

NF/RFL/COMMBOARD/30042014

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING
HELD AT CARRWOOD PARK, LEEDS ON WEDNESDAY 30 APRIL 2014**

Present:

Clare Morrow (Chair)	Non-Executive Director, RFL Board
WO Damian Clayton MBE	Armed Forces
Fred Baker	Independent Member
Peter Moran	Independent Member
Sue Taylor	BARLA
Pat Crawshaw	Student Rugby League
Charlie Bray	Youth and Junior Leagues
Ralph Rimmer	RFL

Apologies:

Nigel Wood	Chief Executive Officer
Martin Coyd OBE	Tiers 5 & 6 Adult Leagues
Trevor Hunt	Tier 4 – Conference Leagues
Ian Szwandt	English Schools

In Attendance:

David Gent	Director of Participation & Strategic Partnerships
Matt Birkett	Head of Community Game Programmes
Kelly Barrett	Community Game Services Manager
Jon Dutton	RFL Consultant
Dave Rotherham	National Player Development Manager
Julia Lee	Community Game Projects Manager
John Hickson	RL Learning
Natalie Flint (minutes)	Executive PA

ITEM

ACTION

1.0 WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the meeting and handed over to Mr Gent who paid tribute to both Ray Unsworth and Hilary Steel MBE, who had recently passed away, for their contributions to the game of Rugby League.

Apologies were received from Nigel Wood, Martin Coyd, Jon Roberts, Ian Szwandt and Trevor Hunt.

Mr Gent informed the members of an additional agenda item regarding Yorkshire Juniors, which would be discussed later in the meeting.

2.0 MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2014

The minutes were approved from the meeting on 5 February 2014. It was noted that the minutes will be circulated via email for approval going forward, in order for them to be made available on the RFL website for public consumption.

In addition, the agenda for each meeting will be circulated to both the Youth & Junior and the Regional Mens League Management Groups for reference and debate at their own forums.

3.0 **MATTERS ARISING**

3.1 **Notes from matters arising**

A paper was circulated which detailed an update on the matters arising from the meeting held on 5 February. The update included:

Item 3.1 - Coaching Retention Target

The alternative approach suggested is that the RFL undertake some research on the number of coaches that leave the community game and identify the reasons why. The RFL can then look at the possible interventions and therefore improve retention of coaches.

Item 3.2 – Funding for Women and Wheelchair

This item has been confirmed with the teams.

Item 4.1 – Sport England (HPNGB)

Whilst discussions have continued with Sport England on how best to implement this, there is nothing at this time that the Board needs to approve or note. Fred Baker has agreed to be the Board champion for the HPNGB work.

A further report on the HPNGB will be made at the July meeting.

Item 5.1 – Discounted Sky Package

A 50% discount scheme for member clubs, up to a maximum of £100k per annum, is in the current contract.

Item 5.5 – Safeguarding

Emma Rosewarne will provide a report at the July meeting.

Item 6.2 – Season Review Report

The season review has been sent to a variety of groups.

Item 8.0 – Betting

The RFL Board policy on this matter was sent to Board members on 7 April 2014.

The Board agreed to the appointment of a cross-game working group of Super League, Championship and the Community Game to develop guidelines on responsible gambling within Rugby League.

The Community Board agreed to the appointment of Martin Coyd to the cross-game working party.

All other items will be covered in the agenda.

3.2 **Action Tracker**

The Chair introduced a new Action Tracker document which it was recommended be used in future meetings, to review action points and their progress.

All in attendance were in agreement that the Action Tracker was the

best way forward and should be adopted.

4.0 RFL COMMUNITY DEPARTMENT

4.1 Receive an update on the work of the RFL Community Department across the seven programmes

Mr Gent updated briefly on the work of the RFL Community Department, which included:

4.1.1 Secondary Schools

Champion Schools are now through to the regional stages with a slight decrease in teams. Corrective actions are being taken to increase the number of teams in future years.

