



Minutes of the **Sussex RFU General Meeting** held at 7.45pm on the 25th July 2011 at Seaford RFC.

11/01 Present: A. Butcher in Chair and Messers Atthis, Bailey, Beglan, Bridges, Butcher, Croucher, Edmonds, Edmondson, Gordon, Hooker, Hopkins, Howorth, Mercer, Newcombe, Nichols, Richardson, Sealey, Thompson G, Thompson J, Wade and Representatives from Brighton, Bognor, Burgess Hill, Crawley, Crowborough, Ditchling Eastbourne, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath, Hastings, Heathfield, Horsham, Hove, Lewes, Midhurst, Newick, Pulborough, Seaford, Shoreham and Uckfield.

11/02 Apologies: Messers Baker, Bradford, Jacqui Coleman, Cook, Doyle, Fisher, Geering, Graham, Lewis, Parker, Rogers, Vincent and Representatives from Hellingly, Holbrook, Norfolk Arms, St. Francis and Worthing

The minutes of the General Meeting held at East Grinstead RFC on 7th March 2011 had been circulated and signed as a correct record. The Executive minutes of 25th March and 25th May were considered. There were no matters arising.

11/03 Nomination of Officers:

Allan Butcher opened the meeting and suggested that the officers proposed below be voted in 'en bloc':

POSITION	2010/11	2011/12 Proposed Nomination	
Chair Discipline/Governance	F Edmonds	F Edmonds	
Chair Finance	R Hopkins	R Hopkins	
Volunteer Coordinator	G Howorth	G Howorth	
Chair Competitions	K Nichols	K Nichols	
Chair Coaching & Player Development	G Jones	A Croucher *	
Safeguarding Officer/ Manager	J Coleman	J Coleman	
Facilities	P Mercer	P Mercer	
Sponsorship & Communications	N Silk	G Ross *	
POSITION	2010/11	2011/12 Proposed Nomination	
Patrons	D Wade	D Wade	
Minutes Secretary	P Sealey	N Walker	
Schools & Youth Discipline Secretary	R Edmondson	R Edmondson	
County Match Administration	K Gordon	K Gordon	
Women & Girls	S De Silva	S De Silva	
Youth 7-18	D Hooker	D Hooker	

Youth Competitions	D Hooker	D Hooker	
19-24 (HE/FE)	S Christian	S Christian	
Minis	K Blakiston	K Blakiston	
Webmaster	N Silk	P Sealey/ D.Lewis *	
Referees Representative	I Mitchell	I Mitchell	
Schools Representative	C Jones	C Jones	
Sussex Fixture Bureau	K Nichols	K Nichols	
Youth Registrar	E Sears	E Sears	
RDP Chair South	G Howorth	G Howorth	
RDP Chair South West	C Keeley	C Keeley	
RDP Chair Central	P Harding	P Harding	
RDP Chair East	D Jenkins	D Jenkins	
West Forum	D Beglan	D Beglan	
East Forum	I Newman	I Newman	
Senior XV Manager	S Bates	S Bates	
U20 Manager	P Colley	P Colley	
London DOC	J Thompson	J Thompson	
Sussex Schools RFU Committee	P Atthis	P Atthis/ D.Hooker	
ERCA	F Edmonds/R Edmondson	F Edmonds/R Edmondson	
CSP	D Fisher	D Fisher	
Kit Manager Seniors/ U20's	S Bates	S Bates	
Sussex RFU Referee Co-ordinator	----	P. Atthis	
Assistant Secretary	----	S. Flint	
League Competitions	M Richardson	M Richardson	
Keeper of Archives	P Sealey	P Sealey	
Medical Panel	Dr D Elliott & Dr D Thomas	Dr D Elliott & Dr D Thomas	

This suggestion was formally proposed by Mr Keely and Seconded by Mr Jenkins and was agreed.

* As Geraint Jones had resigned as Chair of Coaching and Player Development, Alan Croucher had put himself forward for this position. This was proposed by Ken Nichols and seconded by Alan Jenkins and in the absence of any other nominations was agreed.

* As Geraint Jones had resigned as Sponsorship and Communications Officer, Gavin Ross had put himself forward for this position. This was proposed by Heathfield RFC and seconded by Crowborough RFC and there being no other nominations this was agreed.

* As Nick Silk had resigned as Webmaster, Peter Sealey had agreed to help in the interim, with the support of Dina Lewis (Sussex RFU Administrator). The Executive Committee agreed to seek a permanent officer for this position. It was agreed a small working committee be set up to agree how to move this matter forward. This action was proposed by John Thompson and seconded by Roger Edmondson and there being no other nominations this was agreed.

The documentation issued did not include the position as London Representative although John Thompson agreed to continue in this position.

The responsibility of managing the kit for the under 14/18's remained vacant and it was agreed that the Executive Committee would seek someone to fill this role permanently.

