

30<sup>th</sup> August 2009

Dear Member,

### Time for the Warm Up – Rugby's Back

It seems, well barely three months since we were all sunning ourselves in Staines and savouring the sweet taste of play off success and promotion for the first fifteen to National League rugby.

I hope that since then you have had an enjoyable and relaxing summer whether on staycation, braving sterling euro exchange rate fluctuations or on further foreign shores.

Not that rugby seems to have ever been far away. We had a thrilling Lions Series (Ronan, Ronan, Ronan: what were you thinking?) and more recently an unexpected insight into the refuelling habits at Bath Rugby and now the revelations of Bloodgate. The kitchen table chatter in the Grady household at least has revolved around whether there has in fact ever been such a thing as an 'off season'; and this year has been a case in point as Dorking prepared for life in National League 3 London and South East.

Against an Ashes backcloth, there been a huge amount going on;

- Richie Andrews has strengthened his coaching team with the addition of Quins' conditioning coach Gareth Tong, and signing up London Irish and England's Paul Hodgson as a regular skills coach;
- Rugby Chairman Jim Evans has spent the summer identifying targeted areas where we can improve our senior playing strength while maintaining the motivation and the commitment of the existing high quality player base;
- Seven Dorking players (and seemingly several more supporters) spent the summer on the emerging exchange programme with the Hamiltons Club in Cape Town, and plans are afoot to offer a similar opportunity to experience rugby in the UK;
- Plans are also underway to improve our mini and youth rugby capabilities even further by establishing a Youth Development Programme. The Programme will be supported by Gerwyn Wilson the new Mole Valley RFU rugby development officer to increase the prospects of moving our young talent into senior rugby;
- You may have see a televised reminder of success in this area to date, with Matt Keyte and George Kruis appearing in the Middlesex Sevens on Sky Sports for Bath and Saracens respectively. Well done guys;
- Congratulations also to Kay Wilson and Millie Moore on selection for the England Women's Under 18 elite training squad, in Millie's case two years younger than most of the squad members. Well done to both and to Stewart Irvine and the coaching teams on yet another success for the Girls section. With Emma resurrecting the Ladies section over the summer, exciting times lie ahead.

And there's been plenty happening off the pitch;

- We are now operating as Dorking Rugby Football Club Limited, and as a registered charity. We have established a trading subsidiary company with Roger Parkin, David Judd and Marc Boughton on the Board Directors. This is a big step forward to establish the right legal and financial structure for the rugby club. The changes makes it essential that everyone re-applies to become members of the new organisation as described below;
- We have made huge strides forward on the redevelopment project. The detailed planning application will be submitted to Mole Valley before the start of the new season. The new Lease will be in place in the same timeframe and you may have seen the National Trust public notice concerning the Lease in the Dorking Advertiser recently. Ted Ivens and I will

be writing to members and Vice Presidents separately with an update on the redevelopment in more detail than space allows here;

- Roger Spreckley has taken over the organisation of the Members and Sponsors lunches from Julian Biggs and an ambitious gastronomic programme is planned. Brownie has spent the summer trying out new recipes on the Newdigate 2<sup>nd</sup> XI;
- The senior and Youth websites have been updated and harmonised led by Mark Thornberry; and
- Mozza has once again put together a superb Club Handbook packed brimful of reports, news, events, features and even the occasional tour confessional. Thanks to Paul for his summer's labours. A copy of the Handbook is enclosed with a version of this letter that is being mailed to senior members and will be available for collection at Mini and Youth registration on the first two Sundays in September.

So we seem reasonably well placed for the season ahead, but make no mistake it is going to be a big step up in standard and will require a huge team effort from us all. **And here's what you can do;**

- First and foremost, please complete and return your membership form and subscription payment to Dermot as soon as possible. As we are now operating under the new structure, everyone needs to transfer membership to the new charity company;
- An application to join the 300 Club is also being mailed to members. This is an easy and relatively modest way of supporting the Club financially and offers a monthly opportunity to win a cash prize;
- There are a range and variety of jobs where help is needed, from assisting with putting the match day programme together as well as selling programmes, looking after visiting referees, videoing matches, and a range of other useful match day 'stuff'. If you have time and skills to offer, please come forward – ***don't wait to be asked;***
- Competing in National League rugby will inevitably and unavoidably result in increased running costs from travel through to medical. It is essential that we increase the funding for these operations through increased sponsorship and advertising income. Commercial Director Roger Parkin has produced some high quality materials to use with prospective advertisers or backers. What we need now is for members to put their hands up where they can themselves help with advertising or sponsorship or identify opportunities to follow up. ***Please give some thought to how and where you can help or where your company could benefit, whether it is with individual player sponsorship or something broader.***

We have made tremendous progress as a rugby club in every area of our activities over the last several seasons in terms of playing strength and success and our organisation and administration. This season promises to be something of a step into the unknown with new challenges and experiences which will quite literally take us to places we haven't been before. What we do know is that we will face these challenges with a sense of enjoyment and with our inclusive, One Club ethos at the centre of everything we do.

See you at The Club.

Shaun Grady  
Chairman  
Dorking rugby Football Club Limited