

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING
HELD AT RED HALL ON THURSDAY, 6th OCTOBER 2011**

Present:

Richard Lewis	RFL Chairman
Peter Moran	Non-Executive Director
Charlie Bray	Youth & Junior Leagues Representative
Nigel Wood	RFL Chief Executive Officer
Ian Szwandt	English Schools Rugby League
Stuart Prior	BARLA
John Piercy	Student Rugby League
Trevor Hunt	Open Age Leagues Representative
Warrant Officer Damian Clayton MBE	Armed Forces Rugby League

In Attendance:

David Gent	Director of Participation & Strategic Partnerships
Julia Lee	Head of Participation & Regions
Andy Harland	National Development Manager
Kelly Barrett	Community Games Services Manager
Chris Rostron	Head of Partnerships
Angela Adams	Personal Assistant

ACTION

1. **Welcome**
2. **Approval of the Minutes** from the meeting held on the 14th of July
3. **MATTERS ARISING**
 - 3.1 **Sport England recognition of Wheelchair Tag Rugby League and 9's.**

Notification has been received from Sport England that Wheelchair Tag Rugby League and 9's are formally acknowledged as recognised disciplines of the RFL.
4. **GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT**
 - 4.1 **Update of the RFL & BARLA Working Relationship**

This was received at the meeting.
 - 4.2 **Community Board Regulatory Group**

This group met on the 15th of August and highlighted the need to resolve issues in various areas. A Match Official Strategy Group has been set up to resolve areas such as inconsistencies in match fees.

The next meeting of the Regulatory Group is scheduled to take place and confirmed this will look at the disciplinary rules in more detail and feedback to the Community Board in December.
 - 4.3 **Schools Rugby League**

Mention was made of the efforts in organising this year's Champions Schools Final which was held at the Stoop in Twickenham. The number of children participating in this competition has increased from 27,000 in 2010 to just below 30,000 this year and this rate of growth is outstanding.

The board were advised of the celebration of English Schools planned at Headingley Stadium on the 23rd of November to recognise the success and accomplishments of this organisation.

Agreed a need for ensuring strong school-club links are in place and could we look at professional clubs and what involvements they have in this.

4.4 Student Rugby League

The Board of Student Rugby League has agreed to move from being an independent organisation to transfer into the RFL. In support of this move, all involved feel this is a good decision for this element of the sport.

The numbers have been maintained for 2011 with four new universities, Bath, Bristol, Filton and University of West England.

A celebration of student rugby league, past present and future, will be held on the 18th of November 2011 at Headingley Stadium. The launch of membership for alumni as part of the Rugby League Foundation's Legends of League will be presented at this event. There are 70 university teams registered to play rugby league in total.

4.5 Laws Committee

The need to have the professional game and the community game rules as one and the same and any changes to be adopted by both was discussed. It is good to give an understanding of the game to everyone and it should not be difficult to utilise changes in both elements of the game.

The suggestion was made for representatives from the community game to sit on the main Laws Committee.

4.6 Community Board Composition

Agreement to increase the Community Board by one member and rename the position for Youth and Junior to the Tier 4 Youth & Junior Representative. The Open Age Leagues position replaced by two positions, namely: Tier 3 Conference League and T4 Adult Leagues.

5. COMMUNITY STRATEGY

5.1 Results of Quarter Three 2011

The Board were presented with a matrix report which shows significant increases, particularly in London. Reference to the number of community teams at age groups 5 to 16 is showing as "red" as this has had a 1% decrease in the number of teams however the number of participants in this area is growing.

The Board asked to note that Match Officials need to be placed in the correct position relevant to their level of experience; the funding for volunteer roles has ended and the RFL has looked at redeployment, wherever possible, of those in this role. Talent pathway is looking to reorganise the focus for those in this role to be on a workforce basis.

5.2 Sport England Funding 2013 – 2017

Confirmed to the Board that the next round will be over the four year period 2013 to 2017 and 75% of this funding will be Lottery money which will mean less restrictions in terms of carrying over.

Sport England are now looking to see an increase in participation and frequency of participation and we have put things in place to make this happen as well as ways of recording this.

The date for final submission of the next Sport England funding submission is May 2012. The funding will commence April 2013.

The Chairman further clarified to the Board that in the run up to the Olympic Games 2012, the sports agenda is going higher onto Ministers' agenda.

5.3 Community Strategy 2013 – 2016

The Board were presented on this project and confirmed that in setting down a plan for the next Community Strategy, RFL officers, consulted with various people and this resulted in an eight-point planning strategy. By the end of the year the RFL Development Department will need to have formed the basis of the Community Strategy from 2013.

A review of 2010 to 2012 will take place and some of the key elements of the strategy will remain and will look to get the support for these as priority objectives.

