

**MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING AND
FINANCIAL AGM OF
LANCASHIRECOUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LTD
HELD AT LIVERPOOL ST HELENS 23RD NOVEMBER 2023**

President Carol Baker welcomed everyone to the meeting and also reminded people to sign in.

1. **Apologies:**

Alan Marsland, John Dewhurst, Ernie Neely, Alan James, Tim Stirk, Allen Bower, Arthur Crabtree, Owen Williams, Christine Spivey, Ian Spivey, Steve Doherty, Malcolm Phillips, Robbie Jones

2. **Minutes of the General Meeting held on Wednesday 19th June at Tyldesley RUFC**

These were on the County website.

3. **Matters arising**

No matters arising.

4. **Financial AGM and Presentation of Accounts for 2018 -2019**

Paul Deakin welcomed everyone and then went on to explain the accounts. He explained that the aim was not make money per se but to make money that could then be invested back into the Community Game. As in previous seasons the RFU had reduced the money they were giving to the CBs.

As stated previously all money was invested back into the Community to include:

14K for Rugby United

15K County Admin

41K Rugby Community/County Championship

There was currently a shortfall of 4K

Money was invested in the County Teams at all levels to ensure that players who represent the County have a memorable experience.

This year there had been 100K available from the RFU with two funding streams applied for, with 9 clubs being successful.

For 12- 21 year olds 12K had been made available in order for schools to provide an extensive programme.

14 clubs were hosting different events having applied to the RFU and there had been good feedback from those clubs. Any club could apply and there was approx. 7K in the pot.

10K had been made available for the Girls U18DPP

Any excess will be reinvested into clubs looking to start/grow U18 Girls teams. There was also money available for U12 Girls teams.

The Rugby United Project involved 6 CBs and the aim was to specifically target the Black and Asian Community. Bolton , Blackburn and Broughton Pk were the clubs involved in Lancashire.

Lancashire were continuing to participate in the Try It rugby scheme which targeted Primary schools. Approximately 3000 children have been involved and of those 20% have joined a local club. !0K from the Youth Trust Fund had helped to fund this project. wo

8K was available for Age Grade Rugby

6K for the Adult County Campaigns

There was some wiggle room to support the County if they progressed.

Lancashire were continuing to work with Acorn Wellbeing to promote Mental Health Support.

Money was available from Sport England but clubs needed to apply.

CB reiterated the importance of Acorn \wellbeing and urged clubs to flag the support u p at their clubs.

She then thanked Paul for his work on Finance and also his work on the RFU Council.

5. **RFU Representatives Report**

This season there was a new format and a copy of the report had been sent out prior to the meeting.

Dave Clarke and Paul Deakin were available to answer questions.

The first query asked whether a new Chair had been put in place at the RFU. It was thought that it would be Malcolm Wharton from Berkshire but this had not yet been finalised.

DC and PD had been appointed to several groups on the RFU Council as part of their new term of office,

There was a query regarding tackle height and if the Professional game would apply the same rules as the Community game. At the moment the Professionals play to different rules and this would continue for the time being.

There followed a query about the RFU being sued by approximately 300 players , according to Sunday papers, however this was still on going as all the information was currently with Lawyers and Insurers etc so at the moment it was not possible to say what the outcomes would be,

6. **Committee Reports**

a) **Management Board**

All minutes were posted on the website.

b) **Disciplinary Committee**

Brian Stott gave the following report:

- Match Official Abuse was not going away and continued to be an ongoing concern.

- There had been a rise of Racial/Homophobic abuse. This was dealt with by the RFU and at the moment Lancashire had got the most cases, this may be because we report them.
- Regarding the tackle height there had been no rise in sendings off, if anything they were slightly down.
- Going back to the matter of reported abuse , there may be a query about if we are the highest, looking at % we are no better or worse but we do have a larger number of clubs.
- Often a problem with U18 , ref may be right/wrong but he is the ref.
- Problem with U17 games may be that it is often not a Society referee.

c) **Governance**

- There was a new proposal ready to be out to the Board and more details available at a later date.
- Nothing serious to report regarding Safeguarding
- All required courses were being completed

d) **Rugby Development Committee.**

HH reiterated what PD had said about the TRY it Rugby. Any club wanting to join the scheme then just let us know.PH asked whether the Anti Assassins games, HH replied that that would be covered in his report later.

e) **Club and Community Rugby Committee**

Nothing to report on this occasion.

f) **Competitions**

The Lancashire Bowl had now reached the Final stage.

The Lancashire Plate had reached the Semi Final Stage

The Brian Leigh Trophy was at the Semi Final Stage .

League 7 and below were at 95% Completion

Counties 1 – 100 %

Counties 2 – 99.2%

Counties 3 – 99.2%

Counties 4 – 99.2%

DN 100%

York 100%

Numbers were slightly up and more rugby was being played. The issues resulting from Covid seemed to have settled down.

A query was raised about the Finals being played at Leigh again. DC replied that last year Leigh had been promised the Finals but the games were then moved to Wigan. As Leigh had been ‘messed about’ last year the decision was made to award the Finals to Leigh. The finals would be open to tender next year.

7. **Playing**

Seniors:

Nothing to report at the moment . The County Finals would be at Twickenham in June.

U20

Following the ratification of the 'new' eligibility rules by the RFU County Championship Organising Committee we have decided not to enter the Jason Leonard Competition this year.

