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**MINUTE OF QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH RUGBY COUNCIL
HELD BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
AT 5.00PM ON MONDAY 22 NOVEMBER 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
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 Business Services
Gavin Scott	(GS)	Director of Performance Rugby
Mark Dodson	(MD)	Chief Executive Officer
Hilary Spence	(HS)	Chief Financial Officer
Robert Howat	(RHt)	General Counsel & Company Secretary
Gavin MacColl	(GMc)	Independent Chair of the Council's Standing Committee on Governance

Apologies:

Gavin Hastings	(GH)	Co-opted Representative (British and Irish Lions)
Eric Hugh	(EH)	National 2 Representative

1. Introduction**ACTION**

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

Apologies were received from the National 2 Representative and the British and Irish Lions Representative.

2. Governance Update

The President welcomed Mr MacColl QC to the Meeting and advised the Council that Mr MacColl QC would provide an update on the work of the Council's Standing Committee on Governance (SCOG) and was available to take questions.

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Mr MacColl QC presented to the Council on the work of SCOG. The following points were noted:

- A document would be circulated to the Council following the Meeting which outlined the current proposal of SCOG. It was emphasised that it was a consultation document and not a final recommendation. The feedback from the Clubs was going to be vital in progressing SCOG's work going forward.
- It was noted that the paper set out SCOG's current preferred option which was to have a company limited by guarantee replace the current unincorporated association.
- The current structure of the Union was outlined and it was highlighted that the proposed company limited by guarantee would be a holding company which held the shares in Scottish Rugby Union Limited (SRUL).
- The proposed membership of the company limited by guarantee and SRUL boards were outlined. It was noted that there had been divergent views on the makeup of the company limited by guarantee. Mr MacColl set out some of the other company structures which had been suggested by different stakeholders. He noted this remained an area of debate.
- It was highlighted that the feedback from the first round of consultation had suggested that the majority of the Clubs were in favour of a split between the club and professional game.
- It was noted that the matters reserved for the company limited by guarantee and the population and structure of the CRB were other areas of debate. The importance of the views of the Clubs on these areas was emphasised.

Mr MacColl QC thanked the Council for their time and noted that it was hoped the proposal would be circulated to the membership shortly and the consultation would be open until the new year.

The President thanked Mr MacColl QC for his update and asked Council Members for their comments. A robust discussion followed. The key points were noted as follows:

- Members of the Council raised concern that they had not had sight of the proposal ahead of the Meeting. Without the opportunity to consider and digest the contents of the proposal, it was noted that it was difficult to comment on the content.

The importance of the matter was also emphasised by some Members of the Council. It was highlighted that reaching the right, not the quickest, outcome was vital. The Council highlighted that sufficient time should be allowed for the Council to feed into this stage of the process.

The President acknowledged the points and advised that the proposal would not be released to the membership until the Council had had the opportunity to give it full consideration and comment.

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Mr MacColl QC highlighted that he was content to facilitate a further meeting with the Council once they had considered the paper.

- Mr MacColl QC noted that SCOG were committed to conducting a full and proper consultation with the membership and would work to a timeline which the Council were happy with. The President reiterated Mr MacColl's point and noted that SCOG had spent considerable time preparing the documents to be ready for the second round of consultation.
- It was noted that the feedback from the first consultation period had not yet been made available to the Council to consider. The North Regional Representative noted that the Council should have the opportunity to consider the feedback and the contents of the proposal before the consultation document is circulated to the membership. It was confirmed this would be made available to the Council Members in the following days.
- The Referees Representative noted, that as a member of SCOG, SCOG had also been frustrated with some of the perceived delays in progressing the second consultation document and highlighted that they been had out with SCOG's control. He emphasised that the membership were the final decision makers in the governance process and their feedback would be fundamental to the process.

The Midlands Representative, also a Member of SCOG, reiterated the Referees Representative frustrations and highlighted the importance of commencing the second period of consultation with the membership.

Mr MacColl QC thanked all the members of SCOG for the substantial amount of time and input they have invested into the governance review, for which he was grateful.

- It was noted that there had been some personnel changes within the membership of SCOG. It was noted this had been due to divergent views on the direction of travel of the group.
- The Premiership Representative noted that SCOG had met around 19 times and had engaged external experts in law and accountancy throughout that process.

The President thanked the Council for the robust discussion and substantial contribution to the Meeting. It was **AGREED** the relevant paperwork would be shared with the Council and a further Meeting set up for the coming days to discuss.

The President thanked Mr MacColl QC for attending the Meeting and he left at 6.05pm.

3. Quarterly Review of Board Matters

3.1 CEO Update

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The CEO, CFO and General Counsel & Company Secretary joined the Meeting at 6.05pm

The President welcomed the members of the executive to the Meeting.

