

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Minutes of the Board meeting of the held at Liverpool St Helens RFC on Monday 2nd December 2019

Present: G. Burns in the Chair, & Messrs P. Deakin, A.S. Kerboas, R.T.J. Briers, H. Hughes, K. Andrews, M.J. Worsley & M. Downs.

In attendance: G. Morgan, S. Urquhart, D. Southern & M. Coglan.

Apologies: Messrs, D. Clarke, J.T. Hughes J.S. Greenwood, C.A. Baker & B.H. Stott.

RDO Report.

SU reported:-

1. SU presented a summary report of the success of the RWC Club events and feedback from Clubs. 126 clubs had been surveyed by the RFU across the country, this was extrapolated to 15000 people either coming back to the game or new to it. In Lancashire clubs we had 152 minis/juniors and 77 adults become involved in the game.
It would be good to run a similar set of events for the forthcoming 6 Nations.
2. New suppliers and partners have been added to the RFU Portal for clubs to deal with.
3. The Legal and Tax Helpline is still available for all clubs to use.
4. Novembers Rainbow Laces initiative had been a success in promoting inclusive rugby.
5. The All Schools programme is coming to a conclusion. There are to be training days at Blackburn and West Park where members of the Red Roses England Womens team will be attending.
6. There had been some personnel changes locally. Dave Livesey had accepted a national role which has lead to Andy Soutar becoming the Area 5 training manager. John Foster had a promotion to become an RDO in Cheshire and Steph Veal is to emigrate. This will leave a requirement of 2 new CRCs in Lancashire.
7. Matt Coglan was introduced to the meeting. MC will be the new Area 5 Facilities Manager MC has a budget of only £35k for the whole of Area 5 and will audit Womens and Girls issues.
MJW – wondered how we combat the fact that St Helens Amateur Rugby League Clubs had been give £0.5 million for facilities improvements when Area 5 budget was £35k
8. KA – Asked if the Young Rugby Ambassadors scheme has been scrapped and if we could do anything locally. This scheme has been stopped.

SU, MC & DS left the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Monday 4th November 2019, (previously circulated) were accepted and signed as a correct record.

Matters arising.

There were no matters arising.

RFU Written Report

A written report was circulated by KA & RTJB and is attached as Appendix 1

Open Discussion.

1. RTJB – Confirmed that changes to CB funding would not now be put in place this season, this was due to a misunderstanding in the game of what they would involve.

2. KA – A series of “Listening meetings” on the subject of League Structure, held as a roadshow around the RFU, had not been well attended (none was held in the North West which had been commented upon). Only 8 of those invited to West Park Leeds and 4 to Old Albanians had attended.
3. MD/HH – Started a discussion regarding age grade representative rugby and DPP rugby. This highlighted the issues of the RFU seemingly wanting to change all representative rugby in to festival format which was not well received by the players. The DPP constantly being seen as solely the Sale Sharks DPP with parents perceiving their children “signed for Sale”. And the lessening of County age grade representative teams.
4. HH – Lancashire Royals to play the Anti Assassins at Blackburn on 28th December and the Cheshire Harvesters on Wed 12th February at Chester.
5. MD asked to write to Martin Scott who has stepped down as Senior XV Coach and express the Counties thanks for his many years service – action MD

Correspondence.

There was no correspondence appertaining to this meeting.

New Members.

Richard Ellis – Annual Member - Approved

50:50 Draw

Dec 19	Value
D.N. Herriman	£53.40
G. Spenglar	£8.90
P. Hanson	£8.90
S. Knowles	£8.90
T.D. Stirk	£8.90

Date of next meeting.

Next Meeting: Monday 6th January 2020 at Liverpool St Helens RFC.

Any other business.

1. ASK – Volunteer recognition evening needs to be arranged. It was agreed that this would be again a joint evening with Mitsubishi & the RFU. Possible date Friday 22nd May 2020 at PGH.
2. PD – a meeting had been arranged with Carol Isherwood regarding the mixed ability rugby project.
3. GM – highlighted some cost budget for the Cauliflower Ear campaign to promote mental health awareness in clubs. This included Consultation and training costs and advertising. Total funding for the first season was approximately £5.8K
4. GB – Highlighted the possible use of a marquee at Waterloo for the Annual Awards Dinner on Friday 5th June 2020. This is to be looked into by GB and discuss with MD.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:15pm



Chairman Date 6-1-20

Appendix 1.

