

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING
HELD AT CARRWOOD PARK ON WEDNESDAY 11 APRIL 2012**

Present:

Richard Lewis	RFL Chairman & Meeting Chair
Stuart Prior	BARLA Representative
Warrant Officer Damian Clayton MBE	Armed Forces Rugby League
Peter Moran	Independent Member
John Piercy	Student Rugby League
Charlie Bray	Tier 4 Youth & Junior Leagues Representative
Ian Szwandt	English Schools Rugby League
Martin Coyd	Tier 4 Adult Leagues Representative
Fred Baker	Independent Member

Apologies:

Nigel Wood	RFL Chief Executive Officer
Trevor Hunt	Tier 3 Representative

In Attendance:

David Gent	Director of Participation & Strategic Partnerships
Matt Birkett	Head of Participation & Regions
Jon Roberts	Director of Performance & Coaching (in part)
Chris Rostron	Head of Partnerships
Andy Harland	Community Competitions Manager
Martin Flynn	Community Competitions Manager (in part)
Kelly Barrett	Community Games Services Manager
Robert Hicks	Legal & Compliance Officer
Angela Adams	Personal Assistant

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for complying with the short notice in respect of the change of venue. Apologies were noted as above.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 30th JANUARY 2012

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of this meeting.

3. MATTERS ARISING**3.1 Item 3.1 Pennine League and Primary Club Policy – Compliance**

Mr Prior updated the Board and confirmed he met with the Pennine League administrators'. The administrators had concerns around the primary club player policy. Mr Prior confirmed that a general agreement had been reached to meet with the RFL.

3.2 Item 3.2 Circulation of abridged minutes

Mr Gent confirmed that all recent versions of the Community Board minutes had now been produced in an abridged version and would be circulated as well as published on the RFL website,

3.3 Item 7.2 Community Cup Competitions

Mr Gent referred to the discussions and recent proposal for community cup competitions. The Youth & Junior Forum had not agreed on a conclusion to this proposal at the current time. It was proposed to leave the individual leagues and BARLA cups to continue as is. It was noted that the Youth & Junior Forum will discuss this matter again at their next meeting.

3.4 Item 12.3 Safeguarding Issues

Mr Bray asked the Board to note that he had resolved issues around safeguarding in his League.

There were no other matters arising.

4. GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

4.1 Appointment of Community Representative to the RFL Laws Committee

Mr Harland referred the Board to the paper nominating the two appointments as representatives on the RFL Laws Committee.

4.2 Community Board Terms of Reference

Mr Gent confirmed that the paper had been circulated with the additions of the two new representatives of the community game included. He took this opportunity to reiterate that the two independent appointments must not be RFL employees. The Board agreed and accepted the updated version.

4.3 Governance Review

Mr Gent confirmed that at the last Community Board meeting of the 30th of January 2012, the agreement to adopt the Sport and Recreation Alliance's Voluntary Code of Good Governance over the course of its meetings. The first principle of this, entitled "Integrity", was outlined in the paper circulated. It was noted the need for a Risk Register for the community game. The Board approved the report.

4.4 The Developing Role of BARLA

Mr Prior updated the Board on the developments at BARLA. In respect of cup competitions, Mr Prior confirmed that BARLA will look to work with the RFL on how best to organise cup competitions going forward and the role that the RFL Foundation might play in that approach. A management group will be set up within BARLA in order to ensure the above projects can move forward.

Mr Prior further added that BARLA have agreed to consider the RFL Operational Rules for the community game and will look to adopt these at the Annual General Meeting which takes place in June.

4.5 Community Game Operational Rules

Mr Gent advised the Board that each item within this paper should be dealt with individually to ensure clarity on the important amendments to the rules.

4.5.1 Section C1:8:1 Re-registrations

The Board approved the amendment as listed.

4.5.2 Implementing the RFL Operational and Competition Rules

The Board noted the arrangements made to ensure that all Leagues and Competitions within Rugby League at Tiers 3 and 4 operate to the agreed set of operational rules as approved by the Community Board. It was noted the need for Leagues to make certain alternations to their governing documents. It was also noted the need for further work to align the RFL and BARLA appeal

processes.

The Board approved the proposed implementation approach for the adoption of the RFL Operational and Competition rules.

4.5.3 16-Year Old Player Policy

The Board agreed the recommendations

4.5.4 Suspension Policy

The Board noted the work to develop one integrated suspensions policy to operate across the entire game. The Board were in agreement with the recommendations however felt that further work was needed in relation to games played in an England context e.g. England Youth and/or Tier 2

4.5.5 Compensation to Community Clubs

The recommendation today was to take this matter back to the Community Board Regulatory Group for further discussion

4.5.6 Safeguarding

Mr Hicks outlined the thinking on how the policy had been developed to this stage and answered various questions made by the Board. The Board agreed the recommendations.

4.5.7 Registration between Tiers Two and Three

Mr Gent advised the Board whilst not expected to approve the recommendations proposed in this section of the paper, it should look to agree to them in principle so that the NCL and professional clubs can be consulted for their views and then at the next Community Board seek formal approval.

