

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Minutes of the Board meeting held using Zoom Video Conference on Monday 5th October 2020

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

In attendance: Messrs, G. Burns, G. Morgan, B.H. Stott & J.S. Bullough.

Apologies: A. Kerboas.

Lostock RUFC

John Bullough (County Legal Adviser) joined the meeting to elaborate on the issues between Lostock RUFC and Lostock CC over the use of grounds and shared bar. All legal fees would need to be covered by the club should they take counsel. The issue was outside JSB legal expertise, Irwin Mitchell would not act pro bono and Lancashire RFU could not fund for fear of a precedent being set in future legal issues.

JSB will contact Mr Stephenson (Lostock RUFC) to act as a mediator at a meeting that he would be happy to attend.

Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Wednesday 19th August 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. DC – reported that it was still unclear what the new structure of professional staff would look like and who would be in place holding these roles.
2. MD – Confirmed he & DC, PD, HHH & Mark Nelson had held a virtual meeting with Bill Sweeney and Steve Grainger of the RFU to explain what we do in the development centre and how we could continue to run this on £30k without the need for local RFU staff. Sadly this was rejected due to lack of funds.
3. DC – Adult competition structure publication and vote of Council has been delayed pending further information collecting.
4. RTJB – suggested some Board members need to meet with Dave Westhead and Andrew Soutar to understand what their roles will be going forwards.
5. KA – now would be a good time to resurrect the Liaison Group between CB & RFU.
6. KA – a lot of good professional staff have been lost and we need to thank them for their services. RTJB suggested a possible reward which will be looked at further.
7. MJW – will approach Stuart Urquhart to see if he will remain active on the Club & Community committee.
8. DC – The RFU are looking for each CB to set up a Diversity and Inclusivity lead. MD was against this stating volunteer roles at any level should be on merit irrespective of the volunteers gender, race or sexuality.
9. DC – RFU are still pushing to move to Stage E of the Return to Rugby process prior to Christmas 2020.

10. PD – noted that we will receive 15% of last years PFR (funding from the RFU) which will amount to £13k. Due to planning, reserves and low spending our accounts will be slightly down over the preceding 2 year period.
11. PD – received 2 enquires after club health checks but neither club had formally applied for a grant.
12. DC – due to the change in areas the North Group (Cumbria, Yorkshire, Durham & Northumberland) have invited Lancashire and Cheshire to join their virtual meetings. MD to advise Jim Coulson we will accept the offer.
13. MD – at the recent ERCA AGM they had decided to set up a group to look at the purpose of ERCA.

Correspondence.

There was no correspondence appertaining to this meeting.

New Members.

Mr Frost of West Derby – confirmed.

50:50 Draw

Sept 20	Value	Oct 20	Value
P. Saunders	£53.40	P.J. Hughes	£53.40
G. Spenglar	£8.90	K. Andrews	£8.90
R.T.J. Briers	£8.90	G. Spenglar	£8.90
A. Clarke	£8.90	D.N. Herriman	£8.90
M. Cornelia	£8.90	R.T.J. Briers	£8.90

Date of next meeting.

Next Meeting: To be confirmed.

Any other business.



HHH – a meeting (Zoom) set up with Cheshire and Yorkshire to discuss the tri county rugby competition. Meeting to be on 12th Oct. GB, DC, PD and HHH to attend.

HHH – attended a DDP meeting. In attendance was Fergus Mulcroon from Sale who are putting together a restart plan based on starting in October. MD questioned how the U15s and U16s DPP was funded.

PD – investigating a new small scale sponsor, A Plan Insurance, details to follow.

GM – Covid cases in clubs are to be reported to the RFU who will inform the CB of any cases in their clubs.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:26pm

 Chairman Date 2nd November 2020


Appendix 1
RFU Representatives Report

RFU Council Meeting

The RFU Council met by teleconference on 2nd October 2020

Matt Ratana- Council were asked for a moment of silence for Matt Ratana, the police officer and East Grinstead coach who was murdered recently.

Decisions taken since last Council Meeting 12th June 2020

- Premiership resumption recommendations approved on 9th July
- Appointment of Vice –Chair of D&I Implementation Group Working Group:
Ralph Knibbs who made 436 appearances for Bristol RFC, capped for England B, U23s and 7s. Currently Head of HR & Welfare at UK Athletics.

CEO Report: Bill Sweeney

Introduction.

Matters dealt with by the CEO since last Council Meeting

This continues to be the most challenging period for rugby in modern times for rugby.

The primary objective must be for the Union and the game to emerge for the Covi-19 crisis in a strong a position as possible.

Aware of the intense frustration within the game as other sports are progressing faster than rugby. Rugby faces greater challenges when considering return to play compared to other sports within areas of contact. This is a factor in discussions with DCMS for permissions to return to full contact rugby.

Autumn Internationals:

The RFU have been having regular meetings with the DCMS regarding the return of crowds to the internationals. The Government have now made the political decision not to allow crowds for the Autumn Internationals so all the matches will be behind closed doors. The case had been put to DCMS regarding the financial implication of this decision as the losses will be in the region of £142m lost revenue with £42m profit loss.

Talks are continuing with strong representation to return to crowds if the Covid-19 infection rates ease. Refunds for the Barbarians game as now available.

