

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Minutes of the Board Meeting at Liverpool St Helens FC

Monday 3rd October 2022

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

Apologies: Messrs, A. Soutar, B.H. Stott, G.J. Morgan & G.A. Burns.

CB Relationship Managers Report.

No Report.

Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Monday 12th September 2022, (previously circulated) were accepted and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Matters arising.

MD – Confirmation that the re-location project minuted for West Park was a pre-covid plan and no longer valid.

RFU.

KA circulated a report. See Appendix 1.

Premiership Rugby.

A discussion on the issues facing Worcester Warriors and the fact that they were to enter administration. The board felt that the majority of Premiership clubs were functioning beyond their means financially.

Open Discussion.

MD – Reported on the recent RFU Game congress at Warwick. The organisation was very structured in his opinion and left little time for open discussion. Many presentations with, in his view, the RFU. Pushing their agenda. Second day slightly better with an idea of what the club of the future would look like in 10 years time.

DC – Bolton had held a community engagement day and had successfully worked with the elders of the local South Asian community. This is part of the “Rugby United” Project.

MD – Mark Brocklehurst (Bolton Chairman) had volunteered to set up a small, club run, geographical cluster group to meet. Other clubs involved initially are Leigh, Tyldesley, Aspull and Southport. The idea is to be able to share ideas and help each other.

CAB – The new online dispensation system for young players playing either up or down is running well and should ease some volunteer overload. One issue that has arisen is that some parents are bypassing club coaches and safeguarding officers to apply for dispensations.

MD – reported that over the same period as last season there had been 16 senior adult male concedes by Lancashire teams compared to 7 for season 2021-2022. Cheshire so far on the same period had 21 for this season.

Discipline.

MD – highlighted a proposal from BHS. This is to look at discipline at U16's and lower where sending offs will be recorded but not reported to disciplinary. It is felt that by doing this the full scale of the issue will be visible rather than individual clubs and teams ignoring the serious problems.

JRSG – in the previous week the Disciplinary Committee had heard 13 cases.

Correspondence.

None appertaining to this meeting.

New Members.

No applications.

50:50 Draw

Oct 22	Value
A Clarke	£53.40
P Hughes	£8.90
P Hanson	£8.90
H Henderson	£8.90
B O'Driscoll	£8.90

Date of next meeting.

Next Meeting: 6:30 pm on Monday 7th November 2022 using Zoom.

Any other business.

- KA Cornwall had recently lost a great servant to the County, David Martin.
- KA Looking to arrange a table at the Wooden Spoon Christmas Lunch at Anfield.
- MJW The club & Community Meeting had been re-arranged for 12th October.
- JRSG Enquired if Royals would be playing the Anti Assassins this season. It was decided if sponsorship for the game could be found it would be played.
- HH Approach had been made to check the availability of players to play U20's representative rugby.
- HH The re-integration of the ADM and RFU league structures seem to have worked well.
- JTH Had received a call from David Lodge at Newton le Willows regarding them re-starting a M&J section.
- KA Had spoken to Bill Nicol regarding the Vin Hughes Cup and its possible change from U16's to U17's age grade Cheshire game. Approved pending family agreement.

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



Chairman Date 7th November 2022

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Appendix 1

Board Meeting 3rd October 2022 RFU Representatives Report

Notes from RFU Council meeting held at Twickenham on 30th September 2022

Decision between meetings:

Council APPROVED, by electronic vote on 9 September 2022, that paragraph 14.1 of Council Standing Orders be amended to: "Draft minutes of all Council meetings shall be made available to Council members by the CoSec Team within 4 weeks of the date of the meeting. Any comments or proposed amendments to those minutes must be sent to the CoSec Team within 2 weeks of those draft minutes being made available."

A. CEO Report-Bill Sweeney

Report containing an update from the CEO on priority matters for the RFU and our game.

Topics covered are as follows:

2022/23 Community Game Season Start Game Congress

Schools Sector Strategy

- Like other parts of the game, the schools sector is experiencing some challenges – e.g. the prioritisation of the post-COVID academic 'catch up' and pressure being exerted on rugby playing schools from governors and parents due to concerns over player safety and concussion.
- Schools rugby is a key foundation of the game but needs clarity of approach to define how it contributes going forwards, and we see the recent and current situation as a major opportunity for the future.
- Work is underway to commission a semi-independent review to agree the headline strategy of what the schools game needs to look like in 5- and 10-years' time.

