

**OXFORDSHIRE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION**

**Minutes of the clubs meeting held at Holiday Inn on Tuesday 13th March 2018 at 7.30pm. (Chaired by Chris Skaife)**

Present: Gina Overton, Vincent Murphy, Colin Baldwin, Rob Walsh, Chris Skaife, Karen East, Dave Larham (RDO), Doug Bosley, Pete Bramley, Jenny Bosley, Patrick Neale (CNRUFC), Frances Morton (CNRUFC), Stuart Mount (Wallingford), Chris White (Banbury), Mark Gardner (GAB), David Hipkiss (GAB), Steve Trenchard (Chinnor), Chris McCarthy (Grove), Kevin Robinson (Chair ORFU Youth Performance), Keith Upton (Bicester), Chris Stone (Bicester), Andy Lloyd (Oxford RFC), Richard Tyrrell (Oxford RFC), Pete Conway (Chinnor), Nick McKeown (Abingdon), Bob Fisk (Witney), Andrew Merriman (Witney), Jack Pooler (Oxford Harlequins), Tim Stevens (Littlemore / Oxford Univ), Keith Oakes (Banbury).
Apologises: Jamie Goddard
*Minutes taken by: Karen East*

*Meeting starts 19.40*

1. Welcome

Good representation of clubs attending – thank you. Chris welcomed everyone.

Presented a copy of the rugby development slides (focusing on 6 key drivers) – see supporting document.

Slides on 2017/18 seasons activities. Copy of slides will be circulated to clubs.

2. Discipline Procedures

Rob Walsh provided talk on the discipline procedures – report circulated to clubs.
Reminder for people to get DBS in place and tour forms in to Karen (County Secretary) and Jenny Bosley (Safeguarding). Must have **RFU** DBS. DBS for other organisations is not enough – they are different.

Pete Bramley – verbal abuse towards referees has increased – please remember the referees are volunteers and are doing it so people can play rugby. Can clubs please remind teams to be polite – all ages.

3. Competitions / Festival Update

Pete Bramley gave an update. This year he has been looking at competitions and festivals. So far shield competition has taken place. County Cup coming up.

Festivals coming up. Look at Pitchero site for the dates. Apologises for the lateness of those coming out. With all the changes it was hard to get dates out. Early meeting will be had ahead of the start of next season for longer planning for next the next season.

Noted that it costs money to run the festivals. Pete Bramley can assist with costs for trophies etc. if required. We want to assist so the festivals are good.

Vets – going really well. Good game against Surrey. County side is being set up – want all clubs involved. Regiment from Bicester has shown interest to play. Trying to get a BBO league for the vets – not sure at this stage how easy this will be but its an aspiration being looked at.

**Q from the floor** – first heard about the vets. A. Rob Heginbotham has gone out to the clubs, we rely on clubs looking at emails. Karen (County Secretary) can assist with forwarding wider to the clubs if it helps.

**Q from the floor** – should it be a priority to look at BBO vets when clubs are struggling for senior members, should resources be going in to this? Some clubs lose lads for the league games. A. We are aware of this and it might not happen. We are not making this a main priority. We want a good vets competition and games being played – teams merge if need. There will be some thinking about timing of games so it doesn’t impact league games.

**Q from the floor -** saw that Jack Johnson emailed out wanting feedback from the club, was this from the county? A. We knew and supported this. We want to be proud of the county. The feedback will come back to county.

**Q from the floor** - How do we encourage clubs to participate in county competitions? Jenny, Doug and Pete will be taking feedback on board to enhance participation.

**Q from the floor** - Can we get dates out, participation would be better if dates out. A. working with sub committee and want to try and do this ahead of season. Noted that we need to have county cup details and dates on Pitchero.

**Q from the floor** – when it comes to cup competitions can losers have games so that there is a game on every weekend. It would enable as many people as possible to play games.

**Q from the floor** – re. mini and juniors festivals can we avoid school holidays. A. there are certain slot windows allocated by RFU for festivals, we try not to hit holidays but sometimes is tricky.