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

- [SECTION REDACTED – COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE]
- [SECTION REDACTED – COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE]
- [SECTION REDACTED – COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE]
- It was noted that the Rugby Development Department were aware that some domestic fixtures had not been fulfilled due to some teams reluctance to travel. This was something that would continue to be monitored as the season progressed.
- The CEO referred to the recent update from G Fay to the Council. He noted that individual conversations had taken place with each of the women's international team members to ascertain what support, if any, was needed. It was highlighted that the women's game in Scotland was still a long way from where it needed to be but progress was being made and the players should be commended for the manner in which they had progressed and developed.
- [SECTION REDACTED – COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE]
- [SECTION REDACTED – COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE]

The CEO invited questions, the following points were noted:

- [SECTION REDACTED – COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE]

The President thanked the CEO for his update and he left the Meeting at 6.45am.

3.2 *Regulatory and Company Secretary Report*

The General Counsel & Company Secretary referred to his Report which was taken as read, the following points were noted:

- In relation to change of team names, the Board had approved the amendment of Stirling County RFC Women's 2XV to the Stirling Falcons and the change of Kelso RFC 2nd XV from Kelso 'A' to Kelso Sharks.
- North Edinburgh Vikings RFC, Strathmore Community Rugby Trust and Ayrshire Clan had been granted associate member status.
- Further to a request from the Regional Competition Committees, the Board sub-committee approved a further minor change to the adult NCRs (in respect of the use of the U19 scrummage variation in Regional competitions). It was

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noted the updated National Competition Rules and an explanation of the change were both available from the Scottish Rugby website.

- It was noted that on 30 September 2021 the UK Sports Council issued new guidance on transgender inclusion in sport. The four 'Home Unions' were reviewing their respective Transgender Policies in the light of this new Guidance.

Scottish Rugby's Transgender Policy will be considered via the SWDI Committee.

- It was noted that the Member clubs receive catastrophic injury cover under Scottish Rugby's *Club Accident Insurance Scheme*, with the cost of that funded by Scottish Rugby. The Proposal Form for 2021/22 was issued to member clubs on 4 August 2022.

Based on prior years, it was anticipated that further Proposal Forms would continue to be received over the coming months.

- It was noted that at the Joint Briefing in September, the Board and Council members discussed calling an SGM to change some aspects of the Bye-Laws in relation to future General Meetings to provide for hybrid meetings - i.e. a General Meeting being held virtually and in-person so as to facilitate attendance and participation.

The necessary requisition, motion wording and supporting rationale were approved unanimously by the Council and Board, and the preliminary notice of the SGM was issued on 11 November, with a copy provided to Council and Board members. It was noted that the changes to the Bye-Laws had been kept to an absolute minimum and did not address anything other than the ability to allow hybrid meetings.

- **[SECTION REDACTED – COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE]**

The President thanked the Company Secretary for his update and he left the meeting at 6.55pm.

3.3 *Finance Update*

The CFO referred to the Report which was taken as read.

The CFO offered a high level overview of the current financial position of the Company. She offered to meet with Council Members for individual or small group sessions over the following weeks to provide clear and transparent updates.

It was **AGREED** the Council Secretary would set out the sessions accordingly.

The CFO left the Meeting at 7pm.

4. **Rugby Development Update**

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

The Rugby Development Report was taken as read. The following points were noted:

- The East Region worked with colleagues in the Commercial department to host a girls pre-match activation session involving skills development stations and Tartan Touch games prior to the Scotland Vs Tonga Autumn Nations Series test, using the Edinburgh Rugby DAM Health stadium.

The event involved nearly 50 U14/U16s female players from the East and 250+ spectators from aligned schools and clubs (Kelso RFC, Currie RFC, Gala RFC, Edinburgh Quins and Leith RFC).

It also provided an opportunity for 10 players from Edinburgh Quins to be flag bearers for both teams and lead them onto the pitch, in front of 32,000 returning Scotland fans.

- The Glasgow South team hosted a Women's Development Day at Paisley RFC on Sunday 31 October. Though this event was hosted by Glasgow South, it was open to all clubs nationally with female players over the age of 18 who were not yet involved in full contact league rugby but who wished to develop their skills, confidence and ability. There were 67 players registered from across 3 regions. In collaboration with the above event, CPD was provided for 13 coaches, advising on World Rugby's contact ready and activate warmup, specifically chosen around the development of the women's game.

- **Caledonia North (CN)**

Women and Girls - Caledonia North Women's Development Series Programme was initiated in August 2021. It continued to provide meaningful and appropriate opportunities for new and developing adult female players to experience the game in a safe, supportive, and enjoyable environment and it continued to support the establishment of new women's programmes as well as the expansion of existing women's programmes in the North.

