

**MINUTE OF QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH RUGBY COUNCIL
HELD BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
AT 5.00PM ON MONDAY 12 JULY 2021**

Present:

Ian Barr	(IB)	President
Colin Rigby	(CR)	Vice-President
Alistair Forsyth	(AB)	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
Gordon Thomson	(GT)	Premiership Representative
Hazel Swankie	(HS)	Midlands Representative
Ian Rankin	(IR)	Co-opted Representative (Pro14)
Jim O'Neil	(JON)	Glasgow South Regional Representative
John Halliday	(JH)	Co-opted Representative (Rugby Europe)
Jonathan Anderson	(JA)	Schools Representative
Kenneth Knott	(KK)	Referees Representative
Murdo Gillanders	(MG)	Edinburgh Regional Representative
Rosy Hume	(RHu)	Women's Representative
Willie Gardner	(WG)	Glasgow North Regional Representative

In Attendance:

[NAME REDACTED]	(XX)	Senior Solicitor & Council Secretary
[NAME REDACTED]	(XX)	Head of Regional Services
John Jeffrey	(JJ)	Chairman of the Board
[NAME REDACTED]	(XX)	Head of Business Services
Gavin Scott	(GS)	Director of Performance Rugby
Mark Dodson	(MD)	Chief Executive Officer
[NAME REDACTED]	(XX)	Head of Training and Education
[NAME REDACTED]	(XX)	[NAME OF FIRM REDACTED]
Robert Howat	(RHt)	General Counsel & Company Secretary
Sheila Begbie	(SB)	Director of Rugby Development

Apologies:

Gavin Hastings	(GH)	Co-opted Representative (British and Irish Lions)
Malcolm Offord	(MO)	Scottish Exiles Representative

1. Introduction**ACTION**

The President welcomed Council Members and invited guests to the Meeting. He noted a quorum was present and opened the Meeting at 5pm.

Apologies were received from M Offord and G Hastings.

2. Quarterly Review of Board Matters**2.1 CEO and Chairman Update**

The Chairman thanked the Council for confirming their support of the proposed motion amendments ahead of the Council Meeting. He noted that it was important for the members to understand the Council and Board's rationale for the amendments being proposed to the AGM motions and position on the motions themselves.

To that end, a note would be issued to the members from the President and Chair. It was **AGREED** by the Council that the President and Vice-President could approve the note on behalf of the Council.

The CEO provided the Council with an update. The following points were noted:

- The Covid-19 delta variant had caused issues for the National Men's Team Summer Tour with all fixtures being cancelled. Although the fixtures were not fulfilled, it did give the coaching team the opportunity to analyse the players in camp and M Blair (acting Head Coach) was delighted with the attitude of the players.
- The effect of Covid-19 on the Lions Tour continued to be assessed. Player welfare had remained the primary concern in deciding on the fixtures over the remainder of the tour.
- In relation to the 2021/22 budget, the CEO noted that the Company's cash position was strong. There was now a focus on the end of the high-performance playing season and having a gap before next season's activity began.
- It was noted the CEO and Chair would discuss the arrangements for hosting of the AGM with the President and Vice-President. Medical advice would need to be considered before deciding whether it was sensible for Members to be expected to travel to BT Murrayfield and attend the meeting within one room.

The CEO invited questions and the following points were noted:

- **[REDACTED – COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE]**

The President thanked the CEO and the Chairman for their updates.

The CEO and Chairman left the Meeting at 5.20pm

2.2 *Regulatory and Company Secretary Report*

The Company Secretary referred to his circulated Report which was taken as read. The following points were highlighted:

- All active consultations were noted on the website. It was highlighted that there had been concern regarding the NCR consultation deadlines, which had been extended.
- W Gardner's term of office as a Council-nominated Non-Executive Director would expire at the 2021 AGM. His term as a Council Member would

continue. The Council Secretary would contact Council Members regarding the election process for the impending vacancy, which would take place immediately following the AGM.