The Community Games Service database has 91,000 registrations which is a major step forward for the game. In 2012, we must ensure we provide regular opportunities in order to increase participation for sustained periods.

Whilst we recognise our three major products are "13-a-side", "Touch and Tag" and "Innovations", we also know that a 20-week participation period is a vital element of this. It is also worthwhile remembering that our sport is affected by economic changes and the weather also has an impact on us.

The current Sport England ministerial priorities for 2013 to 2017 are seen as:

- A steady increase in participation
- Regular and sustained participation
- 14 to 25 year olds
- A new dimension on inactivity
- Disability sport
- Talent pathways

Mr Wood stated that whilst recognising these priorities are most important, if we are to receive funding what we are doing for Rugby League. He felt this was best covered by the following approach to the process:

- What we are actually doing to make life easier for those who want to participate
- It is essential that what we do is right for the sport (not funders) but ensuring it is demand pulled and not supply pushed
- Its' about people – hired and volunteers
- Proper linkages and exit/continuation strategies as players and others move through the system
- Selecting those activities that maximise our bang for buck and be more selective in our approach as difference regions will require different solutions
- Deliver simple messages
- Ensure all of the game at Tiers 3 and 4 are underpinned by excellent quality assurance processes.

6. COMPETITION

6.1 Four Seasons Planning Update

The board was presented with an update on the planning process involved in the move to a summer season with effect from the 10th of March 2012. 77% of players within the Game as a whole will play in the aforementioned summer season. 68% of Open Age players at Tiers 3 and 4 will play March to November. Youth and Junior players have a total of 85% of players from the game as a whole playing in the March to November season. This therefore demonstrates we are a predominantly summer-

based sport.

For 2012, the NCL is the same as this year, as is the RLC (National). 2013 and beyond is where changes will start to take shape in relation to the governance and structure of the game at Tier 3.

The Match Official Strategy Group which has been set up to deal with the issues faced around current processes, and matters are progressing

Pitches were an area for consideration and Mr Gent confirmed that the Pitch Remediation Programme is being undertaken for Tiers 3 and 4. Grounds Maintenance Courses were held in September, one in the North West and one in Yorkshire and these had been successful with extremely good feedback received. There is therefore the intention to roll out further courses.

Mr Gent confirmed that once the pitch surveys have been completed the intention is to then look to allocate funds for the areas of work that are required; Sport England funding will be available for the next round from April 2012.

6.2 2012 Competition Calendar

The details within this calendar highlight the following:

- Challenge Cup dates are to be signed off at December's Community Board meeting
- Scholarship, U18 Extended Scholarship and Championship scholarship dates are included
- Weekend of Grand Final has no games in order to allow Community Lions selection festival to take place on this weekend

It was confirmed this will go out for further consultation.

6.3 World Cup Festivals 2013

The budgets for each of these festivals have been put together and will be outlined at the next International Federation meeting. Venues will be linked to those who have applied to host the men's games and will be looked at once the allocation of the men's has been finalised. Armed Forces and Police will most likely link together for their festival.

7. CLUBS

7.1 Facility Strategy 2011 – 2015

This publication outlines the need for investment of approximately £7m in rugby league facilities and confirmed that this survey will assist greatly in moving matters forward in this area. The document is available for circulation and will be posted on the RFL website.

7.2 Insurance

This paper sets out costs to the RFL of £70k in order to reduce costs to junior clubs and teams.

7.3 SRA Sports Club Survey 2011

The Sports & Recreation Alliance Sports Club Survey 2011 sets out the results of this and highlights key priorities such as the need for more coaches in the game. This will be published on the website.

8. PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

8.1 Scholarship Academy Policy

The Board discussed the route this paper is taking and will feed this back to the Performance Department for them to reach agreement in principle with the Development Department.

8.2 Compensation to Community Clubs

Based on the discussions which took place earlier in the meeting, it was agreed to revisit the issues around this area at a subsequent meeting.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Agreement was reached at a previous Community Board meeting for an abridged copy of the minutes to be produced. This can then be used outside of the confidential forum of the Community Board. The Chair noted this and asked for this to be arranged. **KB**

9.2 A request for the RFL Marketing Department be utilised more in order to raise the profile of Community Clubs in terms of programmes and perhaps highlight the profile of players and the Community Clubs they originate from. **DG**

9.3 The Chair announced the forthcoming departure of Ms Lee, Head of Participation and Regions, on a secondment with Street Games and he took this opportunity to thank Ms Lee for her valuable contribution to the RFL.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday, 13th December 2011 at 11.00 a.m.

DATES OF 2012 MEETINGS

12th January 2012

11th April 2012

19th July 2012

10th October 2012

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.15 pm.