

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Minutes of the Board meeting of the held at Liverpool St Helens FC on Monday 7th September 2015

Present: Mr T.D. Stirk in the Chair, Messrs, M.J. Worsley, J.T. Hughes, P. Saunders, H.M. Whittle, R.T.J. Briers, K. Andrews, Mrs C.A. Baker, J.S. Greenwood, M. Downs.

In attendance: Messrs, T. Fitzgerald, S. Urquhart & D. Southern.

Apologies: Messrs S.M. Briers, B.H. Stott & Mr D.N. Herriman.

The Board welcomed Carol Baker to her first meeting as Director of Volunteering.

RDO Report.

SU reported:-

1. Now was a key time to focus on University rugby as students were returning, Chris Lowden was developing a strategy to get students to clubs.
2. There were no Coaching courses being held during RWC, future courses will need to be booked online and this would be enforced.
3. Headcase and Concussion training were now mandatory parts of level 1 and level 2 training.
4. Mentor scheme was progressing well.
5. A facebook page had been set up for the big push on Vets and Casual rugby.
6. Touch participation was up at the highest levels ever and was proving a good recruitment tool.
7. Social spaces programme had awards £140K to 10 club projects.
8. A good job had been done collectively for the RWC and clubs now need to grasp the opportunity to increase recruits.

DS reported:-

9. A setback on the unity project as the Portuguese RFU had a new President who had dismissed a lot of our contacts.
10. Our efforts for the RWC organisation had been better than most CBs
11. PFR was still outstanding but would be dealt with in conjunction with SMB

DS & SU left the meeting

Minutes of the last meeting:

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Monday 6th July 2015, (previously circulated) were accepted and signed as a correct record.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

RFU Report

KA Reported on the 4th Sept Council Meeting as follows:-

1. Council had voted to accept the recommendations for the Optimal Ticketing and Hospitality Strategy. See Appendix 1 for KA Summary.
2. There was a presentation on the RWC, Bill Beaumont mentioned the Lancashire efforts for the Trophy tour and his recent visits to North Manchester and Aldwinians.
3. £250 million worth of tickets had been sold, host cities and 6000 volunteers were ready. £10 million had been invested in 550 clubs and there were now 400 schools in the all schools project.
4. Overall the Unity Project was deemed a success.
5. 2000 of the 6000 volunteers have no affiliation to clubs and would be encouraged to seek out their local clubs.
6. The asset registry has been offered to clubs to apply for surplus equipment used at RWC.
7. Adult Competition Review, a new survey will be sent out using Mori IPSOS
8. A National Youth Council presentation had been well received.
9. PFR – Some CBs were worried that this was being driven by the professional staff and not the Counties.
10. RTJB had given a presentation to Council on the County Championship, the U20s (who would be given £2K for entering) and the introduction of the Womens County Championship.

Finance Report

HMW reported on a recent meeting of the Finance & Funding Committee.

1. Some monies were coming in from the debtors list.
2. County Dinner – this needs to be strictly policed and the marketing committee will take responsibility going forwards.

Finance & Funding Report

No report.

RDC Report

TF Report had been circulated along with the minutes of recent meetings of RDC & Team Lancashire committees:-

1. Team Managers would be able to order kit direct from the web shop.
2. 5 RDC workshops would be held in Sept/Oct. A well attended Coaching Conference had been held with 45 present plus 2 coaches from Portugal.
3. Coach education/certification had been held for the RFU/Sale DPP.

4. RDC workshops had been used to identify U20s players.
5. 7 Club Coach Mentor Scheme sessions had been held at different clubs.

Club and Community Rugby

MJW reported:-

1. Next meeting would be 10th September which would be the Annual Planning Meeting.

Marketing & Media

PS reported:-

1. Getting information for the website was proving difficult, we are within a couple of weeks of the new site launch.
2. KA requested possible training session on use of new website.
3. Volunteering is to be added as a new agenda item.

Cup and Competitions

1. It was reported that everything was running smoothly.
2. KA had held a meeting attended by all section heads, one discussion point was the Lancashire Cup being held as a pre-season round robin competition.

Governance

TDS reported on a recent meeting of the Governance Committee:-

1. Dispensations – The colts league had requested block dispensations for teams at U17s & U19s, this could not be approved as there were cross CB issues with other counties.
2. 1 age grade dispensation had been received.
3. Several age grade RFU disciplinary sanctions had been taken up by World Rugby.
4. Caution was urged by the County Solicitor on the chasing of bad debt.

Discipline

It was reported that business was brisk.

Unity Project

1. DNH had attended the Unity Project Conference at the RFU.

World Cup

KA had circulated RWC Headlines and reported:-

1. A successful Trophy Tour day, the organisers of individual events had been invited to the welcoming ceremony for the Irish team at Burton.

Correspondence.

MD reported there was no correspondence appertaining to the meeting.

New Members

There was a new membership application from Charles Grant (Life) - approved.

50:50 Draw

MD to bring the draw up to date from July onwards after receiving all paperwork to organise.

Date of next meeting:

Next Meeting: Monday 5th October 2015

Any other Business

TDS – had been very impressed with what he was seeing as he visited some of our clubs in his Presidential year.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:10pm

_____ Chairman

Date _____

Appendix 1

OPTIMAL TICKETING AND HOSPITALITY STRATEGY FOR TWICKENHAM

Ticketing and Hospitality Review

In September 2014 the RFU embarked on a comprehensive review of ticketing and hospitality arrangements at Twickenham with a view to developing the 'Optimal Ticketing and Hospitality Strategy for Twickenham'.

