

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Minutes of the Board Meeting held using Zoom on Monday 7th March 2022

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

In Attendance : Messrs, B.H. Stott & A. Soutar.

Apologies: Messrs R.T.J. Briers & G.J. Morgan.

Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Monday 7th February 2022, (previously circulated) were accepted and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Matters arising.

There were no matters arising.

CB Relationship Managers Report.

AS reported:

1. A webinar will be held on 8th February with the subject of Payment of Player Declarations.
2. The RFU run North CB Forum will be held by Zoom on 21st March. Agenda items include Safeguarding, Discipline and Sharing of Models of Good Practice.
3. Honda Volunteers – there had been 44 nominations from Lancashire Clubs with 215 Nationally.
4. Aaron Howarth and John Foster were to confirm dates and venues for Lancashire Club drop in sessions.

Walk Over Report.

MD presented the Walkover Report (Appendix 1) which covered 1st January to 19th February.

RFU.

Ken Andrews provided the RFU report (Appendix 2) covering the recent RFU Council Meeting.

1. MD – There had been an issue with e-ticketing and one of our members had a ticket cloned and it appeared on a ticketing website which the RFU discovered. The issue is resolved.
2. DC – Playing Insurance costs to the RFU = £7m and utilities at Twickenham = £5m.
3. JRS – Is player Affiliation required at all levels ? – Yes.

Questions & Comments.

1. PD – Gave a report on our Schools work. We are working in collaboration with Josh Jones of TRYIT Rugby, to run sessions at primary schools with club coaches. The aim is to introduce boys and girls to rugby and provide a link for them to attend their local clubs. This has piloted well in Wigan, Aspull, Leigh and Orrell. 8 Clubs have been involved at 20 different schools with a view to 6 more schools being involved. 800 children have participated in the sessions with 200 going on to clubs. Each school has 5 sessions at one hour per week and costs £150 per 5 weeks. Funding is being provided by the County. It is planned to expand this project to Secondary Schools and utilise some for the RFU Targeted Funding.

2. PD – Explained plans for a Lancashire “Volunteer Plus” role, where 10 clubs would be selected from application and w member of that club would receive funding to build links between clubs and schools/communities. Very much akin to the old CRC role but part time and based at individual clubs. The idea is to be expanded with plans to approach the RFU regarding funding for this project.

Discipline Report.

BHS presented the Discipline Report (Appendix 3).

Competitions.

KA circulated the minutes of the Competitions Sub Committee (Appendix 4)

1. KA – Confirmed that the Competitions Sub Committee had met and finalised the Age Grade Calendar for 2022-2023. As the Board can now approve this instead of the RFU this was APPROVED.

Future Competitions Structure.

1. DC – Lancashire Clubs had voted against the inclusion of lower XVs in the RFU league structure. Cheshire clubs had voted for the proposal.

Correspondence.

None appertaining to this meeting.

New Members.

Annual Membership Approved for Mrs Julie Strang.
Annual Membership Approved for Mr Peter Strang.

50:50 Draw

Feb 21	Value
H. Henderson	£53.40
D. Welsh	£8.90
B. O’Driscoll	£8.90
R. Thompson	£8.90
S. Knowles	£8.90

Date of next meeting.

Next Meeting: 6:30 pm on Monday 4th April 2022 at Liverpool St Helens FC.

Any other business.

JRSG – The Royals v AA’s game was planned for the 27th March which is now not suitable. Proposed new date is 21st May to replace the cancelled Durham game.

CAB – Safeguarding Conference booked for 10th September at Liverpool Collegiate.

HHH – The U16s who are selected solely from the DPP had game v North Mids cancelled.

HHH – U20's quarter final v East Mids would be at Luton on 17th March.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7:50pm

Wah Lone Chairman Date 04/04/2022
PP

Appendix 1.

