

**MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING AND  
FINANCIAL AGM OF  
LANCASHIRECOUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LTD  
HELD VIA MEDIUM OF ZOOM 2ND DECEMBER 2020**

President Gill Burns MBE welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that it had been a difficult year but Rugby would be back !

1. **Apologies:**

S Blackburn C Goulding M Phillips K Potter

2. **Minutes of the AGM and General Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020 via Zoom**

These were accepted.

3. **Matters arising**

No matters arising.

4. **Financial AGM and Presentation of Accounts for 2019-2020**

Paul Deakin, the County Treasurer presented the accounts to the meeting. The sudden cessation of Rugby in March because of the Co vid situation had led to the County need to look at what the effect was. The Lancashire Board were concerned about clubs being able to survive the situation, there were approximately 80 clubs. The Board had written to all Club Secretaries and their Treasurers to check how these clubs were, each club appeared to have handled the situation well including furloughing staff , dealing with breweries to return beer etc. The RFU had paid the County £25,000.00 and the Board had agreed to top up this fund to £70,000.00 as it had some money in reserve. Some of this money had gone to support clubs that were in need, approximately £30,000.00 between 12 clubs. All clubs had been able to apply for support providing they fulfilled the criteria that was in place. Some clubs had also accessed Crowdfunding with some support from Sport England. There was approximately £40,000.00 still available but it was intended to save this to support clubs on their return to rugby eg if clubs wanted to do a M and J Festival this could perhaps be supported but this was yet to be decided as it all depended on the situation re Covid.

As a County we were better off financially as there had been no representative rugby eg County Events did not happen , however the bad news was that because of financial constraints with in the RFU the PFR had been slashed but luckily we did have some money in the bank .

The County had had a meeting with Bill Sweeney and Steve Grainger to discuss this reduction in funding , however although Bill Sweeney and Steve Grainger acknowledged what Lancashire had been doing to support their clubs the RFU had seen their revenue disappear overnight so were unable to commit to more funding.

PD then went on to discuss the plans for the future , this would include supporting and generating a greater number of children into the sport, they were also looking to reduce their admin costs.

There was funding available from a variety of sources:

- Sport England had £16M available for all sport

- Crowdfunding was also available and several clubs had already explored this option
- Winter Survival Package – although still awaiting details for this, but suspect may be in the form of grants with specific criteria attached.

The County would also continue to support the Cauliflower ear campaign which was proving to be a great success and thanks should go to Gary Morgan for his role in this, GM then explained that other Counties were now following Lancashire's lead and there had been requests to use our imagery including a request from Gibraltar.

PD concluded by saying that we were in a better place than he originally thought following the events of this year.

There were no questions.

### **RFU Representatives Report**

The report had been circulated and the main emphasis was on the Return to Rugby. KA/DC offered to answer any questions that may arise:

E. Neely asked about the practice games and if Spectators would be allowed, the consensus was that as most clubs were in Tier 3 then the club houses would not be open and no spectators would be allowed.

H Duggan queried whether the adaptive rules would be reviewed when the vaccine was rolled out ?

KA replied that the rules were constantly under review the RFU were looking at it. Rob B also added that Steve Grainger was leading on this and as soon as it is possible to play rugby as we know it then we will be informed.

J Bradbury informed everyone that West Park had been approached by the BBC to come and see them in training and wanted to see all elements of the training that was going on. It would be shown on local news and possibly the main BBC.

There was some concern raised that the adaptive rules made the rugby allowed to be played sound that tick rugby/rugby league, Mark Nelson suggested that it may be need to try and play a few games in order to get used to it but it may turn out to be a fast and furious game that may be fiercely contested at the breakdown.

R Culvert asked about the fact that clubhouses were shut but what was the situation regarding changing rooms? DC replied that more guidance was due to come out.

G Nicholls from Blackburn asked about whether any testing was going on. The testing at the moment was only being done with the Elite game, Men and Women but there were strict protocols around training and how games were managed.

There followed a general discussion around how people were feeling increasingly frustrated by the situation, eg if clubs were playing but not open then they would be taking another financial hit, MD suggested that there would be a possible difference between amateur and semi professional eg players paid /not paid, it would be a balancing act , higher level clubs would possibly have to show a commitment to their players.

GM then raised a query re player safety, eg if no scrums and props not playing then would need to ensure that they feel included , there was a suggestion that they could perhaps have a kick ?

Although there was clearance to play before Christmas there was no obligation to do so.

There then followed more discussion about the use of changing rooms and if allowed once guidance issued there would still be a need to ensure Social Distancing , again this could not be defined unilaterally as someone said ' it depends on the size of the changing room and the props' so each club would have to do their own assessment based in their club with in the Guidance that would be issued.

There was some good news however as because of the Covid situation Rob Briers year of RFU President had been deferred by a year as Jeff Blackett's role would continue next year, this meant that Rob's year would now be a World Cup year in France.

DC then spoke about a series of Cluster meetings with the clubs. Originally in April and may and had now been redone. He thanked all the clubs for being proactive regarding the way in which they had applied for grants, Crowdfunding etc. Approximately 75% clubs had attended and it was intended to possibly rerun the meetings for updates etc in February.

#### 5. Correspondence

There was nothing appertaining to this meeting.

#### 6. Date and Time of Next meeting

TBC

#### 7. AOB

- KA hoped everyone was listening to the weekly podcasts which were proving popular
- MD said that we were hoping to have County Games later in the season. MN had spoken to the Senior Men and Women and the U20s . It was intended to be a three way tie beyween Lancashire / Yorkshire /Cheshire. There was also the possibility of a trip to Cornwall to play their Senior XV. HH had put together a package and the feasibility was high. Timing will depend on 'Covid World' Dino from Blackburn queried how the squad would be chosen ? MN replied that things needed to be put in place and then decide on selection criteria but it would be fair and transparent.
- There was a review going on about the County Championship, the review was being run by the RFU and was chaired by Tim Miller, it also involved reps from Cambridge, The Royal Navy and Cornwall. The key was that we as a County put forward our views and show that the County sides are important to the Community Game.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm. Gill thanked everyone for attending.

Attendees: