

Report from the Sussex Representative on the RFU Council

I am pleased to report that I have already seen Eastbourne, Haywards Heath, Lewes, Seaford and Uckfield in action. From the “burns” received by players I am sure you are all looking forward to some rain and softer pitches. From early season on the touch line I am sure the 2009/2010 season will produce some exciting matches.

I have also visited Rye for a club “audit” with the President and the Secretary. Good luck to Rye, you have the Executive’s support.

At the Executive meeting on the 7th October planning commences for the visit of the RFU hierarchy in March next year please make sure that everyone has the dates in the 2010 diary—**26th to 28th March 2010**. Our County Secretary is now demanding one page reports only! This will prove difficult this time around as my report must include news from the meeting of Council on the 2nd October.

Council Meeting on 2nd October 2009. The Chair was taken by our new President, John Owen.

John introduced the six newly elected Council members.

It is also John’s wish that Council get to know our England players. It has been agreed with Rob Andrew that Council members will be invited to attend England training sessions (not in blazers and ties, so watch this space)

The Chief Executive, Francis Baron give a most detailed report.

It was confirmed that after pressure from leading Sports, including Rugby the Government have confirmed that OFWAT have withdrawn the intended water charges for drainage on such things as car parks. This could save some clubs thousands, if charges had been applied.

The Australia and New Zealand matches are heading to sell outs and the Argentina match has sold well in excess of 50000, already above budget. Hospitality sales are picking up slowly.

As you will be aware the Image of the Game Task Group has completed its report. This has been issued and presented to the media. All members of the Task Group were thanked for their efforts and especially the speed at which they worked to finalise their work. Well done from Sussex to Bob Rogers who was part of this task Group. I have a fully copy of the report if anyone wishes to read it.

Clarification was given with regard to certain matters relating to Performance Related Pay, this was necessary to correct a press report by the Guardian.

The position with respect to the financial stability of some Championship clubs was of concern. The RFU have sent in consultants to one club. It is hoped that if clubs have problems they should advise the RFU as soon as possible and not wait until the creditors are knocking on the door The RFU can help with advice but not financial aid.

The planning process for the 2015 World Cup has started, more on this in our next report.

The South Stand Development is now 98% complete. Virgin Active is now open, five weeks ahead of schedule and with a membership exceeding expectations on opening day --- 1100 plus.

Good progress is being made on settlement of claims. EDF have settled and paid us nearly £600000. It is hoped that the overall clawbacks on cost will be £2m.

The commissioning of the sculpture for the piazza to be known as the **Core Values Sculpture** has lead to some interesting comment. Certain matters relating thereto are to be referred back to the Management Board.

Questions to the Board

There were various questions; the most substantive was from Tim Stirk. He questioned the wisdom of doing away with the Under 18 AER Group team and our withdrawal of this team from FIRA competitions. After considerable debate it was agreed that a Task Group be set up as soon as possible reconsider the position. The team has always been consider the place were late developers or late arrivals to the game were found and given a chance to prove themselves as a result there have been a number of players who would have been missed had the team not existed and who would not have risen to full caps.

Questions to Committee Chairman

Rob Udwin, Chairman of the Community Rugby Board was asked if rumours about changes of names of RDO's was being considered. It was confirmed this was possible with a change in focus, including job specification.

CRTG proposals on Membership and Corporate Governance and Management

A presentation was made by Nick Eastwood and over some three hours a lively debate took place with the result that 15 Resolution or amendments were voted upon.

This is the first part of I believe three debates on the report. The outcome of these debates will mean considerable changes to rules and regulations and future administration of the Union.

I have added an attachment which I hope explains the results of debates and votes to date.

This brought an end to a lengthy but well conduct meeting.

Please keep contacting me if I can help or direct on any matters. I look forward to another active and interesting season. Good Rugby to everyone.

Graham P Thompson
Sussex Representative on the RFU Council

3rd October 2009