



Kent County Rugby Football Union Limited

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Hon. Secretary

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Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting will be held at **Charlton Park RFC, 60A Broadwalk, London, SE3 8NB on Wednesday 15th September 2021, 7:00 pm registration for a 7:30 pm start.** The members of the County Executive Committee hope that you will be able to attend.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the last AGM, held on 22nd September 2020.
3. Address of the President, who will propose the adoption of the Report.
4. Minutes of the AFGM of 11th December 2020.
5. Election of Officers & Vice Presidents for 2021/22.
7. Election of Committee for season 2021/22.
8. Appointment of Auditors.
9. Any other business.

Report

Executive Committee

The KCRFU Executive Committee met 6 times in 2020-21, 5 times virtually and once physically at the Annual Strategy Day held at the Nevill Golf Club, Tunbridge Wells. This was not the best way of working, but the attendance record of all of those on the Executive was outstanding.

1. Liaison and Partnership with the RFU

During the season, the RFU undertook the completion of a fundamental staff structural review, which saw many furloughed under the Government scheme and a major change in the way that the staff are structured at CB (Constituent Body) level. We said goodbye and thanks to our 2 RDOs Gareth Jackson and Mike Hollis, and to our 4 CRCs. After a break for selection purposes, we welcomed: Adam Cottingham as our new CB Relationship Manager for London and the South East; Tim Holmes, our Club and Volunteer Support Manager; and Mark Finnis - well known to all of us in the County as an ex-CRC, as our Club Developer. With all of these staff having responsibilities for up to seven Counties, ways of working have inevitably been different with all of our contact being by virtual meeting/webinars and CB briefings, and with all three RFU staff starting to attend our briefing meetings with Kent clusters after Christmas as they returned from furlough. Ways of working will be clearly different in future with far fewer boots on the ground and advice being accessed by the new RFU Club Support Centre on the RFU website. It's early days, but there was little choice but to adopt these new ways of working due to the loss of revenue caused by the pandemic as a result of no spectators at the Autumn and Six Nations games, which together provide some 85% of the RFU's annual revenue.

The County also suffered from the financial position, losing some 75% of its normal local funding from the Governing Body and all of its income from sponsorship, hence the need for a slimmed down work programme during 2020-21 and 2021-22.

2. Major Activities for the Executive during the Year

2.1. Covid 19 Relief Fund

The County Executive concluded early in the pandemic that communication would need to continue through the medium of Zoom and led the field in opting for this way of working. This enabled Kent to swing into action in setting up and administering a Covid 19 Relief Fund of well over £100k made up of unspent RFU money and County reserves. Nigel Fray chaired this Fund and has been ably assisted by our new Treasurer Ben Ashby and our office Manager Tracy Pettingale. It is pleasing to note that in terms of immediate sustainability, only one grant of £5k has been required to be paid out due to the outstanding job that our 59 RFU voting clubs did to control expenditure in general, maintain income streams such as subscriptions from sympathetic members and to Government and local authority income streams. More detail about the Fund is provided later in this Report (see 'Club Development Committee' section).

2.2 Administration of the RFU Winter Survival Fund

Kent worked with the RFU to ensure that this Government-funded scheme benefitted as many Kent clubs as possible. Over 35 clubs received financial support from the Fund, which, added to other Government and local government funding ensured that our objective was achieved of seeing 59 clubs into the pandemic and all 59 clubs survive the pressures placed on them by the pandemic. As we approach 2021-22, the challenge has changed to one of ensuring that we retain and recruit players, referees and coaches in enough numbers to closely match where we were before the game closed down in March 2020. We will be monitoring this very carefully through our regional cluster groups, our cluster leaders and through our RFU Club Developer.

2.3 Future Competition Structure (FSC)

Prior to the close down of the game, Kent clubs and the CB were consulted on what they require of the RFU structured competitions offering for XV-a-side Senior Men. During 2020-21 that has taken shape, with the key objective being to cut travel distances and costs, to look at what the players want in terms of total games and to ensure that the structure provides a safe environment. For 2021-22, the structure remains as before, but from 2022-23 it will change, with additional leagues being added at various levels, in some cases a reduction in games and also the addition of more RFU cup competitions up to level 5. In addition, lower sides will - if they satisfy a range of criteria set down by the London and SE Competitions group - be allowed to play in the RFU leagues. We do not anticipate too many Kent clubs wishing to do this given soundings made during the early part of 2021.

2.4 Work Programme

As we start 2021-22, Kent like many Counties will have less available funding with which to provide as full a work programme as we would like. We will of course provide the core activities of Discipline under Tim Fagg and Andy Gent at Age Grade level. So, too, the competition's structure and the administration of our Kent Merit Tables, under John Day and his band of Local Competitions' Secretaries. We plan also to focus on Safeguarding, which is of increasing importance to our game, and to reflect this we are appointing a new Safeguarding lead and team along with our Rugby Safe Officer.

