

Due to Covid 19 restrictions the OLSC has not been able to arrange our annual AGM for the 2019/20 season. This is in line with the terms of the constitution.

The existing OLSC committee have agreed to continue our roles on the committee until it is possible to host the AGM for supporters to attend in person and vote a new committee in.

We have discussed this with Leinster Rugby and sought legal advice to ensure we were not in breach of the constitution.

As soon as government restrictions ease to allow for groups to meet safely we will arrange an AGM.

## **Presidents Report**

I'd like to start by saying THANK YOU to all the supporters who bought our OLSC branded face masks and took part in our table quiz back in February.

Between mask sales and the money raised at our table quiz, we raised €10,200 and were able to donate €5100 to each of Leinster Rugby's charity partners, Down Syndrome Centre and MS Ireland. This wouldn't have been possible without your help and the generosity of Proteam Sports.

I will give an update on activities so far and when we host the AGM we can go into more detail if required.

### **Merchandise:**

We started the 2019/20 season with 6 OLSC branded items:

- Stadium Blanket
- Beverage carriers
- Hipflask
- Tankard
- Wigs
- Ceramic Mugs

We then introduced some new items

- Keep Cups
- Car stickers
- Luggage tags
- Lanyards and card holders
- Pins
- Facemasks

We also launched our new online shop [www.shop.olsc.ie](http://www.shop.olsc.ie)

During the early stages of the 2020/21 season we added more items to the shop, and we hope to add more before the end of the season too.

- Christmas Baubles
- Pencil cases (also great for make-up brushes)
- Fold -up bag for life
- Pop socket
- Hand sanitiser keyrings

Any profits made from sales is put directly back into the OLSC to purchase more stock and also used towards events during each season.

**Charitable work:**

This season we had the pleasure of again working with Down Syndrome Centre and MS Ireland.

Back in February we hosted a table quiz to raise much needed funds for both charities.

Thanks to The Bath Pub for hosting the evening for us and providing food, along with great spot prizes. Thanks also to the following companies for donating spot prizes for the night:

- Leinster Rugby
- The Bath
- The Landmark
- The Leopardstown Inn
- Zambrero
- Richies Bike Store
- The Bridge
- Lemon and Duke
- KDK
- Henshaw Eyewear
- The Donnybrook Gastro Pub
- Ashtons Pub
- Enigma
- Merrion Inn
- Foleys

We had great plans for more charity events during the season to raise further funds for both charities but unfortunately like everybody else we had to put them on hold due to Covid-19. Hopefully we get to continue with these plans soon.

We still wanted to be able to help Leinster Rugby's two charity partners raise funds during a difficult time and introduced our branded face masks and had planned to donate €1.50 for every mask sold but Proteams Sports, when they heard we were raising funds for the two charities came on board and matched that donation, so we were in a position to donate €3 per mask sold.

Thank you again for your support and thank you to Proteams Sports too.

### **The Laighin Out**

We had plans to spruce up the Laighin Out during the season and we did get to make a start thanks to Diageo.

We got a fabulous new backdrop for the stage, new high tables and barrels to allow for supporters to rest their drinks while enjoying the Q&A's

We've loved having the players over to visit us and hope they enjoyed the Q&A's just as much as us. "The show went on" even when we had a power cut in the Laighin Out during the Seachtain Na Gaeilge Q&A.

We hosted our mulled wine and mince pie evening and welcomed visiting supporters during the season and hosted a brunch.

We hope it's not too long before we are back welcoming everybody back to The Laighin Out.

### **Sea of Blue:**

We continued with our Sea of Blue this season and as always Bank Of Ireland supplied flags for us to hand out to supporters to create our Sea of Blue and BearingPoint again joined in and supplied the foam hands, so a huge thank you to both.

When matches started again it was a shame that supporters couldn't be there is person to create a Sea of Blue for the team, so we got banners made and thanks to The Sandymount Hotel we were able to provide a different Sea of Blue to show support to the team as they travelled to the Aviva. Some of these banners are now at home in the RDS to show support to the team on match days. We only managed one away bus during the 2019/20 season to the Munster game but we hope we will be back arranging more soon.

