



OXFORDSHIRE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LIMITED

Clubs Meeting – 16th March 2021

7.30pm – Virtual Zoom

Executive Board and Clubs Meeting

Attendees:

Karen East (Secretary), Pete Bramley (Chairman) Gina Overton, Chris White, Doug Bosley, Philippe Perisegaele, Andrew Tacon (Treasurer), Rob Walsh (Current RFU Council Rep), Chris McCarthy, Granville Williams, Bob Fisk, Iain Wakefield, Lee Gillett, Patrick Sweeney. Nick McKeown, Pete Conway, Aubrey Doran, Craig Morley, Dave Larham, Dave Rudman, Keith Upton, Jack Pooler, Neil Hopper

Apologies: Jane & Paul Weaver, Tim Stevens, Matt Rushton, Peter Ramsdale, Jamie Goddard

Chairman: *Pete Bramley*

Meeting started at 19:35

1. Welcome from the Chair

Pete Bramley welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. RFU Council Representative Nominations (Granville Williams & Rob Walsh)

Two candidates for the role - both were given 10-15 to discuss their manifesto and time after to take questions from the clubs. Clubs will vote via ballot form and this must be submitted before end 27th March to the secretary (KE). Ballot forms and manifestos have already been sent to clubs via GMS.

Granville Williams

Chris McCarthy questioned if GW had sat on a rugby club committee to have insight on the club day to day issues. GW confirmed he has sat on the refs society committee and had relevant experience through the Police.

Nick McKeown asked if GW had plan and vision for growing W&G in the County. GW did not have a specific vision but specified importance of retaining and keeping interest.

Jack Pooler noted difference between rugby clubs and working within the CB had been brought up but noted the skills required are transferrable and would work well in this role.

Aubrey Doran asked what the 3 priorities for the RFU Council would be over the next years in GW opinion. GW Retain players, attract fans and participants (sportsmanship) to the game. Also need focus on how best to gain more revenue for the RFU (and be more frugal on expenditure).

GW thought rugby needs to be on TV as oppose to Sky, Amazon etc., accessible for all (not just football)

Rob Walsh

Jack Pooler thanked RW for his support to Quins over the years. He noted the board and clubs had questioned Steve Grainger about future pandemic planning recently. JP asked RW what the major lessons learnt from this were. RW The RFU did plan for a pandemic but not on this scale, the RFU has been taught a lesson that they need to make sure the reserves are strong. RFU needs to look again at strategic planning.

Aubrey Doran asked what the 3 key priorities were for the RFU Council – RW Financial stability, retention of players (we have no idea about the impact of the pandemic is and we need to keep all players including unemployed involved), bring in new players.

Aubrey Doran asked RW view on the TV arrangements discussed in the press. RW commercially the RFU has to seek the best commercial deal but cricket went down the pay to view route and it didn't work well so the RFU has to be cautious.

Iain Wakefield asked what can be done with the overall safety of the game. Concern is a lot of kids don't stay because of the physicality of the game. RW Recent games have shown tackling is lower and safer. Trying to get more medical awareness. RW thinks rugby is still an all-inclusive game and cannot see tackling being banned. To note horse riding is more dangerous than rugby.

RW has always championed grass routes rugby, without this there is no elite rugby.

Craig Morley asked Rob about expenses claimed in the role. RW does not claim any expenses, RW voted for RFU Council to pay on way for trips etc. Many RFU reps do not claim expenses. RW has also taken club representatives as guests to games where tickets are offered rather than his own friends. (He has taken his son and son in law to a game). RW has always been transparent with this.

3. Diversity and Inclusion Role

Two candidates applied for the D&I role, they have been interviewed this week. The board needs longer to consider the candidates and will meet on 18th March to make their decision on who should be Chair of Diversity and Inclusion for the CB. Once the decision has been made this will be announced to clubs as interim role. At the AGM the board will propose that clubs ratify it.

Twickenham has asked for this role to be put in place as soon as possible hence why it was advertised at this time.