We will be looking to arrange a series of challenge games with the other CBs who will also not be entering the JL CC for the same reason.

It is worth to note that eight players who played in the Senior County Final Last June played U20 rugby in the last 6 seasons(Covid Season apart) The last time we reached a U20 County Final we had a near 50/50 split of players from Level 3 -5 and Level6 down. 14 of last year's U18 s would automatically become eligible due to the fact of which club they play at and some of these players are not anywhere near regular 1st XV team rugby.

U20 Challenge Cup Sunday 26th Feb 2024 Cheshire A

U20 Challenge Cup Sunday 16th March 2024 Cheshire H

U20s Fixture dates 20th and 27th April 2024 – at least one more fixture

Lancashire Royals

Further discussion are ongoing as to whether it is feasible to continue with the Royals this season. If going to play the Anti Assassins there would need to be some input from them.

U18

Trials held at MMU last month – 91 nominees of which 82 trialed

27 man squad selected of which 15 clubs and 13 schools represented

3 games arranged

Yorkshire U18 -3rd December at Vale of Lune 2.00pm KO

Cheshire U18 17th December at Broughton Pk 2.00pm KO

Durham U18 7th January at Keighley RUFC (North Festival) 11.00am KO

U17

Programme starts in April

Nominations for Trial to go out early March

3 games arranged :

Yorkshire U17 12th May A Venue TBC KO 2.30pm

Cheshire U17 19th May venue TBC either Lymm or Chester 2.00pm

Cumbria U17 26th May Tyldesley 2.00pm KO

Schools

53 schools were now involved which was an increase of 11 from last year. So numbers should increase.

There would be a Girls U12 and U14 Festival.

The Boys 14 – 18 year olds competition was running at the moment.

Still waiting for the report from the Schools review.

The next meeting was on the 6th December .

Some concern that there was very little liaison between schools and clubs regarding head injuries.

DC suggested that a meeting should be set up involving Ian Spivey and Robbie Jones.

Women and Girls

The dates for the Senior Games would be in May with the Finals in June.

The Senior County Coaching team had not yet been decided and there would be a decision in the New Year.

The U16 DPP had just been completed with 13 clubs represented.

They would play Cheshire on the 18th February.

There would be a festival at the end of March

The U18s were represented from 9 clubs

They would play

17th December v Yorkshire at Trafford MV

14th January v Durham and Cumbria TBC

Any girls playing needed to be registered eg may be 14 girls but only 5 actually registered, There would be spot checks so please ensure registration is in place.

8. League and North Division Report

Season seems to have turned a corner , more number playing and fewer walkovers. The game on Principle was being used.

The Papa Johns Cup would take place again with similar format to this year but with earlier notification of fixtures. All games would be played after the League had completed and there would be a Wimbledon style draw, ie if Away in 1st round then may be Away in 2nd round.

Next Season Players would have to register themselves and it would then be approved by the club registrar.

Below Level 7 one player may play with one club one week and then change the following week so there was some concern that the system may be open to some sort of abuse. There would be an update on the 1st December 2023

There then followed a lengthy discussion on the pros and cons of the system with the general opinion that it may not work with possible chaos at some levels especially with regard to the EMC . Concern was also raised about how GMS would cope. The aim is to reduce the workload for the club volunteer.

9. Correspondence

There was nothing appertaining to this meeting.

10. New Members

11. Date and Time of Next meeting Wednesday 20th March 2024
Liverpool St Helens RFC at 7.00pm

12. AOB

Rohan Whittle raised a question regarding the Competition involving the Lancashire Cup. DC reported he was speaking to the Senior clubs about it but at the moment they were reluctant to commit to it. BS commented that at that Level the clubs wanted to concentrate on the League rather than look for extra games.

Another query was about the GMS Support that was available as the phone was often unanswered and no call backs received. The only advice was that may be better to e mail but just to keep trying.

The President Carol Baker thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.20pm

Attendees:

President	Carol Baker
Past President	Peter Hughes BEM
Past President	D. Herriman
Past President	Dave Clarke
Past President	Ken Andrews
Past President	Steve Blackburn
Past President	Tommy Hughes
Past President	Brian Stott
Past President	Gill Burns MBE
Hon Secretary	Mark Downs
Hon Treasurer	Paul Deakin

Director of Rugby Development	Howard Hughes
Director	Kate Benetta
Anti Assassins RUFC	R Heptonstall
Aspull	S Bailey
Blackburn RUFC	P Westhead
Bolton	G Tregilas
Broughton Pk	J Heald
Burnage	E Haynes
Burnley RUFC	M Nichols
Firwood Waterloo RFC	G Burns MBE
Heaton Moor RUFC	D Todd
Leigh	T Hughes
Littleboro	L Johnson
Liverpool Referees	P Barnett
LSH	J Williams
Manchester Referees	D Guerin
Manchester RFC	T Harper
Mossley Hill	P Barnett
North Manchester	J Evans
Oldham RUFC	R Heptonstall
Orrell	G Winstanley
Preston Grasshoppers RFC	A Jebb
Rochdale	S Blackburn
SEdgeley Pk	R Berry
Sefton	P Merriman
Southport RUFC	P Andrews
Tyldesley	D Phillips
Warrington	G Perkin
West Park RUFC	C Hilton
Wigan RUFC	D Clarke

Schools

j O Ryan

League

K Potter

Individual Members

Ian Scott Brown

Minutes

Anne Clarke