### **Funding:**

Due to the high volume in revenue the club brought in due to face mask sales and new merchandise, David Ryan the treasurer has worked with BDO to produce the end of season accounts for 2019/20 and these were also passed to the custodian for review.

As always, we'd like to say thanks to Bank of Ireland who sponsor our away guides each season and to The Bridge for sponsoring our Dublin Guide for visiting supporters.

### **Team Gift:**

The OLSC gifted all Leinster Rugby players (men's, women's and academy), management, backroom staff and the Commercial and Marketing team , a personalised face mask and OLSC hand sanitiser.

### **Thank You:**

We'd like to give a mention to those who have helped us out through the 2019/20 season and into the 2020/21 season.

The Commercial and Marketing team that we deal with regularly on different items throughout the season, in particular, Kevin Quinn and Marcus Ó Buachalla.

Chris Elward, another OLSC volunteer, who looks after graphic/layout design for us for the away guides, publication etc.

Proteams Sport for their help and donations with the face masks, which helped us raised over €10,000 for the charities.

BDO Ireland for assisting us with financial queries.

Bank of Ireland for continuing to support us and sponsor our away guides (which are virtual guides for the time being)

***Our OLSC offer providers***

- Ashtown Gastropub
- Base Woodfire Pizza
- Best Menswear
- Dublin Airport  
Parking
- Energia
- Henshaw Eyewear
- KDK
- Lemon and Duke
- Lifestyle sports
- MAO
- Richies Bike Store
- Sportsfile
- The Bath
- The Bridge
- The Donnybrook  
Gastro Pub
- The Exchequer
- The Landmark
- The Merrion Inn
- The Sleep Shop
- Zambrero

**A note from Leinster Rugby:**

Like many things in 2020, it is a huge pity that we do not get the opportunity to present to you the OLSC in person and to meet with our loyal supporters and to address any queries that you may have.

Just as it has been hugely frustrating to see out the 2019/20 season and to start the 2020/21 season without you all in attendance at the RDS Arena, at the Aviva Stadium and of course on our trips abroad in the Guinness PRO14 and the Heineken Champions Cup.

However, in context, many of our friends and our community have had to endure far worse in the last ten months. As we move towards Christmas and a New Year they are very much in our thoughts. To those of you supporters that have lost jobs or fallen on hard times or indeed have lost loved ones, we are very much thinking of you all.

2020 will be remembered for many things and in a sporting and a Leinster Rugby context it should be again noted and acknowledged the success that Leo Cullen and Johnny Sexton's men had in retaining the Guinness PRO14 title for the third year in succession and going through our league campaign unbeaten all season. Leinster Women's Coach Ben Armstrong and Captain Sene Naoupu and their squad also made history by retaining the Women's Interpro title for the first time. Similarly, Leinster 'A' Coach Noel McNamara and Captain Charlie Ryan also retained the Celtic Cup by beating Ulster A in an all-Ireland final at Energia Park. Not a bad season of success to have three trophies return to UCD.

2020 also brought huge disruption to Leinster Rugby's domestic rugby programme with all matches and cup competitions being cancelled. The continued lack of matches is a source of huge frustration in our clubs and schools which we both understand and share. We do however remain fortunate to at least have rugby, in the form of non-contact training, and in particular when other sporting and leisure activities haven't recommenced. Huge work is going on behind the scenes by Philip Lawlor and his team, working with the IRFU and the Government to plan for matches to safely resume as soon as possible in the New Year. To that end you would have seen this week the draws for a number of the 2021 underage clubs and schools cup competitions as a positive sign as we make every effort to plan for the return of matches. The unseen work of our wider rugby community and in particular our clubs and schools volunteers and our Club and Community Rugby Officers to help make the safe return to rugby a success is one of the highlights of the year. Without their support, the work of volunteer Club COVID Officers and everyone adhering to the COVID protocols, this simply could not have happened.

