



ENGLISH RUGBY COUNTIES ASSOCIATION

Counties in Membership

Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Cheshire
Cornwall
Devon
Durham
Eastern Counties
Essex
Gloucestershire
Hampshire
Hertfordshire

Lancashire
Middlesex
North Midlands
N.L.D.
Oxfordshire
Somerset
Staffordshire
Surrey
Sussex
Warwickshire

Associate Members

Derbyshire
Lincolnshire
Nottinghamshire

MINUTES of the meeting held at Fiveways Old Edwardians RFC on Sunday 5th June 2016 at 11:00 a.m.

Counties represented:

Jonathan Dance	Berkshire	Garry Doherty	Hampshire
David McAteer	Berkshire	David Herriman	Lancashire
Anthony Flack	Buckinghamshire	Brian East (Secretary)	Middlesex
Peter Rhodes	Cheshire	Peter Grace (Chairman)	North Midlands
Alan Mitchell (Treasurer)	Cornwall	Charlie Hemmings	North Midlands
Richard Simeons	Cornwall	Colin Baldwin	Oxfordshire
John Drew	Devon	George Merry	Oxfordshire
Treve Mitchell	Devon	Rob Forsyth	Staffordshire
Ivor Smith	Essex	Becky Davies	Staffordshire
Peter Williams	Gloucestershire	Frank Edmonds	Sussex
Jed Stone	Hampshire	Charlie McGinty	Warwickshire

Apologies were received from:

Gordon Roulinson	Derbyshire	Des Chalmers	Somerset
Norman Robertson	N.C.A.	Steve Mead	Somerset
Steve Guy	North Midlands	Malcolm Caird	Surrey
Malcolm Caird	Surrey	Roger Edmundson	Sussex
Andy Shorney	Somerset	Ken Nichols	Sussex

1. PRELIMINARIES

- 1.1 The chairman, Peter Grace, welcomed all to the meeting and thanked members for attending. He welcomed Becky Davies (Staffordshire), Treve Mitchell (Devon) and George Merry

(Oxfordshire) to their first meeting and paid tribute to Jed Stone (Hampshire) who was attending for the last time. Jed had been a long standing member of ERCA and had been Chairman at one time.

1.2 The Chairman circulated a copy of his letter at the meeting and indicated that the views expressed in it were his own. He thanked the Steering Group for their help over the year and praised Middlesex CRFU for their notes taken at the RFU Council meetings.

2. **MINUTES** of meeting held on 17th January 2016

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record. Matters arising were taken as agenda items.

3 **RFU Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP) Strategy**

Members discussed their experiences within their CBs for the establishment of AGPs

3.1 Peter Williams (Gloucestershire) – They had held 4 meetings considering the criteria. The possibility of shared facilities in Bristol and Gloucester was deemed important. Several clubs in the CB had AGP pitches installed outwith the RFU and Gloucester are using this experience.

3.2 John Drew (Devon) – The allocation of time-slots was limited and clubs might have to pay for extra sessions. A lot of their clubs were disqualified because of their leases and security of tenure. The experience of Maidenhead was used as an example of best practice.

3.3 Charlie McGinty (Warwickshire) - A lot of their clubs were disqualified because of their leases and security of tenure.

3.4 Richard Simeons (Cornwall) – Clubs have put themselves out of selection because of their leases. Alan Mitchell reported that Penryn has an AGP installed and had experienced difficulties in getting the facilities used.

3.5 Colin Baldwin (Oxfordshire) – The first tranche of money had been signed off. The next step will be to identify further suitable clubs based on experiences from the first tranche.

3.6 Jonathan Dance (Berkshire) - The experience of Maidenhead was used as an example of best practice.

3.7 Ivor Smith (Essex) – 6 clubs were in conflict with time for practice sessions and priority for sessions was to be established. The CB would have preferred a school installation.

3.8 Anthony Flack (Buckinghamshire) – 1 pilot installation has been installed at Aylesbury RFC and it was hoped to attract schools as users. The club owns its own grounds.

3.9 Becky Davies (Staffordshire) – The CB had identified 5 clubs and were evaluating the most suitable venue.

3.10 Peter Rhodes (Cheshire) stated that their players had not experienced using AGP pitches.

3.11 Jed Stone (Hampshire) – 2 AGP pitches has been installed in the CB. 1 at United Services Portsmouth RFC and 1 at a University Ground; both paid for from other sources.

3.12 David Herriman (Lancashire) – A pilot had been determined in consultation with the FA. Several other AGPs already installed in the County (self –funded) in colleges and universities. 1 AGP was in use for rugby in a club.

3.13 Frank Edmonds (Sussex) – the CB had not yet decided on their first AGP. 1 was already in place at Brighton RFC jointly funded but had not been kept up to standard and not managed by the club. The RFU AGP scheme will be managed by the RFU.

3.14 Summary – Peter Grace will produce a summary of this discussion and forward it to Steve Grainger and Ross Baxter. Ross in running the pilot schemes.

4. **RFU PFR Survey**

It was reported that the feedback from the PFR survey had been given to the CBs.

5. **RFU Adult Competition Review**

There was nothing further to report. Other recommendations about 2nd XV's in leagues are to be considered. Peter Williams (Gloucestershire) reported that 2nd XV's are involved on the CB and the league structure had been established.

6. **ERCA and the way forward**

- 6.1 Peter Grace reported that he had received a comment from outside our organisation that we consider a name change to disassociate ourselves from past activities and issues. After a brief discussion it was agreed to leave things as they are and to make sure that the ERCA minutes are circulated to the CBs and the RFU.

7. **Recent RFU CB Conference**

- 7.1 Attendees at the meeting reported on their experiences at the CB Conference. It was considered a success and a very good forum. The workshops were well received and the discussions lively and not necessarily RFU dominated
- 7.2 Peter Williams mentioned that some CBs had asked for Area meetings to discuss common issues from the conference. The conference had been organised by the CBs for the CBs. A question was raised about whether CBs are fit for purpose; it was incumbent upon each CB that their clubs understand CB activities.

8. **County Championship**

- 8.1 Both Cornwall and Hampshire were congratulated in winning their respective championships.
- 8.2 Peter Williams reported that Gloucestershire had nearly pulled out of the Championship this season due to the lack of player availability. Player safety and player burn-out had added to the criteria for participation. The general consensus at the meeting was that player availability was an issue at the end of the season.

Peter Rhodes commented that new regulations for the CC had been issued by the RFU with an increase in funding. Paper from the RFU is circulated separately

Several CBs noted that the enthusiasm from players for the competition was strong (Bucks, Staffs, Devon and Hants)

9. **Any other Business**

- 9.1 Points covered in the recent set of RFU Council Meeting Middlesex Notes were raised but considered not relevant to this ERCA meeting.

The meeting closed at 12:55 to be followed by the Annual General Meeting (minuted separately) with the future meeting dates agreed therein.

Signed by Peter Grace, Chairman, as a true record of the meeting

_____ Date _____