It should be noted that March 2013 is the earliest that any revised policy can be implemented.

4.5.8 RFL Entry level Leagues

The proposed guidelines for the operation of RFL entry level leagues were approved by the Board.

4.5.9 Primary Rugby League Rules

It was noted that for a variety of reasons it had not been possible to get agreement on the proposed rules for 2012 prior to the commencement of the season and so the paper was withdrawn and the 2011 version of the rules will apply for the 2012 season.

5. COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2010 to 2012

5.1 Results of Quarter 1 2012

Mr Rostron updated the Board on the results of Quarter One 2012 and confirmed that areas are working well and on target.

6. COMMUNITY GAME STRATEGY 2013 to 2017 & WHOLE SPORT PLAN FUNDING SUBMISSION

6.1 Overall Strategy

Mr Gent updated the Board on the current Community Game Strategy and confirmed the current situation in relation to setting out a submission for the funding of the community game from 2013 to 2017.

6.2 Participation Plan

Mr Birkett outlined to the Board the need to ensure that the funding submission is participant led, i.e. it will follow an approach aimed at not only growing and developing the number of participants but also look to meet the needs and wants of those participants.

Mr Birkett confirmed that the thinking behind the main funding submission had been presented to Sport England who deemed them extremely beneficial and a most useful way of working towards the bid.

The Board were advised that whilst needing to take into account growth, the largest element of the submission will be in relation to retention of participants.

Mr Birkett confirmed the four main offers of Rugby League as full contact; modified contact; serious touch; and casual touch.

6.3 Talent Plan

Mr Roberts, the RFL Director of Performance and Coaching joined the meeting for his presentation on the proposed changes to the talent pathway. His presentation detailed the four strategic priorities which form the basis of one integrated pathway linking across all areas of the game. Mr Roberts confirms this strategy has been set out in order to produce more and better players for rugby league, this will mean an increase in the quality of players who progress to the England Squad.

Mr Roberts confirmed that there is a need to ensure the development of coaches is aligned around the physical development of children as well as affecting the mind-set of these coaches with the community environment and a good competition structure.

Mr Roberts highlighted the need to have one integrated pathway but due to geographical differences there is a need to be more flexible and take these into account.

7. COMPETITION

7.1 RFL Competition Structure

Mr Harland referred to the paper which sets out a useful reporting mechanism in relation to all the Leagues in Tiers 3 and 4 and highlights their current situation and circumstances. The Board recognised this as an extremely useful aid for the Community Board and the RFL.

7.2 RFL Touch Rugby League Offer

Mr Birkett presented the Touch Rugby League offer. This offer has its own, unique branding (Play Touch Rugby League) and logo. There are two elements to this offer; a competitive level and a social level. It has been set up with minimum operating standards and has its own website. All venues hosting this must have the branded posters on show.

The Board found this a very innovative project and were very supportive of its development.

7.3 RFL Match Officials Update

Mr Gent introduced Mr Flynn who had been seconded to a new role of overseeing Match Official issues at Tiers 3 and 4 to ensure a strategy and proper governance of this element of the community game is in place.

The Match Official "Short Course" had recently run and confirmed that those

attending this course have been targeted based on their experience and ability to officiate and were therefore deployed at an appropriate level. The monitoring and assessment of officials who attended these courses will continue.

Current, qualified match officials are offered support and encouraged through the pathway on an ongoing basis and this will continue.

Mr Gent reassured the Board that there is not a shortage of suitably qualified match officials and there are accurate databases as well as an appointment panel for both Tier 3 and 4. This has all come as a result of Mr Flynn's secondment to the role as well as a Match Officials Strategy Group to ensure all is effective in this area.

The Board approved the report.

7.4 RFL Match Officials Fees

The Board agreed with the contents of the paper in relation to the proposed changes to fees and mileage rates quoted.

7.5 GB Community Lions – Name Change

Mr Harland presented on this item and asked the Board to note the proposed name change of the Community Lions to the English Lions. He clarified further that the English Lions would be the touring side whilst the Lionhearts would play representative games in the UK.

8. **CLUBS** - *No items for this meeting*

9. **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT** - *No items for this meeting*

10. **COACHING** - *No items for this meeting*

11. **VISIBILITY & PROFILE** - *No items for this meeting*

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 Mr Gent referred to yesterday's announcement in relation to Mr Lewis's forthcoming departure from his role as Chairman of the RFL to become Chief Executive of The All England Club Wimbledon. He stated that Mr Lewis had been instrumental in introducing the Community Board to the RFL and had invited both him and most other members present today to join the Community Board over his ten year period of time with the RFL. He asked the Board to note that over the years there had been some difficult and, at times, quite challenging, discussions which had taken place but the community game of rugby league is in a very good place at this moment in time. He invited the Board to join him in thanking Mr Lewis for his invaluable contribution to this process and to wish him well for the future. All present were in agreement with this.

In response, Mr Lewis stated that he agreed with this and the community game is in a fantastic place and is a long way from where it was when he first joined the RFL. He confirmed he is leaving the Board in extremely safe hands with the current Board and wished everyone the very best of luck.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Thursday 19th July, 2012

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.40pm.