4. RFU Council Update (Rob Walsh – Current Representative)

Winter support survival grant – some clubs have been notified already that they have been awarded the grant. (Some have not). RW urged people to accept grants once they are offered to them.

Community grants update came out tonight and has been sent to the club committee contacts by Twickenham.

Rugby Camps in Easter Hols – no up to date changing room guidance yet.

Future competitions structure will come out next week, RW would like feedback from clubs surrounding this.

5. Risk Assessment Support Grant Offers

Information should have come to clubs from the RFU. The board has agreed to match the grant money that will come from Twickenham - £1,600.

GO Risk assessments are part of everyday life for clubs. Principally it has never been a big focus area but it will be. The main reason for the focus is slips and trips. The risk assessment online tool will be improved upon.

PB asked that clubs look out for this information from Twickenham.

6. Updates from the Board

Doug Bosley, still waiting to hear from SW to hear what's happening. Fixtures may come out a bit later. Clubs just need to wait and see what happens. DB will arrange a meeting shortly for clubs and teams.

Chris White, it's been a difficult season for W&G rugby and for the clubs. We are planning to hold a W&G county day if we can (Covid permitting) sometime in May to try and get the girls back. The plan is to get everything set up now ready to get the season up and running.

Gina Overton, very active on Facebook, Twitter. Community game updates out as soon as we have them. Website being redesigned, we hope to launch this in April. Covid newsletter (digital version) has been sent out to clubs, clubs are encouraged to send it to their membership.

GO Volunteer Recognition; last years winner will go to award ceremony on 19th March (this year it is virtual rather than face to face). It will be a special event still. It will be hosted by Jeff Blackett and sponsored by Sky Sports and Mitsubishi. Last years nominations do have gifts but we have not been able to distribute due to Covid. They will be distributed as soon as we can.

GO There will be new launch on 23rd March for volunteer recognition. There are 3 national award categories. A bit different from how it has been before, information will follow.

Phillippe Peirsegaele – has been a difficult season for clubs. Guidance regarding camps is coming out soon. Age grade season has been extended to 31st May. Regulation 15.8 has also been suspended and will be replaced by a new framework to be announced by the RFU on 9 April 2021

Andy Tacon – Not much going on so not much spent. We are supporting some mental health support courses. We are matching funding for risk assessments. We will also support other activities if required.

Dave Larham – real focus on safe return to rugby and trying to retain the players. 29th March workshop for clubs on top tips for planning to rugby return. In awe of the amount of work that clubs put in for the winter survival grant fund. Jack Pooler noted its great DL is back working in the area. DL has been very helpful and supportive.

Jenny Bosley – dealing with clubs individually. There are still restrictions but Jenny is going through forms regarding camps etc. / safeguarding.

RW has spoken to some of the clubs regarding VAT webinar with RFU VAT expert (reclaiming old VAT). AT added that he managed to recover VAT for Witney, worth talking to him. RW will speak with KE to try and get a webinar arranged.

KE advised that Jamie Goddard has noted that clubs will need more first aiders. Workplace first aid certificates can be counted, clubs should encourage people to do certificates at work where they can. Those certificates can be uploaded in to GMS and it will show as a qualification there. Jack Pooler added that where you have healthcare professionals that meet certain competency frameworks they are not required to have First Aid certificates but they can stand as first aiders as long as they meet the competency framework. KE noted that by trying to do this it will save clubs some money. JG will be in touch with clubs in due course.

KE confirmed that Jamie Goddard will be running some first aid courses for clubs in addition to organising mental health workshops. There will be a 3.5 hour mental health workshop in April (date to be confirmed) and there is also an online offering which every club can take up. The CB will pay for a place for every club on the course and the online offering (the online offering is detailed in the newsletter the CB has sent out) or contact KE (secretary) for more info.

Keith Upton asked for clarification surrounding the election for the RFU Council, KE confirmed maximum number of terms anyone can serve is 3. Each term is 3 years. This next term is another 3-year term. RW current term is his first.

Pat Sweeney asked if clubs interested in 7s tournament in July if they can. 21st or 31st July. Clubs should reach out to Pat if interested.

7. AOB

None

Meeting ends 21:05