



## OXFORDSHIRE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

### Minutes of meeting held at Stratfield Brake (Gosford All Blacks) on Tuesday 4th October 2016 at 7.30pm. (Special General Meeting - SGM)

Present: Vincent Murphy (Opening Chair), Chris Skaife (Acting Chair), Kevin Robinson, Rob Walsh, , George Merry, Karen East, Doug Bosley, Tony Cooke, David Witts, Jenny Bosley, Doug Humphries, Andy Lloyd, Trevor Bethell, Alec Jones, Richard Tyrrell, David Larham, Nomtha Gray, Chris McCarthy, Nick McKisown, Martin Hoare.

*Minutes taken by: Karen East*

#### AGENDA

1. Endorsement for temporary Chair / Secretary
2. Safeguarding
3. Payment of players and HMRC
4. Handbook
5. Referees
6. AOB

*Meeting starts 19.30*

#### 1. Endorsement for temporary Chair / Secretary.

Vincent explained that Chris White has had to stand down as Chair. Names can be put forward by clubs for the proper elections in November but this meeting is to get endorsement for a temporary solution.

Vincent followed on to say that George has been appointed for many activities and is better suited elsewhere so is standing down as secretary so again need endorsement for a temporary solution.

Proposed solution: Chris Skaife as Acting Chair and Karen East as Acting Secretary.

Everyone agreed with a unanimous vote.

At the financial AGM proposals for the permanent position will be put in by the Executive. If clubs wish to nominate anyone else please send details to the Executive.

Vincent thanked everyone for their support and cooperation – asked people to pass this thanks on to their clubs.

Chris Skaife takes over meeting as Chair.

Chris Skaife – I know everyone is busy but I want to get out to clubs to see what clubs want and to show face. I want to see what the Executive can do for clubs. Can I also ask clubs to support and answer any queries that come from us (PFR, handbook etc.).

Can we also confirm appointment of Jenny Bosley as Safeguarding Officer.

## 2. Safeguarding

Dave Larham - Welcomed Jenny and thanked her for taking on this role.

Safeguarding is an area in which we need to look at. Everyone needs to be DBS checked (accreditation cannot be signed off without it). I (Dave) and Jenny will work together on this. Clubs are more aware of safeguarding but if you fall foul of it clubs will be in a mess, can contravene regulations 15 and 21. One club in the county is in a mess because they have not been working together collectively and complying with these regulations. Twickenham can and will put sanctions on for non-compliance.

Note. If there is a risk of prosecution the Ltd clubs are in a better position (committee is protected). Clubs are encouraged to protect themselves with this.

## 3. Payment of players & HMRC

Colin Baldwin is away but Vincent wanted to bring the situation regarding payment of players to everyone's attention on his behalf.

RFU are considering a proposal which decides who can pay and if you pay players it will jeopardize the right to participate in grants. The proposal will be put forward, can clubs look at the information on the RFU website. Colin will be opposing this.

Vincent added some notes about accounting if you are paying people. If you are paying coaches, bar staff, players etc. and not fulfilling RTI, PAYE etc. (HMRC responsibilities) you can incur penalties / fines from HMRC. The law is that you must notify the tax, offer rights to pension scheme – there are lots of responsibilities if you pay anyone. HMRC are currently looking at sports clubs. You must protect yourselves now. Vincent has offered his help to clubs and is available for advice if you need help and support. Limited legitimate travel expenses are fine but also note people who are paid need a contract.

It is a very real danger and organisations (clubs) can go out of business as a result of not meeting HMRC obligations. Clubs must be careful. If you are worried please speak to Vincent, he already acts on behalf of other clubs and can help.

## 4. Handbook

Karen advised that updates have been slow going and GMS data does not match what is sometimes current however any missing info has been taken from GMS. Dave advised GMS should be correct. Unfortunately the handbook is likely to still have some incorrect information as a result but we will try our best as it needs to go out.

The handbook will be at the printer this week.

Ongoing we discussed options. Dave asked clubs if they still value the paper handbook. Jenny / Doug like it for when out and about (internet not always easy).

Most people suggested they refer to the internet now for information instead.

Chris mentioned it may be worth considering an electronic / online version of the handbook for the future in one place which can be updated monthly or as soon as there is a change. We would be reliant on clubs for regular updates. We could then just run a small paper print run for those that need it. An online version would mean we could keep it current.