During questions the following points were noted:

- In relation to the active consultations, it was agreed that reminders should be sent to Clubs when a consultation became active, with the applicable deadlines. It was noted that these reminders were usually included within Club Comms. The Council would also be separately informed going forward.
- In relation to the AGM it was agreed that ideally it would be held in person to allow for sufficient debate on the motions and amendments. However, the overriding safety of Members had to be the primary consideration. The President and Vice-President would work with the executive to find the most appropriate solution.
- In relation to a question on the Haddington RFC Motion, the Company Secretary advised that the legal department were unable to comment due to the nature of the motion. External legal advice had been sought by the Chief People and Engagement Officer. If there was to be any discussion of the motion the Company Secretary and Council Secretary may be required to temporarily leave the Meeting.

The President thanked the Company Secretary for his update.

2.3 *Finance Update*

The Finance Director referred to the circulated Finance Report which was taken as read. He noted the following points:

- The underlying trading loss position was due to the pandemic and the inability to sell the usual volume of match tickets.
- The cash position was healthy as a result of the assistance received from World Rugby, the Scottish Government and the timing of funds received from the CVC Pro 14 transaction.
- The audit was progressing in accordance with the timetable, with the outcomes due to be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee in the coming weeks. The financial statements would then be presented to the Board at its July Meeting.

The Finance Director invited questions and the following points were noted:

- It was noted that going concern had been a key point of audit preparations and an acceptable approach had been agreed with PWC.

- Professional fees associated with the investment transactions involving CVC were still included within the senior management line of the management accounts. The Finance Director noted that narrative had been included in the report to set out the position but he would revisit it to provide further clarity.
- In response to a question on the accounting treatment of the Scottish Government funding, it was confirmed that some elements of the Grant which related to Club funding would be reported in 2021/22 due to the timing of payments and programme costs. The balance would be in 2020/21. The overall amounts would be spread across various lines of expenditure.

The 21/22 Budget was presented, and the Budget Report was taken as read. The following points were noted:

- Ticket revenue was expected to return to pre-Covid levels due to pent-up demand.
- The Budget reflected prevailing market forces in the broadcasting markets.
- The Budget had been put together based on the new strategic plan.
- The Budget included £3million per year of Club Support, in line with pre-Covid years and the strategic plan.
- Super 6/8 costs had been budgeted in the High Performance budget line.
- **[REDACTED – COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE]**

Questions were invited:

- It was noted that a five-year budget had been created based on the high-level strategy. It was asked when further details would be available. The Finance Consultant highlighted that a detailed budget had been done for the next 12 months, future years had been done on assumptions which would be worked on in successive budget processes.

The Finance Director noted that any 5-year plan was subject to change and could only be based on the information available at the time. He highlighted that the detailed development and implementation of the strategy would occur over time and the financial process would follow accordingly.

The President thanked the Finance Director and the Finance Consultant for their update.

The Finance Director and the Finance Consultant left the Meeting at 6pm.

3. Rugby Development Update

The President welcomed the representatives of the Rugby Development Department to the Meeting.

3.1 *Rugby Development Report*

Reset – Welfare

- Safeguarding- Disclosure Scotland were currently able to operate an online PVG application process. As a result, processing times for each application had fallen greatly. CPOs were also reporting positive feedback and finding the new process simpler and user friendly. Furthermore, the safeguarding team now require any PVG applicant for a youth rugby coach role to complete SCRUMS registration before they were processed, this had improved the record of who was coaching at each club.
- AYRTPR – Further to the decision to suspend AYRTPR applications for the remainder of 2021, there is one further exception to the rule. Players whose 16th or 18th birthday falls between 01/07/2021 and 31/08/2021 would be permitted to apply to play at the higher level of rugby over the summer to prepare them for going into this age group for season 2021/22. Applications for this specific group of players opened on 1 July 2021.
- Up 30 June, 117 positive covid cases had been raised by clubs and those which were active were being monitored. This is the total number of cases raised since records commenced in 2020. In line with nationwide trends, an exponential growth in the number of cases being reported by clubs had been seen. June had the highest number of cases for any month thus far, at 36. Clubs continued to adhere to the guidance they had received from both Scottish Rugby and the local health authorities. Clubs were very aware of the processes and dealing well with the situation.

Recover – Playing Opportunities

- Fixtures for season 2021/22 had been published on Tuesday 22 June. Work continued to address questions and requests for changes as and when received from clubs.
- External full contact fixtures had been able to take place for minis and youth rugby since 17 May 2021. Adult external full contact fixtures may commence from 5 July 2021.

Rebuild – Grow, progress, sustain

- Club Recovery Fund - The first batch of payments had been released to those Clubs that had returned their grant acceptance letters; further payments would be made mid and end of July.
- Return To Rugby Kick Start Funding – Letters confirming the grant offers had been sent to clubs, again with the need for the clubs to reply and accept the offer. Once accepted the funds would be released to clubs.
- Fixtures for season 21/22 were now available in SCRUMS, the website would be updated once usual change requests had been received back from clubs.

- Supporting Clubs Investment Programme – SCIP information for season 21/22 would be published w/c 19th July with this year's club and Player Improvement funding.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Successful Regional Awards with good online presence across Scottish Rugby social media channels as well as reporting in local print media:
 - Southern Reporter (East)
 - Edinburgh Evening News (East)
 - Grampian Online & Inverness Courier (Caledonia North)
 - Daily Record, Paisley Daily Express, DnG24 (Glasgow South)
 - Daily Record (Glasgow North)
 - Stirling Courier (Caledonia Midlands)
- 112 clubs awarded funding from Club Recovery Fund and award letters sent. Over £220k paid out in end of June payment run, with the remaining £330k due to be paid out at the end of July.
- 117 applications received for Kickstart funding and circa £700k allocated to projects. Clubs and referee societies received award letters 30 June.
- Fixtures for season 2021/22 published 22 June.
- Coaching and match officiating courses now live. RugbyRight and all courses now available via SCRUMS.
- Making Rugby Everyone's Game conference held on 6 June – further detail below.

Making Rugby Everyone's Game Conference – 6 June 2021

In order to support inclusion and diversity within the community game, Rugby Development had delivered an online conference on Sunday 6 June called "Making Rugby Everyone's Game".

The conference was open to everyone within the club and school game and focused on the practical implementation of good practice rather than policy. Delegates were made up of club players, volunteers, coaches, match officials, Scottish Rugby employees and Council members. Representatives from other Scottish governing bodies had also attended. Out of the 145 individuals who registered, approximately 100 had attended.

The conference had been broken down into 3 sessions.

The first session was introduced by Lesley Thomson QC, who set the scene for the morning, introducing the first two speakers who were Gillian Jones-Williams from Emerge UK, who shared feedback from the Board and Council from her time working with them, along with short presentation on the inclusion of Black and Minority Ethnic Groups (BAME).

The President at Harris Rugby Club had given a short presentation on his experience in rugby as an openly gay male and a late-comer to the game. He highlighted how supportive clubs can be and the important role that clubs such as the Caledonia

Thebans play in creating a welcoming environment to those from LGBTQ+ communities.

Then delegates had the choice of two from the four workshops outlined below:

- **TACKLING BARRIERS TO RUGBY & FOCUSING ON ABILITY, NOT DISABILITY**

Scottish Disability Sport led this workshop and discussed the challenges and barriers to those with a disability and suggested ways that a club can work in partnership with them, to become more inclusive and accessible to those with an impairment.

- **TACKLING HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC & TRANSPHOBIC BEHAVIOUR & BUILDING AN LGBTQ+ - INCLUSIVE CLUB**

Inside Inclusion presented on key issues around making our clubs LGBTQ+ friendly and understanding the impact of certain behaviours and language. They also offered advice about the building blocks for a truly inclusive sporting environment. Dunfermline RFC shared their experience as a club who have created a positive environment and how this inclusive approach continues to see the club grow in all areas of the game.

- **SUPPORTING THE AGEING POPULATION THROUGH RUGBY**

This workshop covered how memories groups and walking rugby are becoming very popular approaches to supporting not only those of advancing years, but also in tackling loneliness and isolation within a community. Rugby Memories Scotland and Hawick RFC presented on their development of rugby memories groups and how they have seen their programmes evolve.

