

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Minutes of the Board meeting held using Zoom Video Conference on Thursday 7th May 2020

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

In attendance: Messrs, G. Burns & G. Morgan.

Apologies:

Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Monday 2nd March 2020, (previously circulated) were accepted and signed per procuracionem by the Honorary Secretary as a correct record.

Matters arising.

There were no matters arising.

Questions & Comments to written reports.

RFU Representative Report – Appendix 1

1. KA – There are to be a series of consultation Skype calls with plyers, coaches and administrators of the game to help form ideas for the structure of Club rugby for the season 2021-2022 onwards.
2. RTJB – 2 Groups have been set up by the RFU to look at how to restart the season, one chaired by Terry Burwell to look at forms of the game and one chaired by Phil Atwell to look at the age grade season. It is felt unlikely that there will be contact rugby by September.
3. HHH – The ADM league fixtures have been published but with contingencies for variable start dates.
4. GM – New deal with Umbro for England kit, will it help financially. RTJB – deal was better than previous.
5. RTJB – we should be prepared for quite substantial reductions in spend for the community game.

Grants & Sustainability.

DC, Phil Clarke & Dave Southern have been ringing around contacts in all our clubs to explain what grants and loans are available and from whom.

1. PD – As of 1st April we had an outstanding payment to us from the RFU PFR of £26k. From a central pot based on club numbers in a CB the RFU offered Lancashire an extra £18k if we agreed to match from reserves. We also have some unspent funds from the 1st PFR tranche. This gives us a fighting fund of approx. £75k to help clubs via grants who may be in financial difficulty.
2. PD – Has contacted all club treasurers by email to ask about their immediate financial position. To date 10 clubs have applied and been given grants of between £2k & £5k to the total of £30k.
3. Nearly all clubs have received their hospitality government grant via their local councils. These are based on rateable value and are either £15k or £25k.
4. Many clubs have not needed grants from Lancashire due to the very quick action in closing clubs down, furloughing staff and dealing with suppliers.
5. RTJB – There had been a lower than anticipated uptake of the RFU interest free loans with only 2 Lancashire clubs applying.

Other Topics.

1. DC – All RFU league tables have been composed just deciding when to send out to the game.
2. HHH – between 9th April & 6th May 12 new clubs had applied to join the ADM Lancashire Leagues. The structure now has 3 leagues and includes some Cheshire clubs who have been accepted. The leagues have 2 x 12 teams and 1 x 11 teams.
3. The RFU have decided not to pay the 2nd tranche of merit table funding which has not been received well. This affects NOWIRUL, ADM and Halbro Colts Leagues. RTJB to ask what is happening with these decisions.
4. HHH – explained that due to there being no RFU league structure to accommodate the IoM teams and the RFU refusing to fund travel for clubs outside the RFU leagues they would play between themselves on the island.
5. DC – Mosley were upset by the loss of clubs from the RFU leagues and felt forced to join NOWIRUL.
6. HHH – requests from clubs in the ADM setup to start similar leagues for their lower teams.
7. MD – It would appear given the current climate that it would not be possible to hold the AGM physically at the usual time. Plan to delay pending further government advice or hold as a virtual meeting. GB had agreed to continue as President for a further season and BHS was thanked for putting his Presidential season back.
8. MJW – suggested that the Board remain in post until the AGM can be held which will give some continuity and stability during the current crisis.

Correspondence.

There was no correspondence appertaining to this meeting.

New Members.

None.

50:50 Draw

Apr 20	Value	May 20	Value
G Spenglar	£53.40	M Cornelia	£53.40
S Knowles	£8.90	K Andrews	£8.90
R Brookes	£8.90	D Poppitt	£8.90
G Spenglar	£8.90	M Cornelia	£8.90
RTJ Briers	£8.90	P E Hughes	£8.90

Date of next meeting.

Next Meeting: To be confirmed.

Any other business.

DC – Congratulation to both Sir Bill Beaumont and Gill Burns MBE who remain in their respective posts.
GM – Mental Health Councillors were now working for our Cauliflower Ear campaign as people may be struggling to cope during lockdown. Looking to gain funding jointly with Durham RFU.
GB – tweeting everyday to keep in touch with the rugby fraternity.
ASK – Volunteer Awards night is on hold at the moment. There have been 104 nominations who will all receive some form of RFU award and 6 will attend a Black Tie dinner.
JTH – NOWIRUL leagues had gone to 12 team leagues.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7:10pm

Wale Souff Chairman Date 2nd June 2020
PP

Appendix 1 RFU Representatives Report

DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

Adult Community Game 2019/20

- Promotion and relegation were retained with final leagues positions were determined by 'Best Playing Record'.
- Adult Male and Female Cup competitions were not completed
- Tyrell's Premier 15s declared null and void.
- County Championship cancelled.

Insolvency regulations

Current insolvency regulations relaxed to allow discretion as a result of the Covid-19 event.

COUNCIL MEETING HELD BY SKYPE 24.04.20

CEO's UPDATE – COVID-19

The primary focus is to deal with the impact and implications of Coronavirus on the Union and the Game.

