

MINUTES

Community Board Meeting

Location:	RFL Office, House of Sport, Gate 13, Rowsley Street, Manchester, M11 3FF	Date:	Wednesday 9 th July 2025
		Time:	4.00 pm – 7.00 pm
In Attendance:	Neil Ashton, Fred Baker, Mark Cordeaux, Steve Curtis, Trevor Hunt, Steve Langrick, Nick Leigh, Lee Mitchell, Stuart Prior, Sue Taylor MBE	Chair:	Martin Coyd OBE
By Video:	Anji Gardner Tracey Leung-Fullerton, Col David Groce OBE, Jake Brook		
RFL Officers in Attendance:	Kelly Barrett, Marc Lovering, Chris Spurr (in part), Ash Seddon (in part)	Invited Guests:	

Apologies:

Item No.	Agenda Item	Action
1.0	<p>Welcome & Introduction</p> <p>Mr. Lovering introduced Martin Coyd OBE as the new Chair of the Community Board. Mr. Coyd welcomed the members and noted the change in leadership since March. He emphasised his desire for transparency and collaborative decision-making. He also outlined the change of dynamic in the Community Board’s relationship with the RFL Board.</p>	
2.0	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Mr Cordeaux thanked Dave Raybould and Phil Jones (RFL) for travelling to the North East to deliver the activator session, which has engaged young people in the North East who will hopefully engage with RL in the area.</p> <p>Mr. Ashton expressed his gratitude to Andrea Murray and Jonny Dowler for their outstanding work in delivering the Champion Schools program. Additionally, he thanked BARLA for their support in providing balls and water bottles for each finalist team.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ms Barrett</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ms Barrett</p>
3.0	<p>Minutes of the April meeting</p> <p>The minutes from the meeting on 12th March 2025 were approved as an accurate record.</p>	
4.0	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>The Action Tracker review was shared with the group. Ms Barrett presented on each action.</p> <p>1) Entry Fee for Champion Schools. Mr Ashton to speak to Andrea Murray about introducing this into the 2025/26 competition.</p>	Mr Ashton

	<p>2) Our League Active – Armed Forces to be invoiced for their representative teams. Ms Barrett to action.</p> <p>3) Our League Active – Donations reinvestment opportunities. KB to explore.</p> <p>4) End of Year MTAS Report – The report was circulated.</p> <p>5) Rugby League Charitable Trust – An agenda item for the meeting.</p> <p>Mr. Hunt requested an update on the Player Pathway presentation and how it was received by the Professional Club during their regulatory meetings. Mr. Lovering agreed to provide a further update at the next meeting.</p>	<p>Ms Barrett</p> <p>Ms Barrett</p> <p>Mr Lovering</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Update from Martin Coyd</p> <p>Mr. Coyd provided an extensive update on governance, the upcoming Council meeting, discussions about the Super League structure, potential changes to the articles, and risks related to Sport England funding. The community game has been affirmed as stable but may be subject to future scrutiny. He emphasised the proactive role of the Community Board and how he would feed into discussions relating to the Community Game.</p> <p>Mr. Coyd provided an update on the partnership he and Col. Groce are developing with the British Armed Forces. The partnership focuses on four key areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-season camps for academies 2. Career pathways 3. QR code recruitment through community clubs 4. Transition support for ex-service personnel <p>The feedback has been positive, and a rollout is planned.</p> <p>On September 28th, the Inter Services Final will take place at Hull KR, and Mr Coyd encouraged everyone to attend.</p>	
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Education Update</p> <p>Mr Spurr joined the meeting and provided a comprehensive update from the Education Department following a recent review and restructuring. The Board noted the following key developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFL to withdraw from UK Coaching framework to enable greater flexibility for Rugby League • Coaching Standards and Challenges: While examples of good practice exist, there remain concerns around inconsistent coaching quality, particularly regarding touchline behaviour and limited ongoing development support. • Coach Qualification Requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level 1 is now mandatory for coaches working with Primary age groups. - Level 2 is required for coaches working with players aged 12 and above. • New Tag Rugby Course: A new “Introduction to Tag Rugby League” online course has been developed to support the mandatory rollout of Tag Rugby at Primary level, aligned with law changes being introduced from 2025 onwards. • Continuous Professional Development (CPD): A new CPD programme has been established to promote structured and continuous coach learning across the game. • Tackle Curriculum Review: Work is ongoing to assess and enhance tackle coaching at the U13– 	