Looking forward to 2021 and the road ahead is of course still an uncertain one. However we in Leinster Rugby are committed to coming out the other side of all of this very much still standing and still strong. As has been widely reported over 50% of our revenue comes from gate receipts and Leinster Rugby haven't been able to welcome any of our fantastic supporters through the turnstiles since February. The positive news around vaccines is hugely encouraging though. Again we've been working hard behind the scenes with the RDS, with the IRFU and with other sporting bodies to agree a plan for the graduated return of supporters to our stadia in a safe, COVID-compliant manner. We can assure you that when we get the green light from Government to open up the RDS Arena in the New Year, we will be ready to go.

There is much discussion about the Guinness PRO14 and what our league competition will look like in 2021. Leinster Rugby are very supportive of any proposal for new South Africa teams to join the league. These teams can bring an extra competitive edge to the competition and we believe the Leinster Rugby community, our staff, our players, our supporters and our volunteers will be energised by the thought of facing the best that South African rugby has to offer in the years ahead.

There's no doubt that Leinster Rugby would have struggled to get through these difficult times without the support of so many across Leinster's rugby family and community. To that end we must sincerely thank all our partners and sponsors, who have been unstinting in their support for Leinster Rugby despite facing the challenge of COVID head-on themselves. In particular our title partner Bank of Ireland whose support for all our Senior teams, our youth teams, our domestic cup competitions, right down to our re-organised Bank of Ireland Leinster Rugby Summer Camps is crucial to Leinster Rugby's success both on and off the pitch. Truly this is support for Leinster Rugby, #FromTheGroundUp.

Furthermore it is significant and important to acknowledge the role of you, our supporters, in getting us to this point. As always your support is vital to our continued success both on and off the field. Leo is on record many times this season saying how different the match day experience is without you and how much we miss having you with us. There can be no doubt that we are stronger and we are better - together! And without Season Tickets to offer during a COVID impacted season, it was truly humbling to see almost 6,000 of you sign-up to become Official Members again supporting your Club. Thank you.

By now we hope that each of our Official Members have received your exclusive Official Membership packs – if not please email [tickets@leinsterrugby.ie](mailto:tickets@leinsterrugby.ie) and we will check this for you. We also launched a new series of exclusive digital content available via your Leinster Rugby Official Membership account. Please remember to log-on regularly where you can find exclusive video

interviews with players, competitions and just this week we launched our first edition of *Across the Laighin*, a new digital magazine again exclusive for Official Members. Coming up is Q&A with Jordan Larmour and looking out to 2021 there will be other events and exclusive activations between now and the end of the season.

We are indebted to the work of the OLSC Committee under the stewardship of your President, Laura Lysaght. It has been a difficult year for them too. Typically each match week, much of their energy is invested into bringing Leinster's famous *Sea of Blue* to life whether home or away. And they have still worked incredibly hard on your behalf and indeed have worked in tandem with our partners and sponsors to ensure that the supporters have a voice. They are all volunteers and their tireless work is worthy of ours and your gratitude for an often thankless task.

Finally, our doors are always open – well our emails are at any rate! – and we are more than happy to deal with queries direct from any supporter that wishes to engage with us at [info@leinsterrugby.ie](mailto:info@leinsterrugby.ie). The team back at base in UCD under the stewardship of Mick Dawson would be delighted to hear from you and to help you.

On behalf them and of everyone in Leinster Rugby, we would like to thank you again for your support and your patience. Our small team here have been working remotely and under challenging conditions (writing this from my kitchen table!) to the best we can. We don't always get it right in some of our activations or our initiatives but we always strive to keep you, our supporters at the heart of everything we do. That will continue to be the case as we plot a way forward into 2021 and beyond.

From us all in Leinster Rugby, Happy New Year.

Kevin Quinn (Head of Commercial & Marketing) & Marcus Ó Buachalla (Senior Communications & Media Manager)

**2020/21 Season:**

We've started the season well,

- Continuing with our Q&A's, a huge thank you to the players for accommodating the virtual Q&A's)
- Virtual away guides
- Sea of Blue – a different type so far this season. We hang banners up for the players as we can't be there in person

Again, thank you for your support last season and so far this season and we look forward to seeing you all soon in the Laighin Out.

Laura  
President