- Set up eight Covid-19 working groups meeting on a regular basis
- Stadium doors closed on 3rd March
- All rugby suspended from 17th March
- Mitigating against any financial impact:
- Working on medium scenario that it will have a £15 million negative impact
- If Autumn internationals played with poor consumer confidence- £30 -£35m gross loss
- Worst case scenario – no autumn games - possible £100m + impact.

Relief packages to clubs

£7 million support package with loan scheme from 6th April

Regular club recovery support updates to include;

- Club Support Guide
- Government Support Guide
- Ways to keep active
- Q & A helpdesk on RFU website
- Support with business rate holidays and grants for clubs from Sport England

Employees

Difficult decisions around people and spend made; no bonus payments, 100% acceptance of 305 staff salary reductions, furlough of many staff including local RDOs

Now awaiting confirmation from Government on job retention scheme.

Major projects on hold or slowed down-

Project Union- revisit the priority areas when normality returns

Project Light – process paused with review the status in May/June

Future Competitions Structure Review.- process paused- intention to implement in 2021-22 season. Agreed to go ahead with the club & CB consultations by a series of Skype events.

6 Nations

Eddie Jones and his team undertook a review of the 6N tournament.

6 Nations in the process of identifying new dates for the postponed 2019-20 tournament.

Eddie Jones

Eddie Jones contact as Head Coach extended until the end of the 2023 World Cup

COMMUNITY GAME BOARD

Rob Briers reported that there had been 5 CGB meetings by skype

- Possible reductions on Community Rugby spend.
- Recommendations received on Pitchside Care- minimum standards for Pitchside Care to be made mandatory from 2021-22 season- proposal to June Council.
- Age Grade competitions to be cancelled

Support for the Community game:- Steve Grainger

Staffing- Majority now furloughed so Rugby Development team consists Of 6 Area Managers, 6 Facility Managers, 12 RDOs, 2 Competitions staff, 2 AGP staff, 8 technical leads and 4 operational staff.

Immediate focus:

Community game update now twice weekly bulletin with updates on RFU support, Government/other support and examples of clubs doing great things

Disappointing uptake of only 60% of clubs opening the information. This is a core line for proactive communication during this period.

Dedicated section of RFU website – www.englandrugby.com/coronavirus is now live houses all relevant information.

Supplemental pot payments have been made early.

Planned RFU funded activity in CB plans suspended - £600k of funding released for CBs to utilize as an immediate support fund. Additional £400 made available to CBs subject to them matching from their own reserves.

Loan payments due in March not taken with June payments under review

Emergency loans fund of £5m has been launched. Online applications have been received.

Sport England has £20m emergency funding to access.

Close monitoring of Government support. Business rate holidays, small business grants of £10k and £25k through local authorities.

Club support pack with advice on club closure, ground maintenance, finances, communication etc. Support to Coaches and Match officials available online and via regular programmed webinars.

Future priorities:

“Getting rugby started” as soon as possible after restrictions lifted. Plans for three Key workstreams.

Playing opportunities and competitions- Restart of rugby, potential phasing of this depend on contact restrictions and peoples appetite for contact. Need to stimulate players to return with a potential spill from delayed summer sports.

Coaches and Match officials- retaining their engagement in the down period so they can play their role in the reboot of rugby.

Club support. Helping them to restart business and remodelling where necessary- pitches and clubhouses reopened and become sustainable and vibrant again.

GOVERNANCE STANDING COMMITTEE

Chris Cuthbertson reported on:

Insolvency Regulations

Agreed to integrate an emergency amendment into the regulations for the 2019-20 season to provide some limited flexibility with regards to clubs who may enter insolvency as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.

Payment of Players

Agreed that the Payment of Players regulations should continue to apply in full and those who were currently ineligible for RFU benefits would remain ineligible.

Declaration process for 2020-21 season now open.

COUNCIL NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Council approved the recommendations of the Council Nominations Committee for Season 2019/20:

President:	Jeff Blackett
Senior Vice: President	Nigel Gillingham
Junior Vice President	Rob Briers
Immediate Past President:	Peter Wheeler

Council agreed that Stephen Pearson elected as Council Elected Board Member for a further period of 3 years and Paula Carter as Council Elected Board Member for a period of 3 years from Season 2020-21

Council agreed the revised Terms of Reference for Council Nominations Standing Committee for immediate effect.

BOARD NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Council ratified the following appointments to be agreed at the AGM:

Chair of CGB for a three year term – David Roberts

Chair of Governance Standing Committee for two year term – Chris Cuthbertson

Senior PGB Rep on the Board- Phil de Glanville

INED for a three year term- Genevieve Shore

AGM Calling notice.

The AGM will be held at Twickenham Stadium at 17.00 on Friday 12th June 2020 by video conference

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

150th Anniversary Working Group

Due to the immediate priorities caused by Covid-19, this group has now been disbanded and been passed to the Executive. There are assurances that the landmark will be properly recognized and celebrated next season. The Union's values have been in place for 150 years and they are needed now in our society more than ever.