



ENGLISH RUGBY COUNTIES ASSOCIATION

Counties in Membership

Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Cornwall
Devon
Durham
Eastern Counties
Essex
Gloucestershire
Hampshire
Hertfordshire
Lancashire

Middlesex
North Midlands
N.C.A.
N.L.D.
Oxfordshire
Somerset
Staffordshire
Surrey
Sussex
Warwickshire

Associate Members

Derbyshire
Lincolnshire
Nottinghamshire

MINUTES of the meeting held at Fiveways Old Edwardians RFC on Sunday 21st January 2018 at 10.45 a.m.

Counties represented:

Christopher Smith	Buckinghamshire	Steve Guy	North Midlands
Alan Mitchell (Treasurer)	Cornwall	Charlie Hemmings	North Midlands
Richard Simeons	Cornwall	Rob Bray	North Midlands
John Drew	Devon	Andy Shorney	Somerset
Treve Mitchell	Devon	Rob Forsyth	Staffordshire
Peter Baines	Herts	Michael Proctor	Staffordshire
David Herriman	Lancashire	Roger Edmondson	Sussex
Brian East (Secretary)	Middlesex	Charlie McGinty	Warwickshire
Norman Robertson	N.C.A.		

Apologies were received from:

Jonathan Dance	Berkshire	Mark Hawkes	Somerset
David McAteer	Berkshire	Colin Baldwin	Oxfordshire
Anthony Flack	Buckinghamshire	Peter Grace (Chairman)	† North Midlands
Gwyn Stone	Buckinghamshire	Steve Mead	Somerset
Ivor Smith	Essex	Mark Hawkes	Somerset
Peter Williams	Gloucestershire	Becky Davies	Staffordshire
Anthony Flack	Buckinghamshire	John Atkin	Staffordshire
Adrian Sparks	Herts	Malcolm Caird	Surrey
David Roberts	Herts	Frank Edmonds	Sussex
David Hodgson	Lancashire		

1. **PRELIMINARIES**

1.1 The chairman, Peter Grace, had sent his apologies – still on holiday and Colin Baldwin had broken down at Banbury. Brian East took the Chair and welcomed all to the meeting.

2. **MINUTES** of meeting held on 10th September 2017

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record.

2.2 2.7. No report had been circulated by David Roberts from the large CB meeting.

3. **Discussion on RFU Governance and possible requirements for geographic CBs to implement such a structure.**

3.1 Middlesex, Hertfordshire and Sussex are making changes to their CB Structure.

3.2 Every CB Structure is different

3.3. Club Development Sub Committee had met last Thursday

- * Colin Baldwin is a member of that committee but was unable to attend today due to a malfunction in his car. He had intended to ask members for their views on any planned CB restructuring.

- * The CB views should be made known to Colin and the RFU Committee

- * Problems with getting volunteers (driven by Sports Council)

- * Young Ambassadors a good idea for volunteers but most had little knowledge of what the CB carries out.

3.4 Members discussed their experiences with Leadership Academies. People who had attended such academies were now volunteering on the CB Committees.

4. **Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP) Strategy**

Members discussed their experiences within their CBs for the establishment of AGPs

4.1 Merseyside, Somerset, Bucks, Devon and Sussex discussed what had happened in their CBs.

There were issues with the requirement of payment for the use to be made before the event.

Problems with mining subsidence in Lancashire for one of the second clubs to be nominated.

Usage below expectation in Somerset

Aylesbury pitch is brilliant but pellets in Beaconsfield (health and Safety are issues) – lack of money for some pitches – maintenance problems after 12 years at Brighton RFC.

Herts – 2 clubs have been selected for the next round of installations and the local RDO is aware of the possible payment for use problems.

Devon reported that 2 clubs are being considered. One has been turned down and the other may go the RugbyShare route.

Norman Robertson reported that Stourbridge has installed their AGP 2 months ago and that their players were happy with the facilities.