Coach Succession Planning

- This piece of work led by Nigel Redman and Conor O'Shea is continuing to progress well.
- Two separate advisory panels will be established to consider the various options, and recommendations will then be presented to the Board regarding the preferred direction in the new year.
- Nigel Redman will be delivering a comprehensive update at the November Council meeting and will be able to answer any questions on the process we've gone through to date.

B. Chair of the Board Report- Tom Ilube

Report containing an update from the Chair on priority matters of the Board for the RFU and our game.

Topics covered are as follows: -

Board changes

- Genevieve Shore has been selected as the new chair of the AP15s entity, which will manage the AP15s competition. This will mean that Genevieve will step down from the Board in November.
- Polly Williams will take the role as Senior Independent Director, and Genevieve's other roles on Board committees will be taken by other members of the Board.

Update to Board from England Men's Head Coach.

- The Board subsequently received an update on the Men's England squad from Eddie Jones, allowing Board to hear about the Summer Tour of Australia, as well as the preparations ahead of the Autumn Internationals and broader RWC23 preparations.

C. NGB Review Group Update- Mike Waplington

Mike Waplington outlined the background, formulation processes and recommendations to evolve the structure and effectiveness of the forums below Council.

The NGB Review Group has taken feedback that the CGB will focus on developing its strategy, and therefore the detail of any structure of CGB and the forums below it should be defined once that strategy is agreed. The Group therefore considers that those elements of its terms of reference cannot be completed now, and so stands down.

Nevertheless, the Group believes that there are improvements to ways of working that can be implemented now, and recommends that even in advance of any structural change, some standard operating procedures (including improved terms of reference) can be put in place to better enable these forums to fulfil their work.

These procedures would be for CGB to adopt, and so this paper provides a starting point for which Council endorsement is asked (rather than specific approvals of specific points)

Council **APPROVED**:

1. Deferring work on Council size, structure and composition until 2023/24.
2. Deferring work on CGB size, structure, composition and funding framework until the future Community Game review and strategy is completed, anticipated to be the start of 2023/24 so that all work is aligned.
3. The standing down of the existing Review Group of the RFU as an NGB.
4. The definition of RFU forums and the control process around the setup of new forums.

D. County Championship Regulations- Paula Carter and Tim Miller

The following changes are proposed for 2022/23:

For the **Bill Beaumont and Gill Burns** competitions:

- CBs will apply to join the competition and indicate the player base they expect to draw from (e.g. National 1 and below or Regional 1 and below in the Bill Beaumont competition), and similarly expected player base would shape the Gill Burns Cup
- Allocation of CBs to a division will be determined by the Organising Committee using a combination of information from applications (expected player level), historical performance and geography (to minimise travel where possible). It should be expected that those teams in Division 1 of both competitions are likely to be required to travel further for their fixtures
- Automatic Promotion/Relegation will cease

For the Jason **Leonard U20s** competition:

- Competition moved towards the end of the season (though still with some overlap on the club season)
- CBs will only be able to select players that are registered at a club at Level 5 (Regional 1) and below
- CBs will be grouped on a geographical basis (Division/Region), with the winner of each Division (Region) moving into a semi-final and then finals.

An amendment was put forward proposed by Colin Free (Cheshire) seconded by Dave Clarke (Lancashire).

“ CB’s will be able to select players that are registered at a club at Level 5 (Regional 1) and below as well as players above this level (National 1 or 2) where these players have appeared on the team sheet less than 6 times for their club 1st XV in the current season”. “CB’s will be able to select players that are registered at a club at Level 5 (Regional 1) and below as well as players above this level (National 1 or 2) where these players have appeared on the team sheet less than 6 times for their club 1st XV in the current season”.

The meeting was asked to agree that the amendment be debated and voted on but this was defeated narrowly.

Therefore, the original proposal was **APPROVED** by Council.

E. Council Nominations Committee- Ken Andrews

Update on work of the Committee since June 2022.

Council **APPROVED** the appointment of Ewen Wilson as Independent member on Council Nominations Standing Committee for a period of three years until 31 July 2025.

F. RFU Strategy and Delivery Plan- Sue Day

Council were introduced to the RFU Strategy and Delivery Plan. This paper provided a brief summary of the process to develop the current RFU Strategy Plan.

The Delivery Plan is the detailed work plan which sits underneath the Strategy to deliver it and covers the significant activity that is planned to take place across the 22/23 financial year.

