

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING
HELD AT CARRWOOD PARK, LEEDS ON WEDNESDAY 24 JULY 2013****Present:**

Clare Morrow (Chair)	Non-Executive Director, RFL Board
Ralph Rimmer	RFL
Damian Clayton MBE	Armed Forces
Sue Taylor	BARLA
Ian Swandzt	English Schools
Peter Moran	Independent Member
Martin Coyd	Tier 4 Adult Leagues
Charlie Bray	Tier 4 Youth and Junior Leagues
John Piercy	Student Rugby League

Apologies:

Fred Baker	Independent Member
Trevor Hunt	Tier 3 Leagues
Nigel Wood	RFL

In Attendance:

Hazel McCluskey	Sport England
Brian Barwick	RFL Chairman
David Gent	Director of Participation & Strategic Partnerships
BJ Mather	Head of Player Development (in part)
Matt Birkett	Head of Community Game Programmes
Robert Hicks	Legal & Compliance Officer (in part)
Sarah Williams MBE	Equality & Diversity Manager (in part)
Michelle Gibson (minutes)	Executive Assistant

ITEM**ACTION****1.0 WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed Sue Taylor to her first meeting of the Community Board as BARLA representative.

Guest presenters Hazel McCluskey and Sarah Williams MBE were also welcomed to the meeting.

2.0 INTRODUCTION OF THE NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN

The Chair introduced the RFL's Non-Executive Chairman, Brian Barwick, to the meeting. Having been in the post for approximately six months, Mr Barwick stated that he was delighted to have been appointed and to have met some of the inspiring people around the sport.

Mr Barwick provided an overview of his experience in both sports broadcasting and major sports administration, having held a successful career at the BBC for 18 years before leaving to join the ITV as Controller of Sport for a period of seven years. From there, Mr Barwick assumed the role of Chief Executive at the Football Association for four

years and in 2009 founded Barwick Media and Sport, a global sport and media consultancy.

During his career, Mr Barwick had enjoyed an association with the sport of Rugby League as viewer, spectator and in a professional capacity. He was particularly interested in the grassroots of the sport and was keen to attend future meetings and Community Game events when required. Mr Barwick paid tribute to the recent Wheelchair Rugby League World Cup Final in Medway and the fantastic spectacle it had provided.

The Board thanked Mr Barwick for his presentation.

3.0 **MEETING HELD ON 17 APRIL 2013**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 April were approved as an accurate record. A number of matters arising were noted, as follows:

3.1 **Item 3.5 – Operational Rules**

Ms Taylor reported that the majority of BARLA members had not yet reached agreement with the Operational Rules, in contrary to the statement by the previous BARLA Chair. Consequently, Ms Taylor would be visiting the members concerned to establish what their issues were and how to address them.

Mr Moran asked if this would impact on the proposed calendar. Mr Gent stated that the report would be concluded on 16 September with a view to the Rules being signed off at the October meeting of the Board, therefore this should not impact on the calendar.

3.2 **Item 3.1 – Disciplinary Matters**

Further to an issue reported at the last meeting, in which a player banned by Student Rugby League had been allowed to play in the Yorkshire League, Mr Gent reported that correspondence had been sent to the relevant leagues and Community Game Services were tracking the player concerned to ensure he didn't play in any other leagues. The Chair suggested that a photograph of the player be circulated to leagues to ensure he did not attempt to play under another name.

DG

3.3 **Item 3.3 – Risk Register**

The register had been circulated to members via email on 22 July. The Chair explained how risk was managed within the organisation and suggested that the appropriate way for the Community Board to feed into that process was to have Risk as a standing item on the agenda at the end of each meeting and agree if there were any new risks. It was agreed that any new risks emerging from discussions at each Board meeting would be added to the register.

3.4 **Item 3.7 – Club Mark**

A report on Club Mark had been circulated via email on 22 July. A proposal on how to approach Club Mark going forward would be submitted to the October meeting.

MB

Mr Coyd and Mr Bray felt Club Mark was very valuable and urged the RFL to continue with this process. Mr Birkett assured that some form of

club accreditation would still be in place and the current process was simply being reviewed to establish if it could be made more user friendly and a digital solution could be found to relieve some of the administrative burden on clubs. Mr Birkett agreed to pick up on any individual concerns after the meeting.

MB

Mr Coyd enquired as to the status of leagues signing affiliation to the RFL. Mr Gent replied that definition of a member and a member club would form part of the Operational Rules debate in October, together with what members would be bound by and the associated benefits.

RH/DG

3.5 Item 3.8 – Financial Strategy

This item would be addressed at the October meeting as part of the debate of registration fees.

Mr Moran asked what value the sport placed on the Community Game. Mr Rimmer stated that one of the outcomes of the Policy Review would be each constituent of the game taking a responsibility for the other parts. As such, there would be a fixed proportion of income to each sector and the exact ratios would be confirmed at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the RFL Council in September.

