

**MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING AND
FINANCIAL AGM OF
LANCASHIRECOUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LTD
HELD AT PRESTON GRASSHOPPERS RFC ON 21st NOVEMBER 2018**

President David Clarke welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies:

Gill Burns MBE, Dennis Woodcock, John Morgan, John Bradbury, John Dewhurst, Ernie Haynes, Ernie Neely, Helen Duggan, John Greenwood, Brian Stott, Tom Fitzgerald, John Heals, John Huyton, Bryan Belcher. Malcolm Worsley, Carol Baker, Steve Blackburn, Bill Hopkinson, John Jeskins, Trevor Hulme.

2. Minutes of the General Meeting held on Wednesday 20th June at Tyldesley RUFC

These were on the County website.

3. Matters arising

No matters arising.

4. Financial AGM and Presentation of Accounts for 2017 -2018

Paul Deakin welcomed everyone and then went on to explain the accounts. He explained that the aim was not to make money per se but to make money that could then be invested back into the Community Game.

All the accounts had been audited and signed off. The balance of spending had been 50% which had been put back in the Community and 50% had been used for administration within the County and for the County Games where whilst there had been a great degree of success there had also been a cost. There were no paid administrators within the County.

Next year the County have £161,000.00 and a spending plan had been produced which was circulated at the meeting. Money would be invested in:

- Lancashire Academy – this was for players that may not have been admitted on the DPP pathway but instead would follow the Lancashire Academy pathway.
- Hire of Facilities
- U13/U15 Girls Pitch up and Play
- Recruitment of new players
- Casuals/Touch Rugby
- Primary School Programme (not on Funding Plan but a new initiative, there were currently 20 clubs engaged in this programme)
- Referee and Coach Development
- Volunteer Recognition
- Competency of Referees
- Continued funding of ERCA
- Safeguarding
- Lancashire Roses

- Players now had increased access to County Rugby eg Lancashire Royals, a concept that other Counties were now following. This year the Royals would play three games.
- U16s increase in Squad numbers

The Financial Plan has been added to the website and can be found here:

http://www.lancashirerugby.co.uk/images/Lancs_Finance_Plan_2018_2019.pdf

Paul then offered to answer any queries from the floor.

ISB queried money for RWC but that would be addressed in next year's budget.

There was also a query about County Sponsorship, which remained the same as last year with regards to the programme, The new Lancashire County Leagues had their own sponsorship from Malcolm Worsley and ADM.

FM then raised a question about the Lancashire Colts Cup as he felt that 20 teams was an ambitious target. There were 60 clubs but only 20 colts teams and FM felt that this was not good enough.

There then followed a discussion about the problems with recruiting players to these teams as there was generally a drop out in this age group. FM felt that there should be a discussion with John Kitchen to see if anything could be resolved eg this year there had been a clash of dates as the wrong structured season had been looked at.

Ken Andrews agreed that a meeting should take place to ensure that this situation should not arise again. There was also some discussion about the fact that 6th Form colleges sometimes targeted this age group. At the moment the County had no specific plan for this age group although there was talk of the RFU setting up an initiative and in that case the RDO s would be more involved.

DH also commented that he had met with the new University Person who had said that they would be focussing on the West Lancs Coast.

PD then closed this part of the meeting and was thanked by David Clarke.

5. RFU Representatives Report

The full report can be found here:

http://lancashirerugby.co.uk/images/RFU_Rep_Report_November_2018.pdf

RJTB wished to clarify the following points:

- The departure of Steve Brown the RFU CEO. Steve Brown had not been fired as was widely reported in the press. He had been at the RFU for 7 years. He had been the Financial Officer , then CEO and there had in effect been a 'perfect storm' with bad results on the pitch , Redundancies , criticism in the press which was not justified although all questions had been answered in regard to that and he also had Eddie Jones!. So sadly he had decide to resign . the Council were sad to see him go and Nigel Melville would take over in the interim.
- Community Game Board. As people were aware there had been widespread redundancies. There was a need to look at the reduction in income, other sports were in the same situation. Rugby was no longer able to rely on Sky, it was becoming more difficult and people were not as optimistic as 12 months ago. There would be no more redundancies but there was a need for the RFU to look at all it's expenditure eg the 7s programme had a very limited

budget, other nations get Olympic funding but as an individual country we cannot access that.