<u>Day of Match Date</u>	<u>Offending Team</u>	<u>Competition Category</u>	<u>Competition Name</u>
February 19, 2022	Aspull 2nd XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
February 19, 2022	Aspull 3rd XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
February 19, 2022	Birchfield	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
February 5, 2022	Bolton 2nd XV	Senior Cup	NOWIRUL Cup Competitions
January 29, 2022	Bolton 2nd XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
January 29, 2022	Bolton 3rd XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
January 8, 2022	Bolton 3rd XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
February 5, 2022	Broughton Park 2nd XV	Senior Cup	NOWIRUL Cup Competitions
February 5, 2022	Broughton Park 3rd XV	Senior Cup	NOWIRUL Cup Competitions
February 5, 2022	Burnage 2nd XV	Senior Cup	NOWIRUL Cup Competitions
February 5, 2022	Chorley	Senior Cup	NOWIRUL Cup Competitions
February 26, 2022	Colne & Nelson 2nd XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
February 5, 2022	Crosby St Mary's	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
February 19, 2022	Eccles 2nd XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
February 12, 2022	Fylde Vandals (4th XV)	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
January 15, 2022	Heaton Moor 3rd XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
February 19, 2022	Littleborough 3rd XV	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
February 19, 2022	Liverpool Collegiate	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
January 29, 2022	Liverpool Collegiate	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
February 19, 2022	Liverpool Collegiate 2nd XV	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
February 12, 2022	Liverpool Collegiate 2nd XV	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
February 5, 2022	Liverpool Medical School	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
February 26, 2022	Liverpool Medical School	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
February 19, 2022	Liverpool Medical School	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
January 22, 2022	Liverpool Medical School	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
January 22, 2022	Manchester Hawks	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
February 12, 2022	North Manchester	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
February 12, 2022	North Manchester 2nd XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
January 30, 2022	Oldham Ladies	Womens League	Women's Competitions
February 26, 2022	Orrell	Senior League	Northern Division
January 29, 2022	Rossendale 3rd XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
February 26, 2022	Ruskin Park	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
February 12, 2022	Ruskin Park	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
January 22, 2022	Ruskin Park	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
February 26, 2022	Sedgley Park 4th XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
February 12, 2022	Sefton 3rd XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
January 22, 2022	Southport 3rd XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues
February 12, 2022	Tyldesley 2nd XV	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
February 19, 2022	Tyldesley 2nd XV	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
January 29, 2022	Tyldesley 2nd XV	Senior League	Lancashire County Rugby Union Leagues
January 29, 2022	West Park (St Helens) 3rd XV	Senior League	HALBRO North West Leagues

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LTD
Board Meeting 7th March 2022
RFU Representatives Report
Headlines on RFU Council Meeting 25th February 2022

CEO Report – Bill Sweeney

An update from the CEO on priority matters for the RFU and our game.

- *Community Game;*
The number of matches played and encouragingly, the declining trend that was evident pre-Christmas appears to be flattening out.
The Club of the Future Commission have had two meetings and two Task & Finish Groups have been established – one with a ‘contact’ focus, the other focused on ‘non-contact.’
- *RWC2025;*
A final decision on whether we have been successful in our bid to host the 2025 Rugby World Cup is due to be made at the World Rugby Council meeting in May
- *Championship Review;*
Council approved the work to begin immediately around the competition structure, participating teams and governance arrangements
- *Women’s Game;*
Good progress on the Premier 15s review and the Adult Women’s Competitions Review Group, is progressing against the agreed timeline. A longer-term focus remains on filling Twickenham Stadium for a Red Roses game by 2025.
- *Autumn Internationals Debriefs;*
A comprehensive debrief process was undertaken with both the men’s and women’s senior coaching teams to review performance in their respective games
- *2022 Six Nations;*
Both home matches are fully sold out, including hospitality across all areas with digital ticketing roll out at 85% of fans using the system for both Wales and Ireland fixtures
- *Player Welfare;*
The Head Impact Prevention and Management Subcommittee/Steering Group will next meet on 24 February to discuss and update on all of our player welfare-related research, initiatives and interventions.
- *Executive Team Update;*
Kathryn Williamson has been promoted to the Executive team as Director of Communications
- *DCMS Cross Sport Forum;*
This is a group set up and led by DMCS which meets on a bi-monthly basis to discuss the key challenges and opportunities in the sector, and to collaborate individual and collective efforts in agreed priority policy areas.

Chair of Board- Tom Ilube

Topics covered are as follows:

- *Appointment of Safeguarding, Whistleblowing and Speak Up Champion.*
Sue Day as the ‘Anti-Doping Champion’ and Polly Williams as the RFU Whistleblowing and Speak Up Champion.
- *Offsite Board Meeting - March 2022- Chippenham RFC*
- *Long-term financial planning and focus.*
Board received a comprehensive Business Planning Update, including a 2021/22 Budget Review. The updates to our long-term financial model highlight the additional revenues generated from having full capacity crowds in the Autumn will be largely offset by anticipated cost increases over the remainder of the current RWC cycle.