4. Oxfordshire RFU Council Member Vote

Clubs are encouraged to vote, please get those in before the deadline.
**Q from the floor** – could Colin and Rob address us. A. Yes. 5 minutes each at the end.

We want to make the vote as open and objective as possible. We welcome feedback on the process. We have followed RFU guidelines.

5. Volunteer Recognition Events / Media and Communications Update

Gina shared objectives with everyone.
Lots more objectives to do. Karen will circulate slides to everyone.

Principally we want to communicate effectively – we need clubs to say how they want communications.
Newsletter – trying to do twice a year. If its useful we will try and do it more often – need feedback from clubs (good and bad).
Banners and plaques – all clubs will get a plaque. Representatives will be out to clubs to present plaques. Each club is also offered a free banner to enable you to communicate to members. Please see details in the newsletter but send any pictures, logos and text and they will be put together. (Not recommended to make banners date specific).

Club investment grant – opportunity for all clubs to have £250. County needs to know what clubs want to spend the money on so that it can be sent to them. Submit an outline plan, timetable and expected outcome and we will arrange payment. This will be ongoing available (each year). County secretary will send form out to clubs to assist with applications within the week.

Emails – recommended that clubs have club emails (rather than just individual) so that emails reach people each year as club representative’s change regularly (e.g. general chair, secretary, treasurer email etc). Can clubs update GMS to ensure we meet data protection rules as we cannot hold large spreadsheets of data. The board are looking at generic emails for them too.

Volunteer recognition event – joined with Mitsibushi this year. Henley is the venue on 5th May – more volunteer nominations are welcomed. Please nominate volunteers to Karen / Gina. Karen will send form out. Karen will find out who has been nominated and provide acknowledgment to clubs as some clubs are not aware if nominations have been received. Feedback last year was the event was very good. This is something we will grow.

Presidents certificates – we can capture people on the day when visiting clubs with an on the spot presidents certificates – look out for these.

County are looking at a sharing area for information (not just web) – sharepoint equivalent.

Twitter is popular communication tool for clubs – also facebook.

8. RFU Sport England update (Colin)

RFU were given job by Sport England to change way looked at it. 12 subjects needed to agree. Things that matter to clubs for example – inclusion on diversity programme improvements, term limits for council members (Maximum 3 year term suggested), time limits for board members, good governance of the union, Colin working on club development committee to see how CBs can take on the subjects agreed, nominations committees for each CB being looked at.
Questionnaire coming out to CBs in the future – cannot give details yet.
Decisions do affect clubs, clubs will be expected to have similar structure before they get accreditation. Colin will keep you posted on progress.
Colin – personally cannot see how clubs can have time restraints on committees as difficult to get volunteers as is. Recommendation is that there is an independent director on the boards.
Terms of office for Council member elected will be 3 year term / appointment.

9. Update on the Senior XV training and fixture for 2018 campaign

Senior campaign starts in May. Invites will go out in the next week or two. Training starts 11 April. Final is on 27th May. Should be a good campaign.

20s not doing so well. Beaten recently. This weeks game – lacking props. If any clubs have u20s props let Doug Bosley know. Senior training is at Chinnor. Dave Larham will put on Pitchero.

10. XV a side games played across Oxfordshire

Dave Larham showed a set of slides based on information from clubs – some clubs not as good at others at providing information. Clubs need to update websites with information.

Bicester in particular has been a success of targeted work. (Quins and Wallingford didn’t have targeted work this season).

Q. from floor (GAB) – struggled to grow beyond u14s this age group seems to be on mass move to Quins. Gosford struggle to grow. A. work is being done at school. The rugby offer has to be right in the clubs (coaching, facilities etc.). Potential opportunity for Gosford to grow is when Quins move to Horspath.

County are losing u14s / u15s consistently – lots of reasons (school games, football etc.). Lots of clubs struggling in those age groups. County will look in to reasons.

Adult game numbers – some games not played this time of year because of weather but if games are called off because of positional problems speak to Dave Larham.