Media coverage of Internationals

A unique deal with Amazon Prime Video to cover the England games and Finals. The England v Ireland game will also be on Channel 4 along with highlights of all the games.

Elite Player Squad Deal for 2020-21

EPS players have accepted a 25% reduction in remuneration

Project Light

Discussions with Six Nations partners and CVC over a possible equity investment in the Project Light have been positive.

Commercial Partnerships

Deals with Umbro, O2, Charles Tyrwhitt- players formal kit sponsor and extended deal with Mitsubishi Motors.

Community Game Board- David Roberts and Steve Grainger

As a result of Covid-19 work continues to support the Community Game with initial focus on supporting clubs. Concern is with player retention and revenue streams.

- Community Game Update continues to be published twice weekly runs in parallel with the dedicated website: www.englandrugby.com/coronavirus
- Weekly webinars for coaches, match officials and club administrators.

Return to Rugby Activity

Consultation with DCMS and Sport England as to the necessary protocols and time frames to a return to rugby

A road map has been published showing six stages (A-F) returning to rugby activity.

Now currently on Stage D- local restrictions apply.

Along side the road map:

Adapted Rugby Activity: Whilst at Stage D rugby activity has been supported by the Ready4Rugby- two touch format of the game. Initially for club to introduce intra club activity but now extends to inter club events.

Plans to Support Clubs in Reopening Facilities: Support for clubs to undertake risk assessments and in rebooting bar and catering operations.

Future Competition Structure Working Group- Stephen Pearson

- Detailed updates have been given in the regular Community Game Updates.
- Consultations have been conducted through Webinars due to Covid-19 restrictions
- Next stages:
 1. Conclusions of consultations
 2. Consideration of feedback
 3. Virtual consultations with CBs during August 2020
 4. Final proposal was to be considered at the October RFU Council Meeting but it was felt there need to be more time to get things right. SP is hopeful that this can be brought to Council in November but it is more likely to be at the February meeting.
 5. Implementation now being proposed for the 2022-23 season.
 6. It is hoped that the plan will be available to the game very soon.

Finance Report- Sue Day

- At the end of March, the Union was performing in line with the budget- the effect of Covid-19 has yet to be fully felt.
- The Union will lose £142m revenue- no crowds at the autumn internationals.
- Inevitable that the significant reduction in revenue which will affect 2020-21 and well into subsequent seasons
- Financial life blood of the RFU is international matches at Twickenham in front of full stadiums.
- Nine different scenarios have been developed- options include normal season, behind closed doors, reduced capacity to no games at all.
- 2020-21 will be loss making with impact on the ability to invest in the game.
- Given the long term effect of Covid-19 not practicable to maintain current levels of spending through increased borrowing. Union spending must not exceed its income over the medium term. Objective will be in the short term to reduce expenditure and an increase in borrowing over anticipated levels.
- Discussions with the Bank to ensure there is access to sufficient funds.

Governance- Chris Cuthbertson

Payment of Players

- Closing date for declarations was 30th June 2020
- 96% completion rate (88% last season)

- 136 clubs declared that they paid players (down from 151 in 2019)
- Compliance checks are on going.
- Full feedback on this years submission process will be reported later this season.

Safeguarding

- The 2nd annual safeguarding self-audit questionnaire sent to all clubs
- Audit of the responses to the 1st questionnaire was delayed by Covid-19 so this years audit will be subject to that audit

Premier 15s Law Variations

- Council approved the Law Variations within the P15s competition for Rounds 1-9 of the 2020-21 season.
- Governance retained its delegated authority to implement these changes and make further changes including amendments to the Law Variations- subject to World Rugby Regulationschanges

Council Nominations Standing Committee- Mike Waplington

- Appointments: Mike Waplington continues as Chair and Ken Andrews was appointed Secretary.
- All 12 new Council members have been through the induction process and been interviewed by NomCo
- A paper about sub committee structures and term limits for members of those committees will be brought to the November Council meeting

Board Nominations Committee- Dominic Proctor

For 2020-21 work is being carried out to recruit:

- Chair of the Board and Non-Executive Director (INED)
- Rugby Europe Representative
- Rugby Football Foundation Trustees

D & I Implementations Group- Genevieve Glover

- Vice-Chair Ralph Knibbs
- Group members have been appointed from 40 applicants:- Amanda Bennett (Independent), Kirsten Flower (National Youth Council); Maggie Alphonsi and Peter Howard (Council); Waheed Aslam, Geraldine Brown and Matt Webb (Game)

Chairman's Report- Andy Cosslett

- Board continues to meet weekly discussing the effects of the Covid-19 crisis
- Board Effectiveness Review was positive but challenges were identified.
- Board diversity- Sport England and UK Sport have committed to a review of the Governance Code with a requirement to minimum levels of BAME members of the Board in addition to the gender composition of the Board.
- Board have committed by 2022 the Board will consist of at least 30% female and 15% BAME members.

Powers of Council

Council approved the recommendations for the Powers of Council.

Lancashire Appointments on RFU Council for 2020-21

Rob Briers-	Junior Vice President
Ken Andrews-	Secretary of Nominations Standing Committee Education and Age Grade Sub Committee RFU Representative on ERFUSU
Dave Clarke-	Adult Competition Management Sub Committee

Payment of Players Working Group

KA/RTJB/DC
05.10.20