

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Minutes of the Board meeting held using Zoom Video Conference on Monday 7th June 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, A. Soutar, G.A. Burns, G.J. Morgan & B.H. Stott.

Apologies: None.

CB Relationship Managers Report.

AS reported:

1. A safeguarding snapshot of CBs is to be organised. CAB to get the general questions about what we do as a CB to support our clubs.
2. North Womens Forum on the 14th June.
3. Communications officer for CB's is now a golden role.
4. 7 Clubs had applied for an RFU Loan.
5. Constituent Body Call with Steve Grainger on 10th June, MD & PD to attend.
6. Project Touchstone – Player Affiliation on GMS is now mandatory from 2022-2023. Players will need to re-affiliate annually.
7. Evidence has arisen of games being played using socially distanced scrums. This cannot happen.

Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Monday 19th April, (previously circulated) were accepted and signed per procuracionem by the Honorary Secretary as a correct record.

Matters arising.

MJW – Questioned if there had been any further contact with John O’Ryan about his proposed Schools project. KA confirmed non had taken place.

RFU Council Members Report.

KA Reported

1. There will be a vote on “ringfencing” the English Premiership at the forthcoming Council Meeting (11th June). KA is interested in the views of the Championship clubs and if they support it or not. MJW commented that none of the Championship clubs have the right facilities and that there should be a set of minimum standards.
2. RFU are considering bidding for the Womens World Cup in 2025.

Questions & Comments.

1. MJW – Concerned that the County are making changes to the Womens & Girls organisation and that Helen Duggan had not been consulted. HHH explained the changes and the reasoning behind them.
2. PD – All clubs are more than financially stable now and we need to focus on the Counties finances. We currently have £140K in the bank, £37k remains of the Covid reserve. The RFU have advised we can keep £11k leaving £26k some of which is to be used for Rugby Reboot.

3. PD – We need to ask Steve Grainger about the PFR and what it will be over the next 3 years. The County PFR award this season is £26k which is £62k lower than usual award.
4. DC – Update report on Club Champions and the work they have been doing (Appendix 1)

Annual General Meeting.

MD – The AGM date had been set but we must be prepared with a contingency should there be further spikes in Covid cases and possible lockdowns.

Correspondence.

None appertaining to this meeting.

New Members.

No new memberships have been received.

50:50 Draw

May 21	Value	June 21	Value
P Hughes	£53.40	J Barker	£53.40
M Brennand	£8.90	M Cornelia	£8.90
P Saunders	£8.90	R Brooks	£8.90
T Stirk	£8.90	P Hanson	£8.90
B O'Driscoll	£8.90	P Hanson	£8.90

Date of next meeting.

Next Meeting: To be confirmed.

Any other business.

RTJB – A conversation is needed regarding the Youth Trust Fund and the appointment of some new trustees.

JSG – requesting an update on the County Championship Review. The review is still ongoing and will report to Council at the October Council Meeting.

HHH – Social media - We are still the number one County for Twitter followers with 6336 followers.

HHH – A role of DPP Liaison Officer had been advertised and a discussion took place regarding the candidates. Chris Stabler was the successful candidate.

PD – Applying for a grant from the Hargreaves Foundation but cannot do from the County, it will need to be applied for via the Youth Trust Fund as a charity.

PD – had a successful meeting about the Mixed Ability project and we are now looking for volunteer clubs.

GJM – RFU have launched a pro active app for reporting of injuries.

GJM – to look at Regulation 9 regarding 1st Aid Provision.

GJM – reported that sadly Colin Kershaw had passed away.

GAB – had met with Andy Kerboas to sort the nominations for the Mitsubishi Volunteer Awards. Also now looking for a volunteer to be the D&I lead for the County.

MJW – received an email from Stuart Urquhart who was upset that the County had not recognised his service to rugby.

MD – Future Board Meetings - they will be a combination of Virtual and Face to face going forwards.

