

# MINUTES

## Community Board meeting

<b>Location:</b>	Doncaster International Hotel, Decoy Bank South, Doncaster DN4 5PD	<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, 24 July 2019
		<b>Time:</b>	3.00pm – 7.00pm
<b>Invited to Attend:</b>	Fred Baker, Stuart Sheard, Jan Robinson, Pat Crawshaw, Billy Dillon, Peter Moran, Flt Lt Damian Clayton MBE,	<b>Chair Person:</b>	Chris Brindley (Non- Executive RFL Board)
<b>RFL Officers in Attendance:</b>	Robert Hicks Dave Rotheram, Charlotte Clynch, David Raybould (In Part), Chris Spurr (In Part), Steve Ganson (In Part), Liam Moore (In Part)	<b>Invited Guests:</b>	Adam Chester (Super League Europe) (In Part), Katarina Graham (Super League Europe) (In Part)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Neil Ashton, Lois Forsell, Trevor Hunt, Sue Taylor		

Item No.	Agenda Item	Responsibility
1.0	<p><b>Welcomes and Apologies</b></p> <p>Mr Brindley began by welcoming the delegates to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were received by Neil Ashton, Lois Forsell, Sue Taylor and Trevor Hunt. Apologies from RFL Officers were Marc Lovering and Kelly Barrett.</p> <p>Billy Dillon was welcomed to his first meeting, attending in place of Trevor Hunt.</p>	
2.0	<p><b>Minutes from the previous meeting</b></p> <p>There were no formal minutes from the previous meeting, as this had been one of the additional operational meetings added for the year.</p> <p>Mr Hicks noted to the Board that in meetings which were operational, with discussions taking place, internal notes would be circulated and confidentially shared with Board members.</p> <p>Mr Brindley asked members to keep any internal notes to themselves, as they would not be for public knowledge at the time.</p>	

<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>Mr Brindley took the Board through the action tracker fully. The Board asked for amendments to be made to this, and for more clear details to be given in the update section of the action trackers by RFL Officer Leads.</p> <p>Ms Robinson asked that the action tracker be circulated soon after the meeting to remind Board members of any actions they must themselves complete. Mr Hicks reminded the Board that the officers are not there to remind members to complete their actions, this is member's own responsibly, but they will aim to circulate action trackers a week after the meetings.</p> <p>Mr Brindley discussed the Community Game Manifesto, the second interpretation of this had been provided by RFL staff 4 days previous, and Mr Brindley was going to look over this and report back by the Monday following the meeting. After this the RFL Officers would be able to circulate the proposed manifesto to Board Members for comment ahead of the next meeting.</p> <p>This manifesto would be re-presented to Board members at the next Community Board meeting, ahead of a presentation to the RFL Council in December by the Board's Chair.</p>	<p>RFL</p> <p>RFL</p> <p>CB</p> <p>CB</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>SharePoint</b></p> <p>Mr Hicks opened the section with points around the Community Game Board SharePoint folder, which houses all relevant documents around the Board's meetings but also the sub-groups of the Board.</p> <p>It has seemed that numerous Board members had a range of different issues with the site, and it was therefore decided that the RFL Officers would set up some 1-2-1 'training sessions' for Board members with the RFL's IT department.</p>	<p>RFL</p>
<p><b>5.0</b></p>	<p><b>Match Officials</b></p> <p>Mr Ganson and Mr Moore from the RFL's Match Officials Department presented to the Board an update on recruitment and retention of match officials for the 2019 season thus far.</p> <p>Mr Ganson took the Board members through a recap of where the recruitment process had previously been, often with complications and barriers existing which hindered recruitment capabilities. Over the last 6 months, the department has appointed Liam Moore, as a part-time Recruitment &amp; Development Manager whilst also having to replace long-serving Appointment Official Bob Smithies. Mike Smaill will take over from Bob Smithies, on his retirement, and will start with the Match Officials Department in two weeks' time, allowing for some overlap in order to fully hand over all of Bob's experience, knowledge and advice. These</p>	

moves have seen a refocus within the department towards recruitment as well as boosting ability to use technology to do so.

