

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Minutes of the Board meeting held using Zoom Video Conference on Monday 8th March 2021

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

In attendance: Messrs, G. Burns, G. Morgan, B.H. Stott & A. Soutar.

Apologies: A.S. Kerboas.

RFU CB Relationship Manager

A Soutar.

1. Winter Sports Survival Fund announcement by RFU due on Wed 11th March. Average grant to clubs is £34k nationally.
2. CB risk support grants in conjunction with the RFU may be made available.
3. There had been little response to the Return to play pathway.
4. The app for reporting injuries at a fee of £50 is not compulsory.
5. HHH – clarification needed on Colts age bands and return to play. Under current reading the Colts league were not aware U17s could be under 16 on 1st September.

AS left the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Monday 10th February, (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.

1. DC – Paul Astbury was concerned that little actual work had been done for Level 7 and below in the Future Competitions Review and would want a Level 7 vote delayed.
2. JSG – any update on the County Championship ? KA, no update, HHH confirmed that Cheshire had now withdrawn from the Tri County Competition.
3. PD – 27 clubs applied for the Winter Survival Fund, monies should be in banks by 31st March.
4. PD – So far after 18 months of lockdown we have not lost any clubs which is excellent news.
5. PD – RFU Loan scheme due to be launched including modular changing / outdoor bar deal.
6. PD – We have covid funds remaining, should this be used for Return to Rugby initiatives ?
7. MD – Cluster Meetings had been a success with 70% of clubs attending, this could be improved but there were some surprising absentee clubs who will be checked on.
8. MD - County General Meeting on 8th April to have the sole subject of the Future Competition Review.
9. DC – CAB to join meeting with Club Chamios and PD to setup liaison group including Neil Ryan to work together on sponsorship.

Correspondence.

MD – A letter received from a solicitor requesting any player records for a Rhys Tighe who had been in a life changing non rugby related accident. Passed to John Bullough for action.

New Members.

No new memberships have been received.

50:50 Draw

Mar 21	Value
G Spenglar	£53.40
M Downs	£8.90
RTJ Briers	£8.90
P Saunders	£8.90
M Cornelia	£8.90

Date of next meeting.

Next Meeting: To be confirmed.

Any other business.

GM – there will be a webinar for the Club Safe Representatives. Documentation due to be released on the 1st Aid requirements at clubs

HHH – emailed groups to get dates for the structured season documentation.

HHH – Plans to set up a Lancashire Rugby You Tube Channel at a cost of approx. £500. This would be county funded but a sponsor will be sought to cover costs – Approved.

CAB – Reported that an ex player from a Lancashire club had been convicted and jailed for serious sexual offences against a minor. Investigations showed no issues at club.

CAB – All Safeguarding Audits were complete.

CAB – Safeguarding Conference to be held Oct or Nov, funding for this is ringfenced.

JTH – NOWIRUL Leagues have been abandoned for the season 2020-2021, full report on their website.

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

Wal Jones pp Chairman Date 19th April 2021

Appendix 1

Headlines

Return to Rugby

On Friday RFU circulated the Return to Rugby plans and Roadmap to CBs and Clubs.
See Appendix 1.

Winter Survival Fund

Funding for clubs are being allocated on a financial needs-led basis and will largely be small-scale funding commitments specifically for the winter period 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021 that can be clearly evidenced by invoices or receipts.

Some Lancashire Clubs taken up the opportunity to bid for the grants and loans.

Future Competitions Structure- Stephen Pearson

Next Steps

March 8 th	FCS meet to finalise structure for discussion and consultation Information document to Council
March 15 th now 17 th	Council Webinar for discussion Structure and Information to be shared with clubs for consultation
April 16 th	RFU Council meeting for decision If agreed, full implementation of FCS starts Sept 2022.

Appointment of Chair of the RFU Board and INED

The RFU Council ratified the appointments made by the RFU Board to appoint Tom Ilube CBE to become successor to Chair, Andy Cosslett and Polly Williams to take over as Independent Non-Executive Director from Helen Weir. The appointments are to be put for final ratification by the member clubs at the RFU's AGM in June.

Tom Ilube CBE has had a 30-year career in the UK technology sector including roles at PwC, Goldman Sachs and the London Stock Exchange.

A keen rugby enthusiast Tom's rugby career started on the pitches of Teddington School and London Welsh rugby club back in the early 70s. His son was part of the Wasps Academy before moving on to represent his University and so I have had the pleasure of being involved in the community game for the past 15 years. I'm a passionate fan of both England Rugby and the community game and am honoured to be joining the RFU at such a pivotal time for the game

Polly Williams is a qualified chartered accountant who spent five years as a Partner at KPMG. She is an experienced board member and is Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee at Jupiter Asset Management, Chair of the Audit Committee at TSB Banking Group and a Senior Independent Director at The Royal Bank of Canada Europe

Polly was a keen rugby player during her time at University, she also spent 14 years as a Governor at Rugby School, most latterly as Deputy Chair. As a Twickenham Stadium debenture holder she is a firm England fan.

