

Report from the Sussex Representative on the RFU Council

The most important matter to report is that at the Council Meeting on Friday 20th November 2009 Francis Baron, the Chief Executive, announced his intention to date to retire from the Union at the Annual General Meeting of the Union to be held on the 4th July 2010 and I quote: - "I felt it is the right time to set my retirement enable an orderly transition to my successor"

John Owen, the President said; - "I would like to thank Francis for his outstanding contribution to the RFU in nearly 12 years as CEO"

Whilst the Rugby has not always been up to the standard we have come to expect of an England Team, the Investec weekends have been must enjoyable and have enabled Carole and me to entertain a number of Sussex volunteers at Twickenham. From the messages of thanks it appears everyone has enjoyed themselves. What a pleasure it was to see the England Women beat New Zealand 10-3. A good crowd stayed on to watch.

On the ticket front for these matches I think I have been able to meet everyone's needs, for the New Zealand match I started with 68 tickets and eventually sold 148. Please be assured that I will try and do my best for the Six Nations matches. I would ask clubs to contact me early if you know you will be short.

November 25th saw 10 clubs represented at an inaugural club support programme arranged by our RDO, Mal Chumbley at Forest School, Horsham. It was a first class evening from which all those who attended benefited. The RFU staff in attendance were knowledgeable and helpful. Sadly, 20 Sussex clubs who were not represented.

Please may I remind all clubs that the Presidents XV awards are now open to enter. Can as many Sussex clubs as possible enter for the awards? There are many categories to the awards, please see www.rfu.com/presidentsxv

Can I also advise you that **Sportsmatch** is to resume its grant activities from 1 December 2009. Application forms are on <http://www.sportengland.org/funding/sportsmatch.aspx>

Seal of Approval and Whole Club approval Please help Mal improve the position in the CB. We have 22 clubs who could get Seal of Approval but only 14 have so far and we have no Whole Club approvals.

Report from the Council Meeting held at Twickenham on Friday 20 November 2009. The meeting was chaired by the President, John Owen.

The Chief Executive reported that the sale of match tickets for the three Investic matches had been good and the budget for the Argentina match exceeded. Concern was expressed over late return of unsold tickets by clubs. This matter is to be reviewed by the Ticket policy group.

Although the credit crunch continues to affect some areas of sales, hospitality sales are much improved. The Marriott and Virgin Fitness continue to make steady progress.

There is serious concern over the increase in the number of injuries this season and representation is being made for an urgent review by the IRB into changes needed to certain laws, especially at rucks and mauls.

Having received a statement from the Chief Executive regarding his retirement a resolution was passed by Council to delegate powers under Rules and Regulations to the Management Board and to put in place the process for the appointment of a successor was passed.

The Finance Director reported on the finances to date which were in line with budget. He was able to report that a sum of £6.5 million has been repaid off our Bank debt.

Questions to the Board The Board were to look at the timing and location of all types of meetings so as to accommodate all Council members, especially those who were having to take more time off work.

It was confirmed that the Image of the Game Report must be discussed at Council. This will now be an agenda item at the next Council meeting.

The Chairman agreed to keep Council regularly briefed, on a Private and Confidential basis, as to progress being made on the appointment of successor for the CEO.

Illicit Drugs Policy and Procedure A policy and procedures is now in place for Premiership clubs. This includes training for all players in the premiership, counselling and sanctions. The implementation is fully approved by the premiership and its sponsors, Guinness. The policy and procedures will then follow down the game. What is not allowed is for clubs to put in place their own testing and checking. Full details of the Policy and Procedures can be obtained from the RFU, it is lengthy and technical.

Rugby Players Association An excellent presentation was given by David Barnes, Chairman and Damien Hopley, Chief executive of the Association on what it does, and how it operates.

Constitutional Review Task Group Nick Eastwood presented to Council a further raft of proposals from the Task Group for consideration and discussion. These resolutions were all relating to proposals on Constituent Bodies.

I report in summary:

1 County-based CBs shall remain. They should expand membership, due to changes definition of membership and admission to membership of FE colleges. CBs will be incentivised to achieve accreditation and High Performance This will include integrated CB planning etc and will part of an action plan from the Community Game Board.

PASSED

2 CBs shall remain as the single administrative tier between members and the RFU

PASSED

3 CBs with fewer than 20 voting member clubs shall be required to consider combining and shall report back to Council by 30 April 2010 on their decision and rationale for it.

PASSED

4 Any organisation applying to Council for new CB status shall be required to have at least 30 voting members.

PASSED

5 Council will review the size of CBs at the end of season 2015/16. CBs with less than 30 voting members will be considered for combining.

PASSED

6 Student club to remain allocated to the Students Union CB

PASSED

7 Geographic CBs shall be charged with coordinating all adult rugby in their area including rugby played in Institutes of Higher Education. A Task group will be set up to ensure a closer working between Students Union and the CB

PASSED

8 A review in season 2015/16 to examine whether the delivery of student rugby has improved.

PASSED

9 Institutes of FE that meet the criteria to be member clubs shall be allocated to their county CB

PASSED

10 The RFU will work to establish the English College RFU with a constitution satisfactory to the RFU. Once established the Colleges Union will become a National Representative Body

PASSED

11 Oxford and Cambridge Universities shall cease to be CBs

FAILED

12 The Army, Navy and RAF shall continue as CBs.

PASSED

13 The recommendations relating to CBs as to size shall also relate to student unions and the services CBs and shall be reviewed in 2015/2016

PASSED

14 The following entities shall be National Representative Bodies: Referees Union, PRL, the RPA and the National Clubs Association.

PASSED

After much debate the meeting was closed.

I hope that all clubs are enjoying the season. Those who are doing well continue to do so, those who need to improve on and off the pitch try hard to do better.

The officers of the CB are always available to help and guide. I will help as requested, just call me if you think I may be of help—01323 897483

Graham P Thompson
Sussex Representative on the RFU Council

22 November 2009