4.1.2 Primary Rugby League

The fixtures started at the beginning of this month and have begun on a good start with positive comments received. Mr Bray added that the Under 7's pilot was well received with a week of opportunities, in which it was apparent that the kids still want the "tackle" aspect. It has been instilled that if children want to play in Under 7's, they must abide by the rules.

The Chair suggested that a video might be produced showing places where Primary Rugby League was being played successfully.

MB

Mr Baker further advised that, since the launch, he has witnessed some very positive feedback on social media, such as Twitter.

Mr Gent updated further on the recent allocation of 3 modular changing rooms, which have been allocated to the RFL from Sport England. Mr Gent expressed his thanks to Sport England. The changing rooms will be allocated to Ashton Bears, Wyke and a Community/Championship club development, which is yet to be decided.

Mr Gent confirmed that the changing rooms will remain under the management of the RFL Facilities Trust.

4.2 Note the progress on the Community Game Scorecard

The Community Game Scorecard was distributed for comment. The Chair asked that the report include a little more detail, specifically any comparative data or context to indicate direction of travel.

MB

Mr Baker asked about the Match Officials, as there had been some inaccurate historical data. Mr Birkett confirmed that the RFL was now working on that data. Julia Lee will manage this and will look at the whole Match Official offer (wider training, appointments etc.).

Ms Lee added that she has started collecting data and she envisaged that the baseline of information would be ready within the next month. Further, Ms Lee advised that an Operational Board has been devised for this department, to assist with these measures and begin to prioritise.

Mr Moran requested a breakdown of the number of players at 12 - 16's. Mr Birkett confirmed that a chart of number of players was available and

MB

could be split into Under 11's, 12 to 18s and then adult teams and above. He agreed to look at a different way of presenting the information.

4.3 Approve an annual RFL State of the Community Game Report

Mr Gent outlined the process of the "State of the Community Game Report" and confirmed that it will be produced in October of each year to show key participation figures from the Community Game.

The report will focus on the following areas of the Community Game:

- Community clubs
- Women & Girls
- Student Rugby League (Colleges & Universities)
- Play Touch Rugby League
- Combined Services Rugby League
- Wheelchair Rugby League

The Chair requested comparisons of the report to previous years which will outline the trends. The Chair also requested that the report be accompanied by a graph or something similar, which will ease view of the trends and comparisons. Mr Birkett advised that this can be adopted in October, when the next report is produced.

MB

The Chair asked that the Board consider in October who the report should be distributed to, although she felt it should be a document for the whole game.

5.0 PARTICIPANT CENTRED APPROACH

5.1 Receive a presentation on the progress being made to implement a Participant Centered Approach through 'Let's Talk Rugby League' and 'Investors in Customers'

Mr Birkett delivered a presentation (please see attached) on adopting a "Participant Centred" approach and explained that one of the next steps would be the analysis of the Let's Talk Rugby League campaign.

Let's Talk Rugby League is aimed at encouraging players, non-players and spectators to share their experiences and opinions of the sport. This insight will help the RFL to develop a more detailed understanding of the expectations and motivations of participants and spectators.

Let's Talk Rugby League is using a wide variety of methods to engage with the target groups. RFL staff and Leeds Met University are facilitating the focus groups and interviews. The focus groups will be conducted in a number of settings including schools, colleges, universities, community clubs and Play Touch Rugby League sites.

The online questionnaire:

(<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/letstalkrugbyleague>) will remain "live" until 31st May 2014. There have been over 5,500 responses as of the meeting date.

Ms Lee delivered a presentation on the Investors in Customers initiative (IIC) (please see attached), the process and delivery plan.

Ms Lee advised that the results of the survey from IIC will be brought to all Boards, i.e. Community Board, Super League, Championships and RFL Council.

6.0 MEMBERSHIP SCHEME

6.1 Receive a presentation on the progress being made to develop a RFL Membership Scheme.

The Chair welcomed Jon Dutton, who presented his findings so far the on RFL Membership Scheme (presentation attached), his priorities and a stage plan for the future.