Professional Game Board- Phil de Glanville & Connor O’Shea

A summary of the PGB meetings on 2 December 2021 and 13 January 2022;

- Review of Autumn Internationals
- Professional Game Match Officials performance

- Premiership Cup
- 'Foreign player' definitions
- Season Structure
- European (EPCR) update

Championship Strategic Review- Connor O'Shea and Vince Thorne

Council discussed the output of the Championship Strategic Review group and endorse the direction of travel, with further approvals on the new regulations to be brought forward in due course. **See Appendix 2.1**

Women and Girls Update – Lou Latter

Update for Council on:

- *Allianz Premiership 15s Salary Cap Review*
The project enters club and player consultation phase and initial recommendations made of a proposed Hard Cap at £120,000 per club.
Council will be asked to approve the Salary Cap recommendations at the April meeting
- *Red Roses Autumn Series Review*
Conor O'Shea fed back to the Women's Performance Management Group regarding the positive debrief from a successful autumn series
- *Women's Competition's Review.*
The role of the Group is to review the competition structures and playing opportunities in Level 2 and below in the female adult game, and will be setting the vision for the women's competition landscape for the next 5-10 years in order to build playing offers fit for the future growth of the game

Community Game Board- David Roberts & Steve Grainger

The 2020/21 Business Plan -funding (£150k) for investment games were agreed These are those Community Game matches staged by the RFU that do not generate revenue and that cost money to stage.

Pitchside Care -it was agreed to recommend that pitchside care standards be made mandatory in the age grade game from season 22/23 and in the adult game from 23/24. Work continues on this in conjunction with the Governance Committee.

Club of the Future- An update on "Club of the Future" was received, noting the appointment of Malcolm Wharton as Chair and Eddie Keal/Jackie Dyer as Council nominees.

Club and CB roadshows undertaken by the Rugby Development Director was received. It was noted that over 80 member clubs had been engaged along with the majority of CBs.

Global Game On proposals.- Steve Grainger

Prior to "Global Game On" individual Unions had the power to introduce domestic law variations however they required the permission of World Rugby to do so. "Global Game On" negates the requirement for permission from World Rugby, in essence giving this advance, for a set of approved law variations. In addition there is strong encouragement to Unions to adopt a more flexible approach to regulations in order to get games played

RFU position

To date our adoption of "Game On" has been an option for two clubs to consider when playing each other – usually to get a game played when either team may have restricted numbers or positional challenges due to lack of players. We should at least consider whether we may wish to adopt elements of Game On as mandatory elements of the game at certain levels and/or trial some lower XV competitions/age grade activity utilising some of the flexibility that it allows.

Club & CB Roadshow Report- Steve Grainger

A series of roadshows were held during the autumn of 2022. Steve Grainger and Alan Royer (National Club & CB Manager) were present at all events. In addition, relevant members of the Club Developer and CB Relationship Manager teams joined at each and, at some, members of the Executive Team.

Issues raised on:

- Return to Rugby and Match Officials
- GMS – this came up at the majority of visits. T
- DPP/Academies – a key concern around player drop off/drop out from community clubs
- Schools – genuine concerns about the place/position of Rugby in schools.
- Training courses – concerns/lack of understanding about changes in training course provision for coaches and match officials
- Number of Replacements –

Player Affiliation- Ben Lowe / Rory Price

Council approved that all adult players will be required to affiliate annually from an effective date (July 2023 at the earliest), this to be confirmed by Council at a subsequent meeting.

Council also noted that:

- i) the action plan and milestones that will be brought back on a regular basis for report and review; and
- ii) regulations required for implementation will return for approval in due course.

As part of this affiliation, it is proposed that the individual will create and own their account with a revalidation of data required each year. A club can then validate every player affiliation to confirm that a player belongs to a club (a very quick process), and then add more information to confirm any players that are playing RFU League Rugby (hence “registering” them for competition integrity purposes). It is envisaged at the lower levels that this could be a simple ‘tick box’ exercise, though may remain more detailed for contracted players/higher levels.

Governance Standing Committee- Chris Cuthbertson

Council were updated on the following:

- Foreign Player Definition
- Buxton RFC
- Changes to RFU Regulation 22 (Covid)
- Global Law Trials
- Annual Club Safeguarding Audit
- Women’s Salary Cap Regulations
- Regulation 13/16 Alignment Project
- Future Competition Implementation Group Update
- 4 Project Touchstone (Player Affiliation)
- Pitch-side Care Regulations
- Transgender Policy

Foreign Player regulation: Chris Cuthbertson

Council approved the principle that the status quo regarding the Foreign Player regulation remains in place for Premiership, Championship, AP15s, men’s Level 3 and Men’s Level 4 clubs until the end of season 2023-24.

