

b) Finance and Funding: No report.

c) Discipline:

BH Stott reported that the committee was quite busy with hearings and that players appreciated the style of chairmanship from JS Greenwood.

d) Rugby Development Partnership:

T Fitzgerald reported that it is a management group aim to retain & recruit players, coaches and referees.

e) Club & Community Rugby.

MJ Worsley reported:-

- H Duggan had joined the C & CR committee.
- Presidents meetings had been held with the theme “is our game in trouble ?”, from this it was felt we need to engage more with players.
- A sub committee has been formed to look at Communications.
- Web masters meeting to be held at Eccles on 29th March.
- A Kerboas is to organise the County Volunteer Awards evenings and is looking for recipients from clubs.
 - 25th April Blackburn
 - 27th April Leigh

f) Competitions:

PJH questioned if the cup finals day had been arranged, JT Hughes noted it was possibly 7th May.

g) Coaching:

Tom Fitzgerald reported:-

- Reports are delivered to the Management Board and we are seen as one of best within RFU
- We have 12-14 players in the Lancashire RFU Academy with 1 to 1 mentoring
- Running the club / Coach mentoring scheme to introduce coaches to clubs and vice versa.
- Working with universities to get students into clubs.

h) Governance: No Report.

i) RDO: No Report.

5. Playing Report.

a) Senior XV & Royals XV

- JS Greenwood – the Royals had played the Anti Assassins and won, there are plans to arrange other fixtures, possibly against Cumbria.
- 40 players had been invited to train with the senior XV as we move towards the County Championship.

b) U20s

JS Greenwood reported

- the loss to Cheshire on 19th March 42-7. The very young squad would now play Warwickshire.

c) U18s

JT Hughes reported

- A change in format since the last report in November but this had worked quite well.

- 5 players had been selected to represent England Counties
- 30+ players had been selected for the U17s
- T Fitzgerald noted that we are restricted to certain schedules from the RFU which we adhere to but other counties do not. K Andrews to investigate.

d) U16s No Report

e) Schools

TD Stirk noted

- that numbers of players in schools was increasing and that the All Schools programme was seen as successful.
- The U18s Schools Plate and Cup finals were outstanding matches held at Preston Grasshoppers.
- Schools Finals day is to be held at Fylde. There are a great variety of schools competing and this is a credit to teachers and development staff.
- K Andrews is doing a great job of running the emerging schools competition.

f) Womens & Girls

Helen Duggan reported

- Growth remains strong with lots of new teams and new sections in clubs who have not had W&G before.
- Work continues to develop club – university links.
- Littleborough are now a “full House” which is U13s, U15s U18s and Senior Women.
- Lancashire is a leader in the RFU Inner Warrior campaign.
- Widnes U15s had played a curtain raiser at Twickenham before the England v Scotland game.
- Thanks to County for supporting Waterloos successful bid to join the Womens super competition.
- The RFU Womens County Championship was now called the Gill Burns Cup.
- Charie Wilcocks, Sally Stott and Molly Morrissey had gained England selection. Women’s 6N player of the Tournament was Jarriet Miller-Mills originally from Manchester.
- County Championship starts on 29th April at Millom v Cumbria.
- 8 U18s and 6 U15s have been selected in North squads.

Tom Fitzgerald thanked Helen Duggan for her great work.

6. League

Dave Clarke reported

- Congratulations to Tarleton on reaching semi final of National Cup
- Play offs were scheduled for 29th April
- There had been a large number of player registrations
- A meeting had been held of clubs in North Lancashire leagues to address problems of only 9 teams in one league. D Clarke and M Downs attended.
- A discussion followed on the possible make up of the proposed Lancashire Leagues & D Clarke confirmed a meeting was to be arranged of all clubs involved.

7. ERCA

David Herriman reported

- Debated the RFU HMG Governance issues and voted to insist that Council members strongly negotiate.
- RFU have increased funding for representative rugby but it is still inadequate.
- AGPs – Criticism of how the RFU are rolling out.
- Want to ask RFU to go back and revisit the Adult Competition Review.

