

CF10 ARMS PARK RUGBY TRUST ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

INTRODUCTION This is the eighth annual report of CF10 Arms Park Rugby Trust and covers the year to 30 September 2024.

CF10 ARMS PARK RUGBY TRUST THE ORGANISATION

The organisation was formally established on 19 May 2016 as 'Cardiff Blues Rugby Supporters Society Limited' but trades under the name CF10 Rugby Ltd. It is a legal entity established under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 as a Community Benefit Society (number 7342), sponsored initially by Supporters Direct. The organisation's name was formally changed to CF10 Rugby Trust following a vote at the 2021 AGM and this came into being in September 2021

CF10's purpose is to be the vehicle through which a healthy, balanced and constructive relationship between the Club and its associate sides, its supporters and the communities it serves is encouraged and developed. The business of the organisation is conducted for the benefit of the community served by the Club and not for the profit of its members. Each member of CF10 holds one share for their period of membership. The Model Rules approved initially by Supporters Direct act as the organisation's constitution along with the Board's Standing Orders.

PREVIOUS AGMs Copies of previous AGM minutes are available in the 'Documents' section on the website (<https://cf10rugbytrust.org>) along with approved minutes of each Board meeting.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The following individuals were elected by the members at AGMs as Directors of CF10:

- Chair: Lynn Glaister (for 3 years until March 2027)
- Secretary: Sally Carter (for 3 years until March 2027)
- Treasurer: Derek Redwood (for 3 years until March 2026)
- Board Members:
 - Simon Baker (for 3 years until March 2026)
 - Andrew Collins (for 3 years until March 2026)
 - Steve Coombs (for 3 years until March 2027)
 - Simon Jones (for 3 years until March 2024 – did not seek re-election)
 - Claire O'Shea (for 3 years until March 2026)
 - Hugh Campbell (for 3 years until March 2027)

In addition Sarah Kirk was co-opted to board from August 2024 until the next AGM in March 2025)

The directors are supplemented by a number of invited observers who also attend Board meetings and contribute to the organisation's various working groups. We believe that this model strengthens the Trust by involving and utilising a wide range of skills in its work. In addition, the Board is very aware that its skillset needs to be kept under continuous review and is very open to supplementing it on a regular basis.

In March 2024 Simon Jones decided not to seek re-election to the board, we are grateful for his contribution over the years.

CF10 ARMS PARK RUGBY TRUST MISSION STATEMENT

CF10 is a democratic and representative forum open to all supporters of Cardiff rugby. The Board has established a mission statement for its work. This was initially approved at the AGM 2017 and a revised version was approved at the AGM 2021:

- Ensure that the voice of all supporters is central and foremost when major decisions are being made at Cardiff Arms Park and to achieve the greatest possible supporter influence in the running of the club.
 - To continue to build the Trust's holding of directly owned and proxy shares thereby creating a significant influence on decision making at AGMs and EGMs of the company.
 - Act as a critical friend to Cardiff Blues Ltd. and its associate sides, supporting innovation when appropriate and challenging views and opinions when these conflict with the views of members.
- To ensure that the continuous history of Cardiff rugby is preserved and promoted via:
 - o Cardiff Rugby Museum
 - o Future developments at and of Cardiff Arms Park
 - o the branding and strategy of the professional rugby team, including retaining 'Cardiff' in the team's name.
- To work in partnership with other regional and local supporter groups in order to maximise our influence at the national and local level.

GOVERNANCE

Complementing our Standing Orders the Board has established a Director's Handbook, both of which are available online (<https://cf10rugbytrust.org/documents>). We believe strongly in the principles of openness and transparency.

SHARES

The Trust (and therefore each member) owns 200 shares in Cardiff Blues Ltd (CBL). More importantly, members who are shareholders have signed proxy forms to CF10 for over 41,250 shares.

Activities during 1 October 2023 – 30 September 2024

Supporter Advisor

David Allen began his supporter adviser term in January 2022. It is a three-year role. We are grateful to David for his continued liaison with CF10 board. He has a standing invitation to attend our board meetings and has attended most.

This role was an important aim of CF10, and the continued contribution David is able to make to all matters at Cardiff Rugby board level has vindicated our belief that the Supporter Advisor role is of benefit to the club and the supporters. The club has agreed that the role is a success so there will be supporter advisor election process in the autumn of 2024. CF10 was invited to help review the process ready for the advertising of the post.

Cardiff Rugby

CF10 board members have continued to hold meetings with Cardiff Rugby Chief Executive, Richard Holland, and key members of his team. For yet another year our meetings continued to be dominated by the central issue of funding and the WRU strategy for

professional rugby. This year also covered the EGM of shareholders where Helford Capital completed the acquisition of a majority shareholding in Cardiff Rugby. The investment company completed the transaction to acquire a 84.55% shareholding in the iconic Welsh rugby club. Shareholders approved changes to the company's share structure and constitution to allow the acquisition, with an overwhelming 99.99% vote in favour. Helford Capital, spearheaded by Phil Kempe and Neal Griffith, confirmed their ambition to drive the Blue and Blacks back to the top of the European game. This is still a work in progress!

During the year we were also able to discuss many other issues with them on behalf of CF10 members, including ground facilities such as catering and bar facilities, merchandise, communication with supporters, player retention and attraction, environmental sustainability, and accessibility issues.

Cardiff Heritage

In September 2024 the care of the Cardiff heritage collections was formalised with the creation of a two-tier Heritage Management Board and Steering Group. The Management Board will be the governing body, and the Steering Group will generate ideas and take responsibility for the required work. This Group has the full backing of both the Cardiff Rugby Board and Cardiff Athletic Club, who both have representation on the Management Board, and an operating budget has been agreed to allow us to improve displays and storage. This is an exciting and important development and there are ambitious plans for the future, including an exhibition linking to the forthcoming Lions tour, and a special exhibition to commemorate the 150th.

