

**MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING OF SUSSEX RFU HELD ON 1ST
SEPTEMBER 2009 AT BURGESS HILL RFC AT 7.30PM**

09/47 Present; Roger Edmondson (President) Peter Silk, (Secretary), Peter Bailey (SVP). Messrs. Atthis, A. Butcher, A. Parker, K. Gordon, G. Howorth, F. Edmonds, P. Sealey, J. Thompson, M. Richardson, R. Rogers, K. Nichols, E. Bridges, A. Parker, N. Silk, D. Wade, P. Mercer, I. Mitchell, K. Blakiston, Ms. J. Coleman and Representatives from the Referees Society and Brighton, Burgess Hill, Chichester, Cinque Ports, Crawley, Crowborough, Ditchling, Eastbourne, East Grinstead, Hastings/Bexhill, Haywards Heath, Heathfield & Waldron, Horsham, Hove, Lewes, Midhurst, Newick, Norfolk Arms, Old Brightonians, Plumpton, Pulborough, St. Francis, Shoreham, Uckfield and Worthing. (25 Clubs)

09/48 Apologies for absence: Messrs, R. Hopkins, G. Thompson, D.Fisher, M. de St. Croix, R. Russell, P. Rowland, A. Bradford, B. Lewis, T. Dickinson, Ditchling RFC, Littlehampton RFC, ,

09/49 Minutes: The minutes of the General meeting on 16th June 2009 were adopted and signed and minutes of Executive meetings on 27th July & 26th August were considered. Noted that Minutes appear on the SRFU website.

09/50 Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

09/51 President Asked all Clubs to look at the 5 CB targets listed in his Handbook notes.

All Clubs to attain Seal of Approval status by June 2010 –‘Whole club’ approval will eventually replace the current Seal.

Where appropriate, if satisfactory progress is not being made, Clubs may be subject to sanctions including participation in CB events for Season 2010-11

The CB Executive will continue its ‘Club Aid’ visits to Clubs.

The CB will urge Clubs to pursue Incorporation to protect Officers and Members. Clubs are asked to consider if CASC status, for tax/rates relief and other benefits is appropriate, bearing in mind possible problems should they later wish to exit..

The CB will continue to commit support for 4 CRC’s for the next two years at least.

The CB to ensure that all teams, in Clubs and Schools have a qualified Coach and Referee.

The CB will support the RFU’s efforts to make clubs aware of the benefits of the re-launched RugbyFirst.

The new website – www.sussexrugby.co.uk – was now operational, and carried some 60 pages of information, including the Sussex Fixtures Bureau. The County Shop would go online shortly.

09/52 At the President’s request, Peter Bailey, made a short statement. He said he was honoured to be elected Senior Vice-President at the AGM, and looked forward to working with the Executive. He would welcome contact from Clubs on any matter the felt he could assist them with.

09/53 Sponsorship The proposed presentation by new Lead County sponsors, Virgin Atlantic, had to be postponed due to pressure of business, but they had invited the County to hold its next Clubs meeting at their premises in Crawley. This would replace the meeting at Lewes. Virgin Atlantic were keen to extend its presence into the Sussex Rugby Community, and would be announcing club-based activities, including offering tickets as prizes etc. Shepherd Neame, had taken sponsorship of the Sussex Knockouts and Sussex Leagues, They wished to supply more Clubs on a full or shared basis. Covers Ltd. were sponsoring the Mini festivals. Clubs were asked to give as much coverage in Press reports etc. As possible, and to explore ways of working with Sponsors. Contact them through Nick Silk.

09/54 Secretary A note had been circulated about the requirements of the Companies Act with regard to the mandatory display information on Letterheads, Websites and emails. The RFU had issued an HRMC note about PAYE with reference to the payment of Players and

Coaches, Bar & Kitchen Staff, Physios, Cleaners etc. A help-line was available for clubs in financial difficulties and he urged Clubs to act sooner rather than later.

Clubs going on, or receiving Overseas Tours must get clearance from the RFU, via County Secretary, failure to do so was a serious disciplinary matter. Further to the decision to adopt the format, used by most Clubs, of an Executive Chairman of the Executive Committee, and a non-Executive President, proposals and nominations would be circulated for the December meeting.

09/55 Treasurer In his absence, the Secretary confirmed that the accounts were being Independently Examined, and would be approved by the Executive, before presentation at the December Clubs. It was likely that a small surplus would be made as against a budgeted deficit of £15,000.

Draft Budgets for 2009/10 had been approved by the Executive, and would be circulated to Clubs.

09/56 – CBRDP – No Report

09/57 - Coaching & Playing President said that no report was available from these Committees and he would express the meeting's disappointment to the Chairmen.

09/58 – Community – People & Places – G. Howorth said that the 4 Regional Development Partnerships were continuing to be the main structure to involve Clubs, and urged Club Officers to support the series of free courses that were being held across the CB. These included, Club Safeguarding, Equity in Coaching, A Club for All, First Aid, Groundsmens' Techniques, Club Volunteer Co-ordinator Workshops, Rugbyfirst, Volunteer Recognition and Recruitment, Pathfinders follow-up. Letters about Vrugby, involving 16-24, had been circulated, and Clubs were invited to bid for money available for 8 projects within the CB. Full details were on the SRFU website.

09/59 – Facilities – P. Mercer reported that 22 Clubs had responded to the RFU Questionnaire on Facilities, and 2 more were in contact. **No replies** had been received from, Brighton, Barns Green, Ditchling, Midhurst, or Seaford. He asked Clubs to contact him if they had lost the original request.

09/60 – Governance – F. Edmonds reported that overall disciplinary numbers were down, but there had been an increase in offences at Junior level from Players and Coaches and abuse of Referees. It was an RFU requirement that Clubs set up a Disciplinary Panel responsible for all aspects within a Club. This included Junior offences. Crawley RFC said that they had not been made aware that a girl playing for a 'cluster', had been disciplined. It was agreed that such 'cluster' or joint club arrangements should be instructed to notify Clubs in such events. Worthing RFC asked for clarification so that Clubs would be advised of Junior Club players disciplined by Schools (and vice-versa) so that any ban could be followed. R. Edmondson, Schools Disciplinary Officer said that there were few occasions this had happened but agreed it should be considered to prevent avoidance of any ban. Clubs should be aware that they were responsible for material placed on websites, and should monitor 'unofficial' sites to ensure that the Club was not brought into disrepute.

FE was unable to comment on future regulations regarding 'Clubs with poor disciplinary records' due to a pending appeal, but would circulate them when it had been resolved.

09/61 - Core Values – RAG Rogers said that his report of the RFU Core Values Task Group (formerly Rugby Ethos) was on www.rfu.com, and urged Clubs to incorporate the core values : *Teamwork - Discipline – Respect – Sportsmanship - Enjoyment* and the mission statement: *“Rugby Union is an inclusive game, for all shapes and sizes, in which teamwork, discipline, respect and sportsmanship provide a healthy, physical sport, which develops life skills and lifelong friendships, whilst providing fun and enjoyment for all its participants”*.

09/62 – Safeguarding – Jackie Coleman said that the change of name from 'Child Welfare' was to recognise other vulnerable people involved in Rugby. Club Welfare Officers should now be known as Club Safeguarding Officers – (CSO's). Free Courses were being held at Hove, Eastbourne, Horsham and Chichester. All new CSO's must go on a course within 6 months of appointment. There were still a few places left on 14th / 21st September at Crawley. CRB checks were going

smoothly. She would be trained on the new Vetting & Barring legislation early next year, and would then start training CSO's.

09/63 – Competitions – All KO and League arrangements were now in place. J. Thompson had Match cards for Clubs playing in R1 of the RFU Junior Vase. The Home County Championship match against Dorset & Wilts would be played at Bognor on May 13th, and all venues for Knockout Finals had been agreed with Clubs.

Worthing RFC complained that despite repeated enquiry, they had not been able to get a definitive ruling on Player Registration for Third XV Players in Sussex Division 1. They had received conflicting advice from the RFU, London DOC and Sussex Competition Committee. J. Thompson said that Registration was a requirement and that he would liaise with LDOC and the Club to ensure that the matter was resolved before the first match.

P. Sealey said revised Sussex 1 fixtures had been agreed and put on www.rfu.com, on 30th July, and, although the Clubs had been informed direct, the incorrect schedule was still on www.rfulondon.com a month later. This could lead to problems if the old version is used by visitors to the site.

09/64 Youth Registration – Eddy Sears confirmed that there were no changes from last year and that previous year's forms were acceptable.

09/65 – AOB

Iain Mitchell advised that new Substitutes Regulations (to be known as the 'Man off' rule) had come into force since the RFU handbook was printed. They are designed to prevent teams taking advantage when they force scrums to go uncontested, by making them play a man short. They are available on www.rfu.com or as a News item on www.sussexrugby.co.uk

Simon Flint – Midhurst enquired if any details were known about a proposed tax on businesses to pay for Crossrail. Nothing known.

Pulborough had now acquired the freehold of their land.

The 2nd 'Peter Rumney Memorial' match would be played at Brighton College on 12th September.

The County U 16 and U18 were playing Eastbourne College on Sept 5th

President invited Clubs to collect their 2009/2010 County Handbooks.

Apologies to 1066 Conquerors RFC for the omission of their details.

All Clubs should check their details and email corrections

to the County Office – cb-honsec-sussex@therfu.com and sussexadmin@rfu.com

Website alterations should be sent to info@sussexrugby.co.uk

Meeting ended at 9.15pm v5