Linlithgow RFC and Moray RFC, shared their journey introducing Walking Rugby and discussed the benefits to their members.

- **INCLUSION STARTS WITH 'I' - TRANS INCLUSION**

A speaker from Leeds Beckett University shared her personal and impactful gender journey. She advocated for young people who are questioning their gender, sexuality and the support needed to be their authentic selves.

Inside Inclusion also presented on terminology and breaking barriers whilst Scottish Rugby's Medical Services Manager took participants through the Transgender Player Application.

Delegates were then invited to join us for the final section of the event where the *"Making Rugby Everyone's Game"* handbook which can be used by clubs to support good practice and maximizing inclusion and diversity within their club was presented.

Finally, we were delighted to welcome Nigel Owens to deliver the keynote speech of the day. Delegates were privileged to listen to the very personal and insightful life story of Nigel as he shared some of his deep-rooted personal struggles and how he overcame them to achieve happiness and success both personally and professionally.

Match Officials

Progress & Performance

Work is ongoing with the National Panels and Referee Societies to prepare officials ahead of the resumption of the wider Scottish domestic competitions in September. Preparation will involve both webinars and on-field practical sessions (in line with Covid regulations) so that all officials are as prepared as possible and ready to contribute positively to the competitions across the country.

Training and Education

Coach and Match Official Courses

Two new coach and match official courses have been created as part of the new Training and Education Development Pathways programme for the club and school game, replacing the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC) framework which ended in April 2020.

Whilst Scottish Rugby confirmed the launch of the new programme in October 2020, courses were unable to be delivered due to coronavirus restrictions in place at the time.

From July 2021, the entry level Coaching Essentials (replacement for UKCC Level 1) and Introduction to Match Officiating (replacement for Referee Level 1) courses will begin to be delivered via a blended approach of online and practical modules.

In addition to these new courses, Scottish Rugby has also relaunched the RugbyRight e-learning module which covers key player welfare information including, safeguarding, concussion awareness, equipment, and tackle safety.

Match Official Strategy

In conjunction with the Scottish Rugby Referees Association and Referee Societies, Scottish Rugby has developed a new Match Official Strategy which will formally be launched in July 2021. The strategy covers all areas of the game, from grassroots to high performance, with the vision 'To continually improve the quality and growth of rugby in Scotland we need the best match officials possible, who feel valued, supported and rewarded for their contribution to rugby.'

SCRUMS Update

On 25th June 2021, a new section of SCRUMS was launched to coincide with the announcement of the new Training and Education Development Pathways programme. This new section enables coaches, match officials, players and other volunteers to access the new RugbyRight e-learning module which covers key player welfare information including, safeguarding, concussion awareness, equipment, and tackle safety. Coaches and match officials can also search for the new courses on offer and book a place through SCRUMS.

The Training and Education team at Scottish Rugby now manage courses and bookings through SCRUMS as well as updating the user profiles of attendees once they have completed a course. Data held on qualifications relating to volunteers can now be held centrally and made available to those who need access to that information –

Scottish Rugby employees, volunteers and employees at our clubs and schools as well as the individual volunteers themselves.

Over the first four days of the courses being available in SCRUMS, 156 users had completed the new RugbyRight e-learning module and 41 users had booked a place on either the Introduction to Match Officiating or the Coaching Essentials courses.

The next significant SCRUMS update scheduled to take place over the summer will allow clubs and schools to submit the results of their fixtures directly into SCRUMS, using a similar process to that which is already in place for submitting teamsheets. On the subject of teamsheets we would ask for support from Council to remind their clubs that teamsheets must be submitted for all matches played - even friendly fixtures.

REGIONS

Caledonia North

As we continue to support our Caledonia North Clubs and Communities to RESET, RECOVER and REBUILD, maintaining community traction and conversation around our cultures, values and behaviours remains important to us in reinforcing the consistent, positive promotion of rugby, clubs and Scottish Rugby throughout Caledonia North. The Caledonia North Team continue to focus our efforts around 3 key principles for season 2021/22; **Remain Connected**, **Remain Engaged** and **Remain Responsive**.