3.6 Item 4.1 – Festival of World Cups

Tickets had been advertised on all relevant websites.

3.7 Item 9.1 – Regulatory Group Issues

The issues on non-acceptance of the rules and the appeals process had been included in the draft rules for approval in October.

In addition, the disciplining of Community Board members had been picked up within the Community Board Code of Conduct, for discussion later in the meeting.

4.0 MEETING HELD ON 7 MAY 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 May were approved as an accurate record.

5.0 FESTIVAL OF WORLD CUPS (FOWC)

Mr Gent presented an overview of the recent FOWC tournament. Everyone involved in the staging of the tournament was congratulated for their hard work in ensuring the tournament was a success, with particular reference made to Julia Lee and David Butler for their considerable efforts. It was agreed that the Chair would write to them to express thanks on behalf of the Board.

CM

There was still some uncertainty as to whether the ARL would host the tournament in 2016/17. The game also needed to establish how it would fund Women's and Wheelchair Rugby League going forward.

Mr Coyd stated that this was the pinnacle of the game for these athletes and it would be very disappointing not to receive continued funding. Mr Coyd added that Wheelchair Rugby League had the potential to be successful on an international scale.

Mr Piercy reported that Student Rugby League had produced

recommendations on how to develop this part of the game going forward. It had now been agreed that the students must be full-time, studying a minimum of 25 hours a week, and be under the age of 25.

Mr Gent advised that Julia Lee would be collating feedback on the tournament from each constituent body, which would be reported back to the RLIF. There was general agreement that each constituent body should be operating to the same set of rules. It was suggested that Nigel Wood take this up with the RLIF.

NJW

Mr Moran asked how it was intended to keep the volunteers engaged with the sport. Mr Birkett replied that the majority of them were volunteering for the Rugby League World Cup and a project plan had been produced to keep them involved in the sport thereafter.

6.0 **SPORT ENGLAND**

6.1 **The Characteristics of a High Performing NGB**

Mr Gent introduced the RFL's Sport England Relationship Manager, Hazel McCluskey, to the meeting. The background and criteria for a "high performing NGB" were outlined (see presentation attached).

Mr Gent stated that the RFL was working with Sport England to meet their criteria, with a view to achieving the RFL's vision of being recognised throughout the world as a leading governing body of sport.

The Chair felt that the Board needed to be more focused on these key strategic issues and potentially a sub-group needed to deal with more of the operational issues on the agenda.

The Board expressed support for this process. The Chair stated that this must be integrated into the work being carried out on the Policy Review.

6.2 **Community Board Code of Conduct**

The draft paper was taken as read. It was proposed to amend item 2.7 to include reference to other Board members, as follows:-

"Community Board members should respect the role of the Chair and opinions expressed by other members of the Board"

Mr Coyd also noted that item 4 should refer to the "Community Board" as opposed to the "Management Board".

The Chair also suggested that item 2.1 be amended to refer to the Board acting in the best interests of "the game of Rugby League" as opposed to "the RFL".

Subject to these amendments, the draft Code of Conduct was approved.

7.0 **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

The Board welcomed Sarah Williams to the meeting, who presented an update on equality and diversity activity taking place across the sport (see presentation attached). The Board congratulated Ms Williams on her recently awarded MBE in recognition of her achievements for the sport in this area.

The Board was asked to nominate an officer to take a lead on equality and diversity matters for the Community Game. Mr Coyd volunteered to undertake this role. The Board was also invited to complete the equality monitoring questionnaire, which was intended to highlight any trends and areas for development.

WO Clayton felt this information would be useful to increase participation from females in the Armed Forces and asked how the resources could be disseminated to constituent members. Ms Williams agreed to pick this up after the meeting with WO Clayton.

SW

The Chair confirmed that equality and diversity should be fully integrated into all of the Board's work rather than being addressed as a separate item on future agendas. It was noted that Ms Williams would also be presenting to the Regional Men's League, Youth & Junior Management Group, Women's Rugby League and Wheelchair Rugby League at their respective meetings.

8.0 **RFL FE/HE OFFER**

The Board noted the agreed new direction for the RFL HE/FE offer from September 2013 onwards. Board members were asked to contact Mr Birkett with any further questions.

Mr Coyd queried whether players were being asked to pay a fee in order to play. Mr Birkett was unaware of any costs other than the affiliation fee. The cost of a licence would be funded by the education provider as opposed to the participant.

WO Clayton asked whether there had been any further thought to trademarking "Play the Ball of Rugby League". Mr Rimmer agreed to follow up on this point.

RR

9.0 **POLICY REVIEW**

Further to discussion at previous meetings, Mr Rimmer reminded the Board of the principles behind the Policy Review and the proposal for an integrated player pathway for the sport (see presentation attached).

Of particular relevance for the Community Game was the reduction in the number of Super League Academies and investment into a smaller number of high quality Academies. It was hoped that this would address the issue of the excessive number of players being taken from community clubs.