FE/Universities – UHI and Inverness College Partnership – a Community Engagement (Student Fayre) would be conducted on a quarterly basis and a regional state schools festival would also take place. Regional staff will work with current UHI sport students to run these events. In linking with UHI, and sportscotland, the CN Team would use the new facility as a 'Performance Hub' for further developing talented players, coaches and support staff from throughout the region. This would take the form of weekly practical sessions for players, along with monthly training and education workshops on a wide range of topics.

- **Caledonia Midlands (CM)**

Development Officers - There were 18 Development Officers (FT & PT) in Caledonia Midlands employed by clubs or schools and a large cohort of these DOs were either new to the role or new to the area. Time had therefore been

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spent supporting them bed into their new roles, on a 1-2-1 basis through the Regional Managers, or through regional meetings.

Match Official Development

Midlands Society Recruitment Roadshow –the society was supported to develop and implement a roadshow as part of their Kickstart funding. This would include on-going activation, physical attendance and recruitment drives at events and the creation of a digital marketing strategy.

Coaching Essentials Courses with target increase in female referees – a Match Officiating Essentials course targeting referees for the female game had recently been promoted. This one-day course would be held on 21 November and would be followed by the opportunity to officiate at Girls and Women Development Festivals to provide an opportunity to put into practice what had been learned.

Midlands Match Official Strategic Advisory Group – implementing a Match Official strategy in Caledonia Midlands would only be realised through collaboration with key individuals in the game from the region. Therefore, the creation of a Midlands Strategic Advisory Group that would oversee and check and challenge the development of Match Officials in Midlands was key.

- **East**

Schools & Youth - The School of Rugby programme was now operating again across 25 communities throughout the East region, including 7 “Cashback” funded programmes, all returning to face-to-face delivery through the Development Officer network. Over 2,100 young people from S1 – 6 had been involved in the programme for the academic year, including 320 girls, providing additional rugby sessions as part of the school curriculum. The region commenced delivery of the Developing Players Programme (DPP, formerly APPs) within several schools involved in the School of Rugby programme.

October saw the continuation of the regional girl’s programme with the second Scottish Rugby series event being held at Meadowmill on 24 October. Despite the October holidays, there were still 90 players participating from 8 clubs at under 12/14/16 age groups. Edinburgh Harlequins hosted an U18s joint session with 4 other clubs, and 25 players in total.

Boroughmuir, Wolves and Penicuik participated for the first time at youth level for girls contact rugby. East hosted a Regional Girls Forum via zoom on Friday 29 October with 8 clubs in attendance. Discussions focussed on the impact of the girl’s series events, and suggestions for the evolution of these.

FE/Universities – November 2021 also saw the culmination of 5 weeks of development sessions with the University of Edinburgh’s Physical Education students. Regional staff delivered the programme to over 200 undergraduate students at both 2nd and 3rd year level. Whilst not a specific coaching course or qualification, the aim of these sessions was to improve knowledge and

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confidence in rugby activities and empower the students to teach the sport when out on placement and when they ultimately graduate.

Clubs - At the end of October, the first Borders Rugby Development Forum was held. Meeting collectively 4 x per year, the aim of the forum was to talk through challenges and issues that may be pertinent at the time, whilst also supporting clubs with their development plans for the future. During this meeting the group had a good opportunity to discuss any current issues, key successes so far, and to share examples of good practice.

- **Glasgow North**

Women & Girls - The presence of Women & Girls in Sport Week at the end of October provided a focus for some targeted social media engagement, under the banner of #EveryonesGame. A specific theme would continue to be identified each month and it was an excellent opportunity to be able to shine a light on some great work taking place across Glasgow North in both schools and clubs. Work to develop the Women and Girls game continued, supporting ongoing club-to-club activity and planning for the next Scottish Rugby-led event in early December at Ravenscraig.

Wellbeing - Conversations with clubs had focussed on mental wellbeing.

Clubs - Communities that had been identified for a specific focus were club and team captains who had been invited to a dedicated zoom meeting in November. There was also an ambition to create a Rugby Development Group in each of the region's seven local authorities.

- **Glasgow South**

Women and Girls - There was positive uptake from Glasgow South clubs involved with female rugby to either host or be part of club-led girl festivals between September and the end of October. 8 club-led activities had given girls aged U12 to U18 opportunities to play. To date, such events had given in excess of 140 girls opportunities to play. 2021 would culminate in a final Girls Series Event on 5 December at Kilmarnock Rugby Club. The team would work with the clubs to discuss how the programme was taken forward in 2022.

Coach and Match Officiating Development - Throughout October 5 courses were held across the region including;

- 2 x FAIR Courses with 12 people in attendance
- 1 Coaching Essentials course with 11 people in attendance
- 1 x Mini Referee course with 18 people in attendance
- 1 x Intro to MO course held online and with 2 people in attendance.