Combining these with our headline strategic pillars as reference, sharing insight into the stories of our Caledonia North clubs and communities is valuable in bringing our efforts and key principles of delivery to life and demonstrate the cultures, values, and behaviours of our unique region!

PLAY and PEOPLE ... Remain Connected - *Grow the reach and relevance of our programmes.* Listening to our clubs and offering them meaningful space to tell their stories is fundamental to succeeding in this space. As part of our Supporting Clubs Investment Programme, our Caledonia North clubs responded brilliantly and engaged with our Case Study initiative. Our 31 clubs submitted 87 compelling stories highlighting the positive impact both they and our game continue to have across our North communities. Connecting with our communities and providing equitable opportunities for ALL to access the game is fundamental to the game in the north. At **Highland RFC**, their club vision is to be "More than a rugby club by positively contributing to the wellbeing of their community". Seeking avenues to work with different groups across their community, the club are now able to deliver to pupils that require additional support through the Inverness Royal Academy Support for Learning Department, where rugby is used to engage those young people, introducing them to the values of the game and offering equitable, high-quality access to sport and physical activity opportunities.

CLUBS & COMMUNITIES ... Remain Engaged - *Consistent high-quality support and delivery.* An important part of support and delivery is the ability to recognise and celebrate the achievements of our Caledonia North Clubs and their volunteer base when all the combined hard work and efforts produce positive results across communities. In June we were pleased to be able to deliver our Club Recognition Awards digitally and remain humbled by the efforts of **ALL** club volunteers across our region. All broadcast through our brilliant Caledonia North Facebook group.

Awareness of relevant issues and supporting communities to overcome these is a hallmark of our Caledonia North Clubs. The **Aberdeen University Men's Rugby Club**, as they have done for several years, ran their annual fundraising campaign to raise money for men's health by participating in the Movember campaign. AURFC has always been a very strong supporter of this charity and they were determined to exceed previous fundraising targets. A key part of the campaign is to raise awareness among young men of issues affecting their health and wellbeing, including mental health and testicular cancer. Since 2015 AURFC have raised £59,000 with the 2020/21 team contributing £13.5k towards an already meaningful total.

COLLABORATE & INNOVATE ... Remain Responsive - *Develop target areas of work aligned to National KPIs and Local Authority Sport & Physical Activity Development Guides.* Our outstanding network of Caledonia North Development Officers and Community Coaches continue to work as an integral part of our regional management structure and, in their environments, are world-class examples of bringing targeted rugby development work alive and meaningful partnership work with Local Authority structures, personnel and localized Community Sports Hubs. Throughout the challenges of the past 15-18 months our **Caledonia North Development Officers** have worked as a team to identify critical areas of development work requiring attention and mitigation and have built programmes that they have rolled out across ALL clubs in Caledonia North.

From mental health and wellbeing programmes like their "Walk to Talk" initiative to online Youth Leadership and Youth Coaching Courses and their digital "Keep Your Skills Fresh Campaign" they were able to design and implement a delivery structure aimed at reacting to the challenges and restrictions of the pandemic by maintaining high-quality and meaningful engagement with our Caledonia North rugby family.

Caledonia Midlands

Club Engagement and Support on Return to Rugby

Supporting our clubs and communities return to rugby through May and June has been a priority for the regional development team. The regional team returned to work on 1st May on a part time capacity, which has allowed for a focus on supporting clubs with their Return to Rugby Recovery and Kickstart funding applications.

Within the Midlands region we received 25 Recovery applications and 35 high quality Kickstart applications from Clubs and Societies. This is significant work done by our clubs, supported by our Regional Managers, as it will create good opportunities for clubs to support the return to rugby within their communities by having their facilities ready and targeted programmes or events to re-engage and recruit players, coaches and match officials.