The position of Sussex RFU Secretary was to be held by Roger Edmondson for the next two years, however, it was suggested that Simon Flint may take over this role from 2013, subject to nomination. This was proposed by Ken Nichols and seconded by Kenny Gordon and there being no other nominations this was agreed.

Roger Edmondson was thanked for all his administrative work and for taking up the Secretary position following the resignation of Peter Silk, the previous Secretary.

11/04 Sussex RFU Representative's Report

It was confirmed that Graham Thompson had been nominated to continue as the Sussex RFU representative at the England RFU. Graham confirmed to the meeting that this was not a 'happy time' at the RFU and a Council meeting was being held on 2nd September to help resolve this. Although Graham was unable to disclose specific information as he was restricted by a confidentiality agreement, Graham was confident that things would soon be solved and moved forward, although it was very upsetting. Graham took a series of informal questions from those present and answered to the best of his ability considering his obligations under the confidentiality agreement.

Allan Butcher advised those present that he was meeting with the Rugby Development Director on 26th July to find out what level of funding could be expected from 2012 onwards. If this was below the current 50% level then Alan suggested that a case would be put forward based on the geographical area of Sussex. A sevens, touch, tag rugby and 2015 legacy plan was also being discussed at this meeting.

11/05 Subscriptions

Richard Hopkins (Treasurer) proposed that the current level of subscriptions remain the same. This was proposed by Ken Nichols and seconded by Chris Keely.

11/06 Sponsorship and Communications Officer's Report

As Gavin Ross had only just been formally elected, it was suggested that this subject be discussed at the next General meeting in September at Burgess Hill RFC.

11/07 Chair of Coaching and Player Development's Report

Alan Croucher stated that there had been a number of resignations across the playing and coaching team. Alan had reviewed the whole set up and considered what was currently wanted and why. He had also looked at the present communication channels. He confirmed that he now had a list of how he wanted to develop a variety of aspects of how things were run. In the short term, it was agreed that they would focus on developing 'cluster managers' (each club should have a coaching rep) and that standards should be put in place. There was discussion over whether coaches should remain with their current age groups as they progress or specialise in one age group. Alan also intended to focus on mentoring and building links with clubs.

Alan therefore suggested that the Coaching and Playing restructure will be as follows:

To identify talent from clubs and schools

To develop club clusters – building coaching roles within clubs

Standardise coaches and get the best players playing for the county

The meeting was advised that there would be no under 14 development this side of Christmas as this was under review.

It was also a concern that 24 coaches were needed and currently there was only 2.

Questions were taken by Alan from those present.

11/08 Volunteer Co-ordinator's Report

Gary Howarth issued a document to the meeting, which had also been emailed, entitled 'Community Rugby, People and Places 2010-2011'. He also gave a short presentation on the 'Leadership Academy' and its aims.

The RFU's policy to develop its volunteers had resulted in a Leadership Academy Programme, which was being run in Sussex between September 2010 and July 2011. There was only 10 places so clubs were advised to put forward volunteers to take part.

11/09 Proposals by Hove RFC to change Second Team competition rules

Hove RFC proposed a change to the current Second XV competition arrangements. Andy Ward from Hove RFC advised the meeting that Hove Second team had found it hard to get suitable level games and that this had de-motivated their players and it was felt that Sussex I players were disadvantaged by Second teams.

A discussion took place regarding this matter.

A vote was held amongst those in attendance that held a mandate on behalf of their clubs as there were opposing views on this matter. Hove RFC proposed that Sussex CB lobby the RFU formally to implement suitable league structures for 2nd XV's. This was agreed and carried.

11/10 Safeguarding Officer /Manager's Report

Jackie Coleman was absent from the meeting and she had sent her apologies. Her report was contained in the pack provided to the meeting.

11/11 Any Other Business

The Sussex RFU Handbook was being prepared and those present were advised to make Dina Lewis or the Secretary aware of any changes of officers.

The meeting was made aware that books in aid of the Wooden Spoon Charity were available for purchase.

Ardingly Development Camp places were being taken up and were popular. The take up of girls on this course was disappointing, although there were a total of 110 children attending.

Richard Hopkins asked those present to ensure that club accounts and commercial insurance details were forwarded to him.

Referees Society – Mike Richardson confirmed that the Sussex Society had a new appointment system and the Youth and Senior Referee contact was to liaise with clubs regarding their weekly referee. Peter Atthis reminded clubs to get their referees properly qualified.

Paul Chapman from Crawley asked whether there would be any promotions to encourage more players, similar to before the last World Cup. Gary Howarth confirmed that there would be a social rugby initiative to encourage families and players to return to rugby based on tag, touch, beach rugby, sevens, non contact etc after the World Cup.

Paul wanted to know what could be done to encourage more players. Gary said that society had changed and that the 'social rugby' initiative should help.

Allan Butcher thanked Seaford RFC for hosting the meeting and complimented them on the improvement in their clubhouse facilities.

There being no other matters to discuss, the meeting was closed at 9.50pm.