

# LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

## Minutes of the Board Meeting

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024

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

In Attendance: Messrs B. Hurst, B.H. Stott, A. Soutar, J. Jones & C. Gaffey.

Apologies:

CB Relationship Managers Report.

A. Soutar

1. AS confirmed that DW will provide an outline for the women's and girls items from Friday's previous catch up meeting this will cover the lead up to the Rugby World Cup. **appendix 1**
2. One club has fallen foul of the payment of players declaration, RFU benefits will be withheld from this club, 12 clubs are being spot checked we don't know at this time which clubs they will be.
3. Thanks to PD for receiving submissions for the innovation funding awards.
4. On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> Sept every player in the RFU leagues has to be registered. DW going to run a report to find which clubs if any will be sanctioned.

Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2024, (previously circulated) were accepted and signed per procuracionem as a correct record.

Matters arising.

There were no matters arising.

Finance Report

1. PD - year end accounts have been submitted to the auditors we have £125,000 in the bank of which £25,000 is held for Rugby United. Thanks to all budget holders we are in a slightly better position than we were last year.
2. Catherine Jones has been talking to the Rugby United clubs, 2 are active, 1 is very quiet and there is a consideration to bring a fourth club in for the final year.

### County Rebranding Project.

1. Chris Gaffey gave a presentation on the update of the graphics that he's been designing along with the font that will go with those for our re branding exercise. A decision was made to focus on Lancashire RFU rather than Lancashire County RFU.
2. The board agreed with the artwork and gave Chris permission to pursue setting it up.
3. Chris was thanked and left the meeting.

### Youth Presentation.

Josh Jones, a member of the RFU National Youth Council gave a presentation.

**appendix 2.**

1. Josh explained the importance of youth representation in county rugby union, this is important for growth and modernization.
2. The goal is to set up a youth subcommittee run by people under the age of 25. The board agreed to support Josh.

### Open Discussion.

1. CAB - there have been many applications for dispensations for underage players at the start of the season some clubs have not applied, played and will be disciplined.
  2. DW – BHS had attended the Colts AGM were proposals made to drop 3 Sundays from the age grade calendar set aside for County rugby to make them into Colts league fixtures. HH commented that the national age grade calendar was set by Twickenham and must be adhered to.  
BHS proposed joint letter between Lancashire and Cheshire who are both in agreement that the Sundays should not revert back to league rugby.
  3. BHS - the top two regulation changes were approved at the AGM and BHS is now looking at the second tier. BSH suggested that the terms of reference for each subcommittee will be set by the board at the start of each season, that committee will then report to the board in line with its terms of reference. There was support and notice agreement from the board for this procedure.
  4. BHS - the new website needs to be planned so that it is simple to find the information that directly affects rugby in the county. BHS will prepare a mock up.
- AS - this is the same across the game as a whole and is not seen as a reason for players leaving the game.
- PD - suggested this is a board we should start using something similar to Microsoft 365. MD suggested that with the number of mailboxes we have it could be expensive unquestioned why the RFU do not provide this to counties.

Correspondence.

None appertaining to this meeting.

New Members.

There were no new member applications.

50:50 Draw

MD - requested that the August and September draw be put back to the next board meeting to allow himself and PD to do a reconciliation of members who had ceased paying in.

Date of next meeting.

Next Meeting: 6:30 pm on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024 by Zoom.

Any other business.

KB - upcoming assessment for the U16 girls we have 92 participants registered from 14 different clubs which will be split over 2 sessions, both will be at Trafford MV with seven coaches assessing. The 92 would be brought down to 44 to create 2 squads. There is a £10,000 budget for the U16s girls payable from the RFU.

KB - for the U18s girls the nominations open on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September and the assessments will be on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October at MMU.

HH - the U18 team boys trial will be 27<sup>th</sup> October with emails going to all club secretaries for nominations by the end of the month.

Meeting ended at 7:50pm



Chairman Date 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024

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## Appendix 1

Many apologies for the delay on this but I've tried to capture some of what we discussed last week in the text below, please let me know if I have missed anything. Appreciate that there is a heck of a lot information here....If possible, can you keep this between the county reps at the moment as we're still working on some of the detail. I'll come back at our next catch up where information is missing.