Moratorium on relegation from the Premiership and Championship

The Council approved:

- At the end of season 2020/21 there will be no relegation from the Premiership into the Championship, and no relegation from the Championship into National One.
- Provided the winner of the 2020/21 Greene King IPA Championship is eligible for promotion under the current Minimum Standards Criteria, the 2021/22 season to consist of 13 teams in the Gallagher Premiership and 11 in the Greene King IPA Championship.
- Holistic new minimum standards on and off the pitch for promotion to the Gallagher Premiership will be developed between now and the end of May 2021 with involvement and approval from Council which will be designed to promote sustainability in the professional game.

Women & Girls Strategic plan

Webinar was held on Thursday 4th March regarding the strategy to develop and deliver a plan to accelerate the growth of the Women & Girls Game, to create long term value.

150th Anniversary of the RFU plans.

Lancashire have invited President of the RFU, Jeff Blackett to host part of his 150 mile walk to celebrate 150 years of the RFU. When we know his plans then preparations and route can be planned.

Patron of RFU

The Palace confirmed that Prince Harry will no longer be the Patron of the RFU As an interim measure our patron will revert to The Queen.

K.Andrews, D Clarke & RTJ Briers 08.03.21

Return to Rugby – Community Game Age Grade adjustments

When the Government Roadmap moves to Step One A - Schools return

From *Monday 8 March*, schools and colleges may be permitted to follow the Stage D1 guidance for internal rugby activity only – no external matches, in line with DfE guidance.

All other age grade rugby must remain at Stage A until *29 March* - meaning individuals can exercise alone or with one other from another household until *Monday 29 March*.

Current lockdown restrictions remain.

The current age grade match season will end on *Monday 31 May*. The focus for the remainder of the season should be on maximising the number of players safely getting out on a rugby pitch.

The age grade out of season regulations are suspended for 2021 and replaced with a range of permitted non-contact and contact training & playing. The purpose of this is to support player safety, contact preparation and player retention for any out of season age grade activities.

The process for 17-year-olds playing adult rugby is suspended from now until *Saturday 1 January 2022*. These are some of the players at greatest safety and retention risk due to the rugby they have missed. While this may impact some clubs at adult level, the longer-term safety and participation picture outweighs the short-term impact.

In season 2021-22, the shift to the next set of age group rules is delayed until *Saturday 1 January 2022*. (E.g. U10s in 2021-22 will play U9 rules before Christmas and U10 rules after Christmas.) For girls that are in the multi-age U13, U15 and U18 bandings, they will move into that age band and play to those rules from September. Training and playing guidance will be provided to ensure safe progression and transition.

Return to Adult and Age Grade Rugby Timeline

When the Government Roadmap moves to Step One A on 8th March

Current lockdown restrictions remain.

Adult rugby remains at Stage A on the Return to Rugby Roadmap.

This means individuals can exercise alone or with one other from another household until *Monday 29 March*.

When the Government Roadmap moves to Step One B – no earlier than Monday 29 March

Adult and age grade community rugby (including schools and colleges) may resume at Stage D1. O2 Touch, Tag and Ready4Rugby training and matches are permitted within the club and against other clubs. We will confirm travel guidance when published by government.

Contact training (excluding scrums and mauls) is permitted to introduce contact gradually and prepare players physically for the next stage on the Return to Rugby Roadmap. Our guidance strongly recommends a maximum of 20 minutes contact in total per session, with regular hand sanitising breaks during and after contact skills training and equipment should be cleaned after use. Players should avoid face-to-face exposure of more than three seconds and more than 15 minutes of exposure at less than one metre with another player.

From Monday 26 April

Having had four weeks of contact training, adult and age grade community rugby will be able to return to Stage D2 on the Rugby Roadmap from *Monday 26 April*.

Again, guidance will recommend 20 minutes of contact training to be permitted (still excluding scrums and mauls).

Matches will be permitted with adapted laws (no scrums & mauls) against other clubs. Again, travel guidance to be confirmed as above.

Guidance for playing friendly matches over the summer will follow over the next few weeks to support maximising player retention and welfare.

Matches will not be obligatory. It will be clubs' and players' individual choice as to when they feel ready to return to contact rugby. Please ensure players are given enough time to condition themselves physically, with a gradual return to contact built in. Ready4Rugby, O2 Touch and Tag can still be played if preferred.

When the Government Roadmap moves to Step Three – no earlier than Monday 17 May

Adult and age grade community rugby likely to progress to Stage E1.

It's anticipated that full contact training will be permitted (including scrums and mauls).

Two weeks after Stage E1 has been reached – no earlier than Monday 31 May
It is anticipated that adult community rugby will progress to Stage E2.

Adult full contact matches would then be permitted.

The current age grade season ends on *Monday 31 May*. (See above for further information).

Some off-field restrictions likely to still apply.

When the Government Roadmap moves to Step Four – no earlier than Monday 21 June

It is anticipated that adult community rugby will progress to the final Stage F.

At which time we expect all remaining restrictions will be lifted.

Next Season

All adult and age grade competitions are currently anticipated to start in September, as normal, under full laws.