# Bangor Rugby Football & Cricket Club

# Honorary Secretary’s Annual Report for 2018-19

# It is with pleasure that I present this Annual Report. Management Committee firstly acknowledges the effort and dedication of our Cricket and Rugby Committees, players and coaches; and the financial, in-kind and enthusiastic support of our members, volunteers and sponsors throughout the year. We also acknowledge the good work of our bar staff, Stephen and Alison Johnston, Christine Wilson and helpers. Likewise, we thank Bangor Grammar School for the use of their facilities for cricket and rugby, and Ards & North Down Borough Council for subsidising Rugby training at the Aurora Leisure Complex.

Registered **membership** stands at 441, down 20% on last year. This reflects a decline in registered rugby playing members across the adult but more especially the Mini section, compensated to some extent by a growing Youth section. Non-playing membership has declined slightly. Playing membership nevertheless represents 58% of total membership and Mini rugby continues to be the largest section of the Club, accounting for 26% of total membership. Regrettably, it is a concern that only 47 registered adult playing rugby members are recorded as having paid their subscriptions.

**Playing Membership 2018-19**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Sen (R) (C) (D) | Junior (R) (C) (D) | Youth (R) (C)  | Mini (R) | TOTAL |
| Total | *49/19/2* | *11/12/1* | *18/30* | *116* | *258* |
| Paid Up | *37/19/2* | *8/6/1* | *18/30* | *116* | *236* |

**Non-Playing Membership 2018-19**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Hon Life | Honorary | Vice Pres | Non-Playing | Country | Associate | TOTAL |
| Total | *6* | *5* | *86* | *56* | *7* | *23* | *183* |
| Paid Up | *(6)* | *(5)* | *86* | *51* | *6* | *21* | *175* |

Our sporting review starts with **Cricket**. Taimur Khan continued as player/coach in a good year for the sport where a very wet start, soon followed by a hot summer, ensured few fixture postponements.

The **1st XI**, captained by Chris Burns, competed very well to finish in 3rd place in Section 1 of the NCU Ulster Bank League, winning 12 of their 18 league fixtures. Despite winning their preliminary round of the Challenge Cup at home to Laurelvale, they went out at home to Downpatrick in a high scoring game in Round 1. The team were also unlucky to lose out to Holywood in the semi-final of the Twenty20 Trophy where a ‘super over’ settled a thrilling game that had ended tied at 108-9.

In JL2, the **2nd XI** again won 7 of their 14 league matches, also finishing 3rd in their league, but went down by 125 runs away to eventual semi-finalists Laurelvale 2nds in the first round of the Intermediate Cup. The **3rd XI** again finished 5th in JL 5 winning 7 of 14 league games, but were disqualified for playing an ineligible player after beating Lisburn 3rds at home in the first round of the Minor Cup.

All three **Youth Cricket** teams had an enjoyable season overall. The **U-15s** again topped Div 2B of their league, winning all 4 games, but lost out again in the semi-final, this year to North Down. In the Graham Cup, they had a narrow 2 run loss in the first round away to Lisburn. The **U-13s** found Div 2B challenging, while the **U-11s** had mixed results in Div 2B and didn’t reach the knock-out stages. A first round win against Armagh in the Quoile Cup was followed by a 16 run loss to Donacloney in Rd 2.

**Rugby** had a difficult year at adult level. Jason Morgan, our Head Coach, left in September to become Head Coach at RBAI, where we wish him well. Mike Ferguson took over as Head Coach assisted by Player-Coach Lewis Stephenson.

The **1st XV,** captained by David Bradford, produced some very impressive early season results in a very competitive AIL2C. However, some serious injuries in the autumn and difficulties in filling key positions contributed to a slump in form over the late autumn and winter period. Nevertheless, the determination shown by the squad in picking up losing bonus points was to prove vital. The marked improvement in the team’s performance towards the end of the season was fittingly rewarded with a morale boosting and deserved win at home to promotion chasing Malahide to finish 8th and retain AIL status for another year. After three tough seasons in the AIL, issues relating to poor game management and inconsistency in converting scoring opportunities are some of the challenges that have to be addressed if rugby is to progress in the AIL and Ulster SONI Leagues.

The demands of AIL rugby contributed to the **2nd XV** struggling in PL1, where they finished 9th, dropping to PL2 next season. The team were also narrowly beaten away to Dungannon 2nds in a high scoring and entertaining game in the first round of the Towns Cup. The **3rd XV** again finished in a mid-table position in UPL 5. In the Forster Cup, they lost out at home in the second round to a very strong Ballyclare 4ths, the eventual winners. A strong **U-20 squad** provided much encouragement for the future by winning both the Malone and Instonians Easter U-20 Tournaments unbeaten.

**Youth Rugby,** following the hard work of recent years, saw a strong U-14 squad compete very successfully for the first time in the Ulster U-14 leagues to finish second in their section. They were also beaten finalists in the U-14 Plate. Our congratulations to Davy Coey and all his coaching volunteers. Many of these boys will now move on to U-16 level next season with a new U-14 squad and more coaching volunteers in place to continue the growth of Youth Rugby at Bangor next season. **Mini rugby**, under Liam Foley, like many clubs in Ulster this season, saw a significant drop in numbers, especially in the higher age groups. An enjoyable season was nevertheless had by all, and the P7s had a very successful tour to Edinburgh in April. **Ladies’ Rugby** continues in the guise of a joint North Down team with Ards and Donaghadee Ladies and enjoyed a number of blitz’s and league games.

**Off the field**, Rugby obtained Sport NI’s Clubmark Accreditation through the Ulster Branch (IRFU) in June, recognising best practice in club governance and future development of the sport, while Cricket continue to work on their submission through the NCU. The volunteer Utilities Team has continued its good work on the grounds and the pavilion. Drainage problems on the cricket outfield and Nos 1 and 2 rugby pitches were addressed effectively last summer. Light bulbs were replaced on No 1 rugby pitch floodlights, rugby posts painted on Nos 1 and 2 pitches, and BT Sport and Internet access installed in the pavilion in September. The Club also obtained full grant funding for a new ride-on rotary mower for the rugby pitches and outfield areas. This was delivered in March through Sport NI’s Pitch Maintenance Programme. The cricket roller, which had served the club well for many years, was also replaced this March.

As the Club looks forward to celebrating the 50th anniversary of the opening of Upritchard Park this autumn, social and economic change has impacted adversely on the sustainability of domestic rugby and cricket over this time. In addressing these issues and challenges, **Rugby** and **Cricket Development Plans** have been produced by the respective playing sections**.** These will inform next year’s Management Committee in producing and implementing an innovative **Club Strategic Plan** aimed at ensuring the sustainability, enjoyment and success of rugby and cricket in Bangor for the future.

Davy Morrow has served the Club well as President, carrying out his responsibilities effectively in addition to his work on the Utilities team. John McMaster, having served on Management Committee for many years, has decided to stand down as Club Chairman, a role which he has carried out with zeal and integrity over the last five challenging but productive years. Chris Escott also stands down after diligent service as Cricket Section Chairman and representing Cricket Section on Management Committee for the last four years. We wish all three well in ‘retirement’.

It is with regret that we record the passing of long-standing VP Sam Ashfield who died in July. Sam played rugby for Bangor for more than a decade from the early 70's. A quiet but loyal supporter, he is fondly remembered as a 1st XV's bus driver and a regular veterans’ touch rugby participant. We also regret the passing of Leighton Arndell, a non-playing member of the rugby section.

*Norman Gault*

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Honorary Secretary

BRF&CC Management Committee