

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Minutes of the Board meeting held using Zoom Video Conference on Wednesday 19th August 2020

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

In attendance: Messrs, G. Burns, & B.H. Stott.

Apologies: Messrs, G. Morgan & C.A. Baker.

Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Wednesday 8th July 2020, (previously circulated) were accepted and signed per procuracionem by the Honorary Secretary as a correct record.

Matters arising.

There were no matters arising.

Questions & Comments to written reports.

RFU Representative Report – Appendix 1

1. KA – Congratulated RFU on keeping the game informed with regular weekly updates.
2. PD asked when we could realistically expect to be back to rugby, DC commented that this was an unknown. KA noted that Leicester was at Stage B in return process and that Greater Manchester was at Stage C.
3. RTJB – Return to Rugby is driven by the government who are advised plans from the RFU to help make decisions.
4. HHH – Keith Stokes video (a medic from RFU is worth watching).
5. MJW – questioned why the Premiership are playing rugby but grassroots clubs are not. KA – This is because of the large amount of testing of players and staff that the Premiership can afford.
6. JSG – asked if County Championship was finished completely. DC – It has been postponed for a year but County Representatives should be constantly pushing its value and relevance.
7. MD – A meeting of County Chairmen had been called by Ed Griffiths (former CEO of Saracens) who detailed a proposal for the County Championship. It was felt EG had no idea of what would be involved and Lancs distanced themselves from further involvement in the process.
8. DC - A round robin series of Senior County games was being discussed with Cheshire and Yorkshire as well as a game with Cornwall for May / June 2021. These games would need to be self funding.
9. DC – reported on a recent webinar for the North concerning the Future Competitions Structure.
10. MJW – commented that recent cuts had been savage and questioned if there were any plans to combat the redundancies. DC noted that a possible meeting with Steve Grainger was in the pipeline with a view to requesting extra funding.
11. MD – Fylde had started a Fylde Coast Community Project to involve all clubs based there.
12. DC – Clubs need to see a populated future competition structure to make a decision on acceptance or not and this should be conveyed to Council Members prior to the 4th October RFU Council meeting. KA questioned if the Board had seen the basic plan.
13. PD – Club healthchecks had not revealed any issues recently, the County are financially viable.
14. MD – Outlined proposals to the AGM which included an electronic copy of the handbook for this season, that all directors and sub-committees should remain in post for the season and that we have a note in our rules to allow for virtual general meetings.

Correspondence.

There was no correspondence appertaining to this meeting.

New Members.

Mr Frost of West Derby – to be confirmed.

50:50 Draw

Aug 20	Value
J.E. Nixon	£53.40
P. Saunders	£8.90
S. Knowles	£8.90
J.E. Nixon	£8.90
M. Cornelia	£8.90

Date of next meeting.

Next Meeting: To be confirmed.

Any other business.

HHH – Podcast going strong with a good following. MD suggested keeping going as it was a fresh approach to communicating with our clubs.

JSG – Questioned had we pencilled in a date for the Lancs Royals v AAs game. This is as yet undecided.

ASK – Conference call with Dave Stubbleby (RFU) re volunteers awards night which will hopefully still go ahead at some point.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7:30pm

Wale Jones Chairman Date 5th October 2020
PP

Appendix 1 RFU Representatives Report

RFU Council meetings:

KA, RTJB and DC attended the virtual RFU Council meetings and AGM on the 12th June. Subsequent meetings were held on 9th, 10th, 23rd July, 6th, 11th and another scheduled for 20th August. Emphasis on Adult Male Future Competitions Structure, RFU proposed organisational changes.

Community Game Updates

The support from the RFU, through their twice weekly Community Game updates, have continued since March 23rd. So far they have produced thirty five editions circulated on Tuesdays and Fridays. These have been sent to CB and Club Chairs, Hon Secretaries and Hon Treasurers

These have contained useful information, support and guidance for all our clubs to get through these difficult times. These updates have included:

- Updates on the return to community rugby- now on Stage C of the roadmap
- NatWest Rugby Force
- Ready4Rugby
- Pitch up for Rugby events
- Local lockdown guidance
- Adult Male Future Competitions Structure
- Safeguarding update
- Webinars- Club Support, Coaching & Referees, one from Eddie Jones on coaching
- Running your club scheduled for September through to November
- Media Support
- Links to articles of CBs and rugby clubs doing great things including Lancashire's "Lend an Ear programme"

RFU proposed organisational changes

The RFU like many other organisations is facing significant revenue reductions as a result of the Covid 19 crisis.