8. Correspondence. There was no correspondence appertaining to this meeting

9. New Members. British Womens Police RFC

10. Date & Time of Next Meeting.

Wednesday 21st June 2017, at Tyldesley RUFC following the AGM

11. AOB.

- SM Parker – a letter in the Rugby paper had been very supportive of the County Championship. We should support the game and not just be a money maker.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 9:25 pm

Appendix 1

RFU Representatives Report Headlines

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the England Team for winning the Six Nations Championship and for their record equalling number of 18 consecutive wins. Pity that they were unable to complete the Grand Slam and Triple Crown in the process. Congratulations also to the England Women's Team and the England U20s for their Six Nation Grand Slam victories also.

CEO REPORT

- Three Artificial Grass Pitches are now in use at Preston Grasshoppers RFC, Aylesbury RFC and Hornets RFC. Planning permission is now in place for work to start at Billingham RFC and Shelford RFC in April and detailed feasibility has commenced on 23 sites for phase two.
- RFU had achieved the top end of the Sport England grant funding scale.
- London Welsh went into liquidation in December after failing to meet a clear set of requirements.
- Gordon Lord (ECB) has been appointed as Elite Coach Educator.
- Mitsubishi Motors support of the volunteer recognition programme has now been officially launched.
- East Stand development planning approval was granted in December. Work has now started immediately after the England v Scotland game.

INTERNATIONAL REPORT

The possibility of change of ownership at Gloucester RFC and the complex questions surrounding common ownership and integrity of the EPCR competition is being considered by EPCR Board, RFU, FFR and World Rugby.

The World Rugby Committee will be discussing the extension of residency requirements for players from 3 years to 5 years.

Rob Udwin had been appointed as one of the Vice-Presidents of Rugby Europe

NOMINATIONS STANDING COMMITTEE

Danny Hodgson standing down as Chairman of the Player Development
Neil Hagerty standing down as Chairman of the Club Development Sub-Committee
Stuart Potts standing down from Schools & Youth Governance.

It was agreed to defer the implementation of a factual recording and reporting system on Council Members to their CB's and representative bodies. This would return to the next Council meeting.

Council approved the following appointments for Season 2017/2018:

President – John Spencer

Senior Vice-President – Chris Kelly

Junior Vice-President – Peter Wheeler

Past President on Council – Peter Baines

Chair of the Community Game Board – Rob Briers

HMG GOVERNANCE CODE

The report of the sub-group established to consider the HMG Governance Code was noted and Jason Leonard spoke to the paper.

- Non-compliance with the Code would impact on funding, and may also impact on support for major events, increased scrutiny and withdrawal of assistance with visas and potential legislation being introduced to bring about change required by the Code.

In total there were 72 requirements within the code. 39 had already been achieved (Green), 21 were easy to achieve (Amber), and there were 12 that would require a constitutional or policy change.

- Council approved the adoption of the requirements within Council's remit
- Council approved the requirements marked in Amber within the remit of the Board and recommended to Board that those requirements be adopted.
- Council endorsed the approach of the group to the requirements as more particularly set out to Council.

2017/2018 SEASON MEN'S INTERNATIONAL TICKET PRICES

- It was proposed to keep ticket prices the same for season 2017/2018 but with one minor change to the number of categories applied to B internationals.
 - The only change is the reduction of price categories to 5 from 7 for the Grade B matches
- The Ticket Exchange has been, in general, well received.

RUGBY FOOTBALL REFEREES UNION REPRESENTATION

- Council agreed that the Executive Committee of the Rugby Football Referees Union be permitted to appoint that body's representative to Council for the period 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018

CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS

- Council approved that from the 2017/2018 to 2019/2020 seasons inclusive, there shall be no play-offs for promotion from the Championship to the Premiership, meaning that currently only the club finishing at the top of the Championship shall be eligible for promotion.

PRESENTATION: SAFEGUARDING

Richard Smallbone presented to Council on the work of the Safeguarding Department.