Accreditation – this is the door that opens up opportunities. If not accredited Dave cannot open the access to funding etc. County is one of the top in England for accreditation. Most clubs accredited.

Developing coaches and match officials – Dave reaching out to secretary’s in a lot of emails in the hope items reach their club agendas. Developing coaches and match officials CPD event is on 28th March. Book on to it now. Clubs please reach out to people to attend.

Huge need for first aid courses in the county – spaces on 19th / 20th March session (Oxford RFC) – please add people on to it. Two-night commitment.

Speak to county if you cannot afford county or coaching courses – there is money for this. If you don’t ask you cannot get it.

11. Safeguarding Update

See handout from Jamie Goddard. Karen will also circulate.
Rugby safe is all about how we can educate the workforce – through activate and safe practices (concussion awareness). Hopefully an event will be held on 24th April at Oxford RFC. The course will be free. Look out for details on Pitchero, twitter and facebook!

12. County updates and activity

The womens fixtures will be on the website soon.

13. Questions to the Board

Q. Recruitment and retention in to age groups, county were going to look in to this, will they still do this? A. Yes, u14s is the major pinch point. We will do some targeted research. (Kevin has Adam White as contact at Brookes Univ). This is on the boards agenda for next month.

14. Council nominee speech to clubs (Rob Walsh and Colin Baldwin)

Colin – been in post 6 year, predecessor for 19 years. Next term is 3 years. Would like to carry on doing it. Have helped many clubs and have never refused to help a club (senior, women’s, juniors). Done lots of jobs at RFU – dealt with compensation scheme. Payment of players – Colin has listened to clubs and put this forward. Slaughter and May – worked on this, got council to have separate council meeting regarding this. Very successful meeting. Applaud that committee needs new members but doesn’t see that old committee was failing. Colin believes the board has always interacted with clubs. Agrees that clubs need reporting back from Council and does this. Represents grass root clubs. Most Council meetings are confidential and cannot report everything.

***Questions:***

Q. If Rob won the election would he inherent club committee positions? A. No, he would have to go through it again.

Q. How many days a week do you spend at Twickenham / duty A. average 3 days a week.

Q. From a clubs standpoint – this is a 3 year appointment, what is the biggest danger to our member clubs and what can you bring to the table? A. The biggest problem is Oxfordshire keeping its independence, pressure to become Thames Valley CB.

Q. Why is TV CB a danger? A. At the moment as CB small we do a good job. A bigger CB may not be the right thing to do.

Rob – Most of you know me as a rugby player. Joined rugby family aged 11. Spent most of my years in Oxfordshire – been at Chinnor for 35+ for years. Been Chairman for 3 years and honorary life member at Chinnor. Have given time to Oxfordshire. Understands the issues clubs have. Have run the county shield and run discipline.
Thinks its time for a change. Current representative has done 6 years, has done well but time for a change. Rob doesn’t think clubs are getting communication from Twickenham to allow clubs to have their say. There is a vast army of employees at Twickenham that can help clubs. Willing to publish facts from meetings for feedback to take back to Twickenham. Transparancy – will publish who’s been entertained at Twickenham on the CB representative tickets. Improved communications, 1:1 meetings would be offered to clubs too. Essentially want this role to be more open – want clubs feel like they have a voice.

***Questions:***
Q. You say you want change, what would you do differently? A. Improve communication back. I know some information can and cannot be given back. I think I would be driven. I am not here to criticize.

Q. Time commitment, I understand this is a senior role, which you are passionate about, can you commit the time? A. Yes, I run my own business and am slowing down my business so I can give time to the job.

Q. How much about what is done at Twickenham affects clubs here? A. a lot of it, but unless we get all the information how do we know what affects us.

Q. Colin inferred there may be an appetite for a TV CB, whats your opinion? A. Don’t want that, we are Oxfordshire and want to stay ORFU. Lets believe in ourselves, we are a strong county.

Round of applause for Rob from attendees at the clubs meeting.

Chris Skaife closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

*Meeting closes at 9.20pm*