There will be a short term impact of £107 m in lost revenue with a lasting longer term effect. As a result, and in order to safeguard the future of the RFU, the organisation needs to reduce its overall cost base and unfortunately means reducing the headcount.

Redundancies are not a short term cost reduction exercise, the Covid -19 will continue to affect the organisation for many years to come and the priority is to emerge better prepared to deal the new landscape. If reductions are not made then the financial position will be untenable as an ongoing business. The RfU need to adapt to a radically changed environment based on a longer term view on how the organisation will emerge from this crisis.

For further information see Appendix 1

Adult Male Future Competitions Structure

Online consultation webinars were held during June. Key members from clubs especially players took part in these consultation sessions.

The Future Competitions Structure Group has released a Recommendation Paper for implementation in the 2021-22 season. The group has asked for feedback ahead of any RFU Council decision on 2nd October 2020.

The recommendation Paper can be found on the Coronavirus (Covid) Community Game Update -18 August 2020 which was forwarded to you earlier.

Modified Game Working Group

Rob Briers as Chair and Ken Andrews are both on this working group.

The group made recommendations on game adaptations in the community game and is now being introduced as Ready4Rugby. The aim of this being to ensure as much permitted rugby activity as possible can take place in clubs to aid retention of players and protect club revenues. This is now possible due to government allowing the RFU to move from level B to level C on the Return to Rugby roadmap.

RFU Area and CB update meetings

KA, MD, PD and DC continue to be involved with the professional staff (not furloughed) Dave Southern, Phil Clarke and Matt Coglean (facilities) in monthly virtual update meetings for Area 5 and fortnightly meetings for Lancashire

RFU proposed organisational changes

The RFU, like many other organisations, is facing significant revenue reductions as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.

Detailed scenario modelling shows there may be a short-term impact of £107m in lost revenues in this financial year with a lasting longer-term impact. The organisation is projecting a 4-5 year recovery with cumulative revenue reductions of around 20% based on a difficult economic environment and softer commercial market.

As a result, and in order to safeguard the future of the RFU, the organisation needs to reduce its overall cost base. Unfortunately this has led to the need to reduce headcount. All areas and departments of the RFU are impacted in the proposed reduction in roles. These redundancies are not a short-term cost reduction exercise, the RFU will get through this and our priority is to emerge stronger but the impact of Covid-19 will continue to affect many areas of society for many years to come – this is about the long-term.

A large number of Rugby Development employees are currently at risk of redundancy. The proposed scale of reduction in the Rugby Development department makes it essential that we exploit and explore new ways of working and the difficult and correct decision has been made to remodel the structure. We could not do what is necessary by making marginal adjustments. A total of 185 individuals have been placed at risk with 81 new roles being created.

The RFU is currently in a formal consultation process with all affected employees - more details will be made available once this is completed. It is important to note, the change is not in any way a reflection on the performance of colleagues or a statement about things not working or being ineffective, it is a change of direction necessitated by the impact of Covid-19 and the resulting financial impact.

The proposed new structure is built around ensuring the delivery of the RFU strategy to support the community game. This recognises that the vast majority of rugby is delivered by clubs and volunteers and that the RFU's role is to support those clubs and volunteers in doing this. I repeat and emphasise that the community game is the lifeblood of our sport, without a strong grassroots there is no English rugby. The RFU's focus will be on three key areas of work:

- . CLUB SUPPORT – supporting clubs in operating sustainably through facility/business support, volunteer development, member recruitment and targeted club financial support
- . COACHING & REFEREEING – supporting effective training, qualifications, development & deployment for coaches and match officials
- . PLAYER EXPERIENCE – managing and growing competitions & mass playing opportunities, supporting a strong player pipeline through schools, colleges & universities and initiating targeted player growth & retention

In addition to the above, clubs and participation will no longer just be the domain of the Rugby Development department, it will be a key focus for the whole organisation. Employees will be provided with training and

support to be sure the external expectations are managed in the early stages of any change.

The restructure will of course require the RFU to work differently; collaboratively across the organisation and externally with the game (including clubs, CBs and educational institutions). This new way of working with the game will be developed over the next few months but it is likely to involve working more virtually, with less time spent travelling and with greater use of technology. There will be a need to establish a different kind of relationship with member clubs, working more with groups of people and clubs rather than individually. Lockdown has forced so many to work differently and we will need to learn from what has worked successfully and take advantage of new skills.

The community game is critical and the foundations of the RFU – continuing to deliver for the community in the most effective way possible is at the heart of all decisions. The RFU will update on the outcomes following the consultation process.

