

Sale FC Rugby Club

Annual General Meeting — Minutes

Date: May 2025 | Location: Heywood Road

1. Notice Convening the Meeting

The notice convening the Annual General Meeting was read.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Chris Boyes and Mark Roberts (Chair of Rugby), who was unavailable due to work commitments.

3. Minutes of the Last Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held in May 2024 were presented and accepted.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman of the Executive Committee, Scott Bambrick, presented his report. Key points included:

On-Pitch Performance

- The club now fields five senior teams, two women's and three men's, bucking the national trend of declining participation at amateur clubs.
- The Men's 1st XV improved on their previous league position; the club aims to push higher next season.
- Sale FC Vikings won promotion to the Harborough Premiership and won the Cup, with a squad that included nine former Colts players, demonstrating the strength of the club's player pathway.
- The Sale FC 1861 Bees (women's second team) completed their debut season undefeated, winning promotion.
- The Colts reached the Plate Final and saw over 30 players transition into adult rugby during the season, a significant development milestone.

Off-Pitch and Infrastructure

- Completion of six changing rooms at Carrington, including dedicated facilities for the women's teams.

- Provisional announcement of secured funding for a 4G pitch and floodlights at Carrington, targeting installation by January, subject to planning approval. Cost to the club: nil.
- Provisional announcement of secured funding of approximately £1 million to rebuild and expand the Jim Birtle Stand, incorporating improved changing rooms, toilets, a kiosk, standing and seating areas.

Financial Overview

- Sponsorship income has increased year on year for four consecutive years. Over £65,000 of the £125,000 sponsorship target for the coming season had already been secured at the time of the meeting.
- Membership numbers, bar and food income, shop spend, and rental income all increased. Overall turnover is expected to be the highest in the club's history.
- External cost pressures, national insurance, energy costs, and cost of living, have been managed through commercial diversification. Match day revenue represents approximately 14% of total turnover.
- A long-term rental agreement with Stockport County FC at Carrington has been secured, providing improved financial certainty.
- A sponsorship name change was announced: Morson Group will sponsor the stadium and CorpAcq will sponsor the kit next season, accompanied by an increase in total sponsorship value.

Sale FC Foundation

- Foundation documentation has been submitted to the Charity Commission, and the body is expected to be operational ahead of the new season.
- The Foundation will operate separately from the club, focused on community engagement, school outreach, and growing participation, particularly girls' rugby. The Rotherham Titans Foundation was cited as an aspirational model.

Tier Two Application

- The club submitted a full application for inclusion in the new Prem 2 structure. The process required significant executive time and resource (approximately 500 pages of documentation).
- The application was unsuccessful. The Chairman expressed personal reservations about the integrity of the process, noting that the club was assessed as well-run and meeting all criteria. The club's intent is to win the current league and earn promotion through sporting merit.

5. Treasurer's Report

Melanie McHale presented the Treasurer's Report, covering the financial year to end 2024. Key points included:

- Overall running costs have increased due to utilities, national insurance, and other external pressures, absorbing some of the income growth achieved.

- The accounts show a reported decrease in turnover year on year; however, this is largely attributable to anomalies arising from a migration between accounting systems (SAGE to a new platform). The new accountants have identified these discrepancies, and the underlying trading position does not reflect the stated decrease.
- The total operating deficit of approximately £39,000 has improved on the prior year and continues to narrow, attributed to tighter budget management and month-on-month variance monitoring.
- A departmental budget system introduced previously has continued to operate effectively, giving each area of the club ownership of its own budget.
- Cash flow management has been strengthened, with improved control over debtor collections and creditor relationships.
- Capital investment projects at Carrington and Heywood Road are being managed within cash flow planning for the 2025/26 season.

6. Chairman of Rugby Report

Mark Roberts was unable to attend. A summary was provided in his absence. Full team-by-team detail was not presented at this meeting. Key headlines:

- Five senior teams in operation, with competitive performances across all sections.
- The Vikings won both promotion and the Cup; the 1861 Bees were promoted in their first season.
- Player pathway from Minis & Juniors through Colts and into senior rugby continues to develop strongly, with over 30 Colts players transitioning to adult rugby this season.