- AGP Programme. This is on hold for a season but this is not a financial decision. The RFU are taking time to look at how the system is working and being managed and to assess where we are. There are currently 24 AGP in place with 12 additional ones planned . All will happen. There are also safety concerns with various talks going on at the moment ranging from cuts/grazes to even a mention of cancer although no link has been proven. As stated earlier the focus is on how the AGPs are being managed.
- The RFU are currently looking at the structure of Leagues in the North. There is a meeting being held today where the consultation findings are being discussed. RJTB noted that there is interest around the Country asking how things are working in the Lancashire Leagues. Jim Chapman who is Chairing the group is being encouraged to look at the rest of the Country – at this point someone noted it was a bit like a competition review !
- Ticket allocation. KA reported that there is a review going on about how tickets are being allocated to clubs. Each club receives 6 tickets , others are then allocated according to how many 15 a side games go on at the club with a % being used as the 'key' to how many tickets are allocated. All the correct information need to be out on GMS. The above will come into force for the Autumn Internationals in 2020. The emphasis will be on the % matches being played rather than the number of members.

6. Committee Reports

a) Management Board

PH queried the fact that the October minutes were not on the website, This was an oversight and would be rectified as soon as possible.

PH then went on to note that Tom Fitzgerald had stepped down , MD then explained that Tom now had more family commitments and so had stepped down , MD noted that he would like it recording that Tom should be thanked for being a mentor to him through the years and for all he had done for Lancashire. PG agreed that thanks to Tom should be thanked in his absence and should be thanked by the County. This was agreed by all present.

b) Finance and Funding Committee

Covered earlier

c) Disciplinary Committee

Brian Stott had sent his apologies and consequently MD gave the following report:

- Business was brisk!. Since the beginning of September there had been 68 players Sent Off, which in comparison to last year was the numbers were up by a third with regard to the same time last year.
- There had been a massive upsurge in players being sent off because of verbal abuse of the referee and also racial abuse in the U14 -U18 age group.
- There was a need for all clubs to go back and reinforce the message to their Junior sections that this behaviour would not be tolerated and would be punished.
- Any form of abuse carried an extra 2 week suspension.

- If a club had 5 or more SO then the Disciplinary Committee would look at the club as a whole.

There was then a query raised about whether referees looked at the whole game or whether there was different 'slant' depending if the players were either RU or RL. TH replied that no matter what game the players were used to playing there was no excuse and all were treated equally.

d) Governance

There was nothing to report at this meeting.

PH then raised the question about the reports in general from the various subcommittees as he had noted in the minutes previously that there had been no reports. All reports that were available were on the website.

MD/DH explained that Senior Officers in the County were aware of what the different subcommittees were doing but not all might necessarily have met formally and may discuss matters through phone/ email etc.

PH stated that he felt that some way of communicating information to the members could be discussed, with the possibility of a news letter as there had not been any cluster meetings this season so far. MD noted that this could be looked into.

DH replied that the Cluster meetings had had various degrees of success depending on the content and the venue.

The comments from PH were noted and would be discussed at a later date with the Media Committee.

e) Rugby Development Committee

HH reported that there had been no actual meetings but things were in progress with the Representative teams. There were currently 12 Representative teams and the Lancashire Royals had played their first game.

TS referred back to the previous comments about reports and asked that perhaps the Chair of each Committee could produce one. The U15/U16/U17 and U18 had all received their Kit.

f) Club and Community Rugby Committee

There was no report as MW the Chairman had sent his apologies.

g) Competitions

- The results were now in and in the process of being added to the website. The Bowl Competition was currently behind schedule.
- Rochdale were in the Final and the Finals were due to be held at Rochdale, this would be looked at by the Cup Committee and the Finals venue would be confirmed.
- The Lancashire Cup had been 'resurrected' this year and this was taken as a bonus. There had been talk of Yorkshire cancelling their Cup Competitions so Lancashire were to be commended.
- The Lancashire Leagues appeared to be going well and although only 10 in each League there had also been supplementary Cup games added to create more fixtures. Clubs had also arranged 'friendlies'

At this point FM said he felt that the leagues were not competitive as his club had recently won several games with a large margin. HH replied that this was because of some clubs dropping out but he felt that in time it would be sorted. FM reiterated that he felt that it needed sorting out. DH replied that conversations around this had been going on for around 7 years – and was still ongoing.