Given the recent capacity challenges seen in recent years, it is proposed that operating a 'one in, one out' policy going forward whereby, if significant work is identified throughout the year, there is a need to identify what can come out of the delivery plan to make room for it.

This process will be managed by the Leadership Team, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and we are seeking Council endorsement on this proposal which was approved by Board in July.

In order to best understand the delivery plan it is helpful to have a good understanding of the Strategy that it is delivering and so a background that has been included.

G. Women's English Qualified Players (EQP) System – Conor O'Shea

This paper set out current thinking regarding the women's English Qualified Players (EQP) system for the Womens Premier 15s competition from 2023/24 onwards.

From the inception of the Premier 15s league there has been an EQP requirement in place whereby clubs are required to have a minimum average of English qualified players in a match day squad over the season.

- The EQP average was set at 14 for the 2017/18 season, moving to 15 in 2018/19 and to 16 in the 2019/20 season where it has remained.
- The EQP requirement was put in place to meet with the objectives of the league namely to ensure the development of England players for the England team and to ensure the sustained success of the England Women's programme.
- Clubs meeting the requirement are eligible to receive EQP related funding which has been set at £7500 per season since the 2017/18 season and is paid as per the terms of the 'EQP Scheme Protocol'.
- The number of clubs meeting the EQP requirement per season has reduced year on year, and consequently the number of clubs receiving the EQP funding.

Several AP15s clubs have raised concerns about the EQP requirement not being met and ultimately, its link to the purpose of the league in developing English talent. It is also felt by the clubs and the RFU, that the EQP related funding is not incentivising the clubs to meet the EQP requirement.

H. Community Game Board-David Roberts

Council received the report regarding recent work/agenda of the Community Game Board.

Topics covered:

- County Championship changes
- RWC2025 Legacy plans with regard to upgrading of facilities
- Game Congress
- Review into Rugby Union in schools.
- Working group established to monitor cost of living increases in clubs

Game Congress was held at Warwick University on Friday 16th and Saturday 17th September.

Council Members and delegates from CBs were invited to discuss the following topics.

1. Different formats of the game
 - Non Contact
 - Contact
2. Club of the Future

J. Professional Game Board Report- Phil de Glanville

Paper received from PGB regarding the following topics:

- Review of International Tours
- Review of European Club competitions
- Worcester Warriors
- Player Performance Management Group – ways of working
- Minimum Standards Criteria
- Updates from stakeholder- RPA, PRL, Championship,
- Championship Transition Project Update

K. Every Rose Action Plan Update (Women and Girls)- Sue Day

The Women and Girls game update paper for Council has been reviewed and simplified, in line with the governance and monitoring of the Every Rose Action plan. Council can now expect a familiar template which updates on each of the pillars of the Action Plan which include:

- Accessibility – Recruit and Retain
- Success – Red Roses, Allianz Premier 15s, Pathway
- Visibility – Broadcast and streaming, increase digital fan following, increase attendance at events.
- Commercially Viable – Premier 15s self-financing, Red Roses self-financing

L. Board Nominations Committee Report- Tom Ilube

The Board Nomination committee will be seeking recruitment for:

- Board Independent Non-Executive Director (INED)
- Premier 15s - Chair and CEO Recruitment
- RFU Representative to the British and Irish Lions

M. D & I Implementation Working Group Report- Genevieve Glover

The recommendation leads have been compiling outstanding actions from the plan, and adding additional work to support the long term embedding of inclusion and diversity into 'business as usual' for Game Leaders.

Key areas of focus for 2022/23

- Better mapping and linking together of the leadership pathways (Leadership Academy/ Leadership in Union/ CBs/ Council etc) ensuring everyone has the same information and access I&D education and resources
- Onboarding process, training and support for Council in the I&D space
- Continuation of Council & National Youth Council (NYC) mentoring
- NYC representation on the Working Group, Kirsten Flowers will be replaced by Krisha Lall, with Kirsten now chairing the Youth Council.

N. Q4 Business Report and Month 1 Finance Report -Sue Day

Sue Day reported on the Q4 Business Report (FY2021/22) providing an update across several key areas at year ending 30 June 2022, including finance, risk, strategic targets, strategic projects and safeguarding.

The Month 1 Finance Report (FY2022/23) provided an overview of the RFU's financial position at the end of July 2022.

KA/DC/RTJB

03.10.22