



## Summary Minutes of ExCom Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020 (via Teams®)

**Present:** PL, JR, SB, GK, DL, NC

**ACTION**

### **1. Apologies**

N/a

*Given the current COVID-19 related issues and prematurely curtailed 2019/20 season, with RFU staff furloughed, the majority of previously noted or o/s actions were rolled-fwd, pending a return to 'business as usual' – these have now been categorised into 'priority' (summarised below) and 'BAU' actions, (only shown within each agenda item section, or carried-fwd under AOB) – to differentiate between those that need immediate action versus others that can wait/cannot be addressed until BAU, or something approximating to that, resumes.*

### **PRIORITY ACTIONS**

**Action (May'20) - RFRU funding** (mid-season submission response)

- Completed by JR (plan for 20/21 season TBC, given RFU financial challenges)

**Action (Nov'19) – new 'BRUR Ltd' Bank Accounts - ongoing**

Once COVID guidelines allow, GK/PL to meet and agree ownership of actions, including:

- Mgmt of RN's access (international tickets)
- Adding NC to bank mandate

**Action (Jan'20) - Re-appointments mobile - ongoing**

**NEW Action (July'20) - SB to speak to RF re: transfer of number (PAC code)**

**Action (May'20) - ExCom to make decision (re: fitness testing) ASAP, once season start-date for Community Game is confirmed by RFU, and communicate expectations to members (cf. *online testing compliance deadlines, below*) - ongoing**

**Action (July'20) - Pre-season fitness testing**

- **BRONCO** – Fed requirement still to be confirmed
- **YO-YO** – all mandated standards to be maintained at current levels:
  - L6 15.5
  - L7 14.8
  - L8 14.3

(2019/20 Federation candidate requirement: 17.2)

**NB** – depending on eventual start-date for 2020/21 season, requirement for L6/7/8 refs to pass mandated Yo-Yo is under review, given need for preparation and diminishing window of opportunity once into Sept/Oct (darker evenings, clocks going back, etc)

**PRIORITY Action:** ExCom to make decision ASAP, once season start-date for Community Game is confirmed by RFU, and communicate expectations to members

### **2. Minutes of last meeting and actions arising**

#### **Online Society meetings**

JR noted recent creation of 'on demand' online training modules by RFU, and general direction of travel to delivery of training online – need to flag this to members.

GK,PL

SB

ExCom

ExCom

Given that, and visibility of successful sessions run by other RefSocs (London, Herts, Glos) there doesn't seem a justification not to run online sessions for Society training.

Agreed actions:

- JR to speak with RD re: planning of training topics & content for 20/21 season (working on basis that monthly sessions follow Sept AGM) JR,RD
- JR to seek invite to attend upcoming London RefSoc session (topic: 'High Impact Decisions') JR

**Q** – if training delivered online, what is the need/purpose for the 'physical' meetings, going forward?

Agreement that:

- Value in having opportunity for members to meet face-to-face (once COVID conditions allow)
- Open forum discussions easier in person, than online (despite increasing familiarity with the format)
- Opportunity to revisit previously used formats, including:
  - Working groups split by grade (eg. L6-8, L9+; newer vs more experienced refs)
  - Separate sessions for, or even led by, MODs/Coaches
  - Utilising SB's access to the Elite PGMOT hub of video analysis (as currently being used by SB with Dev'mt Squad members)
- Recognition that we need to ensure physical meetings have 'value' to members, to ensure ongoing attendance/viability of regular meetings (even if not on monthly basis?).

### **3. Update from Chair (NC)**

#### **Call with Tim Miller, RFRU President & RFU Council Rep (04/06)**

RFRU holding weekly COVID call with RFU (Mike Patz & John Lawn); RFU receiving weekly update from Simon Kemp (RFU Medical Officer)

*TM concern: the longer the lay-off continues, the more difficult it will be to restart, as participants will have filled their time with other interests/commitments*

Mtg on 11/06 re: potential Law variations (following WR announcement of 10 potential changes)

TM involved in regular mtgs across projects – ensuring MOs views/perspectives are included & taken account of in planning

Many redundancies expected once furlough ends – significant £shortfall to make-up

35/37 RefSocs now full RFU members (2 o/s - Cambs & Army - currently 'in process') – far greater than % of clubs (eg. Middlesex: only 66/90 clubs are full RFU members)

TM: standing offer to join either an ExCom/FullCom or Society members' meeting – virtually or in person, once circumstances allow.

#### **RFU AGM (12/06)**

Focus on post-COVID 'new normal' environment throughout, with emphasis that there would be a longer-term impact, beyond the immediate pandemic.

