugh Crouch |
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|  | Anna Hunt to communicate with non-playing members.  Mary Crouch asked if Life Membership would still stand & this was confirmed that it would. |
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| **5** | **Appointment of the general Committee** (Camilla Speed) |
|  | |  |  | | --- | --- | | President | John Tinsley | | Chairman | Ed Winterton | | Vice President | Steve Brown | | Hon. Secretary | Polly Gillies Shields | | Polo Manager | Camilla Speed | | Animal Welfare | Jane Winterton | | Council Representatives | Hugh Crouch, Ed Winterton | | Treasurer | Bev Callaghan | | Other members | Linda McCullough, Claire Durrant, Anna Hunt, Guido Basile | |
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| **6** | **Appointment of Accountants** (Robert Dale) |
| 6.1 | The current Accountants are Hills, but the new committee may decide that they might change to a different firm if that is more compatible with their new Treasurer. |
|  | The Articles of Association must have Audited Accounts & they are also needed for the HPA in order to be eligible for grants. |
|  | Need to have an easy way for the Polo Manager to know who has paid tournament fees etc. |
| 6.2 | AGM approval sort for possible change of Accountants.  Proposed by Liz Penson  Seconded by Hugh Crouch |
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| **7** | **ABF Charity Lunch Sunday 26th June** (Robert Dale) |
|  | Although Edwin will be standing down as a Director, the Vice-President & as a Committee Member, he will continue to have the Committee’s full support in the arrangements he has made for the Assam Sunday. He will continue to work with the ABF & our Sponsors Westerby (Assam Trophy) & Lexus (the Finlay). I will ask Edwin to explain how important it is to sell as many tickets as possible, the more at the ABF lunch the more people bidding in the auction, the more money the club will receive from the auction.  I will now pass over to Edwin. (Edwin de Lisle) |
|  | It is our most important event at Rutland and the success of the charity lunch is paramount.  The Charity will pay £3,000 to host the lunch, Westerby £5,000 to sponsor the Assam tournament & Lexus £2,500 to sponsor the Finlay tournament. |
|  | There will be a live Auction where the ABF will donate 8 auction prizes & the Club will donate 6 auction prizes. |
|  | There will also be a Silent Auction. |
|  | Please could you all come up with some auction prizes, the more prizes the more money for the Club & we could make up to £5,000. |
|  | The ABF Charity is headed by James Everard, who is a local Leicestershire boy. |
|  | The charity is expecting 250 guests at £80/head, with 25 tables of 10. |
|  | We all need to get behind the Charity Lunch and raise as much money as possible. |
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| **8** | **Friends of Rupert Heggs 29th June** (Robert Dale) |
|  | The new Committee will also support Edwin in taking this day forward. I will hand over to Edwin to tell you more. |
|  | (Edwin de Lisle) |
|  | This will be a memorial event to celebrate the life of Rupert Heggs. |
|  | There will be a service, open to all faiths, led by the priest from Ratcliffe College, followed by a lunch & a four goal match, all taking place on the Wednesday after the Assam Cup. |
|  | Bridget will be donating £1,000 to both Rutland Polo Club & to the ABF, for the use of the Marquee. |
|  | Please contact me if you would like to attend the lunch or help. |
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| **9** | **Any Other Business** (Robert Dale) |
|  | Meeting to approve the New Committee members.  Proposed by Robert Dale  Seconded by Paul Maxfield Gullet |
|  | Edwin & Robert were thanked profusely, for all their invaluable hard work & commitment to the Club over the last numerous decades by all present. |
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| **10** | Meeting brought to a close. |