

Dear Fellow Members,

It has come to that time of year, when we have an AGM.

Typically, this is a time that I talk about all the things we have accomplished through the year, our Rugby play, and plans we have for the coming year. However, we all know that this year is far different than any prior.

I will leave the detail financial update to our Treasurer, Nick Taft, to share and also our Rugby play to our DOR, Skippy. Both are sending Letters along with mine. What I want to discuss is our past year and looking forward.

All of us have experienced the unimaginable. What was normalcy a year ago doesn't exist today. All of us have gone through hardships and difficulty keeping our families together going to school or work. Some of us have experienced layoffs or work slows, and some have experienced personal loss. My heart goes out to all during these tough times.

This year has been one of survival and sustainability, both words I have used in the past to describe our goals for the Club, and both words have never been more prevalent.

Since our first lockdown in the beginning of the year, the Board has worked to essentially close the Club down as quickly and as much as possible without any long term detriment. With no income coming in, we needed to drastically cut our costs. However, even at a minimum functioning Club, there are always still expenses, so we needed to raise funds in any way possible and as quickly as possible. A lot of this has come from various donations from around the Club, and for that I would like to Thank all for their generosity.

As we all know, we were able to open the Club up again and started our Rugby play. However, that promise was short lived and we had to close the Club down again and run the same process as before. All of this causes economic strains for the Club and that has been our primary focus, getting through these tough times.

There has been a ton of work done by many at the Club and never more from our Board. I want to Thank all of them for their never-ending commitment to the Club. Their hard work is what has kept us surviving and allowed us to be sustainable during these tough times.

This year, we have added two Members to the Board with Karen Seymour and Darren O'Reilly (Welshy). Both have essentially been thrown into the mix at difficult times and both have rolled up their sleeves and added tremendous value to the team immediately. I would like to thank both for their commitment to the Club as well in volunteering their time and efforts for the benefit of all.

I would also like to share that we have added Sally Iddles to the Board of BPL to add industry experience to enhance our catering and hospitality offering and help navigate the additional compliance burdens that have been thrust upon us during the pandemic. I would like to thank Sally for dedicating her time to the Club and joining our efforts.

As I have said, through the work of many, we are able to survive during these tough times as a Club, and the good news is that whenever we can get back to operating as a fully functioning Club, we will be in better shape than ever.

Our revenue streams to support our Rugby play come from the use of our facilities and our

commercial/donations. Over the last few years, we have made large investments into our facility, without adding any debt to cover the cost of investments. This has allowed the Club to be sustainable, while at the same time, allowed us to make loan repayments of debt the Club had from years ago. This past year, we had more bookings for third party functions than ever before. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these were obviously cancelled throughout the year because of Covid.

Throughout the year, we have worked to continue to maintain the facility, while at the same time, we have made investments to help deal with the restrictions and increase our offerings. All of these efforts bring the good news that once we are out of this Covid Crisis, there is no reason we can't build back our third party events and functions, which will support our Rugby Play and the Club's future.

One of these investments was to help grow out commercial offerings. Hopefully all of you have seen our new Fencing on the 1st Pitch. With Welshy leading the charge, our commercial efforts will come into full force once everything opens up and this will add vital income to the Club.

Our goals for the coming year are simple. Forefront is to simply to make sure we are in good position and ready to open up as soon as we can, have our facility functioning properly and compliant with any restrictions, and most importantly, to allow our Rugby being able to play.

As I have said, every year we look to continue to invest into the Club to not only make it sustainable, but also to make our time spent at the Club the most enjoyable it can be. This year, Covid has also shown us some investments that need to be made. An additional goal of ours for the coming year is to increase and better our outside offerings. We plan to build a larger outdoor area offering all kinds of food and beverage offerings. This will not only help us with Covid restrictions, but it will be enjoyed all year round from everyone watching our Senior side play on Saturdays, to our parents and young players in the Junior side on Sundays. It will also give us better offerings for Events, Festivals, etc., especially with current circumstances. Once we have formal plans for the outdoor facilities, we will share them and discuss with all Club Members. We will plan on fundraising and commercial offerings to cover the investment costs, not by adding more debt to the Club.

So, we go from this year's focus on shut down, survival and sustainability, to next year's focus of opening, functioning and growth.

I speak on behalf of all of the Board when I thank everyone who has supported the Club this past year. There has been a lot of generosity from many areas, which include not only generous funds and donations, but also people's efforts and time dedicated to helping the Club. It has been a tough year and there has never been a greater time of need for the Club and the efforts by all are greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank each Member of the Board for their incredible work, dedication and commitment to the Club. I would also like to thank them for committing the same to another year. The achievements this Board has made over the last three years is a gift to all and I couldn't be prouder to work with each.

Lastly, I would like to thank every member for your trust in having us lead your Club. I look forward to our future together and to the future of Guildford Rugby Club.

All the best to you and your families.

Joe

