

# Minutes

## Community Board

<b>Location:</b>	Boardroom/Meeting Room One, RFL North West Offices, Quay West, Trafford Wharf Road, Manchester, M17 1HH	<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, 08 February 2017
		<b>Time:</b>	10.30am – 2.40pm
<b>Invited to Attend:</b>	Fred Baker, Neil Ashton, Pat Crawshaw, Peter Moran, Trevor Hunt, Stuart Sheard, Sue Taylor	<b>Chair Person:</b>	Nigel Wood
<b>RFL Officers in attendance:</b>	Dave Rotheram, Jenny Baxter, John McMullen, Robert Hicks, Sarah-Jane Gray		
<b>Additionaly</b>	Chris Brindley (Non-Executive RFL Board)		
<b>Apologies:</b>	Flt Lt Damian Clayton MBE, Jan Robinson, Kelly Barrett		

Item No.	Agenda Item	Responsibility
<b>1.0</b>	<p><b>Welcome, Apologies &amp; Introductions</b></p> <p>Mr Wood opened the meeting by wishing the Board a Happy New Year. Apologies were received by Flt Lt Damian Clayton MBE, Kelly Barrett and Jan Robinson. Mr Wood went on to introduce Chris Brindley as a Non-Executive Director and a new member of the Community Board.</p>	
<b>2.0</b>	<p><b>Minutes from the previous meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes from the previous meeting held on 9 November 2016 were approved as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>Ms Taylor gave an update on an item in Any Other Business as complete. She stated BARLA had contacted BARA regarding a tour that had not been authorised but BARA had advertised. Mr Hicks concluded this point by stating a process is to be put in place to enable the relationship with BARA to continue.</p> <p>It was agreed a RESPECT update is to be placed on the action tracker for a presentation at the next meeting.</p> <p>The Board received an update that the Gambling Policy had been implemented; also, that a meeting had taken place with NCL as advised in the previous minutes.</p>	Jenny Baxter

	<p>Mr Baker requested all presentations are distributed immediately post Community Board meetings for the Board members' reference, and to keep members informed who are unable to attend.</p> <p>Mr Hicks stated the minutes would be uploaded to the website and would be relocated to be more accessible than their current location.</p>	
<b>3.0</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>It was agreed items completed or due to be included in this meeting could be removed. These were items 1-10.</p> <p>Ms Gray gave her apologies for not completing item 11 (A working group of the community strategy is to be put together). The opportunity for the Board to feed into this action would take place during this meeting.</p>	
<b>4.0</b>	<p><b>Standing Reports</b></p> <p>Mr McMullen stated all questions received pre-meeting had received a response.</p> <p><b>4.1 Community Delivery</b></p> <p>Ms Crawshaw enquired if the RFL Commercial Department could assist with gaining sponsorship for the Student World Cup. Ms Gray explained the gaining sponsorship process and the work done so far by the Commercial department who had already been tasked with this.</p> <p>Mr Moran requested the figures in 2.1 (Higher Education) be refined to the type of game and to each game played. It was agreed moving forwards figures such as these will be refined by type of game/number of games played throughout this paper. It was agreed tables within new format reports are the best way to show these figures, with previous years' figures included for comparison. A discussion took place regarding more figures, data and rationale with papers. Ms Gray was tasked with briefing the authors to ensure that data forms a greater part of future papers.</p> <p>Mr Ashcroft agreed with the above and suggested the figures for section 4 (Secondary Schools) would be of interest as he predicted they would reveal a drop-in player numbers.</p> <p>The Champion Schools competition was discussed and Ms Gray stated the competition is to be revised. Mr Ashton added to this by explaining curriculum pressures and staffing constraints. He went on to explain the competition is currently servicing some schools and explained further why the review is taking place. The rationale detailed included the competition not being balanced as not all schools are able to play competitively which in turn discourages teams to incur travel costs only to be beaten in games. It was stated the current Champion Schools competition is not increasing participation numbers and is not always an enjoyable experience for the schools or competitors.</p>	SJ Gray