From the 35 Kickstart applications that we received, there is a good breadth of activity planned in the region. It will be the regional teams focus over the coming months to support the clubs and societies bring this to life and ensure the intended impact is measured and achieved. Below are two examples of events or programmes that are planned within the region:

- Dundee Rugby Big Club Weekend, focussing on Youth and Adult 7s, Mini Rugby, Walking Rugby all with entertainment and BBQs.

- Bo'ness Rugby Club "We are Rhinos Legacy Project", targeting growth in participation of youth boys and girls in an area of high SIMD.

Club Recognition

Our clubs and volunteers in the Midlands region have been working incredibly hard off the field over the last season, whether that be supporting their communities through the pandemic, raising funds for local charities, preparing, planning and updating club development plans, being innovative around player and volunteer engagement and development or supporting their members with good communication and engagement.

All clubs in the region who signed up to the Supporting Clubs Investment Programme embraced the new funding model, in particular the Rebuild element of the programme. Through this, clubs shared through case studies, what areas they have been developing and focussing on over the past year. We have received 27 quality case studies from clubs that focus on; Mental Health & Well Being, Everyone's Game, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Changing Lives through Sport and Physical Activity, Promotion of the Women & Girls Game and Club Values, Cultures and Ethos.

To recognise the incredible work and commitment from our Clubs and Communities, we delivered the Caledonia Midlands Community Recognition Awards at the beginning of June. All nominees were deservedly recognised through the digital awards ceremony, with the six winners announced via video presentations from members of Scottish Rugby Council and the regional team.

With the event being digital, our primary engagement came from Twitter and Facebook. On Twitter our video presentations received 152,000 impressions and 1,732 engagements. On Facebook, we gained 36 new followers and the videos were viewed 1,609 times. So whilst we would have loved to do this in person at an event, it is pleasing to see that the reach, and therefore the recognition of volunteers, was far and wide.

East

In May, we saw the welcome return of regional managers to the workplace, albeit working remotely, as we continue to support clubs to prepare for the safe return to rugby in clubs and schools across Edinburgh, the Lothians and Scottish Borders.

With employee turnover across the East, it has provided an opportunity to review regional manager and club alignment. To ensure clubs and schools continue to receive the best support possible, regional managers will be working with new clubs from July onwards. This will provide an opportunity to build new relationships across our team as well as bring fresh expertise to clubs throughout the region. This will be communicated to clubs at the end of June.

Workstream focus for the regional team has been centred around Club Recovery Funding and Return to Rugby Kick-Start funding. Running in parallel to these discussions has been conversations with clubs around the development officer workforce, concluding partnership agreements and objectives for the season ahead.

We are working with Corstorphine, Forrester (a combined role), Jed-Forest, Preston Lodge, North Berwick, Penicuik and Dalkeith (combined role) and Boroughmuir to recruit new development staff following the departure of their current workforce.

We continue to support clubs where a positive Covid-19 case has been identified within their membership, something that has increased significantly in the East region within the last 6 weeks. Whilst follow up conversations take place within 24 hours of being alerted by the club, it should be noted that all our club Covid-19 safety coordinators have managed cases swiftly and with conviction, ensuring members remain as safe as possible from further transmission. We cannot speak highly enough of this volunteer workforce, who have all been fantastic servants to their clubs and communities over the last year. Their understanding of the role and how diligently they have carried out the task will have undoubtedly contributed to ensuring there has been no known transfer of Covid-19 within the club environment in clubs in the East, which has all be traced back to community and school transmission.

Finally, we were delighted to present 6 awards to regional winners as part of our Community Recognition Awards programme, at the beginning of June. Our thanks go to everyone involved in the process of presenting these awards.

Glasgow North

The overwhelming theme of recent weeks has been the accelerated re-emergence of rugby from the pandemic and a more optimistic eye being cast towards the start of next season and beyond. This shifting of focus from Recovery to Rebuild has been most starkly represented by the consecutive delivery of the Club Recovery (15 club applications in GN) and Kick Start Grant funding (18 club applications in GN) streams that have been serviced over the course of May and June. When included with the finalising of the SCIP programme, there has been a significant amount of work in the support of considering and confirming payments to clubs. In broad terms this has helped draw a line between the recovery phase of season 20-21 and the more forward-looking rebuild phase of the summer and season 21-22.