It has been pleasing to see the growing interest in ensuring the Club's rich heritage is properly cared for and fully celebrated. The Trophy Room has been refurbished, and the windows have been boarded up, allowing greater control over light levels. A new portrait of Peter Thomas has been hung on the newly created wall. Memorabilia has also been added to the Pack Bar. Donations continue to be offered and there have been several purchases from auctions, including a Cardiff shirt belonging to Rhys Gabe. The Online Museum continues to flourish and we are working with Cardiff Rugby to incorporate this within the official club website, securing its content for the future

150th Anniversary of Cardiff Rugby

Plans are still ongoing to ensure a special celebration of Cardiff Rugby's 150th anniversary. CF10 members form part of the committee dealing with plans. Ongoing discussions are being held.

Social Media and communications

We have continued to develop a series of blogs on strategic, political and heritage issues. We now have a regular page in the Cardiff Rugby programme and continue to have a strong presence on social media. We are grateful to our social media team for their continued work to ensure we have a strong presence.

In addition to social media our Chair undertook a number of radio and TV interviews on behalf of the trust and JSG Cymru raising our profile.

Cardiff Rugby on the pitch

The 2023/24 season won't go down as the most successful in the club's history. But it might go down as one of the more memorable. Facing unprecedented challenges off the field, the club not only survived but gave us all a taste of how it might go on to thrive in the future. Matt Sherratt unexpectedly found himself as head coach, initially with only 8 players in the club's first pre-season training sessions. But the supporters quickly got behind his new young side and began filling the Arms Park to watch a brand of positive attacking rugby played in the club's best traditions.

A win over the Stormers was the highlight of the first part of the season. Youngsters Cam Winnett, Alex Mann, Mackenzie Martin and Evan Lloyd all starred in this game, showing the form that would see all four win their first caps later in the season. When Champions Cup rugby arrived, Cardiff were expected to struggle, but instead pushed Bath all the way in a memorable night at a boisterous Arms Park. A hammering of the Dragons saw us end 2023 on a high.

The latter half of the season became a story of close run things and losing bonus points. The small young squad was stretched to breaking point as Cardiff began providing a huge chunk of Warren Gatland's Wales squad. Yet still it was only a series of controversial refereeing decisions that led to wins away in Ulster and Munster being cruelly snatched away. A well deserved win over the Sharks away in South Africa saw the season end with a sense of triumph.

Few supporters who packed the Arms Park during 2023/24 will be able to say that they weren't entertained by the Blue and Blacks.

Cardiff RFC on the field Season 2023/2024

Cardiff RFC finished the season in 4th place, with a record of Played 24, Won 15 , Drawn 1 and Lost 8. We amassed 89 points which was 16 points behind the eventual winners Llandovery. We also lost 34-13 to Llandovery in the play off semi final.

The financial restrictions on Cardiff Rugby meant a smaller player pool, and as a result fewer players available to support the RFC. Senior academy players were required to play for the senior team.

Craig Hudd and Luke Pollard joined the club at the start of the season becoming regulars in the team and our young Academy squad members included Matty Young, Kodie Stone, Harri Wilde, Lucas De La Rua and Cameron Tyler-Grocott, all of whom performed very well.

The team was captained by Morgan Allen who, lead ,by example, having an excellent season. Top point scorer was Harrison James with 202 pts and top try scorer was Dewi Cross with 17. Caps were awarded to Ethan Phillips, Luke Pollard, Jacob Lloyd, Joe Williams and Craig Hood, while Joe Tomlinson, Morgan Allen and James Beal all reached 100 games.

Matty Young, Kodie Stone, Harri Wilde and Lucas De La Rua represented Wales at under 20 Level.

At the end of the season , we said goodbye to Joey Tomlinson, Morgan Allen, Aaron Pinches, Jacob Lloyd, Ollie Drake, Harrison James and James Beal. Many of whom have been RFC stalwarts over the past few seasons.

Steve Law (spot) also sadly left Cardiff at the end of the season. His contribution to our success over the time he was with us cannot be understated. Hopefully his legacy will live on under the guidance of one of his Lieutenant's Dan Fish, who will take the role of Head coach for season 24/25.

JSG Cymru

We continue to be a member of the Joint Supporters Group Cymru known as JSG Cymru. It is made up of Crys16, Ospreys Supporters trust, Dragons Supporters Club, Cardiff Blues Supporters Club and CF10 Rugby Trust. Our aim is to meet with the WRU and raise matters on behalf of our members. We publish agreed minutes on our website.

We are sad to report that it was yet another frustrating year for the supporters of the professional clubs. The WRU appointed a new Chair, Richard Collier-Keywood. Nigel Walker continued in the role of interim Chief Executive until Abi Tierney took over as the new Chief Executive at the start of 2024.

Nigel, whilst in his interim CEO role, continued to honour his commitment to meeting with JSG Cymru regularly. We looked forward to the same under the new CEO and it started well but this has now faltered. The last meeting we had was in June 2024 with subsequent meetings cancelled. The WRU decided they wanted to agree the strategy and funding model with the clubs before meeting again. Yet again we finished the reporting year awaiting the agreement with the clubs in the form of a PRA and with stalled communications with representatives of the 4 professional club supporters groups and the WRU. This is frustrating as we believe that they should be seeking input from groups such as ours and did not recognise that our agendas included many subjects aside from funding and structure.

CONTACT US If you have any questions regarding this annual report or any queries regarding Cardiff rugby generally, then feel free to get in touch here:

<https://cf10rugbytrust.org/contact-us>