FM then moved on to comment on the fact that he had a concern that Lancashire had arranged trials and assessment days when the Colts had cup games arranged. KA replied that the Structured season was in place and it was important that schools/clubs/representative sides all 'stick' to their allotted times and dates. The current structured season had been in place since February and it was a mistake by the Colts league that had led to the situation. FM felt this was not the case but he would check the following day.

FM queried the possibility of trials and assessments taking place mid week but BN replied that because of the logistics involved this would not be possible.

In order to resolve this there would be a meeting with the schools, Lancashire M and J and the Colts League on the 6th December to ensure that all dates would be clear to all.

h) Rugby Development Officer

There was no report. There was query about whether Area 5 still existed. It was explained that because of the recent redundancies there was not a different way of working in place. The RDO now had 30 clubs each as opposed to 20 in addition to the loss of the CRCs.

7. Playing

Seniors:

John Greenwood had sent his apologies but as it was early in the season there was not a lot to report at the moment.

U20

Trials had taken place in October with 63 players being nominated from clubs. Training was ongoing ready for the games that would take place later in the season. There was currently a squad of 31 which included 9 from last season which in turn included 2 players from the England Counties and 1 deaf International. There would be a warm up game against Manchester Metro which would probably be played at Tyldesley. In February they were due to play Cheshire on the 3rd February and Yorkshire on the 24th February.

Lancashire Royals

The Lancashire Royals had played their first game earlier in November when they had played the Cheshire Harvesters. The game had been lost but despite the horrendous weather it had been a good game of rugby. There were 20 new caps and 5 old ones.

The next game would be played at Wigan RUFC on December 29th . This would be against the Anti Assassins. The Royals also had a third game booked in in May when they would travel to play Eastern Counties when the Senior Team played their game in the Bill Beaumont Cup. Other Counties were following Lancashire with regards to letting players represent their County.

U18

An assessment day was held on 28th October where approximately 87 players attended, 57 players were invited to attend a development day held at Myerscough Collage on the 4th November, from which a squad of 28 were selected to represent Lancashire.

As most of you know the idea of running a 18s squad is to put on show the best of our 18s players to compete in 3 county representative games to allow selectors to choose a squad to represent the north and hopefully England

These game are played on a festival basis at various venues in the north, this allows

The selectors the opportunity to view the talent on show.

The first game will be on the 2nd December against Cheshire

The first festival being held at Preston Grass Hoppers on 16th December where Lancashire will entertain Yorkshire.

In the second festival held on the 13 January Lancashire will travel away, to be Entertained by Northumberland the venue to be confirmed.

U17

I have nothing to report on the U17s other than that an assessment day as been

Arranged for the 27 January in the New Year

A development day on the 3rd of March

And 3 County games provisionally arranged

24 March against East Midlands Away

A County game yet to be arranged on the 7th April

And a home game on the 28th April against Yorkshire again the venue to be arranged.

U16

The DPP section was now up and running at the moment with currently 69 players involved. This would finish at the end of December when the County Programme would then come into play. It was intended to have 50 players divided into two squads with games against Cheshire at Burnage and against Yorkshire at Keighley. These games would take place in January.

There then followed another discussion on the ongoing concern about colts. There seemed to be an ongoing problem with this age group. KA agreed that a solution needed to be found and perhaps the group that was meeting in December could come up with some ideas. DH suggested that the RDO should have some involvement and ask clubs what they wanted from their Colts. There was

some mention that some colts in this age group preferred the school option because of better coaching ? in which case was there scope for looking at the professional staff and how they could help. IS mentioned that there appeared to be an increase in numbers at U16 so what could be done to ensure these stayed within the game. Was there scope for the County to look at this?. The general consensus was that everyone has their own ideas but need to look at working together eg look at the management of the colts , Lancs Colts v Halbro Colts. Hopefully the group meeting in December may discuss this then to see if there were any solutions.

Schools

This section was now being run as part of Competitions with a system of School Cups following the same format as other Competitions eg Cup/Plate/Vase/Bowl. Every school was in the mix and there were no Schools/Emerging schools. The format would be they would play one term of rugby in the Autumn Term and then after January it would be 7 a side rugby. All schools finals would be finished by the end of January. All finals would be played on an AGP so there would be no Schools Finals Days as in the past. There would be age group Festival Days at the AGP.

The Half Game rule would also be brought in where every member of a squad gets half a game, rather than the replacements getting the last 5 minutes. This had been piloted last year. This year the U13 – U18 would be using that rule and it will be come a regulation in the 2019/20 season. The premise being that if you got a good amount of game time then players would stay. FM queried how many would be in a squad? Eg what would be the minimum number. Some comments about if a competition then managers may only take a set number of players.

