

**MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING AND
FINANCIAL AGM OF
LANCASHIRECOUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LTD
HELD AT PRESTON GRASSHOPPERS RFC ON 20th November 2019**

President Gill Burns MBE welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There followed a minutes silence to mark the death of Ken Jones, a Past President, who had died the previous evening.

1. Apologies:

John Huyton, Tom Fitzgerald, John Bradbury, Ernie Neely, Malcolm Phillips, Bill Chappell. Eddie Wiles, Alan Bower, Dave Hodgson, Tommy Hughes, Steve Blackburn, Trevor Hulmes, Mark Nelson, Frank Morgan, Malcolm Worsley, John Jeskins.

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

These were on the County website.

http://www.lancashirerugby.co.uk/images/19-06-19_General_Meeting_Minutes40454.pdf

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 which were now on the website. He explained that the aim was not to make money per se but to make money that could then be invested back into the Community Game. 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:

- The Lancashire Royals
- The Lancashire Academy
- 40 Club Coaches had accessed level 2 training
- The School and Community Programme which had yielded a 10% increase in numbers.
- World Cup/Club Sessions
- Refereeing Courses
- Mixed Ability Rugby
- Mental Health Support

Paul then offered thanks to all the people who had helped to support and provide the above. He then went on to talk about the impact that the RFU cuts had had on the game. There had been a 10% reduction in funding. Last Season Lancashire had not got to Twickenham, which had saved some

money but the aim was to get to Twickenham so needed to put plans in place. Plan A was austerity but there was a Plan B.

Age Grade Rugby – Players would pay for their kit. Howard Hughes had secured a good deal with ADM as we wanted to continue to do the 'good stuff'.

£10,000.00 had been ear-marked for the Schools and Community Fund

£20,000.00 had been set aside for administration, this was not a lot in comparison to other Counties and there were no paid administrators.

Lancashire County RFU did not want the austerity to impact on the Community but it may have some impact on the Representative Rugby,

Lancashire's Income came from:

- Subscriptions
- Discipline (which was proving to be a great Fundraiser! Which was not good but that was a different discussion!)
- Competition Fees.

The Representative element could cost up to £65,000.00 and with the £20,000 Admin costs it meant there was £15,000.00 gap which meant there would have to be some cuts.

There had been a few queries about possible sponsorships but nothing yet confirmed.

The Financial Accounts had been signed off.

PD then closed this part of the meeting and was thanked by Gill Burns

5. **RFU Representatives Report**

The full report can be found here:

http://www.lancshirerugby.co.uk/images/RFU_Rep_Report_Nov_2019.pdf

It was not intended to read the report to everyone however there were some points to note.

- The CEO had a vision of what was needed and this was noted in the report.
- The Project Union was discussed at some length, the emphasis should be on player Enjoyment meaning that players should be looked after on and off the pitch. The RFU wanted to build an understanding of what the players want, which may be different to what players wanted years ago!
- GMS continued to be a point of discussion and despite endless assurances that it would be improved it was still a source of frustration at times. KA took the point from ISB that League Secretaries bore the brunt each week trying to check match cards etc and he would relay that back to Twickenham. CB did add that training was available but it was felt that it was not necessarily a training issue but rather a fault with the system.
- A query was raised about the Technical Area that was mentioned in the report. BS said that there was guidance available which he would distribute to the clubs.

- The Adult Review was the Competitions Review and this was due to be reported to the Board in the first week of January.
- Payment of Players. Governance were currently looking at the clubs declarations and various Disciplinary actions are being looked at. RB did say that some clubs had missed the deadline which was also being looked at to see if the return had been done manually or electronically.