The four strategic pillars on which to focus were listed as follows: technology, hearts and minds, benefits and customer focused/participant centred.

Ms Crawshaw asked whether players and registrations are being concentrated on, and also, volunteers. Mr Dutton confirmed that all these areas of the game are being looked into, along with Match Officials.

The Chair asked whether there would be any mileage in working with other partners with successful loyalty programmes, e.g. Tesco. Mr Dutton felt that this was a good idea and he would explore the possibility further with the Commercial Department.

The Board noted the initial progress made on this matter and noted that a further report would be made at the next meeting on the viability of the proposed scheme.

JD

7.0 PLAYER PRODUCTION & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Report on the progress being made on the RFL Player Production and Youth Development system and seek support from the Board on the direction of travel being taken.

Mr Rotherham presented a PowerPoint presentation on a series of proposals for player production and youth development, which had been developed in conjunction with the Three Way Working Group (see presentation attached).

Mr Rotherham drew the Board's attention to the introduction of a proposed three tier Academy system with four year licences from 2016, as follows:

- Up to 8 Category One full-time Academies
- Up to 8 Category Two part-time Academies
- Unlimited Category three education Academies.

Mr Rotherham highlighted the proposals, which have gone to the Championships Club Forum and will also go to the Super League clubs at a forthcoming meeting.

There was a wide ranging discussion across a whole range of points by the Board on this matter. The Community Board noted the proposals in the presentation and in principle agreed to the broad direction being taken. No final decision was made on the proposals by the Community

Board as the proposals are subject to further consultation across the game as a whole.

It was agreed the Community Board would discuss the matter again at its next meeting.

DR

8.0 STUDENT RUGBY LEAGUE

8.1 Receive a presentation on Student Rugby League

Ms Crawshaw presented a brief update of the history of Student Rugby League and also, the path in which it has taken in recent months.

The Board noted the excellent progress made over the last 18 months to develop Student Rugby League.

9.0 GOVERNANCE

9.1 Approve a number of issues relating to the governance of the Community Game

The Community Board considered a paper on a number of regulatory matters and agreed, referred, noted and considered the following items.

The Community Board agreed/noted the following;

- 1 The change in status of the West Cumbria Youth and Junior League from a RFL affiliated league to a RFL member league was agreed with immediate effect.
- 2 It was noted that BARLA, the Pennine League, North West Counties Open Age and WRLA are all recommending to their members the adoption of the RFL Operational Rules.
- 3 It was agreed that the Board will consider what action it should take regarding those leagues which have not adopted the RFL Operational Rules at its next meeting.
- 4 The Board approved the exceptions to the Operational Rules as listed in the paper from the NCL on the matters of away team colours, the number of players on representative duty and players attending appeals.
- 5 The Board agreed the appointment of Sue Taylor to the Community Board Regulatory Group with immediate effect.
- 6 The Board agreed the revised Community Game First Aid standards.

The Community Board referred to the RFL Board for approval

- 1 A revised definition of what disability means in the sport of Rugby League,
- 2 A revised set of terms for 'Community affiliated membership of the RFL' to amend the RFL articles of association,
- 3 A revised set of terms of reference for the RFL Community Board.

WO Clayton on behalf of Mr Coyd raised the issue of RFL employees representing Regional Men's leagues at the Regional Men's Leagues Management Group meetings. Mr Gent responded that it was the leagues that had taken that course of action because it was difficult for them to get representatives to meetings so they had asked to be represented by the RFL employee. It was hoped that leagues would

send a volunteer but also it should be recognised it is for leagues to send who they wish to be represented by.

DG agreed to look at a different way of scheduling meetings, e.g. around Magic Weekend or other fixtures or in different parts of the country, to make it easier for volunteers to attend.

