

Chairman's Address and Public Meeting Introduction

Welcome:

Ladies and gentlemen can I start by thanking you all for giving up your own time to come along to the public meeting this evening.

Background:

The purpose of this meeting is to present The Friends of Newport Rugby Trust Committee's proposals and recommendations for the setting up of a Trust Fund.

This Trust Fund will provide Newport rugby supporters with the opportunity to play a more active role in safeguarding the future of Newport Rugby Football Club.

It is also an opportunity for us to outline our vision of how we as rugby supporters can make a significant and crucial contribution to the development of the game of rugby union in our local community.

By the time this meeting draws to a close we hope to have convinced you of the merits of our proposals and recommendations and to have secured your endorsement to proceed to the launch of the trust fund early in the New Year.

I am sure that you all appreciate the challenges that the recent restructuring of Welsh rugby at the top-level present to our club otherwise you probably wouldn't be here this evening.

Quite simply the club's financial income has been slashed to a small fraction of that received in recent years.

In addition, due to the level that the club is now competing at, it is even more difficult to attract sponsorship and corporate investment to the club.

Whilst the club's expenditure has also fallen significantly, there are still fixed costs such as the maintenance of the stadium and other facilities in the ground which have to be paid for.

Through no fault of its own, this go-ahead club with its own stadium and facilities is now paying the price of Welsh rugby's continuing financial failings.

By contrast, other clubs in Welsh rugby continue to look to the local council for the provision of their grounds and facilities.

My colleague Gareth Davies and I have felt for a long time that supporters should not be leaving the financial burden of keeping our club afloat to the Newport Board members.

The average Newport supporter would probably consider that any financial contribution of their own would have little or no impact on Newport's finances.

We believe that if we were to pool those supporter contributions, then the impact could be quite significant.

Having sounded out fellow supporters via the official Newport Rugby website, it seems that they agree with us and want us to provide them with the opportunity to get involved.

Community:

At the same time, if rugby is to flourish in the city of Newport and in Wales generally then supporters also need to play their part in ensuring that future generations of schoolchildren continue to play rugby.

Unless we do this, then the best players in our area will be lost to the game instead of progressing through the various age groups to senior level and a place in the Newport senior squad.

That in my opinion and in the opinion of my fellow committee members would be an absolute tragedy.

As a committee we believe that supporters should where possible provide practical and financial help to Newport RFC in promoting and expanding their award-winning community sports projects – Gateway Rugby, The Second Half and Extra Time.

We have appointed our own community officer so that we can pursue our own projects in the local community as well as work in partnership with Newport Rugby Football Club.

Already we are in the process of developing the necessary contacts and links with the community both directly and via the club.

Corporate:

We also aim to involve local businesses in our plans by offering corporate membership of the trust fund.

Again we have appointed a corporate officer to carry out this role.

Guest Speakers:

We are fortunate this evening to have two guest speakers who have helped with the setting up of sports club trust funds and they have kindly offered to share their experiences with us.

Jacqui Forster is a Development Officer for Supporters Direct, an organisation that has vast experience in helping and advising soccer clubs in England, Scotland and Wales on how to set up their own trust funds.

Jake Greenland is a member of the Bristol Rugby Independent Supporters Trust (BRISTrust) committee, the first rugby union trust to be launched in the United Kingdom.

We are also delighted to be able to announce that **Roger Eady**, Managing Director of Newport Rugby Football Club has agreed to speak to you tonight in support of our plans to set up a trust fund.

Agenda:

The agenda for the evening is shown in the slide on the screen behind me. (Please refer to 'Agenda' Slide)

The meeting will be divided into two parts:-

Part 1 will include talks by both **Jacqui** and **Jake**.

This will be followed by a short address by Roger Eady.

There will then be a 10 minute break.

Part 2 will include a presentation from our Vice-Chairman and Financial Expert **Dave Griffiths**.

This will then be followed by an opportunity to ask questions.

Can I therefore ask that you do not interrupt any of our speakers and instead save any questions that you might have until this part of the meeting?

Voting:

As you can see we will be holding a vote towards the end of the meeting to see if our proposals and recommendations are acceptable to you and to hopefully secure a mandate to proceed to launch.

There will also be a vote on whether you agree that the current committee members should undertake that work. [\(Please refer to 'Committee Members' Slide\)](#)

The current committee members are:-

Chairman: Andrew Cox

Vice Chairman: Dave Griffiths

Secretary: Kev Jarvis

Treasurer: Mark Howard

Administration: Sarah Cox

Community: Nick Jackson

Corporate: Chris McHale

Fundraising: Alan Cording

Club Liaison: Dennis Bennett

Media & Publicity: Gareth Davies

Website: Hywel Jones

As Chairman of the committee, I can tell you that the contribution and dedication of each and every committee member has to date been substantial.

