

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Minutes of the Board meeting of the held at Liverpool St Helens RFC on Monday 2nd March 2020

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

In attendance: Messrs, G. Burns, G. Morgan, D. Southern, S. Urquhart, & P. Mills.

Apologies: Mr B.H. Stott.

D. Clarke opened the meeting by congratulating RTJB on his appointment as RFU Junior Vice President for the season 2020-2021.

RDO Report.

Phil Mills, one of our two new Community Rugby Coaches was welcomed to the meeting and gave a short introduction to himself.

DS reported:-

1. Phil had started to meet with clubs and was quickly picking up from where his predecessors had left.

SU reported:-

2. International Womens Day – 8th March. RFU & Sale working together to hold a celebratory at the Sale v London Irish event on Fri 6th March. Kai Burns will lead on the event with 11 clubs represented.
3. DC had been asked to question if there was to be a Womens Leagues Presentation evening along the format of the mens game. Given the low numbers of leagues it was thought that the Mens and Womens presentations could be made at the same event.
4. Womens Rugby Conference – Sun 4th April, 11:00-13:30 at Waterloo. Aaron Howarth to lead.
5. Student 7s – 11th March at Preston Grasshoppers.
6. Walking Rugby – Sale Sharks & RFU are pushing this initiative with clubs. Sale will help organise 31 weeks of Walking Rugby with a club. Contact kat.dalton@salesharks.com
7. IGR festival – Typhoons are to host 8 teams (4 Games) on 25th April in an International Gay Rugby Festival.
8. Trafford MV ladies to play first game against Oldham on Sat 7th April.
9. Club Clusters – DS reported that 3 had been arranged with good uptake so far.

SU left the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Monday 3rd February 2020, (previously circulated) were accepted and signed as a correct record.

Matters arising.

MJW – Have RFU Legal contacted John Bullough re Lostock issue – yes.

KA – Stepped down as Chair of RPPG. Bill Nichol has been appointed with Robbie Jones to act as vice chairman.

HH – Bill Nichol was DPP Liason manager and therefore the post will need to be re-advertised.

Questions & Comments to written reports.

RFU Representative Report – Appendix 1

Rugby Development Report – Appendix 2

Safeguarding Report – Appendix 3

1. HH – RDO Liason Meetings are to be re-invigorated.
2. MD – Explained the process of voting for the upcoming ballot for the post of RFU Council Representative and potential conflicts of interest.
3. GM – preparing to run a mailshot of the player Headcase case study.
4. GM – Rugby Safe lead contacts needs to be complete by clubs.
5. ASK – Volunteer nomination window has closed with 101 nominations. RFU contributing £2k + certificates and prizes. Need to identify and approach a guest speaker.
6. CAB – received an email with regard to Corona virus from RFU.

PD circulated the current financial expenditure statement.

Correspondence.

There was no correspondence appertaining to this meeting.

New Members.

None.

50:50 Draw

Jan 20	Value
S Knowles	£53.40
S Knowles	£8.90
AT Rowntree	£8.90
WN Hopkinson	£8.90
RTJ Briers	£8.90

Date of next meeting.

Next Meeting: Monday 6th April 2020 at Liverpool St Helens RFC.

Any other business.

- KA – Both Bill Lowe (Eccles) and Hugh Paterson (Tarleton) had passed away. MD to send County condolences.
- KA – suggested we invite Brendan Thomas and Noel Speed to next meeting to explain player pathway. KA to invite.
- KA – a meeting had been held with Mark Saltmarsh (RFU) regarding Lancashire being a model for Clubs & Schools age grade calendar.
- GB – has secured a guest speaker for the Annual Awards Evening.
- DC – At the clubs meeting at Wigan all clubs had been reminded about abiding by the Technical area rules.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:00pm

Wale Some Chairman Date 7th May 2020

Agreed & signed remotely due to Covid 19 lockdown.