This, and particularly the Kick Start Grant funding scheme, has helped establish plans across rugby communities for the new season, the details of which will become a focus for the regional team over the course of the summer. In addition to plans focussed on the immediate re-engagement of people across rugby communities, we have been engaged in conversations where clubs have identified an opportunity to operate differently to pre-pandemic ways. Two examples include Cambuslang who are seeking to re-frame their relationship with Stonelaw High School to more sustainably establish them as a School of Rugby and Glasgow East who are considering a Community Asset Transfer to better secure their long-term access to facilities.

The confidence in planning for season 21-22 coincides nicely with the ongoing re-engagement of staff, which has been re-configured slightly to enable maternity cover for one of the Regional Managers to begin in August. That ongoing engagement of staff and supporting their wellbeing through a graded return to work remains a high priority, as does the continued support of the Development Officer cohort. It is true for both groups that the improved ability to plan for next year has provided good

momentum and discussions are ongoing in relation to regional priorities and specific workplans and KPI's for DO colleagues ahead of next season.

This has also enabled conversations to be developed with partners and stakeholders with another round of updates shared with local authority and Active Schools colleagues, among others. These provided an update on our expectations of the next few months and created opportunities for dialogue about particular areas of collaboration; e.g. Scottish Rugby Schools Week, investment in Girls Rugby, the identification and support of future leaders.

The other element aligned to the forward-looking perspective has been our support of the competitions programme, both in supporting clubs to understand the return of established programmes, such as the School and Youth offer, and in exploring the appetite and logistics of new initiatives such as the Under 20's programme. In the meantime, club support has continued in the guise of a further round of club forum meetings in early May, supporting the coordination of the Regional Awards presentations and continuing to engage with and support Covid-19 Safety Coordinators as guidance evolves and where cases arise.

Glasgow South

Development Officer Network

The regional team continue to plan, and host fortnightly catch up meetings with the Development Officer Network. All Development Officers are invited to attend with the majority of individuals engaging now that they have returned from furlough. With that said, now that access to schools is better, many of the Development Officers can be delivering sessions during this time but have requested that we keep the arrangement going and they will look to prioritise where possible.

Given that training and friendly fixtures have now opened up for youths, this has been a great platform for the network to share successes, challenges and good practice when it comes to hosting and attending fixtures with youth teams within the guidance. As the Regional Managers return, we will begin the transition with them to take on these meetings which have proved successful to the network and the region.

Club Support

Club support remains a key focus for the Glasgow South Team. With Regional Managers returning part-time in May, the level of support to clubs has increased. The team continues to support a number of clubs through positive Covid-19 cases, which have all been managed well within the clubs.

Further support has been given on applications for the Club Recovery Fund and Return to Rugby Kick Start Fund, along with advice and guidance on the return of friendly fixtures. Regional Managers will now begin liaising with clubs on Development Officer investment and partnership agreements for season 21-22.

Community Recognition Awards – Glasgow South

This season Glasgow South introduced two bespoke awards, which were:

- The Adam Gray Memorial Award

- Special Recognition for Contribution to Rugby

The Adam Gray Memorial Award was open to any individual player, coach, volunteer, match official, club staff or parent who has demonstrated an outstanding contribution to a rugby club/school/community in Glasgow South. This award is not only about what the individual has done but how they have demonstrated and brought to life the values of game and role-modelled positive behaviour as they have done so.

3.2 *Referee Strategy*

The Head of Training and Education referred to the circulated Referee Strategy which was taken as read. He highlighted the following points:

- Due to a decline in the number of people refereeing assistant referees had been removed from National 1 matches.
- It was noted that diversity was an issue and the strategy had sought to identify a more diverse committee structure.
- There was a need to clarify the pathways and align the approach in the recruitment and opportunities of referees. Rugby Development were now working with the Referees' societies to develop this.
- The strategy was designed to increase the number of people who start, stay and succeed as match officials. It was intended to improve the standard of refereeing throughout the game and to increase the number and diversity of match officials, which aligned with Rugby Development's wider strategy.
- It was noted that a collaborative approach with the referees' society and over 50 individuals had been adopted to develop the strategy. The strategy would now be delivered together with the SRRRA and the 6 Referee Societies.