6. **Committee Reports**

a) **Management Board**

All minutes were posted on the website.

b) **Finance and Funding Committee**

Covered earlier

c) **Disciplinary Committee**

Brian Stott gave the following report:

- There was some concern about the number of Sendings Off in the U18 Age group, the main problem with U18 appeared to be concerning Abuse of the Referee.
- There was a further discussion about the Technical Areas and it should be noted that the Coach should stay in the Technical Area at all times. A coach could be sent off if outside the Technical Area.
- Referees were refusing to ref on Sundays because of the abuse by Parents and Coaches.
- The bottom line is that you cannot abuse the Referee.
- All pitches should have a Technical area but there was a need to be realistic, there should be a barrier but that may not be possible.
- Racial Abuse was also on the increase and this was not acceptable in any shape or form.

d) **Governance**

- The Safeguarding online audit had been done and Lancashire were the first County to get a 100% completion rate.
- CB intended to do an audit of 10% of the clubs in Lancashire.
- There had been successful Safeguarding Conference at Waterloo RUFC and the County were thanked for sponsoring and supporting the event.
- Half game rule had come into play and there had been a lot of interest and reaction to it. If any complaints that the rule was not being adhered to this would only be accepted from a player or coach of that team and not the opposition.
- 22 clubs had U18 playing Open Age and it seemed to be working well. Carol queried whether the form should ask the player if they wanted to play Open age then that response would be recorded. There was some discussion as to whether clubs realise that that form only had a 12 month 'life span'.
- Not as many Age Grade players were playing up or down.

There then followed a brief discussion about the concerns about Player welfare eg how much rugby should U18 be playing, query if clubs kept a tally if players were playing

Saturday/Sunday and at school during the week. A query also came up about how a Rugby Concussion may be recorded, eg have a set form that could be passed from club/school/ or school to club to make people aware.

KA noted that there was always a problem of overplaying, there was an Age Grade Forum to look into this such as where players were playing and to ensure they were not 'burnt out' by 19.

e) **Rugby Development Committee**

Courses were being held but were not as well attended as might have been, one had been cancelled earlier in the season through lack of numbers. Sessions were free and the message was to go back to the clubs and let them know about what was going on.

f) **Club and Community Rugby Committee**

There was no report as MW the Chairman had sent his apologies.

g) **Competitions**

This covered all areas including the Colts/Seniors and Girls competitions. Some Lancashire clubs not included in the RFU leagues but the ADM leagues were continuing and the season was going as it should.

BH reported that the Competitions were hopefully on track. The Lancashire Cup was being played for this season for the first time in a number of years.

The M and J section was going well and it was being looked at to see whether the format may possibly change next year after this year's format had been reviewed.

There was a request that minutes from the previous meetings would be sent prior to the meeting in future.

h) **Rugby Development Officer**

There was no report.

7. **Playing**

Seniors:

It was reported that Martin Scott had retired from coaching the Forwards in the Senior team but was continuing to work with the U20s and The Royals. Information about the post would be available soon in order to appoint a new forwards coach.

MD asked it to be noted that there should be a vote of thanks to Scotty for all that he had done with the Lancashire Senior XV.

It was felt that there was a good base of players for the Lancashire Senior XV, there was some discussion about the fact that a lot of players had had dual registration with Sale FC and there was

some concern that some players may move because of some dissatisfaction with the system. If they moved it was hoped that it would be within a reasonable distance.

Looking at the upcoming season it was felt that it was rather disjointed , the 3 Qualifying rounds were as normal but then the Final was on the 21st June. The squad players had been alerted to this so that they could organise themselves re rest/need to maintain fitness. There was also a potetial clash with the England Counties tour.

The change had happened because of the RWC, the game could be played on the usual date but would not be at Twickenham, which is why the change of date was opted for

Next year the season would be back to normal.

U20

46 players had had trials at Preston and from these 22 had been chosen.

The fixtures were as follows;

V Durham 26th January at Tyldesley RUFC

V Yorkshire 23rd February at Yarnbury.

Hopefully there would be another good attempt to get to Twickenham.

Lancashire Royals

Trials had been held and the side chosen. Should have played Cheshire but Cheshire had declined the game.

V AA on December 28th at Blackburn RUFC

V Eastern Counties in May when the Seniors play their game against Eastern Counties.