### RWC Impact '25 – Lancs specific information

- The wider Local delivery team (Club Devs, Growth activators, Coach and Match official officer, comps officer) are working to deliver a focussed piece of work leading into, and beyond the '25 RWC.
- Nationally, we'll be concentrating much of our work across a series of host cities and Hotspots. The hotspots were generated from sport England data, and our own data and insight teams. The hotspots capture areas where womens/girls rugby provision doesn't match the demand from the local population e.g. Liverpool, currently has no girls rugby offer, in a city of over 900,000 people.
- Lancashire will benefit from sitting across two of these – Manchester (host City), and Liverpool (hotspot).
- For each area we have refined a club list, based on where we see the greatest potential, and most realistic growth. We used a range of factors to get to the club list but ultimately much of it was driven by club readiness factors (i.e. they want to grow new womens/girls activity, or sustain existing high levels and have capacity to do so), and proximity to the host city/hotspot area.
- Funding for the programme comes from Sport England, meaning that we have to work within the designated host city / hotspot areas.
- Please see mission statement slide attached for breakdown of objectives.
- We have also identified a few clubs that sit outside of the hotspot/host city areas, where we think, with a little bit of support, we could support them to grow their WAG's numbers. *N.b. These clubs wont be eligible to receive some of the interventions below*

In a practical sense, we'll be using a range of interventions to support the clubs within each area:

### Playing and volunteering

6-12 girls schools coaching programme:

- School delivery programme, primary and secondary, using Sale Sharks community foundation as the delivery partner.
- Focus / Aim of the programme is to increase club registrations between the U6 - U12's age group, by delivering hands on coaching support.
- Delivery will be club lead i.e. the clubs provide their target schools and focus age groups
- Sale Sharks team will also support in-situ coaching support at the clubs i.e. Wednesday evenings, Sunday mornings to aid transition from school to club.

### School rugby managers

The role of the school rugby manager (SRM) is somewhat different from the 6-12 delivery. The SRM should act as a facilitator within a school sports partnership/network of schools. The hope is that these individuals will help us to further promote, and endorse rugby union within their setting, whilst opening doors for local clubs (e.g. schools festivals based at rugby clubs).

Lancashire have 2 in place currently, they have been working for the past season:

- SGO @ Sefton School partnership, United learning multi academy trust (James Wright)

There are also 2 new SRM's for the coming season:

- Fylde community foundation (working in schools for the fylde and Wyre cluster of clubs)
- 1 new post within the city of Manchester (details to follow)

### University grants programme

4 Lancs universities have been awarded funding to employ a coordinator and / or activator. The purpose of these roles is to support new playing opportunities outside of the traditional BUCS offer, introduce new people to the game, and support links with local clubs

- Manchester Met, Uni of Manchester, Uni of Liverpool, Lancaster Uni

### Facilities

I think that you probably know about most of this already but please see breakdown of clubs who have received facility grant support below:

Year 1 – Aspull, Leigh (Social spaces)

Year 2 – Eccles (social space and changing room upgrade), Manchester (Changing rooms)

Year 3 – Aldwinians, Bolton (social spaces), and LSH (changing rooms)

There is also a new fund coming online – Small grants programme (official name and more details TBC)....This will look to support clubs with small grants for quick and easy fixes to improve their facilities, making them more attractive for female players. This will not be open application and clubs within a host city or hotspot, will be invited to apply should we think that they have a good project.

### Coach and match official development

Many clubs have already successfully applied, and have received vouchers to attend coaching and / or referee course. The successful applicants will also be added onto a coach mentoring scheme and will be eligible to apply for free stash:

- Aldwinians 3 vouchers, Bolton 1, Burnley 1, Bury 1, Fleetwood 2, Fylde 2, Leigh 1, Littleborough 5, Collegiate 2, Manchester 4, PGH 2

### Connecting communities

Our central team have been working on new initiatives designed to open up our rugby clubs to brand new audiences. Clubs have received grants to initiate and develop these links/partnerships:

*Womens institute*

Broughton Park

Southport

Waterloo

Fylde  
Rochdale

*Our Parks*

Eccles

Rejected by Sefton and Wigan

*This women runs*

Vale of Lune

Bolton

Universal club support offer

Whilst we have focus clubs, we will still offer support more widely to any/all clubs within the county who are looking to develop womens and girls rugby, via our universal club support offer, much of which has been improved for the season ahead:

- National webinars
- Online resources and learning
- Love rugby resources and guidance
- Coaching guidance
- Inner warrior resources
- Local networking meetings
- Club developer support

Club lists

Liverpool Hotspot	Manchester Host City	Non Hotspot
Sefton	Aldwinians	Fylde
Collegiate	Leigh	PGH
Waterloo	Wigan	Fleetwood