Appendix 1
RFU Representatives Report

2019/20 Appointments

- Rob Briers nominated for Junior Vice President for 2020-2021
- Conor O'Shea was welcomed to the Executive team as Director of Performance Rugby
- Andy Cosslett as Chair of the Board for a final one-year term until 31 July 2021;
- Chris Cuthbertson as Chair of the Governance Standing Committee for a further two-year term until 31 July 2022
- Bill Sweeney to serve in three Senior Roles (*NB: this requires a two-thirds majority*).
- Kathryn Williamson appointed Communications Director

CEO Report – Bill Sweeney

- There is an open dialogue with PRL around the RFU's position regarding the PRL sanction against Saracens in relation to the Salary Cap regulations, the situation is being closely monitored.
- Financial support for the Championship next season (2020/21) represents a return to the levels of funding prior to the 2016- 2020 cycle. The Championship clubs were disappointed with this decision but RFU have offered to support them during this period.
- Good progress continues with the Union's two major projects: Union and Light.
- Project Union- good progress in the key areas of focus which centre around: stakeholder engagement, business planning (which includes 'core' planning, strategic business case development and capability reviews), and development of the Union's culture
- Project Light- The six Unions have now signed an agreement allowing 6 Nations to sell the combined broadcast rights for the next cycle and the UK tender process is taking place over the next month.
- Final negotiations with CVC regarding their equity investment continue to progress.
- 2019 Rugby World Cup (RWC) debrief, key areas to target: optimising the PGA; collaborative working between the professional team and wider organisation; appropriate working environment and facilities for the professional department; use of sports psychology
- Bill Beaumont is running for a second (and final) term as World Rugby Chairman with French Rugby Federation (FFR) President Bernard Laporte as his Vice-Chairman. The RFU has been working with Beaumont on an outline manifesto to use and has a primary focus to unite the global game.
- Patron-Duke of Sussex: The Duke will continue to maintain his patronages including those of the RFU, IPF and All Schools. A meeting is being scheduled with The Duke's team to better understand the way the RFU will work with him in the future.

Community Game Board- Rob Briers

- With a relatively flat budget for 2020/2, anticipated it is envisaged that the most significant area of increase in investment will be around recruitment and development of volunteers. Increased investment back into facilities (mainly around women & girls development) is also under consideration
- Operational funding in relation to competitions (namely travel funding and match official funding) will be sustained during 2020/21.
- A small number of areas remain unresolved and are the subject of further discussion. These include Aspirational Teams, funding for County Championships and Investment games held at Twickenham.
- The IPF core grant of £500k is due for re-instatement in 2020/21 after a two-year payment holiday. Options on this are being considered.

Future Competitions Structure- Stephen Pearson

- The adult male Future Competitions Structure Group, is making progress since its establishment last summer. The Group has reviewed data and insights relating to the direct impact of the existing structure has on the game.
 - Appropriate travel time/distance
 - Player welfare concerns
 - Quality of player experience/quality of competition

- Financial sustainability (of clubs).
- CGB were clear on taking an early decision on any changes at Council in April, but to implement any changes in 2021/22.
- Communication with the Game:
 - Phase 1 – late January and February - communicate findings and carry out digital survey with players and club - closing date 6th March
 - Phase 2 – March to early April - face to face consultation meetings with CBs, clubs and others.
- Ken Andrews insisted on a local meeting involving both Lancashire and Cheshire clubs.
- Approval at the April Council Meeting. **Update- See Future Competitions Structure below**

Governance Standing Committee- Chris Cuthbertson

Reported on the following:

- PRL Salary Cap Regulations -
- Insolvency Regulations
- Pitchside Medical Care
- AGM 2020- whether to hold it in the Midlands but central London was still the best venue
- Laws Subcommittee Terms of Reference
- Tyrrell's Premier 15s Regulation Changes
 - the removal of the second team competition;
 - a decrease in registered squad size from 60 to 40; and
 - flexibility for teams to have up to 10 players dual-registered.