RFU Representatives Report Headlines

CEO Report

2019 Rugby World Cup - Reaching the RWC final in Japan was a tremendous achievement and we are all extremely proud of the England squad, Eddie, his management and support team, and RFU staff for their commitment and hard work during this tournament. The squad were great ambassadors for their country and England Rugby and we will take valuable lessons forward and build on this youngest ever team to play in a RWC Final into the Six nations and 2023.

All warm up games sold out, 60 m views on social media and 12.8 m watched the final.

Squad – Average age- 26.8, Caps 38.7, BAME 30%, State school educated 70%.
Youngest Tier 1 at any RWC and youngest side in a RWC Final.

Impact on the business: The tournament has and will continue to have a great impact on multiple areas of the business.

2019 RWC debrief: A formal debrief took place on 14-15 November to identify the strengths and weaknesses of England's preparation and participation in the 2019 RWC in order to make clear recommendations to build on the lessons learned for improved future performance.

Global Stakeholder Engagement The RWC provided a useful forum to engage proactively and constructively with our Union counterparts to build greater understanding of the global issues and what areas we as a Union should be influencing.

Japan should be commended for hosting an outstanding and record-breaking tournament

England performance raised the profile of rugby with the final being this year's most viewed television event, watched by 79% of the viewing audience (12.8 million) across the UK.

Project Light -Current focus on completing the outstanding complex areas including equity split, revenue distribution, corporate structuring, governance and exit.

Project Union is currently meeting the timeline with the current key areas of focus for the project: affordability exercise, ways of working, development of the Union's culture and stakeholder engagement.

Affordability analysis: This process involved providing a cost for the core activity and strategic objectives what key initiatives the Union should deliver as part of the updated strategy and their cost.

Culture development: The Executive will be creating a detailed plan for the development of a high performance culture to create an environment which empowers staff and those connected to our organisation to realise the full potential of the RFU.

Stakeholder engagement: After the Christmas break engage with key internal and external stakeholders.

International Update: At the World Rugby Council meeting it was agreed that:

- South Africa would host the 2022 Rugby World Cup Sevens. It was also agreed that
- There would be a dual bidding process for the 2027 and 2031 Rugby World Cups.
- The HIA time would increase from 10 to 12 minutes.
(It was also noted that there had been a 35% reduction in HIAs compared to 2015.
There was cautious optimism that the High Tackle Sanction Framework was having an impact).

Rugby Europe New structure for the Rugby Europe Championship. The competition will likely expand to eight teams with pool stages, semi-finals and finals each year. The Championship will still be used to qualify teams for the Rugby World Cup.

Injury Risk Reduction Working Group: An injury risk reduction working group has been set up to understand the role of the game in protecting players from injuries.

Staffing:

- Eddie Jones' contract is in place until August 2021- conversations for an extension on are being held.
- Nigel Melville has been replaced by Conor O'Shea as Director of Professional Rugby

Community Game Board Report:

- Regulation 9: A revised proposal to make annual risk assessment and provision of first aid/immediate care mandatory at all age groups up to, and including U18. The original proposal was including adult rugby.
- CGB agreed that interest should be payable on any future RFF loans by any clubs that paid players (L6 and below) or that exceeded current limits (L3-L5 inclusive).
- CGB endorsed proposals to streamline funding to CBS. This includes focusing the use of funding more on core activity (e.g. discipline, safeguarding) and relying less on CBs to create development plans.
- An update on progress with the current review of competition structures.
- An update on the work of the travel funding review group was tabled. This will be aligned with the review of competition structures.

National Rugby Survey (NRS)

The survey gives us insight into what motivates the rugby community, how their opinion of the Game is changing, and what is influencing this across different roles, ages, genders, and geographies. 20,000 responses. CBs will get headlines post Christmas. Detailed information is available on request
The survey was conducted across all four Home Unions, facilitated by the RFU on behalf of other Unions, which gives us some important collaboration opportunities.

Adult Male Competition Structure Group

The Group have started the listening process with a number of meetings around the country - which included a good number of players as well as club administrators. A group of Council Members have been asked for their views. An initial report will be presented to CGB in January before it goes out to wider consultation. It is hoped that a final recommendation will be presented to Council in April. There is still a debate as to when implementation will take place- 2020-21 or 2021-22.

Chairman's Report

Key items namely Project Light, Project Union and the annual report and accounts. Safeguarding in the community game is high on the agenda This has been discussed at the Audit and Risk Committee and in Governance, and remains on the CGB agenda. This remains a critical area for the Union, and while the new self-audit process for clubs introduced this year has been very widely complied with, there remains much more to do.

