

RFL COMMUNITY BOARD CHAIR SUMMARY – 27TH NOVEMBER 2024

Dear Community Game Colleagues,

The Community Board held a meeting on Wednesday evening. The meeting began with a tribute to Peter Moran, a former Community Board member and President of the National Conference League, whose dedication to Rugby League left a lasting impact. The Board extended its condolences to Peter's family, honouring his contributions to the community game.

The Community Board's Terms of Reference were reviewed, leading to a significant resolution regarding the representation of the Community Game at upcoming RFL Council meetings. It is worth highlighting the Board's diverse membership, which encompasses a valuable blend of skills, knowledge, and experience. With both long-standing members and new faces, this diversity enables the Board to effectively address, engage with, and inspire the many facets of the community game.

For further details on the Community Board members please visit the RFL website. [HERE](#)

Mr Raybould, the RFL National Development Manager, participated in the meeting to provide an overview of the initiatives undertaken as part of the Game Wide Review Refresh. The sport is currently confronting numerous challenges that impact player experience, retention, and governance. Mr Raybould delivered an update regarding the working groups that have been established and the proposed solutions across six key themes: Match Officials, Coaching, Competitions, Governance, Touchlines, and Adult Behaviour.

Next Steps:

1. Develop and finalize a detailed action plan that includes designated roles, timelines, and objectives.
2. Disseminate these actions and provide regular updates to stakeholders through club communications.
3. Organize a game-wide webinar in early 2025 to address these issues and present updates on key initiatives, particularly concerning brain health.

Mr Raybould and his colleagues will continue to provide updates to the Community Board and the Community Game regarding the priorities necessary to implement the required changes.

We then had the opportunity to hear from Ben Thaler, the newly appointed Match Officials Recruitment and Development Manager, along with Phil Bentham, the Head of Match Officials. They provided valuable insights into their current initiatives, which include an audit of active match officials and comprehensive support for match officials throughout the UK. Additionally, they are conducting an audit of Head Cams, developing a Recruitment and Retention Strategy, and establishing a new structure or pathway for officials. Lastly, they are focused on educating and developing tutors and assessors to enhance overall match official training and support.

Ms Barrett provided a comprehensive update on the Our League Active membership scheme, including the net revenue received. She sought agreement and additional input on the prize offerings for 2025, as well as how donations could be utilised to enhance the community game. Stay tuned for more information on this. As I mentioned in my September update, the Community Board approved a modest £2 fee increase for 2025 to sustain activities and reinvest directly into Rugby League, ensuring its long-term accessibility and growth.

Mr Lovering then shared that he has taken interim responsibility for the RFL Performance Department to align with the Talent Sport England funding application. He also outlined plans for the Player Pathway, with further updates expected in the New Year.

Mr Coyd updated on the England Wheelchair Rugby League team's recent trip to Normandy, where they were defeated by France 32 to 28, following a win against Spain with a score of 60 to 28. He noted a significant impact on the sport, with an 85% increase in participation since the World Cup and a 163% rise in playing opportunities. Currently, there are 50 teams and clubs in the UK, with growing interest from areas like Edinburgh.



The meeting reinforced the Board's commitment to addressing challenges and driving progress. With strong leadership, innovative solutions, and a united community, Rugby League is set for a bright and sustainable future.

Stay tuned for more updates as the Community Board continues to shape the game, we all love!

Many thanks for reading as always and do let us know your thoughts.

Sandy Lindsay MBE
Chair RFL Community Board