



RFL COMMUNITY BOARD CHAIR SUMMARY – 22nd MARCH 2023

Dear Community Game Colleagues,

The Community Board met for this first time in 2023.

We were delighted to be joined by Tony Sutton the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of the RFL together with Rhodri Jones the Managing Director of Rugby League Commercial. They provided a comprehensive overview of the IMG grading recommendations. The Community Board were in the main, supportive, and recognised the ultimate objective of grading was to drive revenues that would benefit the whole game. However, they felt that there needed to be reference to the Community Game within the minimum standards that Clubs needed to comply with, which would be linked to Development Plans. The Community Board are to receive a copy of the minimum standards ahead of the Special General Meeting in April.

We were then joined by Liverpool John Moores University who provided an update on the touchline project that had taken place during the 2022 season. They had been commissioned to undertake a research project to monitor touchline environments. They have observed games, undertaken focus groups and conducted a survey with parents. The main theme that came out of the project was that the competitive nature of games had a detrimental effect on the behaviours of coaches and touchlines from U12 upwards. Various projects are ongoing in this area, which we will now use the research to progress a paper to be returned to the Community Board.

Roberts Hicks provided an update on concussive and sub concussive impact in the sport. This included a brief update regarding litigation, insurance, education, and awareness that has been ongoing. He also updated the Community Board on the SRA pan-sport concussion guidelines that the RFL has worked on with government and other sports, this will be rolled out at the end of March. There is a lot of work ongoing in this area and the Bboard expects to be updated further as the year goes on. Once the SRA guidance is published there will be series of workshops for clubs, coaches and first aiders, and communication will be sent directly to participants.

Marc Lovering also confirmed that work is underway to bring in necessary changes from 2024 onwards linked to our desire to ensure we do all we can to mitigate risk. This includes calendar planning, the need for a defined and consistent off-season, review of Primary Rugby League rules and potential law modifications.

Community Board member Fred Baker gave a comprehensive update on the work that has been done to form a new Southern Regional Development Forum and supporting groups. It was clear from the presentation that a considerable amount of work has been undertaken to ensure volunteers in the South feel valued and are an integral part of the sport, we look forward to seeing how this work continues to evolve.

Community Board Members Lee Mitchell and Fred Baker then provided an update on the work that has been undertaken on reviewing the Level 2 coaching content. A subgroup of the Community Board has been created to review the content, delivery method and ongoing CPD and education for coaches. The Community Board has asked for a further update on this wider area at the next meeting in June.

Can I please take the opportunity to wish you all the very best for the season.

Sandy Lindsay MBE, Chair, RFL Community Board