Southport	Bolton	Garstang
West Park	Boroughton Park	Burnley
LSH	Didsbury	
	Eccles	
	Littleborough	
	Manchester	
	Trafford MV	



Appendix 2

# Lancashire meeting

*NYC project- Youth Representation*



# Why is it important ?

## The Importance of Youth Representation in County Rugby Union

- Youth representation in county rugby union is essential for growth and modernization. With support from the National Youth Council (NYC)
- Revitalized the CB's social media presence, improving communication and engagement with the community.
- Involving youth in decision-making drives fresh perspectives and ensures rugby's future relevance and growth.
- Free for the county, I want to give my time and resources for this project, and an important link with the NYC.

# Case Studies

- **Durham**

Focused on the initial setup phases.

Begun to establish youth council within the CB

Ideas for potential projects and outlining responsibilities for council members.

Looking to help transition from colts to senior, CB & social media presence, enhancing communication and engagement to Youth.

- **Kent:**

initiate the formation of a youth group.

Development of the KCRFU Youth Engagement Strategy Survey to understand youth needs and engagement.

- **Hertfordshire and Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Derbyshire:**

Established Youth Representation

NLD full council that is self-ran with a similar set up to that of the National Youth Council.

Herts youth representation in the Executive team and youth forum

# What will the sub-committee look like ?

## Youth Subcommittee Formation Plan

### •Age Range & Representation

- Targeting **17-25-year-olds** for fresh perspectives and diversity in decision-making.
- Ensures youth representation that reflects the broader rugby community.

### •Member Selection

- Focus on individuals **already involved with the county** to ensure familiarity with county operations.
- Recruiting members from **Lancashire** for local engagement and direct impact.

### •Planned Committee Size

- Looking to form a group of **3-5 members**.
- Small and focused for efficient collaboration, but large enough for diverse input.

### •Next Steps

- Finalizing member selection.
- Assigning specific roles to ensure meaningful contribution from all members



# Our Project for this season!

## Lancashire and its roots!

### *Project Overview*

Select **a few clubs** to showcase their positive impact on youth rugby.  
Focus on **youth involvement** within the subcommittee—members will lead the project.

### *Video Format*

Create **2-3 minute videos** per club.  
Each video will explore key **talking points** about the club's successes and projects, all from a **youth perspective**.

### *Key Talking Points*

Youth development programs within the club.  
Club's approach to **engagement with young players**.  
Innovative projects the club is working on to support youth rugby.

### *Outcome*

Highlight the clubs' positive work.  
Promote youth engagement and foster a connection between young members and county operations.

# **Our Project for this season!**

## **Lancashire and its roots!**

*Sedgely Park RUFC- NATIONAL LEAGUE CLUB, MINI AND JUNIOR SECTION*

*Widnes RUFC- HISTORY OF THE CLUB WITH MUSEUM AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT*

*Blackley RUFC- STARTING A RUGBY TEAM WITH MINI AND JUNIOR SECTION*

*Aspull RFU- PRE COVID ONE AGE GROUP THRIVING SECTIONS PLUS DUAL CODES*

*Bolton RUFC- MIXED ABILITY, JUNIOR MA AND RUGBY UNITED and girls rugby*

*Littleborough RUFC- SENSORY ROOM PLUS Girls and Ladies Rugby*

*Eccles RUFC- MINI AND JUNIOR SECTION PLUS OPEN AGE AND MODERNISING THE GAME THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA*

**Star \*, Looseheadz, Northern network**

# Positives for our county ?

- Highlight the positives within the county, highlighting from a youth perspective.
- Allows a future sustainable model which gives us the link back with the youth
- Representation from pervious Lancashire age grade players, meaning more insight at AGM meetings, who are linked back into the clubs and youth on match days.
- Only 3 other CB's have got a youth sub-committee and there projects are poor.
- NYC have stated that this will be used as a pilot study for the other CB's if works.
- Plus RFU is really pushing commitment for ages 14-25 to keep in the sport with free coaching courses, refereeing ect...



# Future Possibilities?

- It will become a sustainable model away from myself and NYC.
- I would like also, which will be a youth sub-committee proposal, a youth recognition award handed out to any young volunteer in the county.
- I would like this to be an extra award at the Lancashire awards night. Which will be handed out from the youth sub-committee, but this is engaging with the youth but not from a playing perspective.





Thank you any Questions ?