



## RFL COMMUNITY BOARD CHAIR SUMMARY – 21<sup>st</sup> JUNE 2023

Dear Community Game Colleagues,

The Community Board met on Wednesday and were delighted to note that Sue Taylor, BARLA Chair RFL Vice President and Community Board member has received an MBE for the work she has done for the community game. In addition, four members of England's Wheelchair Rugby League squad have been recognised following last autumn's thrilling World Cup triumph – captain Tom Halliwell, who has been awarded the OBE, plus Sebastien Bechara, James Simpson and head coach Tom Coyd, who have been awarded the MBE.

This is a great accolade to all those involved in the Community Game and very well deserved.

We're also delighted and proud that Jon Dutton, the former CEO of RLWC2021 has received an OBE and would like to extend our congratulations to him and his team.

The first item on the agenda was an update from David Raybould, RFL Competition Manager, on the calendar planning work that has been underway with the youth and junior leagues. It is recognized that there are a lot of rugby league activities to fit into calendar planning, which includes league fixtures, cup games, school games to name a few. This work has evolved with the evolution of concussion in sport and there is a desire to have a defined off season to reduce the level of risk. There are several research projects going on and we as always will be led by the data to ensure that the game takes place safely.

Next on the agenda was Chris Spurr, Community Coach Development Manager, who provided an update on the review of the level 2 coaching course structure and the proposed CPD coaching journey. There may be a possibility of being able to deliver one day of the coaching course online, however there is still a need to have practical elements. It was noted that UK Coaching would no longer be providing coach education administration for courses, and these would be transitioning into the RFL. The Board were also informed that there are several coaches that register to attend courses but do not turn up so we will be reviewing the refunds and transfer policy. In addition, we will be reviewing the rules on coaches registering on courses and classed as "working towards" and reviewing those registered on GameDay to understand in what capacity they are coaching. We would ask that Clubs support us in gaining a better understanding of our coaching workforce.

Mr Lovering provided an update on the active participant figures which compared May 2023 with figures taken at the same time in 2022. The Community Board noted that there continues to be an accelerated growth in women and girl's activity. There has been a significant increase in our inclusion playing offers post RLWC2021. Open age is an area of concern together with the transition from youth and open age; this is something that we will be gaining a greater understanding of, using the registration data. Our intention is to understand the motives of retained players but also lapsed players that have not registered to play. The Community Board will be updated at their next meeting.

Mr Mitchell, Warrington Foundation gave an update on the recent conference they held which involved the Super League Club, Foundation and community game and club stakeholders. The purpose of the conference was to outline their "Big Hit" strategy, which aims to support the growth and development of rugby league in the town. I attended the conference myself as an observer and found the whole concept a great idea, bringing all rugby league people together from the Warrington area, listening, challenging and inputting ideas as to how to make the game better. We will ensure that best practice can be shared across all Foundations. Further evidence of the work Foundations deliver was outlined by Mr Lovering who gave an overview of the programmes delivered by the Foundations supporting the delivery of the RFL Community Strategy.



The Community Board undertook an evaluation survey in March with the results presented at the meeting. There was a general feeling that it is timely, as so much is happening in the wider game, for the Board to be refreshed, with all areas of the game represented and consideration given to the Community Strategy and the Code of Sport Governance, to ensure diversification. We discussed this at length and agreed that all members should have skills and knowledge relevant to different areas of the game, so a skills and competencies matrix could be used with an open and transparent recruitment process undertaken. RFL Executives are to create this and share it with the Community Board. We also discussed the way in which the board conducts its meetings and will be moving to a consent agenda, to ensure the board has ample time to discuss important, strategic topics. It is envisaged that the Community Board will be restructured by the end of this calendar year.

Finally, we received an update on Our League Active. It was always intended that fees would be reviewed bi-annually to enable incremental changes rather than major price rises. The Community Board agreed that fees would be reviewed ahead of the 2024 season, which will be discussed and agreed at the next meeting in September.

Many thanks for reading,

**Sandy Lindsay MBE, Chair, RFL Community Board**