7. Chairman of Mini & Junior Rugby Report

The Chair of Mini & Juniors (Liz Dockry) presented her report:

- Over 300 Mini & Junior players are now registered, growth that continues to buck national trends.
- Recruitment has been strong across all age groups, driven by social media, word of mouth, and the quality of coaching. The Under-10s grew from 5 to 14 players across the season; the Under-12s significantly expanded their squad.
- Over 25 years of combined volunteer service was noted across the coaching and management teams. Thanks were extended to all coaches, managers, age group leads, and volunteers.
- Carrington facilities, including the Legends Bar and the Doghouse Bar at Heywood Road, continue to support the M&J programme and contribute to club revenue.
- The 2024/25 End of Season Awards were held with over 200 children in attendance, with Player of the Year and Players' Player presented for each age group.
- Carolyn stepped down as Fixtures Secretary after a long period of service; Gareth has been appointed to the role.

8. Annual Subscription Rates for 2025/26

The following subscription rates for the 2025/26 season were presented and approved. Changes from 2024/25 are minimal, with the ability to hold rates largely attributable to commercial income growth:

Membership Category	2025/26 Rate
Single Adult Club Membership	£210.00
Family / Couple Club Membership	£260.00
Concessions (OAPs, Ex-Military, Under 21s)	£165.00

The removal of the instalment payment facility (previously PayPal, used by only 18 members) has contributed to keeping headline rates stable. The executive confirmed it will continue to support families requiring phased payments on a case-by-case basis.

Rates were proposed, seconded, and approved without objection.

9. Election of Officers

The following officers were elected:

- Chairman, Scott Bambrick (proposed: Scott Bambrick; seconded from the floor). Elected unopposed.
- Chair of Rugby, Mark Roberts (proposed: Scott Bambrick; seconded from the floor). Elected in absentia, unopposed.

10. Approval of Vice President Nominations

Five nominations for Vice President were put forward by the executive and approved by the membership. Those nominated were:

Player Nominations (proposed by the Chair of Rugby section)

- Aoife McKenna, 1861 player since the team's inception, four-time captain, and the first player in the club's history to reach 50 appearances for the 1861s.
- Dan Birchall, Nine seasons at the club, over 100 appearances, former Lancashire captain, and a key figure in the club's progression through the leagues. Returned from a serious Achilles injury to play the majority of this season.
- Ben Simpson, Fourteen to fifteen seasons at the club; instrumental in establishing and developing the Vikings and Norsemen alongside the coaching team.

Volunteer Nominations (proposed by the Chair of M&Js)

- Nikki Baker, Over 10 years coaching and volunteering in the Minis & Juniors section; described as one of the most dedicated and effective coaches in the section.
- Pete Tomlinson, Over a decade coaching from Under-6s through to Colts graduation; a consistent presence on match days as a volunteer, problem-solver, and club ambassador.

All five nominations were approved by a show of hands. No objections were recorded.

11. Any Other Business

- Sale FC Foundation: Documentation submitted to the Charity Commission. The Foundation is expected to be operational ahead of the 2025/26 season. Its primary purpose is to drive community engagement and grow participation, with a focus on girls' rugby and outreach into schools not currently playing the sport.
- Carrington Development: Plans for 1,500 new homes to be built adjacent to Carrington were noted as a significant opportunity for future membership and participation growth.
- Swinton Lions: The club confirmed Swinton are under a three-year contract (currently in year one), contributing approximately £70,000 per annum in revenue. The arrangement will be reviewed on a season-by-season basis, particularly in the context of the planned 4G pitch installation.
- Original Rule Book: A member requested the original club rule book be surfaced and displayed. The executive confirmed they are aware of its existence and are working to locate the original or earliest surviving copy.
- Member Spend Tracking: A question was raised regarding the ability to track and analyse member spending at the club. The executive acknowledged this as a valuable metric but noted the administrative resource required to analyse smart card data comprehensively is not currently available.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed. The executive and members were thanked for their attendance and contributions throughout the season.