Governance

Saracens Decision - The Committee received an update PRL and Angus Bujalski as to the Saracens Salary Cap breach decision. In particular the Committee noted that the ultimate authority for the Salary Cap Regulations derives from the Premiership Regulations which are approved by Council. The judgment would not be released publicly, but the Salary Cap Regulations themselves are publicly available,

Club Audit - The Committee reviewed the results of the annual Club Audit (where CBs provide returns as to the which clubs have maintained their voting member status during 2018/19). The results are largely stable, while this does not give a full picture as to the health of the game a largely flat trend was seen as positive.

Safeguarding Audit - noted that completion the rate was over 95%, with only 25 clubs outstanding (out of around 900). It was reported that the audit process was seen as helpful by some clubs who had not had a youth section but only sought to play 17 year olds in adult rugby as it helped give a framework for additional support for those players.

County Championship Regulations -*Council approved the County Championship Regulations for season 2019/20, and grant delegated authority to the RFU Legal & Governance department to finalise the drafting of the regulations.*

Payment of Players -The Legal and Governance Department is undertaking a fuller review of this, which will also take into account any learnings from the ongoing investigations and cases. An update in January with a fuller report in March.

Insolvency Regulations - There was support for a simplification of the regulations, and widespread support for an automatic penalty. A report with recommendations will come back to the next Committee meeting in January.

Diversity and Inclusion

The D&I Working Group was established to “recommend ways in which diversity and inclusion may be increased in the leadership and governance structures of the game.”

A framework of diversity and inclusion principles designed to ensure the RFU achieves the desired progress it has committed to on this agenda and to ensure compliance with the Diversity Action Plan and the Terms of Reference of the Group.

Council agreed the ten Diversity and Inclusion Principles

Council Nominations Committee

Nominations appointed a number of Council members to the following Committees:

- Council Support Group
- Insolvency Regulations Working Group.
- IPF Trustees
- GMS Steering Group, Fundraising Oversight Board & Tyrells Premiership 15s Selection Panel

Invitations will be sent out during this month for Council to apply for:

- The role of Junior Vice President.
- Chair of Community Game Board
- Council Elected Board members x2
- Council Nominations Committee x3
- Distinguished Members

Finance Update

Sue Day reported that the finances were under control and stable and they hit all financial targets. Due to the RWC - loss of income profits were down to £3.9 m from £30.9 but this was expected and this is catered for in the four year cycle.

The Annual Report and Accounts were made available.

International Rugby and Broadcast Strategy

Simon Massie-Taylor provided an update on the International Rugby and Broadcast Strategy. Project Light – the consolidation of northern hemisphere (Six Nations) international rugby media rights and other union-owned broadcast assets.

Project Union (RFU Strategic Plan)

Sue Day updated Council on the process undertaken on the new RFU Strategy

The project committed to achieving the following objectives:

- A defined Purpose to explain why we exist.
- A Vision which inspires and leads Rugby Union in England
- A core Mission statement that underpins how we will deliver our Vision
- A set of key objectives and plans that will ultimately deliver the strategy
- A defined set of KPIs to help us measure our success
- Refreshed ways of working, which are fit for purpose, efficient, adaptable and which
- enable collaboration across the business
- A redefined organisational culture that empowers our staff and those connected to our organisation

The SteerCo recommendations and next steps were agreed and it was acknowledged that due to the current affordability gap there were a number of important decisions to make.

A number of key initiatives that needed to be progressed as soon as possible;

- The 'Understand' objective – this is seen as critical to further our understanding of the game and our key stakeholders to best inform decisions
- The Stadium Masterplan – the stadium needs a long term strategy so that the considerable sums invested each year in the asset are being spent in the right place
- Effective people recognition – due to budget reductions there had been little movement in people reward in the last two year. It will be important to review to make sure we remain in line with the market
- Rebuilding the pathway – we have significantly reduced our contribution to the pathway in recent years - important to review which areas to reinstate to ensure it doesn't lead to a drop of in performance and revenues

RFU Ticket Policy Proposal

Following consultation with the IRTSC, the RFU Board has provisionally approved a 5%/ £5 ticket price increase for the 2020 Autumn International and 2021 Six Nations. A paper was provided on the background on the strategy for the last two seasons and detail on the 20/21 pricing recommendation. A final decision will be made by the board in the New Year, following further 2020/21 budget planning and Project Union process.

Professional Game Board Report

Phil de Glanville (Students RFU and Senior PGB representative) highlighted key matters discussed at the most recent PGB meeting which included changes to the composition of the PGB and using data from quarterly reviews of the player performance management group. Looking ahead, it was noted that PGB were looking at its objectives which will aim to explore methods to develop the game such as Women's rugby, in addition to monitoring the professional game agreement.

KA/RTJB 02.12.19