U18

All the U18 games were outside the County, in Cumbria, Durham and Yorkshire in a festival format

U17

No report as new management being put in place.

U16

Changes were due to come into place next year.

Schools

This was changing this year and the competition would now be a 3 tier competition, Cup/ Vase/Plate in each year group. Games would be played in early January. Schools had taken the new format well as it would ensure that '50pt scenarios' would no longer take place.

Women and Girls

The games had been set with teams playing against the Northumberland in April and then Durham and Yorkshire in May. Dates would be added to the calendar on the website.

8. League Report

The League review was ongoing, according to the Community Game update listening panels were being set up to gather clubs' views. There had been 8 panels around the Country but although it had been pointed out that there were none in the North west it was doubted that this would change.

There had been a meeting with Cheshire where the Lancashire/Cheshire proposal had been discussed again and Cheshire had resubmitted it to the TFUNCC where it had been voted through 8.0.

Once the listening panels have concluded it would go to Council in April so Lancashire clubs would need to decide what they wanted to do.

9. The North

The message to clubs continued to be that they must complete the EMC as there were still clubs not following the procedure correctly.

The Game on Regulations were being applied. Cumbria want the Game on Principle at L8 and below.

Still concerns about mismatches but that needs to be taken up with the leagues at their AGM.

Lancashire had written to Paul O Leary about the consultation process mentioned above as the nearest to us had been at West Leeds/Blaydon.

KA was due to attend a meeting next week so any comments about the process should be passed to him by Thursday 28th November.

10. ERCA

DC and DH had attended the recent meeting which had been the 'longest meeting ever'. The discussion had centred around the academies link to the Professional game and not the Community game. There had followed a long debate on funding. Lancashire had taken one of the biggest 'hits' and it was unlikely to be replaced.

There was also some discussion about the County Championships with only the Senior tier having the opportunity to play at Twickenham.

There was a new Secretary who came from Hampshire and the new Treasurer came from Devon.

11. Correspondence

There was nothing appertaining to this meeting.

12. New Members

13. Date and Time of Next meeting

Wednesday 18th March 2020

Liverpool St Helens RFC at 7.00pm

14. **AOB**

- Gary Morgan had been co opted on to the Board. He requested that clubs please update their GMS for contacts as he had been trying to contact people.
- MD mentioned that any clubs travelling across the border (Wales/Scotland) did not have to apply for permission as in tours as long as they were travelling there and back on the same day.

The President Gill Burns MBE thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.35pm

Attendees:

President	Gill Burns MBE
Senior Vice President	Brian Stott
Vice President	John Greenwood
Vice President	Carol Baker
Vice President	A James
Past President	Peter Hughes BEM
Past President	D. Herriman
Past President	Tim Stirk
Past President	Dave Clarke
Hon Secretary	Mark Downs
Hon Treasurer	Paul Deakin
Director of Rugby Development	Howard Hughes
RFU Representative	R T J Briers
RFU Representative	K Andrews
Director(Co Opt)	G Morgan
Aldwinians RUFC	I Spivey
Anti Assassins RUFC	P Mahon
Blackburn RUFC	G Bancroft
Burnage RUFC	E Haynes
Burnley RUFC	M Nichols
Firwood Waterloo RFC	T McClure
Fleetwood RUFC	S Doherty
Heaton Moor RUFC	D Todd
Littleborough RUFC	B Hurst

Liverpool Collegiate	G Morgan
Lostock	A James
Manchester RFC	T Harper
Oldham RUFC	R Heptonstall
Preston Grasshoppers RFC	I Crosley
Southport RUFC	P Andrews
Trafford MV RUFC	R Murray
West Park RUFC	C Hilton
Wigan RUFC	D Clarke
Colts	A James
Mini and Junior	I Spivey
Schools	R Jones
Seniors	J Greenwood
Seniors	S Rigby
Safeguarding	C Baker
Safeguarding	C Spivey
League	K Potter
Individual Members	Ian Scott Brown
Minutes	Anne Clarke