Mr Ganson explained that the numbers of Match Officials on the old database was significantly incorrect with duplications, and long-term inactive officials being included, however the new database now allows for an accurate picture to be given and shows an increasing number of active match officials within the game.

Mr Ganson then showed the Board members the recruitment pathway for officials from entry point to the elite full-time match officials looking after international fixtures. The pathway begins with entry through a match officials' course, after which a person would join a referee society, whom would then nominate for a person to be considered to join the 'performance' grading (Grade 3 and above). Once at this level, officials are considered and reevaluated to see whether they should move up the gradings. The system is something which Mr Ganson explained was to be looked at in due course.

Mrs Crawshaw asked what happened above Grade 4 referees, were these officials recruited by the RFL. Mr Ganson explained that societies can nominate Grade 4 match officials to be considered for a move into Grade 3 and above, and such nominated person(s) would be invited to take the match officials fitness test and check to see they meet the minimum requirement standards.

Mr Ganson then explained the small pool of resources available to recruit, support and coach/develop match officials across the country, from designated Grade 2 & 3 match officials' coach, to the support staff regionally for Grade 4 and below officials.

Mr Moore explained that some areas were without match official societies as the game is still developing there, and as such courses are ran but without the ability to join a local society – instead they are signposted to their nearest society.

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Mr Clayton asked whether it would be possible to connect the Armed Forces match official's appointment officer into the Match Officials department, to see if they could share resources and pool officials in areas where they are needed (e.g. the South). Mr Moore agreed to pick this up offline with Mr Clayton.

Mr Sheard asked for clarification over exactly which realms of the game and leagues the Appointments Officer looks after. Mr Ganson explained that this was everything around the community game, from NCL leagues to Universities & Colleges, to Schools to Women & Girls and all the member leagues of the RFL.

Mr Ganson went on to explain the restructuring of the recruitment process and courses to include online variations via the Our Learning Zone platform, which will also provide weekly access to the previous weekends review of elite match officials alongside notes.

Mr Baker asked whether areas with little or no activity has different direct strategies. Mr Ganson and Mr Moore explained that this is where the digital elements will help to recruit officials in the first instance, particularly in areas where societies do not exist.

Mr Moore gave the example of the London and the South, himself and Ben Thaler had recently gone down to the region for a meeting in order to establish

<p>a centre of excellence partnership within the region, in place of a society, to offer regional training and community in support and knowledge sharing sense.</p>	LM
<p>Ms Robinson asked whether it is possible to request visits from some of the full-time officials to visit the North-East region to inspire and work with younger people to engage them with match officials' recruitment programme. Mr Moore said he would again pick this up with Ms Robinson away from the meeting.</p>	LM
<p>Mr Ganson then went on to talk in depth about the Our Learning Zone plans and the exact figures for the match officials' courses in terms of turning into active officials. Currently less than half of those undertaking a course will become an active match official, but Mr Ganson and Mr Hicks stressed that not everyone participating on the course will be doing so for the purpose of becoming a match official, it can be a CV-strengthening exercise or a development tool.</p>	
<p>Mr Moran asked whether a central register for referees could exist of all those whom take on a course so they can easily turn into officials. Mr Hicks explained that this was possible to simply register yourself online to be appointed to games once the course had been undertaken, however as not all people undertake the course specially to become a match official it would be hard to just add people to a central database off the fact they have achieved the qualification.</p>	
<p>Mr Ganson briefly spoke on female referees and stated that this needed more visibility – although over the past year the likes of Tara Jones and Caitlin Beevers have helped to boost the profile.</p>	
<p>The barriers to recruitment, as laid out by Mr Ganson were for the most part was losing officials due to abuse and investment issues within recruitment of match officials. Mr Ganson gave examples to the Board on issues of abuse from Under-18 match officials right through to the elite full-time referees getting abuse. It is occurring at all levels of the game and is a deterrent for retention of match officials across the game.</p>	
<p>Ms Robinson asked if in Mr Ganson's opinion was the abuse the greatest barrier for the recruitment and retention of officials. Mr Ganson said he did have to agree with this statement.</p>	
<p>Mr Moran and Mr Dillion both gave their opinions on ways to tackle disciplining such behaviours in a way which would affect clubs and communities rather than certain individuals, in terms of tackling coaches or spectator abuse towards referees.</p>	
<p>Mr Brindley suggested the idea of creating a video like that of the Magic Shirt but focused around match officials. Mr Ganson said he had seen one called 'I Love Refereeing' as a video and campaign.</p>	
<p>Mr Ganson did stipulate that the match official's department acknowledges abuse and they would like to tackle it themselves, and do not condone or support referees and societies making their own individual stands against abuse – such as going on strike.</p>	
<p>Mr Brindley asked that these barriers be focused on within the October operational meeting, to look at strategies and root causes around the abuse of</p>	RH