Recognition of desire from clubs to restart rugby, but RFU will only sanction once guidance (both Govt & medical) says it is safe to do so, allowing that rugby is one of the highest risk, close-contact sports, from a COVID transmission perspective.

Early action to close down season, with 62% staff furloughed and funding/support offered to clubs has limited the immediate impact: due to RWC2019, FY2019/20 was already expected to be loss-making (-£20m, per Business Plan) and now it is expected to be -£22m, so relatively 'good' in the circumstances. However, with England men's games at Twickenham representing c.85% of RFU income, lost test matches (6Nations, Autumn'20) will severely impact finances, and therefore funding to the wider game.

Participation headlines: growth in women's & U18 playing numbers, decline in senior men's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations for 2021 (centred around Eng v Sco match) – now downscaled

## **RFRU AGM (28/06)**

Funding: £90k from RFU; total c.£250k over past 4yrs

COVID-19 - over £200k 'given back' to clubs by RFRU/Federations/RefSocs

Autumn Internationals – unlikely any SH teams will travel, potential 6N matches being considered

Restart of (Community) rugby – v.unlikely until “... into the autumn...”

Special RFU Council meeting at end of July to discuss Game Competition proposals – expected to comprise 1x L3, 3x L4, 6x L5, 12x L6 leagues (question re: provision of To3 at L4 level)

'Return to Play' working group established, with RFU doing considerable modelling of options (World Rugby's 10 law amendments “...ridiculous...”)

Finances – subs retained at £40 per RefSoc; work ongoing to maintain T&D budget, but subject to RFU finances – will update once situation clear

Officers – 4 people nominated for 4 roles, so no election required

AOB

- COVID: many schools/uni's have already written-off rugby until 2021 (at least); widespread concern re: availability of MODs, once rugby restarts if no vaccine in place (given many are older, so at higher risk), as well as MOs choosing not to referee to avoid risk of infection
- Berks RefSoc held up as exemplar of good practice by Mike Priestley (RFRU Chair), due to proactive, positive response to COVID, including: leading the way in donating funds to clubs; proactively contacting life members; initiating a survey of members re: attitudes to COVID (Note: NC agreed to share survey questions with wider RFRU membership, for extended nationwide use)

## **4. Safeguarding update (JR)**

Encouraging start to process

- all members contacted, with DBS clearance in place or applications initiated for all but 12 members
- 9 applications already completed successfully, with 4 members covered by their home clubs

JR did note an issue with GMS, where ½ dozen members were 'not found', (despite his enhanced access) though profiles did subsequently become visible, when a duplicate entry was submitted.

Action: JR to send out reminder to members to make contact and get set up on GMS

JR

Clarification received from Steve Bradford – no DBS required for ref, if being supervised by a DBS'd person (potential to enhance/support this with use of RefCoachLink kit?)

## **5. 2019/20 AGM planning**

Agreement on conducting virtual AGM via Zoom, on 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in September (15/09)

Associated actions & timeline/deadlines:

1. All ExCom reports to be sent to NC – 31<sup>st</sup> July
2. Communication to members, via WTR, re: timing of AGM & nominations for ExCom roles – 31<sup>st</sup> July
3. Closure of ExCom nomination window – 31<sup>st</sup> August
4. GK to set up Society Zoom subscription – 31<sup>st</sup> August
5. Sept ExCom meeting - 1<sup>st</sup> September (with confirmed nominations and any resultant actions)
6. 2019/20 AGM – 15<sup>th</sup> September

ExCom  
NC

Society  
GK

ExCom  
Society

**6. AOB**

**Berks Refs Relay**

Great effort, and over £1,100 raised in donations to the JustGiving page.

Agreement for Society to donate a further £250 to the cause – PL to 'action' donation & GK to reimburse from Society funds via expenses

PL,GK

**Bookkeeping App**

Agreement, now that we are a Ltd company, that use of basic bookkeeping app (eg. QuickBooks, Xero, etc) – PL & GK to investigate

PL,GK

**Exchange Appointments**

Per SB, unlikely to have any pre-Xmas, given the uncertainty re: start of season & confirmation of fixtures

**Online Testing Compliance**

DE to circulate status list, once compiled (c.50% done to date)

DE

**Maidenhead 1st XV**

Transferred from SWG to SEG for 2020/21 season, for all L5 fixtures

NC to send out minutes, publish summary minutes on website and agree agenda for next meeting. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 21:05

NC

The next (ExCom) meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September - NC to circulate Agenda in advance, point members to previous minutes on website, etc.

NC