A communications plan was being developed.

The Council Referee Representative noted that it was pleasing to see this four year strategy plan, which would address some of the concerns that have been raised by Council Members in the past. He noted that during the development of the strategy the resources available had remained a question. He was pleased to now see it come to fruition.

3.3 *Investment into the Club Game*

The Head of Business Operations provided the Council with a presentation. The following points were noted:

- The breakdown of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 funding levels were provided to the Council. It was highlighted that due to the pandemic, the figures from last year were lower than usual.
- The SCIP funding model was outlined to Council Members. It was noted that it was based on the reset, recovery and rebuild phases and associated timelines.

- The breakdown of the Player Improvement funds was outlined.
- In relation to the Club Recovery and Kickstart fund applications, it was noted that 235 applications had been received. The total amount requested was £1,326,015. Six Clubs had contacted Rugby Development to request amounts over £7,500. The details of those matters were outlined.
- £1.25 million was the approx. amount which had been approved and would be paid out throughout June - August. As it was a forward fund, receipts would be required later to substantiate spending.

7 claims had been declined and the Clubs had been directed to other funding streams. The Regional teams had engaged with each of those clubs to discuss the most appropriate funding stream.

In response to questions the following points were noted:

- In relation to insurance, the President noted that Clubs should still consider insurance at a level above the required level and consider those who are self-employed etc.
- It was noted Rugby Development Department were looking at defibrillators for clubs. A survey had been sent to Clubs to understand who had one or who had access to one.

The President noted that it was the Director of Rugby Development's last Council Meeting before her retirement. He thanked her, on behalf of the Council, for all her hard work and commitment over the past few years.

The President thanked the Rugby Development Representatives for their updates.

The Rugby Development Representatives left the Meeting at 6.35pm.

4. AGM

4.1 Motions and Approach

The President noted that the Council had been clear on their stance to each motion and clear rationale would be provided to the Clubs on that basis.

The President and Vice-President would liaise with the Chair regarding the communications to the Clubs on the motions and amendments.

The President was continuing to engage with the proposers of the motions.

4.2 Hosting of the AGM

The President noted that everyone was in agreement that hosting the AGM in person would be preferable, to allow sufficient debate and discussion.

The President confirmed he would discuss this with the Chief Medical Officer and the Threat Management Group and update the Council on the outcome of those discussions.

4.3 *Agenda*

The President asked the Council Members to consider the AGM agenda ahead of the next Meeting and let him know if there were any matters which they believed should be included.

5. **Diversity and Inclusion Update**

No Diversity and Inclusion issues were raised.

6. **Safeguarding Update**

No safeguarding concerns were raised.

7. **Council Matters for Quarterly Review**

7.1 *Council Member Quarterly Reports*

The President referred to the circulated Council Member Quarterly Reports, which were taken as read. Council members were asked to verbally update on matters related to their individual reports.

8. **GOVERNANCE**

8.1 *SCOG Update*

The President noted that SCOG had had a number of Meetings and had considered the comments raised by the Council. An update would be provided to the Council at a supplementary Meeting on 19 July.

8.2 *Code of Conduct*

The Vice-President thanked the Council for their approval of the Code of Conduct. Once finalised the Code of Conduct would be implemented.

9. **AOB**

As AOB the following points were raised:

- It was asked whether a physical copy of the Rugby Record would be released for the new season. An answer would be sought.
- The Vice-President referred to the request received by the Council from Selkirk RFC to reconsider the relegation proposal. The Council were asked to

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consider the request and a decision would be made at the forthcoming Meeting.

With all business concluded, the President closed the Meeting at 7.20pm.

Date of next meeting: 19 July 2021

APPROVED 10 AUGUST 2021