



In Touch

You know something's up when it's the AGM and there are 30 or more players in the room ten minutes before the scheduled start! Yes, we've appointed a new coach and the boys wanted a look at the new boss who will direct their efforts over the next season. They didn't even murmur when the scheduled start had been postponed because Thomas Tench had been delayed. Hardly surprising given that his daytime job entails a daily commute from his home in Richard's Castle to Cardiff. When he did arrive he got a big welcome and told the room he looked forward to developing Ludlow's running rugby style, so exciting times to look forward to at The Linney.

Thomas was the former head analyst at Worcester Warriors until their demise. Now he is sports performance analysis technical demonstrator at Cardiff Metropolitan University. I am sure that he will be warmly received and his technical expertise will greatly benefit our young teams. Well done to Steve Small and Keiron Pinches for getting him on board and well in time for the new season. Hopefully the early appointment will persuade some very talented youngsters from the area to throw in their lot with Ludlow Rugby Club although, our second team, having been kicked out of the league for failure to fulfill some fixtures at the start and end of the season, is now awaiting news of the merit league which is being formed locally.

And so to the AGM and another new and very welcome face in former player Ben Jackson. Having committed as a volunteer to a number of roles with mini rugby, Ben, I am delighted to say, has also committed to being club treasurer. He has made an impressive start getting a handle on the annual accounts, quickly identifying areas where we can do better and already working on bring down the cost of some of the big ticket items like energy costs. He will also be producing a budget which will allow us to identify spending priorities. It's really good to see former players coming back into the fold and volunteering help and ideas.

There's still a vacant role of vice chairman and I know there are plenty of players and former players not short of ideas and ability who could fill it. The business part of the meeting was quickly dealt with. The accounts are healthy, all roles with the exception of vice chairman were filled with Lynn Davies once again leading the team as chairman, Kelly Nicklin as secretary and myself as President.

The club celebrates its 90th anniversary this year and all tickets to the celebration ball have sold out. The Mini and Junior section is healthier than ever with teams from under 6 to under 15. An active programme of recruitment is under way in both primary and secondary schools and there are a good number of volunteers helping. Only two areas fall short on player numbers at Under 10s and Under 13s. James Bridge, who heads up the section said a full programme of matches with local clubs had been played. Touch rugby, on Wednesday evenings, is also getting good numbers with anyone over the age of 12 of either sex welcome. It's a good way of keeping fit and enjoying yourself through the summer. There's a few lads and dads playing and occasionally mums and daughters.

The new season will be upon us before we know it. Stu Lewis has already begun work on selling pitch side boards and booking ads for the programme as well as courting the big sponsors. As an incentive we will be

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offering the chance of going in the draw for tickets for the Autumn internationals for people who sign up early as sponsors or who pay their annual VP subs which are now due.

It was agreed at the AGM that all subs and sponsorships would be held at the same price for another season.

And one more important piece of business was conducted: the creation of four life members, former chairman, Iain Braggins; Margaret Jones who for years has tirelessly carried out duties, often unseen, and ranging from bar shifts to organising events including promise auctions and raffles; Colin Spanner who as well as playing for many years, has done two long stints as secretary and as disciplinary officer; and lastly myself, an accolade which I feel very honoured to have been proffered and of which I am very proud having been a part of the club in some way since 1968.

As ever at the AGM gossip was swapped and missing faces were asked after including Roger Evans, Lawrie Wallace and Bob Buzzer Flemons. News of Bob was thin but, what do you know, the following morning the doorbell rang and there was Bob standing on the doorstep offering me the original postcard of The Angel, where the club then met, with a summons for Spitfire pilot Laurie Whitbread to play for Ludlow v Malvern on a Saturday in January 1939. Pilot officer Whitbread was killed in the Battle of Britain. Hundreds lined the streets of Ludlow for his funeral in September 1940 including, I am sure, many of his old rugby teammates. I think we should probably have the postcard framed and put on the wall of the clubhouse.

Anyway, Bob was well and partner Jo is recovering well from chemotherapy. It was lovely to see him, albeit briefly.

See you soon,

Andy Wright

President Ludlow Rugby Club