	<p>U16 levels, with plans to support improved delivery through player development programmes and the coaching network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching Rebrand: A rebrand to “<i>England RL Coaching</i>” is planned for Q3 2025, aiming to align coaching pathways with national performance goals and improve identity and trust in coach education. • Digital Learning: The <i>ETrainU</i> digital learning platform is now live and receiving positive feedback. Expansion plans are in place to increase the number of workshops and accessible resources. • Staffing Update: Two new Coach Development Officers have been appointed to strengthen regional support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Anthony Atherton</i> – North West and Cumbria - <i>Ellis Pascall</i> – Yorkshire • Funding and Partnerships: Work is ongoing with partners, including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), National Lottery, and other education bodies, to attract new funding streams and increase access to coach development. <p>The Board thanked Mr Spurr for his presentation and asked to be kept up to date on further developments.</p>	<p>Mr Spurr</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Rugby League Charity Ms Seddon joined the meeting to provide an update on the work undertaken relating to social impact and the Rugby League charity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RFL Community Trust presented progress toward delivering meaningful, long-term social impact aligned with the 2022–2030 Community Strategy. • OurLeague Life Brand: Introduced as a platform focused on tackling inequalities, promoting inclusion, and strengthening communities. • Partnerships & Hubs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 national partnerships established (against a target of 10). - 8 Community Hubs launched (against a target of 30). • Impact to Date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - £946,000 of new income generated (target: £2 million). - Over 5,999 volunteers supported. - 1,070 participants engaged through inclusive rugby league formats including Wheelchair RL, LDRL, and PDRL. - £4.5 million invested in facilities (target: £15 million). - Ethnically diverse representation at 6.7% (target: 7%). • Trust’s Role: The Trust currently partners with 34 Charitable Community Organisations (CCOs), with 23 Foundations meeting minimum standards for collaborative delivery. • Next Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalise governance and legal structures. - Launch new projects funded through streams such as the Climate Action Fund and Reaching Communities. - Enhance visibility and programme reach via shared delivery models and community collaboration. <p>The Board thanked Ms Seddon on the clarity of the update, noting that the presentation clearly outlined the targets set and the current performance against those targets.</p>	

<p>8.0</p>	<p>Open Age State of the Nation The Board were updated on the latest data and downward trends in Male Open Age Rugby, with participation down by over 30% since 2019. Many clubs are now relying on youth players to fulfil fixtures and struggling to field multiple teams, highlighting the urgent need for change.</p> <p>Discussion led by Mr. Coyd and Mr. Lovering reinforced that while a formal strategic review of the Community Game is not underway, the RFL Board is expected to initiate a deeper review of critical areas, with Male Open Age being a likely priority.</p> <p>The Board acknowledged several contributing factors, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining player availability and club sustainability • Volunteer fatigue and governance capacity • Travel burdens and competition format rigidity <p>Immediate Next Steps: Community Competition Structure Review (CCSR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit and refresh existing proposals to create a more flexible and localised competition framework that better reflects the modern game and supports participation growth. • Strategic Alignment: Ensure proposals are integrated into the broader strategic review to deliver a joined-up and sustainable approach across all levels of the community game. <p>The Board agreed that there is a clear opportunity to modernise Male Open Age Rugby, strengthening its foundations, enhancing long-term sustainability, attracting investment and enabling the growth of stronger, more connected and resilient clubs and competitions.</p> <p>At the next meeting, the Board would like to see an overview of the proposals for a new open age pyramid structure.</p>	<p>Mr Lovering</p>
<p>9.0</p>	<p>Discipline Update Following the Respect and Discipline communication issued on 9 May, the Community Board were updated on both the response from the game and the disciplinary trends that have since emerged.</p> <p>The Board noted the importance of consistent messaging, education, and appropriate sanctions across all levels of the community game. This item will now become a standing agenda item at future meetings to ensure ongoing oversight and accountability.</p>	<p>Ms Barrett</p>
<p>10.0</p>	<p>Participant Membership Ms Barrett had circulated a paper in advance of the meeting to provide an update on the net revenue received to date.</p>	
<p>11.0</p>	<p>Date of the Next Meeting The next meeting is scheduled for September 10th; however, we would like to hold it during the day and extend its length. Ms. Barrett will explore Saddleworth as an option and will confirm arrangements as soon as possible.</p>	<p>Ms Barrett</p>
<p>12.0</p>	<p>Meeting Close The meeting closed at 7.00 pm.</p>	