



OXFORDSHIRE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LIMITED

Executive Board Meeting – 16th February 2021

7.00pm – Virtual Zoom

Executive Board Meeting

Attendees:

Karen East (Secretary), Rob Walsh, Pete Bramley (Chairman) Gina Overton, Chris White, Doug Bosley, Jane & Paul Weaver, Philippe Perisegaele, Andrew Tacon (Treasurer)

Jamie Goddard and Jenny Bosley joined 7.30pm and left following their sections.

Apologies: None.

Chairman: *Pete Bramley*

1. Approval of Minutes from January 2021 Meeting and Matters arising.

Further wording to be added. DB asked for some additions. Board will approve at the next meeting.

This meeting is recorded from here.

2. Open discussion / issues with the board

The Chair noted that individuals from the board have been discussing with clubs about the fractiousness of the board and how its run / how individuals work. PB thought this was undermining the CB and was wrong. Issues should be addressed to the board and individuals. The board must be more open and robust.

PW thought there are extra challenges doing things remotely rather than face to face. It is usually easier and more effective when working face to face. PW does not think we are working effectively as a committee. Sometimes individuals who need to be involved in their area (specialists) were and are not involved where needed.

It was noted that there was pressure by clubs at the last meeting for decisions to be made by the board but people / clubs do not know what meetings individuals are having / what conversations are being had outside of the board meetings so crossed wires can be had.

PB / RW are sitting in a number of meetings and it's noted they need to give info across the board more frequently especially with things changing swiftly. Chris W and Paul W have a SW women's forum meeting starting next week and will use that as a start to share notes with the board.

JW asked that before key messages / statements **that impact multiple areas or are momentous** are sent, those messages should go to the board for a quick read first. This does not apply to day-to-day messages or mandatory emails (like Twickenham issues). The default position for decisions from specific specialist areas should be that those areas issue them.

The secretary (KE) expressed that is not always practical for individuals to give updates on a daily basis following internal meetings and sometimes the next board meeting is the relevant point to update but agreed that things that impact multiple areas or are momentous must be shared swiftly. If clubs contact members and people do not know the answer, please direct to the secretary / chair in the first instance so that the issue can be dealt with or passed to the relevant contact. PB reminded people not to take things personally, it's all about rugby.

GO thinks it's important that if the Chair has thoughts about the direction of the Exec board the board must be clear on those plans. The meetings should be the forum for those conversations, decisions regarding board appointments and direction should not be made by one individual alone.

RW expressed that we need to be kinder to each other. Everybody has feelings and it is important. GO reiterated that there is no aggression needed. All agreed.

The secretary (KE) advised that one of the clubs in particular is not happy with remuneration for the secretarial and accountancy fees. KE confirmed that if a volunteer could do the required work / funding was really cut then she would stand aside. The remuneration is on a contractor basis, not employee. AT (treasurer) noted this is a CB decision and if it is needed the CB make this decision, the membership cannot make all of the decisions. The secretary was

brought in with a number of paid hours due to volume of work and hours. Currently the secretary claims a maximum of 27 hours at a significantly reduced rate a month as agreed at budgeting. The majority of hours are worked on a voluntary basis. The payment agreement can be withdrawn at any time if deemed necessary. RW noted that the secretary paid hours had been agreed and that the secretary had got the board tidied up after it had been in a real mess.

3. Update from treasurer

RW asked what general expenses were for ORFU. AT (treasurer) General expenses are exactly that but also include £1600 for a farm building, which we used for storage. KE noted that it is a comparable cost compared to other areas we checked for cost analysis earlier this season. It was felt that this is still needed and was the best financial option.

4. Jamie Goddard update Mental Health

From a county point of view and the outside area individuals are really affected mentally. As a county we need to push what we can do. JG has reached out to people including Clinical Psychologist Tom Murfitt that the secretary (KE) brought in recently to give a free session to the county.

JG is waiting for data on costs for online options. We want to run for at least 1 person from each club (preferably several). JG to look at the training. KE noted that Bicester had had some free mental health training so he should talk to them. GO mentioned a health line and is getting info on costs for this.