	<p>match officials. Mr Hicks also suggested looking into the review of disciplinary structures across the community game in relation to match officials and abuse.</p>	
<p><b>6.0</b></p>	<p><b>Player Development Leagues</b></p> <p>Mr Raybould presented to the Board an update around Player Development Leagues. Mr Raybould explained that the Player Development Leagues link directly into the intervention commitments given to Sport England.</p> <p>Mr Raybould explained how Player Development Leagues have evolved to meet a need for clubs who could not enter an existing league for whatever reason. As they are non-competitive it is a move away from the winning emphasis which exists within current leagues.</p> <p>The Player Development Leagues are still evolving, but at this moment we do have 4 types of activities which currently sit within the programme.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Merit Leagues exist to provide a central system where clubs can arrange friendly fixtures. Clubs simply register with the Merit league, which are then added on our system and insures the participants. Competition Officers then produce a list of participating teams and then it is up to teams/clubs to arrange fixtures between themselves.</li> <li>2. Fledgling development activities Mr Raybould then gave some case study examples of clubs participating in, which for the most part is Volunteer Led. Cornish Rebels are supported by the Saints Foundations started running school festivals and CPD for coaches, with the look to now develop further into schools and other opportunities within the game.</li> <li>3. Semi-structured competitions, with the examples of Midlands Junior Development Festivals and Bedfordshire Rugby League Development provided by Mr Raybould. The festivals provide more playing and development opportunities. Mr Raybould explained how with the Midlands Festivals taking place at Under-11s, Under-13s and Under-15s, with all teams coming together to play multiple times across the day.</li> </ol> <p>Mr Baker explained how they had managed to put on 4 festivals, making it a good year for the reformed league, and has helped to reinigorated the shape of Rugby League within the area.</p> <p>Mrs Crawshaw, who had attended one of the festivals fed back to the Board that she had two observations, one that the whole day had been non-competitive and secondly that she personally found there to be no match official abuse. Mr Baker fed in for clarity that whilst the games were competitive, it was not about the winning.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. 'Player Development' Leagues</li> </ol> <p>Mr Raybould then explained the integration of player development days and festivals into existing competitions, such as the City of Hull &amp; District Development Days. These are delivered by staff from the City of Hull</p>	