JSG – Advised the Board of the forthcoming Anti Assassins Lunch.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7:36pm

D. Elwell

Chairman Date 6-9-21

Appendix 1

Report by email from Roger McKerlie of Club Champions

- *Corporates and large businesses – they are under ever greater pressure to be seen to be leaders and excellent role models as we emerge from the pandemic and they are looking for ways to demonstrate this whilst benefitting from enhanced brand reputation. The Lancashire Community Partner programme will do this*
- *The smaller and medium sized market (SMEs) also want to enhance their brand reputations but they have much tougher investment decisions to make. They are more likely to look for programmes that offer a measurable return in investment for their money spent. By becoming a Community Partner they get to use to associate with interesting projects but behind that we can help them with classic sponsorship rights activation*
- *Public sector organisations, notably the police, NHS and the higher education sector want to influence behaviour especially in young people and the county RFU can help them do that through clubs activity or bigger county wide rugby related projects*
- *We are also working on a programme we call Supplier Partners and this is on a national basis. The car parking opportunity fits into this but there are many more – it seems a lot of businesses want to reach the clubs market and we are working on ways of them doing this through the county. I will talk to you separately about an organisation called Veo, who manufacture a camera and tripod product that enables clubs to record their games. It works on Artificial Intelligence so it doesn't need an operator. I am not endorsing it but we have introduced it to Hampshire, Herts and Kent and I believe Yorkshire are about to sign with them. They pay the county £250 pa and you can earn an additional £200 for every club that buys one, whilst they will also give you one of their products to use for the county – Kent plan to lend it to clubs on a rotational basis for example – and this would give us further sponsorship opportunities*
- *Once the Community Partner programme is finalised and you are happy with it we will redesign the brochure and create a powerpoint presentation to take to market*
- *As discussed we need to join the Manchester Chamber of Commerce (I will progress this) and I will start attending their online networking meetings. This has worked really well with Hertfordshire where I have met with senior people from the university, county council, LEP as well as dozens of business people. It is a great way for me to start raising the profile of the CB and people are really interested in finding out more about the Community Partner programme and helping out. In effect it is giving me a large number of advocates in the business community and the LEP have introduced me to GlaxoSmithKline and Britvic....of course these relationships take time to nurture but we have something unique to offer and the same will be true for Lancs*
- *In the meantime I have done some research into the Lancs business community and we are building a database of contacts within the top 100 as these will be our primary targets*

Community Partner Offer Document.

Community Partners and social value

Lancashire RFU is the gatekeeper to over 60,000 members of the rugby community in the county. We know that rugby union has the power to engage people from all communities and socio-demographic backgrounds and to influence opinion and behaviours through the unique properties and values of the game.

Lancashire RFU and the rugby family in general is becoming a more active partner to the business, charity, local authority, health, education and law enforcement groups in the county. In doing so we will offer our considerable asset base with the organisations driving the “county narrative” so that we contribute to the strategic goals of the region.

Together, we can make the county a bellwether for the power of sport, business and community working together to make a huge difference to the lives of our people through:

- Improved mental and physical health
- Greater social inclusion and mobility
- Greater equality and diversity, particularly for those from hard-to-reach and disadvantaged backgrounds
- Increased skills attainment and career signposting for young people

We have access to our own programmes in these areas, through our club Social Value scheme, and we partner with a number of excellent sport-based projects that also deliver against these important outcomes.

We are looking for sponsors and partners from the private and public sectors to contribute a minimum of £5,000 pa to become a Community Partner.

Social value

What is social value? There are many definitions, but we firmly believe that it is the contribution to the *long-term* well being and resilience of individuals, communities and society in general. If the pandemic has taught us one thing it is that a unified and fairer society is a stronger one and that greater economic returns come from greater social equality of opportunity. We have seen this directly through our clubs, many of whom have revitalised their purpose during the last 12 months as they realise what a powerful force for good they are.

The four pillars of social value are community, sustainability, wellbeing and inclusion and the Lancashire rugby family offers the perfect place to find them.

How does it work?

Once on board as a partner Lancashire RFU will work with you to identify the social, commercial and reputational outcomes you are looking for.

We will find the right delivery partners and/or projects for you to support, establish the KPIs and timescales, return on investment needs and then implement and report on the programme and how it affects your organisation.

If you are looking for a commercial return on investment we will create an integrated communication strategy for you, influencing both your stakeholders and ours, so that we can maximise the reach and recognition that you receive from your investment.

We have a huge network of organisations that already deliver social value-based programmes right across the county and your investment will help capacity build these.

Alternatively, we can invite our clubs to bid for financial support for more local projects which they are ideally paced to deliver. You can choose the geographic footprint you wish to follow.