Women and Girls

The following report was sent in by Helen Duggan.

This season has started well with a number of developments for the expansion of women's and girls Rugby in Lancashire.

A new merit league in North Lancashire has seen a number of development teams play against South Cumbrian teams to help develop. The structure has been instigated by the CRCs and is working well, it is hoped we can replicate the structure in the south of the County.

A number of clubs have expanded the pitch up and play system and put on full festivals, notably Rochdale hosted 21 teams last month to great success.

With the new youth County programme after New Year it has allowed clubs to spend time developing their players ready for a new set-up that will bring 7s to the County fixtures. There will be a larger focus on development of the player as well as linking into the RFUs centre of excellence programme, which is run locally by the Premier15s side Firwood Waterloo.

The focus for the County support will be to help clubs ensure they provide good opportunities for the girls and women players when they come to start Rugby so looking to see how we can support the coaches and volunteers as well as linked schools better into local clubs to grow the game. We also intent to explore how to reinstate the Lancashire cup competition at all ages.

The recent internationals has seen more success for the Lancashire development of players with former Lancashire players - Laura Perrin, Fylde/West Park and Firwood Waterloo becoming part of England U20s, Detysh Harper, Eccles/Firwood Waterloo joins the academy and Sarah Beckett Waterloo/ West Park / Firwood Waterloo receiving her first full international cap for England against USA in the recent Quilter Autumn Internationals

8. League Report

There continued to be the ongoing saga with regards to the Electronic Match Cards . Paul O Leary from the RFU was seeing what he could do to improve the Mobile App but the budget for that was not in place and the general feeling was that it would be next season before it would be sorted. Ken Potter was the EMC 'guru' so if clubs had any queries they should contact him.

9. The North

Dave Clarke then updated the meeting on the situation regarding the review of the structure of the North.

- The first round of the consultation meetings had taken place.
- Feedback from the working group was that the Durham meeting was most helpful as it had a good representation of players who were clear with what they wanted.
- The Lancashire League clubs had not originally been invited but then had been invited.
- The Lancashire CB did not attend as they were not invited as the Working Group wanted to hear from the clubs.
- The working group had met with all the CB groups in the North.
- There was a meeting of the Working group today to finalise a structure to present to the clubs.
- The meetings in December had been cancelled.
- The next round of meetings would be held in 2nd or 3rd week in January.
- There was a query about whether that information had been sent out to RFU clubs or all clubs , including the Lancashire League clubs.
- Minutes from the meeting had been received and there were a couple of queries which would be raised at the next meeting.
- PH wanted it noted that Lancashire Leagues should be part of the discussion.

10. ERCA

Steve Grainger had attended the meeting and presented the current situation to the group. The bottom line was that there was no increase but no decrease in support. The relationship with the Professional game had improved and DH asked if the other Northern Counties could attend the next meeting.

There was concern about how the County Championship was being treated.

11. Correspondence

There was nothing appertaining to this meeting.

12. New Members

13. Date and Time of Next meeting

Wednesday 29th March 2019

Liverpool St Helens RFC at 7.00pm

14. **AOB**

FM asked if it was possible for the County to recognise the work that Standish High School was doing with regards to Rugby Union in the area as he felt that they should be rewarded in some way. KA replied that they were recognised as a strength and are currently the holders of the Ken Andrews Emerging Schools Trophy.

Mr Dave Clarke thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Attendees:

President	Dave Clarke
Past President	Peter Hughes BEM
Past President	Frank Morgan
Past President	D. Herriman
Past President	Ken Andrews
Past President	JT Hughes
Past President	D Todd
Director of Rugby Development	Howard Hughes
Littleborough RUFC	B Hurst
Manchester RFC	T Harper
Oldham RUFC	R Heptonstall
Orrell St James RUFC	David ? (in place of Paul Cattle)
Preston Grasshoppers RFC	I Crosley
Southport RUFC	P Andrews
Trafford MV RUFC	R Murray
Vale Of Lune RUFC	D Hodgson
Wigan RUFC	D Clarke
Mini and Junior	I Spivey
U16 s	B Nichol
Safeguarding	C Spivey
League	K Potter
Individual Members	Ian Scott Brown
Minutes	Anne Clarke