Powers of Council Working Group- Nigel Gillingham

- NG led the discussion on how the RFU Council fulfils its responsibility for holding the Board of Directors to account and exercises its other powers set out in RFU Rule 16.

Council Nominations Standing Committee- Mike Waplinton

- Council agreed to the nomination of **Rob Briers** for election at the AGM as the Junior Vice-President of the Rugby Football Union for the 2020/21 season.
- Council agreed to the revised Terms of Reference for Council Nominations Standing Committee including the amendment of the term limits to two terms of up to three years on a retrospective basis.

Board Nominations Standing Committee – Dominic Proctor

Council ratified:

Council Members' Ticket Entitlements- Charlie McGinty

- Council agreed on the principle that no individual should receive a greater allocation of tickets than a club.

Professional Game Board Report – Phil de Glanville

Issues were reported on:

- Competition Review – Premiership and Europe
- Chair of Medical Advisory Group (MAG) – Phil Winstanley appointed Chair.
- Minimum Operating Standards
- RWC 2019 Review
- Structured season 2020-21 and 2021-22

Professional Rugby Injury Surveillance Report (PRISP) – Season 2018-19- Dr Simon Kemp

A presentation by Dr Simon Kemp highlighted and number of issues in the game:

The PRISP report has been discussed at the PGB resulting in an action plan for concussion prevention:

- Ensuring that the most 'injury averse' interpretation of the laws and High Tackle Sanction Framework are used by English referees and Citing Officers.
- Sharing analyses of concussion risk in the tackle in the professional game with players, coaches (and World Rugby) looking towards approaches to concussion prevention.
- Refining our views on potential law changes and trials will be taken to the World Rugby Law Review Group and Welfare Symposium meetings in Paris on 3-5 March 2020.
- Focus on reduction of concussion risk in Age Group rugby (with particular focus on U18 boys and University players) and Professional men's rugby.

Project Union Update – Sue Day

- Council was updated on the progress made to date on Project Union.
- Following a presentation by Frank Dick, who works with the England Men's team, has been supporting the RFU with develop the language within its culture.
- The Council then spent some time in focus groups discussing the culture development of the RFU.

Budget/Business Planning –

- Sue Day presented the Q2 financial report and gave a comprehensive update on the RFU's Financial Position and Strategic Plan Performance.

FUTURE COMPETITIONS STRUCTURE

Key points

1. Council received an update on the work of the Future Competitions Structure Group at its meeting on 24 February; this included headlines from the ongoing survey as well as some suggested direction of travel to take into the face-to-face consultation.
2. The survey has had a substantial response with greater than 5.5K responses, including approximately half from players, and with good representation by role, level and region.
3. Council were advised that the survey will remain open **until 6th March** to provide even more opportunity for people to feed back, especially if they can't make a face-to-face consultation meeting.
4. Respondents are encouraged to continue to submit commentary into the free text questions and also directly to members of the Future Competitions Structure Group and/or their Council Members. There is ample opportunity to submit views and **no decisions have been made.**
5. Some of the headlines from the report include:
 - a. 90% of players want to play 26 or less matches, with the majority wanting 20-23.
 - b. 90% of the Game still want knockout rugby of some kind.
 - c. The Game supports the principle of automatic promotion on winning league (wherever possible – accepting some playoffs may still be needed in some cases).
 - d. The Game supports the principle of lower XVs entering leagues higher than Level 8 and this is even stronger for players.
 - e. The Game strongly supports the principle of organising leagues geographically and not restricted by county boundaries.
6. A future structure must address:
 - a. Appropriate travel time/distance
 - b. Player welfare concerns

- c. Quality of player experience/quality of competition (to include interest / excitement)
 - d. Financial sustainability (of clubs)
7. The next steps are to digest Council feedback and proceed to face-to-face consultation in a series of meetings around the country.
8. These will be held w/c 9/3/20 to w/c 30/3/20. Dates and locations will be advised ASAP given short turnaround times. Whilst this consultation is open to all clubs, a **MAX 2 x members attending per club** will be in force (**must** include player rep) to manage venue capacity. At the consultations, results from the survey and other work will be shared alongside some headline thoughts on recommendations for discussion.