DG

****ADDITIONAL ITEM** TRANSFERS RULES**

Mr Bray brought to the attention of the Board the concerns of the Yorkshire Youth and Junior League concerning the RFL overturning the decision of the league on a number of transfers for safeguarding reasons. The Board also noted correspondence from the Hull Junior league on this matter. The process undertaken by the RFL to reach its decision was discussed as well as the role of transfers in the Youth and Junior game.

It was agreed that the system was not working well and the valid concerns of the Yorkshire Youth and Junior League were noted. It was agreed that the RFL would work with the league on a revised set of procedures between the two organisations. Secondly, that the policies and procedures surrounding the issue of transfers generally within the Youth and Junior game be revisited and the RFL Youth and Junior management group on behalf of the Board undertake that task.

CB/DG

10.0 RUGBY LEAGUE LEARNING

10.1 Receive an update on the Rugby League Learning programme

Mr Hickson presented on the newly launched one-stop shop for Rugby League education, Rugby League Learning Limited (presentation attached).

The initiative, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the RFL, has been created to allow the sport to deliver a more co-ordinated approach to the supply and delivery of qualifications, training and development.

Rugby League Learning Limited will provide support on subjects ranging from coaching and match official's qualifications to personal development opportunities for those working in clubs, at any level.

The Chair suggested that Mr Hickson should contact the clubs and request feedback on what level of Leadership & Management training they require and how they can benefit from RL Learning.

JH

Mr Hickson confirmed that three full-time staff have been seconded from the RFL and also, have the assistance of a partnership of Warrington Colligate.

Board members questioned whether the branding was right, given that the rest of the game had adopted the Extraordinary brand. It seemed odd to have such a separate brand for this venture. JH agreed to think further about this issue.

JH

11.0 SERVICES TO COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE AWARDS

11.1 Agree and recommend to the RFL Board two new awards to recognise outstanding and distinguished service within Community Rugby League

Further to the paper, it was proposed that two new awards should be implemented, which will be awarded by the Community Board to recognise the achievements of volunteers to compliment the highest award the RFL can offer to a volunteer in the Community Game - a place on the RFL Roll of Honour.

The proposed awards will be the RFL Services to Community Rugby League Award and the RFL Community Rugby League Award of Merit.

The terms of reference for each award are, as follows, respectively;

- Services to Community Rugby League - For those who have undertaken a particular or specific service for the sport of Rugby League at a community level over a number of years.
- Community Rugby League Award of Merit - For those who have given distinguished and outstanding service to Community Rugby League, over a considerable number of years. It is anticipated that there will be many, in the different branches of Rugby League, who have given such faithful service, and this award will enable the RFL and the sport to express its gratitude to them in recognition of all that they have done. Competitive success will not be considered as the basis for an award; as such success offers its own recompense.

It was agreed and recommended that the two awards are established and Mr Gent agreed to make all the necessary arrangements for future nominations.

DG

12.0 RISK REGISTER

12.1 Note any risks that have emerged from the meeting which need to be added to the Community Game Register

It was agreed that further risks should be added to the Community Game register as follows:

- The transfer policies operated within Junior and Youth leagues
- Leagues not adopting the RFL Operational Rules
- The agreement and implementation of the proposed player production and youth development system

WO Clayton on behalf Mr Coyd raised a number of questions on how the RFL deals with the process and management of risk. It was agreed that Mr Gent would meet with Mr Coyd to address those questions.

DG/MC

13.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 100th Anniversary of World War One

WO Clayton advised of a wreath laying event that will take place on Friday 22 August 2014 in honour of the 100th Anniversary of World War One, at the Cenotaph, London. WO Clayton further advised that Sir Stuart Peach will be in attendance and will host RFL and competing team representatives in MOD Main Building prior to the event. All appropriate permissions have been granted by Westminster Council with coordination between the RFL Events department and GB Armed Forces RL now necessary to ensure appropriate representation.

14.0 MEETING DATES 2014
TBC in July 2014

MG

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 2:50pm.