It will take time for an orderly transfer to an online version but everyone seemed to support this.

It was also discussed that club websites are not always up to date and it would be good if clubs good have standardisation of information on the club sites.

GMS is not a bad system but clubs need to take some ownership and we ask that clubs update this and make sure information is correct so that it remains useful.

We welcome clubs input on how make the handbook better in the future for an online / paper version.

## 5. Referees

There is a general lack of referees – Bicester 2 and 3 teams had matches cancelled as no referees available.

5 fixtures couldn't be fulfilled due to referees not being available to date.

It was discussed that referees are aware of the problem. Clubs have lots of level 2 referees amongst their players and members. These level 2 referees need to register with the Referee Society. They will then form part of the reserve bank. If you join the Society it does not mean you have to committee to referee every week, much much less expectation, it's just needed to boost numbers.

The referee situation will be put on the agenda for the next Executive meeting. Vincent explained that the Referee Society will start direct communication to clubs to get referees.

Kevin explained that they are trying to get referees. The last weekend in September is always bad for numbers. The problem is recognized and they are trying to recruit. There will be a leaflet sent out with the handbook and there will be postcards to distribute around clubs. Referees can be youngsters not just older people so can clubs please encourage younger members to become referees as well.

Question from Wallingford – Do referees pull resources from other counties and do schools provide own referees?

- This question will be put on to the Executive meeting agenda so Andy Rolfe can answer as he is not here today.

General consensus is that referees are lacking in all counties.

## 6. AOB

Bicester – recruiting and retaining players is causing a struggle. Under 14s – hardly any teams in Oxfordshire. Have any other clubs got this issue? Grove have, GAB have – noted we think six have folded in the U14 age group.

Dave – this is on the agenda to look at the under 14 age group. It seems no one is concentrating on the year 7 and 8s. Dave asked clubs to look at what they are doing to find out why people are leaving? Sometimes it can be as simple as the players not liking the coach. Clubs must identify why people are leaving – ring and ask them. Encourage them back. Kids will just walk away otherwise and it's worrying.

Some youngsters are leaving the county, playing at boarding schools but we do need to know why to identify reasons. Clubs can approach secondary schools for players. There is lots of funding going in to state secondary schools for rugby.

Kevin – the county did a players survey which they learnt a lot from. Kevin and Dave with clubs would be prepared to do some sort of survey again. It would be worth exploring further. Six teams dropping out is a big problem, rugby might not be doing enough. Some youngsters do just get fed up if start too young. Perhaps also size groups instead of age should be considered (NZ model).

Bicester – added that he has heard from parents that the 'danger' element with the contact and risk of injuries (head injuries) has put people off.

It was noted that they used to do rugby roadshows where went in to schools with coaches and this got a good uptake of players. Dave Larham suggested this still goes on. Dave will put something together for the next meeting featuring what's going on in secondary schools and where. It was requested that Dave could give the school contact details (names of the rugby contacts within the schools) to the clubs so they can reach out to them directly. Chris Skaife acknowledged we need to get the schools and clubs working together.

The ladies and girls had an open evening which provided an opportunity for people to ask questions and engage with parents. It gave facts about the dangers etc. people discovered rugby is not as risky as they first thought.

Chris asked clubs if they have tried this? It seemed not. Chris suggested this might be something to do and may help with the retaining of players too. **Can clubs please come to the AGM with some suggestions for retention of U14s – we can help.**

#### Oxford Rugby Club – Not clear what priorities should be – Club or Schools rugby

Kevin and Chris need to discuss and come up with recommendations on priorities for age groups. Also the 48 hour rule applies and no more than 80 minutes of rugby in a weekend. The latter rule may have gone but this isn't giving guidance. Asked Dave to provide guidance from the RFU?

#### Dave – RFU event 'Rugby Aware'

Dave said the RFU have an event targeted to parents which can be run. **If you're a club that thinks this would be good and you have enough parents to fill a room please contact Dave.** It covers safety aspects; it's called 'Rugby Aware'. Vincent added as it's vital to find out why kids are leaving rugby we must try and do all we can to do something about it.

#### Rob Walsh – DBS

Rob highlighted that we must get the message across that DBS is essential. A coach recently came in for verbal abuse of a referee and it was found they didn't have DBS. This is priority.

*Vincent closed the meeting – thank you everyone and what a great meeting – talking about the game!*

Meeting closes 20.45