<p>Mr Baker recognised and praised RFL colleagues for the implemented Primary Rugby League ethos and the ongoing changes in coach philosophy through Coach Development.</p> <p>Ms Gray indicated the Champion Schools proposed changed format would be circulated to the Board for the Board to champion and encourage the changes.</p> <p>In section 7 (Primary Rugby League), it was detailed the 2017 Handbooks have been printed and are being distributed. It was explained the North West League will work from a slightly altered version.</p>	<p>SJ Gray</p>
<p>4.2 <b>Player &amp; Coaching Development Report</b></p>	
<p>Mr Rotheram described the paper.</p> <p>Ms Crawshaw stated that herself and Jan Robinson had attended the Embed the Pathway conference last month and praised it highly. She went on to encourage other Board members to attend future events.</p> <p>The Embed the Pathway name was discussed and Mr Rotheram explained the history and origin of the name. He went on to explain the programme is to be rebranded in 2017 and relaunched in January 2018. Ms Gray explained this will conform to the recent rebranding of the Rugby Football League FL and England Rugby League.</p>	
<p>Mr Sheard brought to light an advertised holiday programme at Huddersfield that he believed could be part of the England Talent Pathway programme which was being charged for, he deemed this to be inappropriate. Mr Rotheram was tasked to look into this.</p>	<p>Dave Rotheram</p>
<p>Mr Crawshaw voiced her concerns over former players using professional clubs to charge for coaching to children and how she believes this activity does not conform to the pathway in place. Ms Gray and Mr Wood agreed any Rugby League activity must be perceived as positive and that the RFL needs to be inclusive of any activity. Ms Gray went on to state a 'light touch' approach would be used by the RFL around such activity. Mr Wood concluded by stating these activities are private enterprises and their legalities are not under the RFL's remit, but that checks can be carried out if concerns are raised over their operation. Ms Gray stated the framework on this piece of work is to be brought to the next meeting. The figures on what Performance and Development perceive to be the quantity on private companies who coach Rugby League will be pulled together for the next meeting.</p>	<p>SJ Gray</p>
<p>Appendix 1 was explained as a recruitment tool for collages with a Category 3 academy to promote Rugby League to U16s.</p>	
<p>Ms Crawshaw explained this will not conflict with schools or Champion School activity.</p>	

Mr Moran went on to voice concerns over this model to which Mr Ashton expressed his concerns over a rest time in the season available to players and giving them too much choice. In conclusion, Mr Wood stated this model is offering choice to players and he believed no major issues had been raised at this meeting. He concluded timescale conflict will have to be dealt with at a local level.

Appendix 2 was introduced and Board members were asked not to share its content.

#### 4.3 **Safeguarding**

The paper was introduced and the floor was open to the Board's questions.

Mr Baker explained he had attended the Safeguarding Conference 2017 to which he gave positive feedback. He went on to suggest that the conference could have been publicised more.

Mr Hicks confirmed figures in item 2.5 (Breakdown of causes by type of case) were not age specific.

Mr Moran requested the figures in the table in item 2.6 (Distributed by age group and league) to be categorised.

It was noted there is no spike in figures to raise any concern. Mr Hicks went on to state Colette Eden is currently working with the Government on Safeguarding and the relevant Departments are positive on Rugby League's dealings with Safeguarding process and reporting.

#### 4.4 **Marketing and Communications**

Ms Gray began her presentation and explained its content. The pages detailed highlights in the grassroots game; Referees; Club features; Lee Radford plays in Yorkshire Men's League; Challenge Cup; Super League star takes NCL coaching role; Season Launch.

The whole game Season Launch 2017 event was discussed at length and Ms Gray stated this would take place again after the learnings from this year's event. Mr Wood stated, on reflection, the grassroots section would be scheduled before Super League. Mr Ashton went on to explain his school attendees had a positive Rugby League experience and how the event made use of Rugby League's unique accessibility to the Professional game. Ms Gray stated her positivity re: the improvement of the representation of the community game as a whole. Mr Hunt reiterated positive feedback from himself and other attending journalists.

A video of highlights from the event was shown.