A Whatsapp group will be set up for all of the safeguarding contacts by JG asap.

JG asked for links to be put on the website. PW/ GO / PP can assist with this if JG sends content to them.

PP asked if we could use the Covid emergency fund for mental health training. AT advised the RFU is looking at what else the money could be spent on and the timeframe may be extended. AT will query this. At the moment it does not meet the criteria.

CW also noted Banbury ran some free sessions. JG is to link with the clubs to see if more free sessions can be grabbed. The key is JG must get things booked now and get things up and running for March.

PP noted the Sport England course was free, at most was £15 per person. JG will look at this. E learning course by UK coaching also available:
<https://www.ukcoaching.org/courses/learn-at-home/mental-health-awareness->

[for-sport-plus](#) at £12 per person. JG will investigate.

Rugby Safe – JG will provide info for website to GO / PP / PW.

5. Safeguarding

All clubs have done audit except 1, JB is chasing them to complete. Discipline fees, Jenny proposes that we need to increase the fees. Papers only will increase in cost up to £40 (this is an increase of £5). Face to face will increase in cost to £60 (this is an increase of £15). Effective from Sept 21 (season 21/22).

Proposed Jenny Bosley, Seconded Rob Walsh. Unanimous vote in favour of these increases.

Safeguarding (JB) – will send info to PW for web. Some of it does need updating.

6. RFU Council Nomination

Currently Granville Williams and Rob Walsh have been nominated by clubs. The closing date is 25th February for nominations.

DB challenged that closing date for nominations is 1st March and not 25th Feb. The secretary (KE) will check this and will circulate RFU Council Nomination rules to all of the committee.

Manifestos of the candidates will be sent to the club secretaries. DB challenged that we don't need to put this on social media or the web. KE thought that we should be transparent. CW / PB / GO also agreed we need to be transparent. PP noted there could be some negative to the losing candidate. Each candidate must be treated as equal in this. It was agreed that all candidates would be treated equally and GO will manage social media splashes, the secretary (KE) will deal with emailing the information to clubs and will handle the ballot forms.

The CB supports RW as a council member for another term. RW has no objections to details being posted on social media.

DB challenged the RFU rep process. The secretary (KE) read instructions from the RFU to confirm issues and will circulate. The CB is following the correct guidelines, which have been updated by the RFU legal counsel due to the virtual nature of the voting due to Covid.

7. Winter Funding

A winter funding meeting was held by the RFU. AT (treasurer) and the KE (secretary) attended for the board. There will be no extension to the winter funding deadline. DL is phoning all the clubs to apply – deadline 25th Feb. Dave Larham is the immediate contact for queries on this. If they cannot get hold of Dave Larham they should contact KE (secretary) who can link them to someone at the RFU as a matter of urgency.

8. Diversity & Inclusion Role

The secretary (KE) raised that we are recommended to have diversity and inclusion role in the CB. The board agreed and RW suggested we should bring someone in ASAP and as a stand-alone committee. The D&I lead / officer would sit on the main board. PB concurred.

GO will like to be considered for this role. JW asked GO if this would be in addition to the comms role she currently holds. GO would be happy to do both roles but is happy to take CB guidance if this was considered.

The board will advertise the role and will invite candidates to apply ahead of the March meeting.

KE Proposed to put D&I role out, seconded by Paul Weaver. Unanimously voted to get this advert out by close of business Friday.

KE will share with the committee the job role description ahead of publishing.

9. Additional sub committee role

The secretary (KE) suggested Dave Rudman (Littlemore) would like to work with the board. The board were very happy and embraced this. Dave Rudman will work on Philippe Peirsegeale sub committee if he accepts. PP already works with Dave in a coaching capacity on occasions. PP and KE to connect with Dave Rudman.

Chris White suggested Francesca Ronan would also be interested in a sub committee role. The plan is that she will shadow Chris White initially. The board were very happy with this. CW to connect with Fran.

The board concurred that it was good to see additional people wanting to work with us.

10. RFU Council update

RW noted that the moratorium or ring fencing is not wanted by many clubs. Majority of RFU council are against this.