Appendix 2
Rugby Development Report

Rugby Development Report- March 2020

Representatives Squads

Under 15 Boys

Training is underway, awaiting update from Bill Nichol on Squad for their first game.

Under 15 Girls

The U15 Girls were successful in their opening Festival beating Yorkshire 19-7 and then Cheshire 12-5. Next Festival this Sunday at Sandbach.

Under 16

The 16s completed their programme yesterday (1/3/20) with a 18-12 win over East Midlands, with just one B Team loss against Cheshire a very successful programme again.

Under 17

The U17s played their first game yesterday over in Yorkshire, some good points but a bit to work on, they led for most of the game but in the end went down 29-22. Next Game 5th April v Cheshire – Venue to be decided.

Under 18

The U18s that played for the North U18s and put in some really good performances which led to FOUR Lancashire players being selected for England Counties U18s.

Congrats to

Jonty Cope Kirkham Grammar School

Keir Gordon Kirkham Grammar School & Waterloo RFC

Alex Minozzi Myerscough College & Preston Grasshoppers RFC

Roma Zheng Myerscough College & Warrington RUFC

Tumy Onasanya Leigh RUFC is on the standby list and was invited to the England U18 Elite Squad training.

Under 18 Girls

The U18 Girls won all their games in Yorkshire against the hosts and Cheshire. Hopefully they can continue that form going into the next festival this coming Sunday at Sandbach.

Under 20

The U20s went to Yarnbury RUFC for their final Group game and in quite windy conditions pulled off something no other County has done since 2007, beat Yorkshire in Yorkshire at U20 Level, that ended Yorkshire's 17 game unbeaten record and puts them under pressure to beat Durham to avoid relegation. Our Home Quarter Final is scheduled for 29th March venue and opposition TBC.

Royals XV

Still waiting on Cheshire to agree a date for the game v Cheshire Harvesters

Royals v Eastern Counties Wanderers – confirmed Saturday 16th May, at Fylde 12 noon KO

Senior XV

Forwards Coach has been appointed, not a new face, Paul Arnold. In addition we also appointed Alex Loney as a specialist set-piece Coach.

Reminder of the Fixtures –

9th May - Durham @ Sedgley Park

16th May - Eastern Counties @ Home (Double header with Royals) @ Fylde

23rd May – Yorkshire – Away @ Wharfedale

Final Date change now Saturday 30th May

Women's XV

Nothing further to add from the last report other than nominations are being sought for the Trial, currently 30 from the online form.

Other Information

With Bill Nichol moving in to the RFU Role of Chair of the RPPG it was agreed between Bill and myself that we need to re-appoint the role of DPP Liaison for Lancashire. The role will be re-advertised.

Appendix 3
Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding – Child Protection

No incidents to report this month. No referrals to Safeguarding team at Twickenham HQ.

Under 18's Playing as Adults in Open age game.

There have been 33 applications from clubs; which have all been approved. With a number of young people from each club also having been granted approval to play open age.

Three clubs are still awaiting approval. The granting of permission is outstanding due to requirements still needing to be met to satisfy criteria. Safeguarding training, audit of practices and new appointment to role of CSO.

Manchester and District referee's society have asked for help and support to update and improve their safeguarding practices including training, new DBS requirements and support for "young officials" in the game, (young persons under the age of 18).

Safeguarding Audits

In depth Safeguarding Audits for 10% of Lancashire clubs

Currently working to identify the 10% of clubs that will need to undertake the 'deeper' safeguarding audit to satisfy national requirements.

Deputy CBSM Sue Hopkinson will be standing down as Lancashire deputy CBSM at end of 2019-2020 season.

National CBSM conference will be on weekend of 12th 13th & 14th June 2020 at Lensbury Hotel in London. Carol Baker to attend