Future Competitions Structure regulation change- Stephen Pearson

Council approved the removal of the 100 player registration limit at Level 3 and below (set out in RFU Regulation 14).

Board Nominations Standing Committee – Dominic Proctor

Council approved:

1. the reappointment of Phil de Glanville as Senior PGB Representative for a term ending 31 July 2024;
2. the appointment of Paula Carter as Chair of the Governance Standing Committee for a term ending 31 July 2025;
3. the reappointment of Deborah Griffin as World Rugby Representative for a term ending 31 July 2024; and
4. the reappointment of Jonathan Webb as World Rugby Representative for a term ending 31 July 2023.

Council Nominations Standing Committee- Ken Andrews

Council approved:

1. the nomination of Rob Udwin for election at the AGM as the Junior Vice-President of the Rugby Football Union for the 2022/23 season.
2. that the fixed term for the Co-opted Council members Garnet Mackinder, Roxroy Fearon, Yemi Gbajobi and Matt Webb be extended to 31 July 2024.
3. to approve the RFU Rose Award for reward and recognition for a national contribution from non-Council members and for it to be implemented in the season 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1.

D&I Implementation Working Group Update- Genevieve Glover

Updates on Council Working Group mid-way through the 21-22 season, specifically looking at Recommendation 4 and reviewing of the recommendations.

Council Members approved the direction of travel as appropriate for this recommendation (outlined in Appendix 1) and the principle of a two-pronged requirement for:

1. the Appointment of a D&I Lead by CBs and Clubs; and
2. evidence of the formal adoption of a suitable D&I policy by the CB/Club so that the subject matter is covered by an organisation's Rules and therefore enforceable.

International Relations Advisory Group (IRAG) Update - Katie Dooling

Council noted the role and remit of IRAG and the group's agreed objectives for 2021/22.

Men's International Ticket Pricing – Season 2022/23- Mike Proctor

Council were provided with information regarding the plan and process for the 22/23 Men's international ticket pricing for discussion. Following the Board meeting on the 19th January, this plan was presented to the International Rugby Ticketing Subcommittee (IRTSC) on the 17th February for decision. A recommendation has been approved by the IRTSC hence this update submitted to Council for discussion. A final recommendation will ideally be presented to the Board in March seeking approval

Budget/Business Planning – Sue Day

- Sue Day presented the Q2 financial report and gave a comprehensive update on the RFU's Financial Position and Strategic Plan Performance.

RFU as National Governing Body – Review Group Update- Mike Waplington

Brief update on the work of the group since November Council

Council, its composition, the route to Council and its relationship with the Board and *Executive*. - The forums beneath Council and the Board, their structure and composition and the decision making processes.

Appendix 2.1

Championship Strategic Review:

Recommended direction of travel

1. Based on the above work conducted by the sub-groups the Championship Strategic Review Working group are recommending the following transitional approach over the following three seasons. See Appendix 1 for diagrammatic version of how we see this transition working over the next three seasons.
2. **Season 2022/23**
 - a. The Championship League returns to a 12 team competition. This is required to meet the minimum number of games required by clubs for commercial reasons. This is a restricted season due to RWC 2023 which means it is not possible to introduce a new cup competition but we would look to introduce play-offs at the end of the season to add excitement to the season finale.
 - b. There are two different scenarios which could lead to a 12 team league.
 - i. There is no promotion to the Premiership as clubs don't meet MOS. In this scenario one club would be promoted from National 1.
 - ii. One club is promoted to the Premiership meaning two clubs would be promoted from National 1.
 - c. The implications of the above are being worked through but it would be our intention to make these scenarios clear to National 1 clubs following the February Council meeting.
 - d. The rest of the 2021/22 season would be used by the Governance group to develop the MOS and regulations for the 2022/23 season which would need to go to the June Council for approval, along with some headline MOS for the 2023/24 Cup competition to help clubs with planning.
3. **Season 2023/24**
 - a. In season 2023/24 we would introduce a 'proof of concept' cup competition alongside the existing Championship league which would take place between:
 - i. Existing 'aspirational' Championship clubs
 - ii. Premiership A teams
 - iii. Championship clubs with links to Premiership A teams
 - iv. Premiership and/or Championships clubs with links to Universities
 - b. This returns to a full season following RWC 2023 and so is the earliest opportunity there is space in the calendar for the proof of concept competition.
 - c. Season 2022/23 will be used to establish which clubs want to enter the competition alone, and which want to establish a partnership arrangement to enter a side. We will also use this time to establish competition laws, regulations, minimum standards and dual registration processes.
4. **Season 2024/25**
 - a. Provided there is appetite from Championship and Premiership A sides, season 2024/25 could see the cup competition transition into a league format replacing the current Championship, or remain as a cup competition alongside the existing league.
 - b. Again appropriate regulations need to be put in place but only Championship clubs competing in their own right would be able to gain promotion to the Premiership through this competition. The exact format is work in progress and depending on the number of teams could be a straightforward league format, or if there is high demand from Premiership A sides to take part it may be that two conferences are needed. This detail would be established during the course of next season (2022/23).