	Touch and Tag Rugby as intellectual property was discussed.	
<b>6.0</b>	<p><b>2017 events</b></p> <p>Ms Gray explained the criteria for Tier 1 Community Events 2017 (the most prestigious in the calendar). A paper outlining this and the proposed events was distributed. Ms Gray explained, moving forwards, partly due to the restructure within the RFL, working smarter would be a priority and she explained how volunteers would be supported to be involved in the running of events. She explained the tier 3, not mentioned on the paper, would include all other not listed community events.</p> <p>Mr Hunt stated his belief the International Community Lions should be included to the Tier 1 list in the 2018 season. It was agreed this would be the case and a review of the Tier 1 events would take place each season.</p> <p>There was a discussion over the pinnacle of the community game being Lions.</p> <p>Mr Baker expressed his concerns over calendar commitments over the Tier 1 events as he believed they all fell within a short space of time. This was discussed and agreed this could not be altered due to Rugby League being a seasonal sport.</p> <p>Ms Crawshaw suggested an English Students' game for the University/ College event still unnamed on the paper scheduled for the 2 June 2017 at Headingley. It was agreed this would sit well as a Tier 1 event and would be added to the list.</p> <p>Ms Gray explained the agreement and commitment given to Damian Clayton MBE to include the Jack Harrison event as a Tier 1 event in 2017.</p> <p>Mr Wood explained feedback on the paper could be received post meeting after delegates had had time to digest the content of the paper.</p>	SJ Gray
	<b>LUNCH</b>	
<b>7.0</b>	<p><b>Restructure updates and 2017 plans</b></p> <p>A presentation alongside handouts were received. Ms Gray opened with the news that Sport England had deferred the submission and resubmission was now scheduled for 20 February with a scheduled date for the funding decision on 21 March.</p> <p>As part of the presentation the Strategic Pillars were explained and discussed. These were; Successful and Sustainable clubs, competitions and foundations; A new pathway in Education; Rugby League variants; Talent.</p>	

	<p>The work streams were detailed. Mr Wood reiterated this piece of work is for Rugby League to produce for the benefit of Rugby League itself and it not determined by any externals.</p> <p>It was noted Women’s Rugby League is not classed as a variant in this structure but is throughout the whole strategy. The workstreams include a new pathway, including a Women’s Super League.</p> <p>Ms Gray went on to explain the organogram of the new structure for the Performance and Development and Operations departments. She cautioned the Board this was a live project and was still on going. She reiterated the new structure will have a major change on how colleagues’ work is completed and efficiencies.</p> <p>Ms Crawshaw voiced concerns over external funding being too greater an influence on colleagues’ jobs and the effect this has on the community game. Mr Wood stated change is constant and the RFL’s challenge is to ensure that the disturbance is minimised. Mr Wood went on to explain briefly how the RFL created revenue.</p> <p>Ms Crawshaw explained further concern over losing colleagues due to restructures every 4 years. A central, constant, unchangeable structure was discussed, rather than key departments changing every funding cycle.</p> <p>It was noted once this work is complete and colleagues have filled the positions available, this will be communicated to the Board.</p> <p>Mr Moran voiced his perception that the RFL gives a lack of support to the community game to which Mr Wood stated an ecosystem of the RFL would be distributed at a later stage as he strongly disagreed with this perception. Mr Wood went on to explain the RFL Board and corporate structure and how the Board’s work is governed.</p> <p>Mr Sheard gave his opinion the Operations department structure is key to the community game and its structure should be kept constant but how the Development team’s structure could differ dependant on the current cycle’s strategic goals.</p> <p>Mr Brindley concluded the discussion by stating changes in sport or business is constant and happens very quickly and each funding cycle will differ from the previous. He explained the structure of departments will alter at the next funding cycle in order to enable Rugby League to succeed in the future. He stated technology is key and the RFL need to stay ahead of the curve to progress.</p>	<p>SJ Gray</p> <p>Nigel Wood</p>
8.0	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>Mr Sheard requested short form notes, similar to Jan Robinson’s are produced so they can be distributed as usual despite Jan’s absence at the meeting. Mr Hicks was tasked with this.</p>	<p>Robert Hicks</p>

	<p>Ms Crawshaw questioned if the new change in playing rules are to be filtered down to the community game. It was noted this is the case if the rule is suitable to the games, however do not affect regional exclusions.</p> <p>Ms Crawshaw explained a recent kit issue for a Students' 'origin game' event. She questioned the rationale behind the RFL's relationship with BLK with so many historic and ongoing issues. Mr Hicks stated a paper is to be produced for Mr Wood's approval to detail a review of the BLK contract. He assured Ms Crawshaw this would be actioned imminently.</p> <p>Ms Taylor reiterated an offer given from BARLA to the RFL to fund the production of concussion posters and first aid kits. She stated no action had been undertaken after this offer had been brought to the Board in 2014. Mr Hicks assured the Board he would address this.</p> <p>A RESPECT update was requested to which Ms Gray gave a brief overview and stated an update be brought to a future meeting.</p>	<p>Robert Hicks</p> <p>Robert Hicks</p>
<p><b>9.0</b></p>	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>It was agreed an additional meeting is required before the scheduled next meeting in June. A date in April is to be agreed upon and circulated in addition to the current dates previously distributed.</p>	<p>Jenny Baxter</p>