

Press Release

7th November 2011



Launch of the All-Party Group on Rugby

An All-Party Assembly Group on Rugby was officially launched at Stormont today.

The purpose of the All-Party Group on Rugby is to engage with the Northern Ireland Assembly at a strategic level and to examine issues impacting upon the development of rugby, stadia and specific issues affecting the professional game in Ulster.

“We have ambitious goals to becoming a leading force in World Rugby within 10-15 years and support from the Assembly will be crucial to reaching that goal.” said Ulster Rugby Chief Executive Shane Logan

“There is a richness to rugby that can, if harnessed properly, make the game a huge power for good in our society and we are very interested in engaging with our elected representatives and government departments to ensure that rugby is at the heart of decision making in Northern Ireland.

The values of respect, discipline and hard-work that are an intrinsic part of the game provide a useful code in terms of educating our young people. Rugby has the ability to bring communities together, deter from anti-social behaviour and our clubs provide excellent bases for their local communities. Through the game we can promote the benefits of active living, encourage children and young people to take part in enjoyable and sociable physical activity and tackle health issues.

And there’s an economic angle as well – with rugby played in Belfast for 9 or 10 months of the year it accounts for a substantial number of bed nights in Belfast as our hotels accommodate travelling teams and their supporters who are all spending in the city.”

The APG is chaired by Alastair Ross, MLA for East Antrim.

“The Assembly shares many of the aims of Ulster Rugby, and certainly recognises the positive contribution that rugby can play in the community, whether that be in terms of promoting a healthier way of life, teaching discipline or as a means of enjoying the social side of the game in clubs across the Province.

We also recognise the specific challenges that lie ahead if the sport is to grow and attract greater participation amongst sections of the community who have not traditionally identified with rugby football.

I would hope that through the APG we can play our part in helping to grow rugby in Northern Ireland and ensure that Ulster continue to be recognised as one of the leading professional teams in Europe.”

Ends://

For further information please contact Lyndsey Irwin at Ulster Rugby on 028 9049 3222 ext 240 or email lyndsey@ulsterrugby.com

Members of the All-Party Group on Rugby

Chairperson: Alastair Ross MLA

Vice-Chairperson: Judith Cochrane MLA

Members: Barry McElduff MLA
 Conall McDevitt MLA
 Simon Hamilton MLA
 Basil McCrea MLA
 John McCallister MLA
 Chris Lyttle MLA
 Michelle McIlveen MLA
 Colum Eastwood MLA

Non-Members who attended the Launch

Arlene Foster MLA (Fermanagh & South Tyrone)

David McNarry MLA (Strangford)

Jim Wells MLA (South Down)