CashBack Schools of Rugby - Robert Burns Academy delivered a girls transition event with over 50 girls from P7 and S1. This fell on Scottish Women and Girls Week and helped celebrate the success of the girls programme run by Robert Burns Academy and Cumnock Rugby.

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Transition of players from School of Rugby Programmes to clubs had started in November 2021. This would continue to be monitored as the programme progressed.

- **Game Development**

Coach and Match Official Courses - An additional two new courses were launched in November to grow the number of courses available to clubs and schools.

Match Official Strategy - The match official strategic board continued to progress with year 1 objectives and will meet again in December.

Match Official Recruitment Campaign - As part of the #EveryonesGame campaign, a new referee recruitment video was launched across the Scottish Rugby social media channels on 2 November. The video features new and current referees and aimed to raise the profile of the benefits of refereeing and encourages people to get involved.

First Aid Courses - A series of World Rugby First Aid in Rugby Level 1 courses were being delivered in each region to support the return to rugby efforts and improve standards of player welfare. The course was delivered by trained World Rugby Educators.

RugbyRight - 2976 coaches and match officials had completed the 2021-22 RugbyRight online course. This course was the minimum standard for all coaches and match officials and was now delivered via SCRUMS so that clubs could track their own completions. The deadline had recently been extended to 31 December 2021.

During the Rugby Development Department's update to the Council it was noted that the season structure consultation process would commence shortly. A check and challenge group had been established and were due to meet.

The Representatives of the Rugby Development Department left at 7.05pm

5. Election of Council Nominated Non-Executive Director

The President noted that a vacancy had arisen for a Council Nominated Non-Executive Director on the Board of Scottish Rugby Union Limited.

He referred to the circulated papers with the CVs of the two applicants - the Borders Representative and the Vice-President.

The Council Secretary explained the election process as prescribed by the Scottish Rugby Election Rules.

A secret ballot was taken among the candidates, with each elected Council member being entitled to vote.

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With 12 votes to 3, the Vice-President was elected as Council Nominated Non-Executive Director.

6. Diversity and Inclusion Update

No Diversity and Inclusion issues were raised.

7. Safeguarding Update

No safeguarding concerns were raised.

8. Council Matters for Quarterly Review

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.

The following points were noted:

- The Borders Representative noted that he had raised concern regarding the Autumn Tests being shown on Amazon Prime. He highlighted that a number of Clubs would not have a subscription to this platform. The point was noted and would be monitored.
- The placement of the Council Member Reports on the agenda was discussed and it was considered whether it should be placed higher on the agenda. The President understood the point and noted the importance of the Reports. He highlighted that it was done in the current order so invited guests were dealt with first but he and the Council Secretary would consider the running order going forward.
- The National 3 Representative noted that during the Autumn Test window, some rearranged league fixtures had been given 11am kick off times. Some of the Clubs involved had to travel significant distances to these fixtures, resulting in some Clubs having to leave home particularly early in the morning. The National 2/3 fora had raised this as an issue with the Chair of the Championship Committee and a member of the Competitions Team. It had been stated that if the Clubs did not agree to rearrange the fixture then it would go ahead as scheduled. The National 3 Representative highlighted that this matter should be revisited and the Clubs should be able to apply more discretion and common sense in how the fixtures were dealt with.

The President thanked the Council Members for their contribution. He highlighted the importance of the Council Member Reports and the ability to ask questions of the relevant stakeholders.

9. President Caps

The President noted that he and a number of Council Members had discussed creating a retrospect "President's Cap" for players who had played for Scotland in games that, at the time, were not classed as full internationals (but now would be).

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The Council unanimously supported the premise and suggested that all players (men and women) who had played in such a game should be located and given a cap.

For any players that had since deceased, the cap would be given to their family, where able to be identified.

The President confirmed he would discuss the matter with the Senior Corporate Affairs and Stakeholder Manager and provide the Council with an update at the next Meeting.

9. AOB

Under AOB, the following points were raised:

- The result of women's national team against Japan was highlighted and the Council noted their congratulations to all involved.
- The Glasgow South Representative asked for clarification on the Rugby Record and whether a hard copy would be issued. The Council Secretary advised that, as far as she was aware, a physical copy of the Rugby Record was not being prepared this year and Clubs should keep their contact details up to date on SCRUMS.
- The URC Representative provided an update on Murrayfield Injured Players Foundation. He noted that Clubs were insured through Scottish Rugby for catastrophic injuries only. For £350 a year, there was an additional policy that could be purchased by Clubs to provide more comprehensive cover. Only 41% of Clubs currently had it in place. He urged Council Members to flag this to their Clubs and encourage them to consider putting the policy in place.

ALL

With all business concluded, the President closed the Meeting at 7.45pm.

Date of next meeting: 7 February 2021

APPROVED 20 DECEMBER 2021