- In light of recent football related disclosures, we believe our current safeguarding processes are rigorous. RFU have worked closely with the Child Protection In Sport Unit (CPSU) within the NSPCC to develop robust policy and procedures to safeguard children.
- Awareness of Safeguarding Policy and best practice has led to an increased number of DBS applications (Disclosure and Barring Service, new CRB check process)

LIFT THE WEIGHT

Damian Hopley informed Council that the RPA had launched the "Lift the Weight" campaign which was around mental health issues suffered by players and in particular in the two years following leaving the game. This centred around the loss of self-esteem, loss of identity and a loss of a sense of belonging. The Personal Development Programme did a lot to assist players however a 24 hour confidential counselling service had been established. It was noted that players listened to players.

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Stephen Brown and John Cunningham updated Council with the progress of the new Strategic Plan 2017/2021

The highlights were around:

- “Why” – making rugby a force for good for everyone in England and the
- “What” – to be England’s strongest sport and the world’s leading rugby nation.
- The wording required work however the basic theme was in place.
- Strategic priorities would be protect, engage, grow and win with innovation, people and technology being the key enablers.
- Council would be receiving a full draft document in April.

WOMEN’S NEW COMPETITION

Women’s Super Rugby Competition – Following interviews with 14 women’s clubs, 10 teams have been selected to participate in the inaugural 2017-18 season.

Bristol Ladies Rugby Ltd, Darlington Mowden Park Sharks, **Firwood Waterloo Ladies**, Harlequin FC, Gloucester-Hartpury Women's RFC,, Loughborough Students (Lightning), Richmond FC, Saracens Women, Wasps FC Ladies, Worcester Valkyries

WOMEN’S COMPETITION REGULATIONS

- Council approved the regulatory changes as presented
- Council agreed to delegate authority to the Chair of Governance, Malcolm Caird, Alys Lewis and Chris Burns to finalise the detailed drafting of the regulations and to make such further regulatory changes as may be required to implement the principles
- Council agreed to delegate authority to the Chair of Governance, Alys Lewis and Chris Burns to finalise the drafting of the regulations for the Women’s County Championship

PAYMENT OF PLAYERS UPDATE

Malcolm Wharton presented to Council.

- That an official RFU statement on the effect of the payment of players be adopted and issued with the wording to be finalised;
- Clubs to submit an annual declaration, signed by four key post holders, stating whether they make payments to players in any form and if so, to state the details; and
- Clubs choosing to make payments about agreed levels (those levels to be confirmed by Council in April 2017) at Levels 3-5 and any payment at Level 6 and below would render themselves ineligible for RFU financial benefits (with the specifics to be agreed at Council in April 2017).

There were large concerns around non-compliance with HMRC requirements and it was noted that some clubs wished to retain unlimited player payments.

The principles had been agreed and a final paper would be presented to the April meeting for approval with implementation for the 2018/2019 season.

PROMOTION TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP

Geoff Irvine’s paper was noted.

It was proposed that in order to achieve promotion from National League One, the club finishing top of the league should play the club finishing at the bottom of the Championship in a two-legged play off to determine who competes in the Championship the following season. This was deferred to the next RFU Council meeting in April.

FINANCIAL REPORT RFU finances in a healthy position.

Record of Attendance

T Fitzgerald	President
H E Neely	Past President
D Clarke	Vice President
P E Hughes	Past President
S M Parker	Past President
D N Herriman	Past President
J T Hughes	Past President
M Downs	Hon Secretary
K Andrews	RFU Representative
M J Worsley	Club & Community Director
T D Stirk	Governance Director
J S Greenwood	Director
H M Whittle	Past Vice President
E Haynes	Burnage RUFC
J Lancaster	Burnley RUFC
A Ingham	Chorley RUFC
D Burrows	Colne & Nelson RUFC
T Dunn	Didsbury ToCH
D Todd	Heaton Moor RUFC
B Hurst	Littleborough RUFC
A James	Lostock RUFC
J Jeskins	Manchester & District Referees
R Heptonstall	Oldham RUFC
R Coope	Oldham RUFC
J Huyton	Orrell RUFC
I Hollis	Orrell RUFC
G Winstanley	Orrell RUFC
B Cook	Tarleton RUFC
B Belcher	Tyldesley RUFC
D Clarke	Wigan RUFC
S Rigby	
I Scott Brown	