

**MINUTE OF BRIEFING MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH RUGBY COUNCIL  
HELD BY MICROSOFT TEAMS  
AT 5.30PM ON TUESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2021**

**Present:**

Hazel Swankie	(HS)	Midlands Representative
Colin Rigby	(CR)	Vice-President
Alistair Forsyth	(AF)	Borders Representative
Bobby Frazer	(BF)	National 3 Representative
Bob Richmond	(BR)	North Regional Representative
Eric Hugh	(EH)	National 2 Representative
Gerry Tosh	(GTo)	National 1 Representative
Jim O'Neill	(JON)	Glasgow South Regional Representative
John Halliday	(JH)	Co-opted Representative (Rugby Europe)
Ian Rankin	(IR)	Co-opted Representative (URC)
Jonathan Anderson	(JA)	Schools Representative
Kenneth Knott	(KK)	Referees Representative
Murdo Gillanders	(MG)	Edinburgh Regional Representative
Rosy Hume	(RHu)	Women's Representative

**Apologies:**

Gordon Thomson	(GT)	Premiership Representative
Willie Gardner	(WG)	Glasgow North Regional Representative
Ian Barr	(IB)	President

**Attending**

<b>[REDACTED]</b>	<b>(XX)</b>	Senior Solicitor and Council Secretary
Gemma Fay	(GF)	Head of Girls & Women's Strategy

**1. Introduction**

**ACTION**

The Vice-President noted a quorum was present and opened the Meeting at 5.30pm.

Apologies were received from the Premiership Representative, the Glasgow North Representative and the President.

The Vice-President noted that the Head of Girls & Women's Strategy was attending the Meeting to provide the Council with an update on her work and outline her intended next steps in implementing the strategy in the Girls and Women's game.

**2. Creation of Women's Strategy**

G Fay presented to the Council, the following points were noted:

- G Fay noted she had taken a new created role which focused on the strategy for taking the women's game forward. She highlighted that since commencing her role she had been researching trends in women's sport to support her in establishing the best route to professionalism within the game and how that journey should be managed.
- She highlighted the importance of making a significant difference to the perception of women's rugby, both internally and externally. She noted the importance of all stakeholders working together to achieve this.

- G Fay emphasised the importance of women within the game feeling engaged and respected with opportunities available to them on and off the field. The women's game should not be isolated and should share equal importance with all aspects of the game.
- It was noted that G Fay would bring people from all across Scottish Rugby to build a basis for the future of the women's game and to understand and recognise where the game currently was, and what would be needed to take it forward.
- G Fay highlighted that creating momentum within the game was important to be able to reach a transformational place.
- The current differences between the men and women's games was highlighted, with particular reference to the percentage of women in the international team who did not play club rugby within Scotland.
- The importance of "seeing it to be it" was noted. It was highlighted that opportunities to develop women in top jobs within the performance setting needed to be identified. The same could be said of off-field and consideration should be given to how Scottish Rugby wants the women's game to be viewed internally and externally.
- **[REDACTED – COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE]**
- In relation to the process going forward, G Fay highlighted the need to align the resource and increase the capability of the Clubs and people to be able to deliver a better quality and quantity of experiences to players and all involved in the girls and women's game.
- **[REDACTED – COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE]**
- It was noted that this was a significant opportunity to work collectively to progress the girls and women's game for the future of Scottish Rugby.

During questions, the following points were noted:

- In response to a question, G Fay noted that the pathway to professionalism was being considered across different sports where professionalism had come in. She noted that professionalism should not be defined solely on paying players or fully professional leagues and instead the eco-system the game is played in should be considered.
- **[REDACTED – COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE]**
- The Women's Representative noted that the women's international game at the weekend had been a fantastic event which showcased the development of the game in Scotland. She highlighted that the Council now needed to consider what was happening with the women's game in the Clubs. She was of the opinion that one person representing the women's game on the Council was not sufficient. She emphasised that there was the opportunity to

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create a special women's game but it could only be achieved by working in collaboration.

- In relation to working with the schools on girls rugby, G Fay noted that Scottish Rugby had to be smart about how to sell the sport compared to more traditional girls sport. She highlighted that tackling girls (and their parents) perception of the sport was a first step in doing that.
- The URC Co-opted Representative noted the importance of creating a professional environment was a sensible first step in taking the game forward. He thanked G Fay for all she was doing and advised that during a recent coaching session he was involved in the girls rugby group seemed excited and engaged in the session they were doing.
- **[REDACTED – COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE]**
- The Glasgow South Representative also thanked G Fay for her presentation and highlighted the importance of having schools involved in the development of the strategy.

The Vice-President thanked G Fay for a thoroughly interesting and positive session. He confirmed that the Council were supportive of all the work she was undertaking and were happy to assist her in any way they could.

## **5. AOB**

With no further business, the Meeting was closed at 6.25pm.

Date of next meeting: 22 November 2021

**APPROVED 15 DECEMBER 2021**