c. The end of Season 2023/24 marks the end of the current Professional Game Agreement and PRL's Broadcast arrangements. This provides an opportunity to align funding and governance arrangements under one agreement and potentially aggregate broadcast rights. This will also be considered over the next few months.

Conclusion

1. As we continue conversations with Premiership and Championship clubs, along with potential partners there are three possible outcomes;
 - a. Status quo – continuation of the Championship League in its current guise (our position would be that in this scenario no additional RFU/PRL funding would be provided).
 - b. Full transition to league format – this would be optimal should there be enough interest from clubs and potential partners.
 - c. Compromise solution – the continuation of the Championship League with the addition of a Cup competition on an ongoing basis as planned in Season 2023/24.
2. Our intention is to work towards the full integrated league format and will keep Council updated on progress as stakeholder discussions continue.

Lancashire County RFU Summary Disciplinary Statistics Season 2021/2022

Notes

The previous season figures are based on 2019/2020. The season was incomplete I have adjusted the figures to give a full season figure.

Overall the number of disciplinary matters are nearly 9% lower than last season. However, it is unclear if this is because discipline is improving or fewer matches.

The worrying trend in youth rugby remains to be verbal abuse of match officials. This is coming from both coaches and players.

There are currently 2 teams on 5+ Eagle RUFC and Widnes RFC.

Combined Current Season Statistics

	Total	Proved	Denied	Dismissed	Sine Die
Current Season	118	109	11	9	0
Previous Season	129	122	5	4	4
Difference	-11	-13	6	5	-4
Difference %	-8.61%	-10.33%	106.25%	153.13%	-100.00%

	Striking	Kicking	Tackle	Foul Play	5.12	Balance
Current Season	52	8	10	30	9	0
Previous Season	43	13	10	33	21	1
Difference	9	-5	0	-3	-12	-1
Difference %	19.69%	-40.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Adult Current Season Statistics

	Total	Proved	Denied	Dismissed	Sine Die
Current Season	90	82	10	8	0
Previous Season	106	99	5	4	4
Difference	-16	-17	5	4	-4
Difference %	-15.18%	-16.80%	104.55%	125.00%	-100.00%

	Striking	Kicking	Tackle	Foul Play	5.12	Balance
Current Season	39	8	9	21	5	0
Previous Season	35	10	7	27	18	1
Difference	4	-2	2	-6	-13	-1
Difference %	10.03%	-22.58%	30.65%	-21.25%	-72.22%	0.00%

Youth Current Season Statistics

	Total	Proved	Denied	Dismissed	Sine Die
Current Season	28	27	1	1	0
Previous Season	23	23	0	0	0
Difference	5	4	1	1	0
Difference %	21.74%	17.39%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

	Striking	Kicking	Tackle	Foul Play	5.12	Balance
Current Season	13	0	1	9	4	0
Previous Season	8	3	3	6	3	0
Difference	5	-3	-2	3	1	0
Difference %	62.50%	-100.00%	0.00%	50.00%	33.33%	0.00%

Monthly Totals

	<u>Total</u>					<u>Adult</u>					<u>Youth</u>				
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Proved</u>	<u>Denied</u>	<u>Dismissed</u>	<u>Sine Die</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Proved</u>	<u>Denied</u>	<u>Dismissed</u>	<u>Sine Die</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Proved</u>	<u>Denied</u>	<u>Dismissed</u>	<u>Sine Die</u>
September	20	19	1	1	0	14	13	1	1	0	6	6	0	0	0
October	31	30	1	1	0	28	27	1	1	0	3	3	0	0	0
November	24	23	2	1	0	15	15	1	0	0	9	8	1	1	0
December	13	11	2	2	0	11	9	2	2	0	2	2	0	0	0
January	13	11	3	2	0	10	8	3	2	0	3	3	0	0	0
February	17	15	2	2	0	12	10	2	2	0	5	5	0	0	0
March															
April															
May															
Total	118	109	11	9	0	90	82	10	8	0	28	27	1	1	0