Lancashire RFU employs a commercial organisation, Club Champions, to identify opportunities and to ensure we deliver on our promise for our partners. One of their account managers (people who are highly experienced in managing community sport projects for investors) will take you through the process and act as the interface between yourselves and the county to ensure all parties benefit.

Return on investment

On average each of our clubs have a minimum of 1,000 members (some have more but we also support the smaller clubs) and the “reach” into their communities is at least 4 times this number. The common denominators with these people are their passion, loyalty, commitment and love for their clubs and any organisation which supports their sustainability (socially or economically) benefits greatly from the association. Remember that each

of those club members has their own business, family and social networks so the potential to maximise your investment is huge.

Beyond the club system we have relationships with a number of projects and programmes that use sport (not just rugby) and physical activity to enhance the lives of thousands of people and, through us, you can access as many as you want. We will do the leg work for you and make sure your core messages are communicated to the relevant stakeholders.

Organisations we can support

Large businesses

Most corporate organisations and larger businesses are faced with the concept of ESG (environmental, social, governance) issues daily and the focus on the *purpose* of business, beyond making profits, has never been greater. It is not easy to satisfy ESG commitments whilst delivering a return to shareholders, but we can help, especially with the “S” of ESG.

If your business needs to be seen to be investing into the social fabric of the county becoming a Lancashire RFU Community Partner can help. Business has a much bigger role to play in the post pandemic society than previously but there are tangible benefits which can come with this, including:

- Increased business awareness
- Improved brand reputation
- Widened access to influential networks and contacts
- Using sport to become part of the county narrative
- Significant content for social media and PR channels
- Staff engagement
- Customer loyalty and engagement
- Access to a new potential employee cohort
- Access to new customers
- Contribution to the wider purpose of the business

SMEs

Small and medium enterprises make up more than 90% of the county business community and we are very conscious that they need to see economic returns from supporting community sport. Investing into projects that change people’s lives for the better is a great way to ensure your business becomes widely recognised throughout the county and acknowledged as a force for good.

Of course, all of the benefits that corporates and large businesses get from being one of our Community Partners also applies to the SME market, but, additionally, we can help you to build your business and increase sales through the rugby family.

Specifically, we can:

- Design and implement promotions which help you to *engage* with the rugby community
- Offer our media channels for you to promote products and services
- Offer you access to interesting content for you to share with your own stakeholders
- Use the rugby community for market research purposes
- Use county RFU events and activities to create brand awareness amongst our community
- Offer different ways for your business to fundraise and engage your own customers

Public sector and education

Whilst the projects we support are great promotional vehicles for commercial organisations to use, they also make a significant contribution to the challenges faced by our public bodies too.

It is generally accepted that sport in the community has the power to engage and excite people of all ages but it can go much further and influence behaviour change and lifestyle choices. We are confident that we can make a major contribution to public sector bodies such as the police, NHS and the education sector. For example:

- It is argued that up to 40% of crime is a result of mental health issues, whilst anti social behaviour often originates in young people being bored, aimless and lacking a framework for their lives. Engaging them through sport could make significant resource savings and, more importantly, cut the numbers of

potential victims of crime. We can create and deliver sport based programmes (particularly in rugby union, with its emphasis on physicality as well as skill) which will contribute

- By working with the rugby community and helping us to take the game to new audiences in hard-to-reach localities, we can help to integrate the police into previously inaccessible groups
- Sport and physical activity can have a huge impact on the growing problem of childhood obesity. The rugby community is ideally placed to contribute to prevention strategies which will reduce costs in the future
- We can provide the NHS with the perfect platform to educate young people (and their parents) on the benefits of healthy eating without being seen to lecture them
- We can help the universities and HE/FE colleges to engage with young people at an early age to help influence their future career or education decisions. Whilst only a tiny minority of the thousands of young people we work with go on to become professional sports stars we can help many more make the right decisions, in partnership with the education sector

Summary

The rugby community is a tight knit family comprising people from all socio economic backgrounds, including a higher than average number of senior business people and entrepreneurs. People who can make change happen through their clubs, businesses and networks.

By partnering with Lancashire RFU you will benefit from direct access to this community and, whatever the specific outcomes you are looking for, you will make a lasting and telling contribution to a better society.