



All-Party Parliamentary Rugby League Group

Ordinary Meeting Minutes

11th December 2012 Committee Room 13

Meeting Commenced at 1800.

Present

Greg Mulholland (in the Chair); Lord Hoyle, Lord Smith of Leigh, Lindsay Hoyle MP, Yvonne Fovargue MP

In attendance

Group Secretariat: Mark Ramsdale

Organisational Associate Members: Spen Allison (BARLA), Chris Rostron (RLC), Niel Wood (RFL), Eric Czerwionka (Pro Build Assist Ltd)

Individual Associate Members (no affiliation): Maurice Oldroyd

Non-Members: Gill Johnson, Wally Salvan, Mike Edwards, Jarrod Faulkner, Jeff Charlton, Peter Wilson, Hazel McCluskey, Andrew Habbershaw

Apologies

Simon Reeve MP; Julie Hilling MP; David Hincliffe; Anton Muszankyj; Nigel Wood; Gary Brook; Paul Cypher; Daniel Bunney; Gavin Willacy; Chris Byron; Barrie Smith; Gary Job; Phil Hodgson

New Associate Members

The Group welcomed new Associate Member Iain McIlroy

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were considered an accurate record.

Matters Arising

The Secretariat was investigating who had previously won the Group's Super League Player of the Year. It was suggested that previous Group Officers' constituencies may have kept records.

Action: Secretariat to contact offices of Members for Makerfield and Wigan to begin searching for records.

The Chairman had written to and received correspondence from the RFL CEO asking for clarification on the situation and, if BARLA had not been consulted, that the RFL consider withdraw the decision until such time as adequate consultation had taken place.

Action: Subject to be included in a meeting with RFL CEO; Secretariat to approach RFL for some dates to meet.

Ongoing

The Secretariat raised continued dialogue with:

- The RFL regarding an event on inclusivity;
- South Africa Rugby League and DCMS regarding the South African Government position on rugby league;
- Women & Girls in Sport Parliamentary Group joint event; and
- The RFL regarding a memorial at the National Arboretum honouring rugby league playing and supporting servicemen and servicewomen.



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Correspondence

Sent

Letter to RFL CEO Nigel Wood regarding BARLA position on RFL Council.

Received

Letter from RFL CEO Nigel Wood regarding BARLA Position on RFL Council.

Correspondence from Howard of Effingham accepting invitation to speak at a future Group meeting.

Action: Secretariat to secure meeting for the school.

Various from 1eagu3:

- Correspondence: From Jon Wilkin regarding meeting with the GMB; and
- Correspondence: From Ernie Benbow regarding information about 1eagu3. Included:
 - Document: 1eagu3 recommendations from LJM report on Bradford Bulls Report;
 - Document: LJM 1eagu3 Bradford Bulls Evaluation Report;
 - Letter: From 16 Bradford Bulls players regarding their support for 1eagu3.

Correspondence was received from 1eagu3 and Canada Rugby League congratulating the Chairman on his being shortlisted as Sports Parliamentarian of the Year.

Action: Secretariat/Chairman to send notes of thanks.

Group Activity Report

The Secretariat presented an overview of all references to rugby league in Parliament since the last meeting. Early Day Motion 811 "Sir Kevin Sinfield Day" had been tabled by Greg Mulholland, in which concluded with the call for an Honour for England and Leeds Rhinos player Kevin Sinfield.

[Secretariat's note: The full Motion can be viewed at <http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2012-13/811>]

Members questions what work the Group had undertaken into securing more Honours in rugby league. The Secretariat explained that questions had been asked by the Chairman to Cabinet Office about the number and level of Honours that had been awarded to the main five sport in the UK, including rugby league. Further, officials within the Cabinet Office had agreed to meet with the Chairman and representatives of the RFL to discuss what more can be done to improve the likelihood of Honours for those involved in rugby league.

Action: Meeting to be arranged with the Cabinet Office for the Chairman and the RFL.

AOB

Associate Member Eric Czerwionka introduced Wally Salvan, Wheelchair Rugby League Founder, and Gillian Johnson, Bradford Bulls Wheelchair Rugby League, who alleged that funding for Wheelchair Rugby League had been removed by Sport England as part of the upcoming funding announcements.

Responding on behalf of the RFL, Niel Wood stated that the RFL had no desire to pull funding from Wheelchair Rugby League and that Wheelchair Rugby League had been included in the RFL's Whole Sport Plan. He explained the process involved in Sport England's awarding of funds to national governing bodies and that the next funding allocation would be announced on Monday 17th December 2012 and until that point, the RFL would not know the amount it was to receive.



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Hazel McCluskey responded on behalf of Sport England. She explained how Sport England works with national governing bodies and reiterated the announcement date. She noted that the allocation of funds would be decided by the RFL within guidelines provided by Sport England. She also noted that one of the key outcomes of Sport England's investment in NGBs over the next four year period was a growth in participation by people with disabilities.

Action: Secretariat to invite Wheelchair RL to present to the Group.

Action: Secretariat to ask RFL for a copy of the bid and terms of reference.

Thomas Disken, BARLA solicitor passed away.

Action: Chairman to write to Mr Disken's family.

Meeting closed at 1835.

Presentation: Rugby League Cares

Chris Rostron, Rugby League Cares General Manager

[Secretariat's note: Presentation is available on the Group's website]

The Chairman welcomed Rugby League Care's General Manger, Chris Rostron. The Group feels Rugby League Cares represents an exciting development for the sport and the Group is fully and formally behind the charity as a partner of the Group and its official charity.

After introducing Rugby League Cares (RLC), Rostron presented the background behind the creation of the charity was presented, it objectives and the rationale of unifying previously disparate charities within the sport.

The structure of RLC was delivered alongside the how the charity would be resourced and funded and those funds used in terms of programmes and projects. This included the aspiration to become the biggest club in rugby league with 10,000 members by 2015 and presentation of specific projects in the four strands of: Grants, Welfare, Heritage and the Benevolent Fund.

In concluding, the benefits to all of the new combined approach were presented including the charity's greater ability to support the rugby league community in terms of finding and disseminating support, pooling of talent and resources, increased publicity and greater opportunity for different aspects of the game to be included.

During questions, it was noted that no specific organisation was mentioned during the presentation to demonstrate the holistic and inclusive nature of the rugby league community and RLC.

On funding, Rostron explained that there is enough capital for 2013 but that public funding was required if the charity were to survive. Membership was a key element and the target of 10,000 members would be a central part of the charity moving forward. The Rugby League World Cup 2013 had a role to play in spreading the message about RLC and there was a communications plan in place to maintain contact with the community, media and the RFL.

An events programme was being implemented and use was being made of the RFL's ticket database, past players' networks including Student Rugby League.



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Heritage was one of the elements that needed attention, specifically the need to undertake an audit to ascertain what has taken place before and what is available throughout all of rugby league. One particular aspect was the rugby league statue at Wembley Stadium, for which RLC was supporting the RFL.

Associate Members shared their interest in seeing the community come together at all levels.

The Chairman thanked Rostron for the presentation and taking questions and expressed the Group's support for RLC and its endeavours. It was felt that there were plenty of activities for the whole rugby league community to be involved in and support and the Group would look to do its bit, particularly as RLC was an official partner of the Group.

As the meeting was the last of 2012, the Chairman thanked Mark Ramsdale and Group Officers for their work throughout the year and expressed his pride of the job that was being done and the professional nature of the Group.

Members and Associate Members were thanked for their contributions throughout the year and all were wished a happy Christmas and an exciting 2013 with the Rugby League World Cup and the 25th Anniversary of the Group.