Purpose of Review

Revenue from International matches at Twickenham is the key driver of the RFU's ability to invest in the game throughout England. Twickenham is also the showcase for England Rugby and the environment in which the rugby family comes together to watch England play. It is therefore essential that a clear long term strategy is in place to ensure that Twickenham delivers the optimal experience, showcase and revenues. In undertaking this review the RFU was motivated by:

- A concern that the customer experience at, and the overall presentation of, Twickenham were below the levels to be expected of the world's leading rugby stadium and were not consistent with the brand values being developed for England Rugby.
- A concern that as the stadium ages and customer satisfaction declines, the profitability of Twickenham would decline and restrict the RFU's ability to invest in the game.
- A belief that there is significant potential to improve the performance of Twickenham as a key driver of the RFU's ability to invest in the game.

The Review Process

The RFU appointed International Stadia Group (ISG) to assist in the review and in developing the strategy. ISG is the market leader in the planning and execution of strategies which combine the creation of the best spectator experience with the generation of optimum revenues from premium and general admission stadium seating.

The guiding principle in the work undertaken by ISG has been to respect the traditions and ethos of the game. ISG has worked in close collaboration with the International Rugby Ticketing Sub-Committee (IRTSC) and the RFU senior executive group. The IRTSC is an advisory body which includes volunteers who represent clubs from throughout the country, and is chaired by a member of the RFU Council. It reports to the RFU Board and Council on all ticketing matters and hence ensures the view points of the clubs are taken into account

The priorities advocated by the IRTSC and delivered by the ISG strategy are:

- 1. More seats to be available to club members.**
- 2. Club members to be seated in no worse locations than previously.**
- 3. Club members to pay similar prices to those paid previously.**
- 4. The ability for clubs to monetise part of their ticket allocation to be preserved.**

The RFU Council has been briefed consistently on the project and will decide whether or not to proceed with the various recommendations. The paramount consideration, as always, is the greater good of the game. Several recommendations were approved at each of the April and June Council meetings. Further key resolutions will be formulated following feedback from the clubs as a result of this consultation process and will be considered by the RFU Council on **4 September 2015**.

ISG conducted extensive market research and surveys of key stakeholders and customers including club ticketing officers and club members in order to assess the:

- status quo in terms of how tickets are allocated, distributed and used, and how hospitality is delivered and sold.
- 'market', including a detailed understanding of the desires and behaviour of all categories of consumer based on an extensive research and data collection process.
- optimal structure to ensure delivery of the best experience for all in the stadium.

ISG has developed a strategy to deliver the best return from Twickenham on match days, both from a revenue perspective to enable investment in the game, and from a brand perspective.

Optimal Ticketing and Hospitality Strategy: Overview of Recommendations

The strategy recommended by ISG involves a complex and interrelated matrix of measures across many areas of operations at Twickenham, including match categorisation and seat categorisation, ticket allocation, ticket systems and ticket pricing, debentures, hospitality and capital investment.

The IRTSC has been involved at each step of the process and has had significant input into the ultimate strategy.

At their meetings in April and June the RFU Council approved the necessary resolutions relating to match and seat categorisation, and short term ticket pricing. At their meeting on 4 September, Council will consider the necessary resolutions relating to hospitality and ticket allocations, including a major change in respect of the Official Licensed Operators (OLOs), which are the final resolutions required to implement the recommended strategy.

Changes to the OLO Scheme

Hospitality at Twickenham remains a vital source of revenue for the RFU and our on-going ability to invest in the game. It is essential that the hospitality offerings are shaped to maximise revenue and optimise the RFU's share of those revenues.

ISG's advice is that the existing OLO scheme is unsustainable in the medium to long term, as evidenced by the downward trend in both the number of clubs selling tickets to OLOs and the prices being paid by OLOs for tickets. The RFU is therefore intending to move to a new OLO scheme to protect and ultimately increase the revenues delivered both directly to clubs and the RFU for reinvestment in the game

Impact for Clubs

As indicated above, the overriding principle has been to respect the traditions and ethos of the game of rugby union. **Fundamental to this is that the position of the clubs as the ultimate ‘owners’ and guardians of the game is sacrosanct.** This is reflected in the impact which adoption of the recommended strategy will have for the clubs, as follows:

- Clubs will continue to receive **50%** of the available seats at all England international matches at Twickenham. Clubs will no longer be able to sell tickets to OLOs – tickets for the OLO programme will be sourced direct from the RFU and from the ‘other’ 50% of available seats.

More tickets will therefore be used by club members. The ability for clubs to monetise tickets through sale to OLOs will be replaced and the overall position of the clubs will be improved (see below).

- **The quality of tickets allocated to Clubs will not be materially affected.**
- **Club members will pay broadly the same price as previously on average.**
- **Twickenham will remain accessible to all.**
- Clubs that cannot use their allocation or wish to monetise their allocation will be able to sell them to other club’s members through a new, easily accessible ticket exchange.
The difference between the purchase price paid by the club and the price at which the tickets are sold through the exchange creates an ‘**Exchange Premium**’, guaranteed by the RFU, which the selling club will automatically receive.
- This has the added benefit of enabling verified club members throughout the country who were not successful in their club ballot, to secure match tickets at Twickenham.
- A new ring-fenced fund (the ‘**Supplemental Club Pot**’) will be created for the clubs from non-rugby family ticket sales at internationals.
- Overall, clubs will receive direct cash payments from ticketing which are forecast to be approximately **3 times the total cash benefit** received through the current OLO programme.
- **Consideration is being given to the possibility of adopting at Twickenham the ticket allocation and distribution process adopted successfully for the Rugby World Cup.** The survey responses show that this process has been well received by Clubs as it reduces their workload while maintaining their control of their allocations.