Of the Premiership clubs Saracens pitch was re-laid last year and is brilliant but Worcester pitch needs maintenance.

5. **CB Bar at Twickenham**

- 5.1 The new system for gaining entry to the CB Bar was causing problems with refused entry. CBs have to give the names of people from CB wanting entry to Simon Winman – is it for volunteers only or CB Sponsors etc?
- 5.2. Poor attendance at the CB Bar – one third full on some occasions – where is it - use it or lose it.
- 5.3. Refurbishment 250K in budget to revamp the CB Bar.
- 5.4. Each CB should write to Simon Winman about what they want.
- 5.5 The overwhelming feeling of the meeting was that the CB Bar should keep its existing name and that it should be a facility that should be considered as something special.

6. **County Championship**

- 6.1 The attached paper from Malcolm Caird was read out at the meeting
- 6/2 Concern was expressed about the fact that some finals were not to be played at Twickenham this year. Most members present were concerned about this decision process.
- 6.3 All the 7 Finals will either be at Twickenham or nearby – Cardinal Vaughan School - Secretary to circulate details of the arrangements for the Finals.
- 6.4 Buckinghamshire were clearly upset about Level 6 players having to play CBs with level 3 and level 4 players. All CBs were asked to e-mail Malcolm Caird (new Competitions Chair) stating their reasons for having a new structure.
- 6.5 Loss of earning insurance – are semi-professional players covered?

7. **Treasurer's report**

- 7.1 The bank balance was £3580 and there were still unpaid invoices for some CBs.

8. **ERCA and future topics**

- 8.1 Peter Grace had agreed to invite Steve Brown to this meeting but was unable to attend. Hopefully he will be able to attend the AGM in June 2018.
- 8.2. Length of the Season – player's welfare
- 8.3. Competition Review
- 8.4. Academy numbers and those not making it – do they return to the original CB?
- 8.5 Ticketing roadshows – encourage clubs to attend

9. **Any other Business**

- 9.1 Jed Stone nominated as a Life Member of ERCA.
- 9.2. Secretary asked to produce the ERCA Constitution for Peter Baines to review for the next meeting
- 9.3. Secretary not seeking re-election at the AGM in June
- 9.4. Northern Represented position still to be appointed.

The meeting closed at 12: 15 with a vote of thanks to Roger Edmundson for taking the notes of the meeting.

The AGM will be held on 3rd June 2018 at 11a.m.

Signed by Peter Grace, Chairman, as a true record of the meeting

_____ Date _____

Notes from Malcolm Caird re the County Championship (dated 12th January 2018)

I have now taken over from Rob Briers as chairman of the County Championship Committee, so if anyone has any direct queries, please contact me direct

There has been much debate about the venue for the Finals. We set out with the objective of having all 7 finals in or around Twickenham. That has proved difficult for the u20 because of the timing of the overseas tour, as well as exam commitments for the players. So those finals will remain as they are – one at Twickenham on Club finals day, and the other at a suitable prestige venue, both at the beginning of May

The remaining 5 will be at Twickenham. Three (men's tier 1 and tier 2, and women) will be on the hallowed turf. The other 2 will be at either Cardinal Vaughan or Keller Hall. We are working on those two having their medal presentations in the Royal Box. The fall back is Richmond, the Stoop, or London Irish new ground at Sunbury, but still to have presentations and post-match functions at Twickenham

Keith Kent and the Competitions Dept were supportive of holding 4 finals on the Sunday (plus the BaaBaas), with the fifth on the Saturday, but that proved unacceptable to Aviva as well as logistically difficult

We are also working on having one big venue within the stadium to accommodate all 5 post match events, thus creating critical mass. We may struggle to find a single venue, but are working on it

From early this season, Steve Grainger bought in to enhancing the County Finals Day, as has Steve Brown

The overall direction of travel is that, within three seasons, all 5 finals will be on the Twickenham pitch, and all post-match events held in one venue, again in Twickenham. How quickly we reach that destination remains to be seen

Any queries, please get in touch