Their professionalism and attention to detail in carrying out their duties has been of the highest order.

For several weeks leading up to this public meeting the committee members have met on a weekly basis in their own time.

These meetings have lasted all of 2¹/₂ hours and sometimes even longer.

Committee members have also spent many hours of their own time researching their particular area of responsibility and coming forward with proposals and ideas.

During this time many e:mail messages have been sent out and many phone calls have been made.

In this way the committee has been able to make the necessary contacts and to obtain important and useful information.

Volunteers:

[\(Please refer to 'Agenda' Slide\)](#)

We will also be asking any volunteers who wish to get involved in helping with the launch of the trust fund and beyond to make themselves known to us.

Committee members will be available to take details following the meeting.

Donations:

Finally, as a rugby union club we are not eligible for any grants for financial assistance in setting up the trust fund.

We will therefore have to pay these not insignificant costs ourselves.

As a result we will be asking supporters to consider making voluntary donations, which can be made in cash or by cheque to help cover these initial costs.

If you feel that you would like to help in this way then please see Alan Cording or any other committee member following the meeting.

Part 1

Ladies and gentlemen we are now ready to begin the meeting proper.

I would now like to hand over to our first guest speaker, Jacqui Forster of Supporters Direct.

Our second guest speaker this evening is Jake Greenland, a member of Bristol Shogun's trust committee.

Finally, we are delighted that Newport Rugby's Managing Director Roger Eady has agreed to speak to us this evening.

I would now like to call upon Roger to address this public meeting.

Part 2

Ladies and gentlemen, the second part of our meeting will start with a presentation from one of our committee members, Dave Griffiths.

Dave is our Vice-Chairman and a Chartered Accountant by profession.

Because of his financial background, Dave has kindly agreed to perform the role of financial adviser to our committee and to the trust.

Dave will be giving us a presentation on the basic outline of the proposed trust fund for Newport Rugby Football Club supporters.

I would now like to call upon Dave to give his presentation.

(Please refer to 'Dave Griffiths' set of slides)

Questions:

Now that Dave has finished the last presentation of the evening, we are ready to take any questions that you may have.

If you have a question that you wish to ask then please hold your hand up we and will try to give everyone an opportunity to ask his or her question.

Please wait until you are identified by the Chairman and a microphone is brought to you.

We will do our best to answer all questions as honestly and accurately as we can.

Motions for the Inaugural Public Meeting:

Ladies and gentlemen if we could now move on to the two motions which must be voted on in order to ascertain whether there is a mandate from the prospective membership for the proposed Trust Fund to be set up.

[\(Please refer to 'Motions' slide\)](#)

The two motions are as follows:-

Motion 1: That the Friends of Newport Rugby Trust be formed, and that this body be governed by the laws and regulations appropriate to an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS).

Could we have a show of hands please?

Motion 2: That the following individuals:

Andrew Cox (Chairman), Dave Griffiths (Vice Chairman), Kev Jarvis (Secretary), Mark Howard (Treasurer) and committee members: Dennis Bennett, Alan Cording, Sarah Cox, Gareth Davies, Nick Jackson, Hywel Jones and Chris McHale .

... be authorised to form a Steering Committee (including co-opting new committee members where appropriate) to manage the affairs of the Trust in compliance with the aforementioned laws and regulations. This body shall hold office until the occasion of the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Trust.

Could we have a show of hands please?

Request for Volunteers:

If I could now ask if there is anyone who wishes to volunteer to help out with the setting up, launch and running of the trust fund if they could leave their details with one of the committee members immediately following this meeting.

We are particularly looking for anyone who can provide help in a legal capacity or marketing role.

Another role where we are looking for someone with relevant experience is in dealing with the media and publicity in general.

Also, if there is anyone who feels that they can represent the younger supporters we would like to create a youth representative role.

Please note however, that we are a democratic organisation and are happy to receive help from anyone who is interested in getting involved with the trust fund.

Request for Donations

If we can now move on to the question of donations.

If anyone feels that they would like to make a voluntary donation to help with the setting up costs of the trust fund then please speak to Alan Cording, our Fundraising Officer after the meeting.

As has already been explained these costs are not insignificant and all donations will be greatly received and appreciated, as without sufficient funds we will not be in a position to be able to launch the Trust.

Please note that these funds will only be used for trust fund-related purposes.

Close of Meeting:

To finish, can I ask you all to join me in thanking our guest speakers Jacqui and Jake for taking the time and trouble to speak to us this evening and to show our appreciation in the usual way.

Also our special thanks to Roger Eady for coming along this evening to voice his support for the trust fund.

Can I thank you all for turning up this evening to listen to our proposals and recommendations.

Please feel free to join the committee members for drinks after the meeting.

I would like to wish you all a safe journey home.

Thank you!