	<p>Academy and volunteers, it does help that they are a small league within a small geographic area.</p> <p>Mr Raybould explained that the player development days had a different look and feel to home and away fixtures, with elements designed to challenge players through learning experiences in a positive environment. As the days are open access 62 new players have turned up to the days, of these 26 have transitioned to a club. In the past 12 months (from 2018 to 2019) the league's player numbers have increased by 8% with 3 months of the season still to go.</p> <p>Mr Raybould also used the example of the North East SPARC Festivals, led by the Newcastle Thunder Academy. These festivals are focused around player skill development, alongside a bigger focus on character and sporting values than winning at all costs.</p> <p>Ms Robinson explained that coaches are not allowed a say in what happens on the days, and the ownership and learnings are primarily down to the players themselves.</p> <p>Mr Raybould then concluded his presentation with the next phases of the player development leagues, including sharing best practices. He also noted that for the most part the challenge would lie in the introduction of leagues to Yorkshire and North West regions.</p> <p>Ms Robinson said she took learnings surrounding the mixture of both aspects of development days but also SPARC festivals to be the most successful.</p> <p>Mr Baker asked about the opportunity to host a player development league conference to allow all regions to share best practice.</p>	
<p><b>7.0</b></p>	<p><b>Primary Rugby League</b></p> <p>Mr Spurr presented to the Board on Primary Rugby League. He began by explaining the brief background and pilot schemes which have been undertaken from 2015 at Under-7s through to Under-9s, with the idea of minimising the rush into 13-a-side format of the game and a win-at-all cost mentality, to instead develop players, increase participation and boost all players game times.</p> <p>Mr Spurr went on to discuss the success of all the pilot schemes, which showed direct growth in skill opportunities, and ultimately more skills will see an increase in player development – other benefits were improved motivation and improved self-esteem, leading to more confidence when playing. Mr Spurr explained that overall this saw players staying in the game for a lot longer, as all participants could play and be involved.</p> <p>He then went on to explain the ethos of the game around letting children have fun, develop skills and enjoy the game. Primary Rugby League allows for the adult emphasis on winning to be removed, and as a result the playing environment for children involved improves. ALL players can play ALL of the time, with the overall benefit coming from player development.</p>	

Mr Spurr then explained in detail the plans to roll out the Primary Rugby League across 2019 (Under-7s to Under-10s) and 2020 (Under-7s to Under-11s), after a slight lull in 2018 due to the loss of a manager.

Club foundations engagement through training has also fallen away, however it was explained to the Board that the education of ethos and rationale through the foundations is to be re-energised with the renewed focus on Primary Rugby League.

Mr Spurr then gave an overview of the current situation with Primary Rugby League, including the ongoing activities within the NW Junior League and some push back has been received regarding the 2019 playing format for the Under-10s, in Yorkshire, for the most part due to adults' motivations to win.

However, a working group has recently been set up across multi-departments within the RFL and a campaign around Primary Rugby League is currently in the planning, alongside the creation of a community on Our Learning Zone.

Mr Spurr explained how the new Primary Rugby League workshops will be delivered to Foundations in October and November and then brought in across the game.

Mr Baker asked if those already qualified in Primary Rugby League have access to Our Learning Zone community or refresh training, as well as what would happen to those areas with no designated foundations. Mr Spurr confirmed that the online community, assets and tools would be available to all qualified coaches.

Mr Brindley asked what support was needed from the Community Board directly around Primary Rugby League, to which Mr Spurr commented that promotion of the positive messages, results and ethos would be beneficial.

## 9.0

### **Super League Presentation**

Mr Chester and Ms Graham arrived early, therefore the agenda was moved around to allow them to present as soon as possible rather than having to wait.

Mr Chester and Ms Graham came to present to the Community Board around ongoing community marketing initiatives Super League Europe have for the Betfred Grand Final at Old Trafford in October.

Firstly, a number of club support opportunities are available, including cash back incentives for clubs and the ability to earn up to £1000 for your community club through organising a coach to the Grand Final. All of these offers will be managed by Sales Manager, Becky Higgins. Mr Chester explained that the purpose of the offers was to encourage community clubs to attend the Grand Final, whilst also getting something back in return. Ms Graham also added the ability to get Universities involved in the offers, with contacts through BUCS being made.