Presidents walk, Judge Blackett would like to do the presidents walk to raise money for the injured players fund. If any clubs can arrange a walk for 10-15 miles we could get good publicity and it would be good to support. The event is planned to take place between 22nd October and 5th November. CB to look at getting involved. Witney to Chipping Norton a possible route.

RW reminded everyone that 50% RFU community staff still furloughed for 50% of the time.

There are big discussions about the supplemental pot (when a club cant sell tickets it sells them back to Twickenham which Twickenham use for hospitality). Twickenham hoping to hold on to supplemental pot, but that money is spread across clubs. Council feels strongly that this should not be stopped; money should continue to go back to clubs. Club chairs were asked and they support the council decision.

DB asked about levels. There is a webinar next month to discuss the levels of the game. Looking at reducing number of teams in Cat 1 and 2 – not fixed yet.

RW noted they are also looking at minimum operating standards at certain levels. This will be hard on some clubs; club chairs were against this as is RW.

DB asked about the glass ceiling. RW noted that the glass ceiling should be raised for 2nd teams.

11. Volunteer Recognition / Mitsubishi Motors Leadership Network (MMLN)

GO noted that the volunteer give out cant be done as planned due to Covid. Nominations afoot for different things but no clarification at the moment. There were 4 nominations for the MMLN. Becca O'Neil (RFU) has confirmed there were many nominations across the whole network and the nomination being put forward fro Oxfordshire is Craig Morley at Bicester. Craig Morley is not currently aware, once he is formally informed we can publish that information.

12. Website

AT / PP / PW / GO met to discuss the new website. Fees are in the region of £200 annually. Things are going really well. There are concerns over GDPR and the team are looking at this carefully. They need content that is correct

and sections up to date. View to launch website is March. Feedback needed from the board by 1st March, including content. Plan to showcase it at clubs meeting. PB recommended that GO / PW also link in with the referees society for content (Chrissy Clarke works on this for the refs society). The board thanked the web team for their hard work on this.

13. Updates from other areas

JW / PW End of season youth festivals – they are not happening. GO will publish this – no competitions or festivals, hope to resume in Sept. Referees society – Kev Coyne needs to see Jane and Pauls recent communication. KE will resend their communications via GMS to the club boards.

PP – England Ruby advanced coaching award (Level 3) – Twickenham hoping to start these in May. £1100 is the cost for the full year mentoring programme. There is one webinar and one workshop to outline the criteria to meet. This information has been sent to club coaching coordinators.

PP – The SW are running 2 workshops for coaching and referee coordinators in March.

PP – Age grade calendar has been sent round. There are some notable changes. Club and school calendar has been removed for flexibility. U16 and U18 remain the same to protect exam period. PP asked PW / JW for contacts in these areas. Zoom meeting needed to discuss the calendar. JW / PW noted that they usually spend time with Kevin Robinson (RFU Youth Liaison) on this area. Suggestion that PP / KR / JW and PW have a meeting via zoom to close the loop.

DB –SW have confirmed no competitive rugby until start of the next season. No further update.

CW Wasps have set up academy partnership with City of Oxford College. ORFU support this. Good educational programme for 16-18 year old girls overseen by Wasps coaches. Good path way links. We will be able to retain the players to play for the county and their clubs. A lot of the other academies insist players only play for academies. This is a great step forward and we need it. The CB supports this. GO will put this out on communications. KE will send GO information to share and will circulate to the board.

CW – There is a Zoom meeting on 7th March with Martin McTaggart to discuss girls and women's rugby (mainly girls) for the next season, inter counties and competitions. CW will attend.

14. AOB

GO - Covid newsletter could be put out digitally. We have not done one for a while. Snapshot of what CB has done, mental health follows up. CW Some light hearted content may also be welcome. What have we been doing page would also be good. Individuals to send GO information to be included by Friday 26th Feb. All of the board were supportive of this newsletter going out and it was felt it was needed.

Meeting ends 21:50

Next meeting is 9th March – this will be a 30 min board meeting at 7pm followed by a clubs meeting at 7.30pm