Mr Moran enquired as to the timeline for this process. Mr Rimmer confirmed that the proposed changes would be introduced from 2015. It was likely that a tender process would be adopted to decide which clubs would run Academies. Tenders would also be welcome from clubs wishing to work together to operate a joint Academy.

The Chair reiterated that this solution was intended to ensure the whole sport was interrelated from professional to community level. The final structure would be determined at the EGM later in the year.

10.0 **COACHING**

BJ Mather joined the meeting to provide an overview of the proposals within the Coach Development Plan 2013-2017 and the Coaching Qualification framework.

Mr Coyd expressed concern that the requirement to continually undertake and pay for CPD qualifications might act as a deterrent to coaches. Mr Gent replied that coaches were required to undertake some CPD qualifications each year; however it was intended to keep CPD to a minimum at level 1. Mr Mather pointed out that approximately 70% of people on level 3 were professional coaches and very few community coaches were involved at this level.

Mr Birkett pointed out that quality coaches had been identified as the top factor in influencing participation levels.

The Chair suggested that the possibility for coaches to do some of their CPD online should be explored. **JR**

Mr Moran felt that the Coach Development Plan should include some targets for the retention of coaches. **JR**

The Board was supportive of the strategic direction for the Coach Development Plan for 2013-17 and the RFL Coaching Qualification Framework.

11.0 **COMMUNITY GAME REGULATORY ISSUES**

11.1 **Community Board Regulatory Group (CBREG)**

It was proposed that the CBREG be mandated to make decisions on operational issues on behalf of the Community Board, with only matters of key significance being referred to the Community Board for decision. Mr Gent agreed to clarify which matters would be classed as significant. **DG**

In addition, it was proposed that the CBREG membership consist of eight people, comprising two from the RFL and six others from the Community Game to reflect the composition of the Community Board.

The Board was supportive of this change to the CBREG terms of reference.

11.2 **Community Board Terms of Reference**

It was agreed that the revised Community Board terms of reference would be presented to the Community Board meeting in April 2014.

11.3 **Medical Standards**

The Board noted the amendments to the Medical Standards to ensure appropriate First Aid provision was in place across the Community Game.

11.4 **Age Bandings**

The Board was asked to approve an amendment to the Operational Rules Section C regarding the registration of Youth (16+) players, which would enable them to play for other clubs at Men's Open Age level.

Mr Moran objected to this proposal and felt that players that were

signed at age 16 by an Open Age team should also be allowed to continue to play for a Youth team if they wished to do so, as stated in the BARLA rules.

The Board agreed with Mr Moran's point and it was agreed that this would be the rule that was adopted.

RH

11.5 **League Management Rules**

The Board was asked to approve the terms of reference, competition rules and rules regarding under age players for Wheelchair Rugby League.

Mr Coyd felt that some of the rules required updates and agreed to liaise with Mr Gent on this matter. An updated version would be brought back to the Board at a later date.

MC/DG

11.6 **RFL Member and RFL Affiliated Leagues**

The Board approved the two definitions below to describe community leagues under the jurisdiction of the RFL:

- Definition 1 – RFL Member League. This is a league which is wholly operated by the RFL, e.g. Yorkshire Men's League, and in every sense under the direct jurisdiction and legal control of the RFL.
- Definition 2 – RFL Affiliated League. This is a league which has a separate legal status to that of the RFL but is affiliated to the RFL via one of the bodies of the RFL Community Board and is operating to the operational rules etc., e.g. North West Counties 13 to 15s.

11.7 **Regulatory Policy**

The progress on the development of regulatory policy in a number of areas was noted.

12.0 **TIER 3 CHALLENGES**

Mr Moran provided a report on a number of issues affecting Tier 3 members.

A meeting of the Conference League South had recently taken place. Key issues identified were lengthy travelling distances and receiving fixtures in good time to book venues. It was hoped the League would reach 10 teams to extend the current season and assist with the retention of players.

The National Conference League was experiencing similar problems with the fixture lists and the need to address the backlog of fixtures before the end of the season. The majority of clubs were making a success of the summer based season, whereas some had expressed preference for the traditional season.

Mr Rimmer agreed to circulate a Business Manual containing a number of best practice ideas that had been distributed to the Championship clubs, as some of this might also be applicable to community clubs.

RR

Mr Coyd asked whether there were any plans to have only one Community Game representative team for international matches going forward. Mr Gent replied that the Community Game International Group would need to determine this and he would prepare a report from this Group for the next Board meeting.

DG

13.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 State of Mind

It was noted that the RFL was working with State of Mind to deliver courses in the community on mental health and wellbeing of players. This was funded by Rugby League Cares.

13.2 Rugby League World Cup

Mr Rimmer reminded the Board that the game would be out of season when the World Cup concluded and clubs must be prepared to take advantages of the momentum created by the tournament.

14.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 16 October 2013

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2.00pm.