Mr Chester then went on to provide more information on the free to enter Mascot Competition with Northern Rail. Mr Chester explained that the competition was

	<p>targeted towards parents entering on their children’s behalf and acted as a great data capture exercise which could also benefit the community Board with future campaigns, projects or competitions.</p> <p>Mr Chester then went into great detail around the Grand Final Festival in partnership with the RFL Development Team which will take place for Under-7s and Under-8s at Fives in Trafford ahead of the Grand Final. The space will hold 13 pitches, which will be run through Sky Try (Tom Brindle &amp; Marc Lovering) but promoted by Super League Europe.</p> <p>Ms Graham then discussed the Learning Disability Awards, in recognition of the partnership between Community Integrated Care, the RFL and Super League Europe. Participants in the Community Integrated Care Learning Disability Super League will also participate in a lap of honour around Old Trafford.</p> <p>Mr Moran asked if any of these promotions would be going out via postal service since there is a heavy focus on digital or online platforms. Mr Chester confirmed this would happen, following a successful previous postal communication Super League have used.</p> <p>Mr Rotheram added that the Festival would be a good time to promote the positive campaign messages of Enjoy the Game or the ethos around Primary Rugby League, which have been central to the Board’s Meeting. RFL Officers, including Mr Rotheram, would filter this into Tom Brindle whom was organising the event from the RFL side.</p> <p>Mr Baker asked what the plan was around ticketing for families and participants. Mr Chester reassured him that all participants would be seated together in their own separate block, with individual turnstiles and stadium concourse.</p> <p>Mrs Crawshaw asked whether the Community Board would receive invitations to the Betfred Grand Final, having not been invited to Dacia Magic Weekend. Mr Chester said he would look into this, but obviously those decisions did not sit within the Super League Marketing Team.</p>	
<p><b>8.0</b></p>	<p><b>Community Board Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>Mr Hicks presented the Terms of Reference to the Board which were being amended due to the recent Governance Review and ahead of next year’s Community Board.</p> <p>Mr Hicks asked that once shared around the members via email, could they please filter any feedback back to himself within one week, as the terms of reference needed to be present to the RFL Board in August for approval.</p> <p>Mr Hick noted that it was a working document, although he wanted to bring to the attention of Board Members Key Point 1.6 which discusses Sport England’s need for those receiving funding to meet the Sport Governance Code, especially in relation to holding a seat at the RFL Council. In order to meet this criteria, all Board members must meet and pass the fit and proper person(s) test, which eliminates any such person(s) with financial, criminal or associated risks from taking a seat on the Board or Council.</p>	<p>ALL</p>

	<p>Mr Hicks was clear that this governance restructure was going ahead as planned, and the change to terms of reference will see the Community Board become fit for future rather than fit for purpose.</p>	
<p><b>11.0</b></p>	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>Ms Robinson raised some questions around the online learning platform – Our Learning Zone. Mainly when this would be ready to roll out across the leagues and regional areas. Mr Rotheram replied that some pilot communities were currently being set up across Performance and Development, but if she was to get in touch with Chris Spurr he would be able to provide access to the Game Day Managers Module which is currently being trialled in a few areas. The official launch of Our Learning Zone will be at the England Knights v Jamaica game on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019.</p> <p>Mr Hicks updated the Board on the results of its CPSU audit for Safeguarding, with the RAG rating now moving to a 1-5 rating system. Although not confirmed the RFL was expecting to receive an overall scoring of 4, with some areas being scored a 5.</p> <p>Mr Baker asked if the CreatedBy 2021 Legacy Funding could be used for volunteer or Coach Development Funding instead of capital. Mr Hicks explained that whilst this was funding not from the RFL but Sport England the movement away from Capital Funding could not happen, however he would request Colin Moore to come and present to the Board at the next meeting.</p> <p>Mrs Crawshaw asked what was happening with the 21,000 by 2021 campaign and if it was being purposely launched in the community. Mr Hicks explained this was a central campaign, lying with Sarah-Jane Gray, however an update can be circulated to the Board.</p> <p><i>It is noted that prior to the meeting closing, RFL Officers in attendance were asked to leave the room. After this point minutes were not kept.</i></p> <p><i>Meeting Closed at 7.30pm</i></p>	