**Chairs Report 2017/8**

**Last year when I took up the role of Chair I mentioned two things, firstly that I believe in the spirit of the game and had always found very honest and genuine people associated with rugby clubs, Manchester RFC was no exception and I had been made most welcome, which had inspired me to get involved from day 1. The second was that at 56 I would still carry on playing and this would limit my involvement for a while.**

**I have been supported by ‘Dink’ in my first year who has maintained his involvement especially on Saturdays and I thank him for his help and guidance this year. Being, almost one step removed I have been able to observe a lot in this year and now feel able to start making my mark in the second year and more of that later.**

**My view in May last year was, if it is not broken do not attempt to fix it. The first team had been promoted, almost all other sections of the club were doing well and we have continued in that vein in 2017/8, although the first team has possibly not hit all their goals, that is marginal, down to a few points here or there in games, a lack of bonus points made the difference between top half security and a relegation nail biter but on reflection a solid start in the new league.**

**The above shows me that with a little improvement the first team can more than consolidate their league status in 2018/9, hopefully those who worked tirelessly on the field will remain committed to Manchester.**

**Other senior men’s teams have had a mixed season the 2nds narrowly missing out on promotion due in no part to a dubious result’s panel decision, the thirds hopefully have clung on to their league status, due to the dedication of a key few individuals both teams have honoured the vast majority of their fixtures, my thanks to Xander, Faz, Colin, Laks and his team for all their efforts in 2017/8.**

**Other sections have continued to flourish and I will not steel the thunder from them in their report but just to say briefly. M&J’s are the live blood of this club, year in year out producing outstanding players and good people, Tim Holmes continues to do a remarkable job.**

**I do, however, want to make a special mention of two groups for what they have achieved this year, the ladies and Makos both for different reasons.**

**Firstly, I did not feel this club does not always give the ladies the spotlight they deserve, I have sought to change that and encourage them to better things and boy have they delivered in 2017/8. They have achieved their highest position in the league, playing at level 3 in ladies’ rugby, they have almost doubled player numbers in a year, creating a successful Development squad, they have developed new coaches and will train more coaches to help themselves and girls rugby, a huge success.**

**On top of that they are the best organised of all teams in Manchester, they have to travel the furthest, which takes true dedication and all of them and I mean all of them pay their way.**

**Secondly, we have Makos, another great success, it is hard to achieve harmony within a club, let alone bring two clubs players and coaches together and make a cohesive unit. Yet, that has been achieved in spades by Darren, Suzanne and others from both clubs. But most importantly it has provided regular rugby for a group of lads who put loyalties other than to the game aside, which kept them in the game, to continue the pipeline into the senior squads, a great achievement.**

**Finally, none of this happens without a dedicated team working tirelessly behind the scenes, we have many willing volunteers, who give up their time freely, we need more but those we do have, do a brilliant job. I thank the whole committee for their continued support and hard work, I thank those beyond the committee, such as Tim & DI, Anne Marie and Iuean to name a few who make this club tick.**

**In particular, I want to highlight three individuals, two of whom have already had a mention in recent weeks.**

**David Want, our referee co-ordinator who has been in role 43 plus years and we hope will do at least 50.**

**Bryan Fisher, he has been a staunch supporter of ladies and girl’s rugby at the club and continues to be a great ambassador for girls’ rugby, liaising with local schools. In his honour I have decided that there should be an annual club award for the best senior ladies’ player, which rightly brings them on par with senior men, this will be named in his honour and mark his 50 years of service to the club.**

**On the coaching side, we have a dedicated team, Oggy, Goughie, Colin and Jamsy providing development and guidance throughout the season. However, one person in particular has dedicated almost all his spare time to the club and players over the last few years. He has worked tirelessly for the club, I am sure at some personal cost at times but as we know, he has taken on new challenges at work and committed to his wonderful wife. As a consequence, Beanie has reluctantly asked to step down as Director of Rugby but will remain involved with the club and players going forward. It is a testament to him, that in replacing him, what he did week in week out has formed the basis of three roles going forward.**

**Manchester RFC owes him a lot and I am sure you will all agree.**

**For now, that is enough from me but I will come back in at the end of the meeting to set out my plans for 2018/9 and beyond.**