



# All-Party Parliamentary Rugby League Group

## Ordinary Meeting Minutes

### 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013 Committee Room 17

Meeting Commenced 1815

## In attendance

**Members:** Lindsay Hoyle (in the Chair); Lord Smith of Leigh; Simon Reeve, James Clappison. Later, Greg Mulholland.

**Group Secretariat:** Mark Ramsdale

**Organisational Associate Members:** Niel Wood (RFL); Spen Allison (BARLA); Eric Czweronkia (Pro-Build Assist Ltd); Gary Job (Pro-Build Assist Ltd); Andy Habbershaw (Actiondry)

**Individual Associate Members (no affiliation):** Maurice Oldroyd; David Ramage; Jeff Charlton; Gary Brook; Mark Billyard; Anton Muszanskyj

**Non-Members:** (later) Martin Coyd, England Wheelchair Rugby League

## Apologies

Lord Grantchester; Yvonne Fovargue MP; Dave Watts MP; Julie Hilling MP; David Gent; Nigel Wood; Colin Ward; David Wilson; Stephen Johnson; Barrie Smith; Paul Cypher; Ikram Butt

## Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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

## Matters Arising

The Secretariat raised the on-going activities:

- Compilation of the complete list of the Super League Player of the year.
- Consolidation of Group records.
- Preparation of the process for contacting local politicians regarding Associate Membership of the Group.
- Seeking of information on Sport England's Active People measure, including level of rugby league participation broken down by region.
- Investigation into inclusivity event
- Investigation into Women & Girls in Sport Parliamentary Group joint event;
- Contact with South Africa Rugby League and DCMS regarding the South African Government position on rugby league; and
- A memorial at the National Arboretum honouring rugby league playing and supporting servicemen and servicewomen.

## Correspondence

### Sent

- Letter to Mark Harper regarding Visas for rugby league players
- Letter to BARLA with a request for support for the Group

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- Letter to executives within the BBC regarding the regional Inside Out piece on Super League club funding
- Letter to Stuart Cummings on his standing down as Match Officials Director
- Invitation to London Skolars, Hemel Stags, Oxford Rugby League and Gloucester All-Golds to speak at a future Group meeting.

#### Received

- Letter from executives within the BBC regarding the regional Inside Out piece on Super League club funding

## Group Activity Report

The Secretariat listed the number of references to rugby league in Parliament since the previous meeting.

### Ryan Glynn

Dewsbury Member Simon Reeve raised the serious spinal injury of Shaw Cross Sharks player Ryan Glynn. Ryan was injured in a legal tackle playing for Shaw Cross against Elland on 9th March.

The Group was informed that Glynn was in the spinal unit at Sheffield, one of the best facilities in the country. He is in good spirits after an eight-hour operation and has taken great comfort from his visitors and messages of support from the rugby league community.

Simon asked if the Group and the Political Animals would be able to help support fundraising for the Glynn Family, which was agreed.

**Action:** Secretariat to supply a signed bottle of House of Commons whisky and a Political Animals shirt signed by England and Great Britain Captain Jamie Peacock and Australian Captain Darren Lockyer.

It was noted that the Rugby League Benevolent Fund and BARLA had been involved.

## Rugby League World Cup 2013

Niel Wood provided a brief summary of the status of the RLWC13.

In response to questions from Associate Members about the World Cup trophy, Wood explained the trophy is the game's version of the Olympic touch and has been and will be seen by many people. This was being converted to ticket sales and it was expected that a return to the RLIF would be made, as set out in the UK's bid.

Organisations could support the tournament by taking "Day to Remember" packages whereby 12 to 500 tickets could be purchased, branded and given to whomever the body might wish. Additionally, hospitality packages are available. All details were available on the World Cup's website: [www.rlwc2013.com](http://www.rlwc2013.com).

It was noted that the Trophy was at the 2013 Pumbed Rugby League Varsity Match.

**Action:** Secretariat to liaise with the RLWC13 office to see when the World Cup is to visit constituencies.

Meeting closed at 1837.

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## Presentation: England Wheelchair Rugby League

Presentation commenced at 1906.

Greg Mulholland in the Chair.

The Chairman welcomed Martin Coyd, England Wheelchair Rugby League General Manager and thanked him for presenting to the Group. He recognised the work being undertaken at Medway, calling it a “wonderful outpost of rugby league”.

Coyd presented his background and experiences in the armed forces rugby league and his roles in Medway, the RFL and in England Wheelchair Rugby League. He spoke of the Group event held in Portcullis House in 2009 and after speaking to Medway Council, its positive response and foresight in seeing a fantastic opportunity in the game and desire to support.

The game originated in France and has often developed out of basketball clubs. There have been some developments out of Super League clubs, such as Bradford and Leeds. The growth and improvements in quality of the game and those playing is positive and qualifications specific to wheelchair rugby league have been created. People take part from huge and varied backgrounds and people of all abilities can play wheelchair rugby league, the result of which is incredible levels of skill and intensity in the game.

The league season starts at Easter weekend, with games played over two basketball courts. There are two leagues in the UK, West and East, featuring 12 teams with cross-conference games at the end of the season. It is very true to the mainstream version of rugby league, with the same rules except for their being no scrums.

In 2012, the Wheelchair Rugby League Home Nations tournament took place featuring England Reserves, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. This year, the World Cup is taking place in Gillingham, Kent over 3<sup>rd</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> July. The facilities at the venue are excellent with seating for 1000 spectators to see three games a day. There will be a big opening ceremony and a documentary crew following players and teams. It is hoped that Channel Four might see fit to cover, bolstering its outstanding coverage of disability sports.

The cost to run a wheelchair rugby league club is three times that of a normal club due to logistics and equipment, particularly the chairs required. When questioned about funding being pulled from the wheelchair rugby league, Coyd explained that there had never been any funding from Sport England for wheelchair rugby league.

**Action:** Secretariat to write to all MPs who have a wheelchair rugby league side and extend an open invitation to attend games.

**Action:** Secretariat to investigate an event in Parliament and a visit to watch the game being played.

**Action:** Secretariat to investigate a Political Animals wheelchair rugby league game.

The Chairman closed the presentation, thanking Martin for his time. The Chairman set out the Group’s support for wheelchair rugby league, noting that after receipt of the requested report, the Group is “clear and positive” in its support for the sport and all were looking forward to a World Cup in Kent.

The presentation concluded at 1935.

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