We will also, through Taff Gwilliam and our Coaching and Refereeing Sub-Committee, look to provide a clear support programme to recruit new coaches and referees, whilst retaining those we already have. We will put emphasis on the recruitment of new club and CB volunteers through our new Leadership Academy, which is to be led by Trevor Martingell, our Volunteer Manager for the County. As we move to a post-pandemic environment, we hope to return monies from the Covid Relief Fund back to more 'business as usual' programmes, including for small facilities grants whilst we wait for the RFU to be in a position to resume funding major facilities improvements. We will continue with our Cluster consultation and communication, where, over the past year and across the 5 Geographical and the Women's and Girls' Groups, we have been able to engage 85% of clubs.

Where the Women's and Girls' game is concerned, we will work with the RFU and our own Committee, under Graham Withers, to add to the 1300 (as at March 2020) active players in Kent and to play our part in helping the RFU achieve its target by 2027 of 100,000 active participants in the Women and Girls game.

2.5 The Executive Committee

Thanks to all those who served on the Executive and our sub –committees as volunteers during the last, difficult year. It is hard to maintain motivation for the game we love when no matches are being played and we have been unable to visit our clubhouses for banter and social interaction.

In 2020-21, we saw Ben Ashby replace Peter Dessent as the CB's Honorary Treasurer. We are extremely grateful to Peter for his long and valued service, and are pleased to report that Ben has settled in well into the job, bringing his investment expertise to our table, and a shrewd knowledge of our finances, aided by the diligence and hard work of Tracy Pettingale in the County office.

Nigel Fray has taken on the key role of Director of Governance, overseeing what we do from the corporate side to safeguarding and discipline. Nigel has also represented us on the RFU's CB liaison groups on potential club insolvency and financial monitoring, and on the RFU's Diversity and Inclusion Group.

Finally, I would like to record the Executive's thanks to Sylvia Taylor, who having retired as County administrator took on the mantle of Mike Cordell as County Secretary. Many thanks to you, Sylvia, for going a distance further as you and Tracy developed the new style County Awards Dinner at the Ashford International and for all of your work on our behalf over the years.

And.....finally, finally, our thanks to John Nunn, our outgoing President, for sitting through our meetings both physical and virtual over the past 3 years and making his contributions to our decision making. Also thank you, John, for representing the County at a number of club lunches and matches and being at all of the County Championship games when you were able to do so. Greetings to our incoming President Doug Hursey who, since the turn of the year, has already brought commercial acumen and knowledge of the game to our meetings and to our Strategy Day.

County XV

The Senior Men's and Women's campaigns and the U20's competition were cancelled in their entirety. The planned Development Tour to South Africa, due to take place in July was also postponed and is now scheduled to take place in 2023 when conditions in South Africa are expected to be appropriate for a successful and enjoyable trip for the county development squad. In the meantime, the RFU Community Game Board is conducting a review into the future of RFU funded championships for Senior Men and Women and for the U 20's.

Game Development Committee

This committee is responsible for all 'on the pitch' elements of Kent rugby but due to the pandemic, no competitive rugby was actually played during the 20-21 Season. Clubs attempted to engage with their players via various methods, most using social media, zoom, or fitness challenges, etc all of which were supported by Kent RFU and examples shared via the Club Cluster Virtual meetings. Training restarted in line with the RFU's return to rugby road map and Rugby Camps took place at some clubs for youth and mini players, again in line with RFU guidance.

Committee members worked hard behind the scenes to try and ensure that clubs would be able to restart rugby in the 21 - 22 season in good shape and that clubs would be able to enter competitions at the appropriate level."

Youth Rugby

Having taken over as Youth Chair in October, expecting to have some rugby normality back soon thereafter, it is a relief that we now look towards the new season with the expectation of a normal season.

Throughout the challenge that the last 18+ months has thrown at the Kent rugby community I have been impressed and astounded by the inventive ways clubs have used to keep their youth players engaged.

From Running "fixtures" to virtual team passing and online fitness sessions, the great coaches we have in Kent really stepped up and we can all be optimistic about a resurgence of youth rugby in Kent come September.

Mini Rugby

We could never of imagined the impact Covid would have on our beloved sport during this last season. As Kent Mini Chair it was amazing to see how our Club's Mini Representatives came off pitch to use various social media platforms to keep their players and families in touch. Virtual ball passing, pancake tossing and a whole lot more showed massive team spirit by all.

Women & Girls

For a "non" year this has been an incredibly productive one for the female game in Kent. I have maintained regular email communication with all Girls and Women's club contacts, and we also formed a single "cluster" in the excellent Cluster Zoom initiative that Kevin Cope headed up.

Girls Clubs: Rather than Covid being a complete hindrance, the Girls sections in Kent have been proactive throughout the 2020-21 season running training sessions and eventually modified matches once the regulations permitted them. This has led to a terrific influx of new players.

County Girls Programme: Due to the Pandemic, the 2020/21 County U18 and U15 programme took place virtually. I should very much like to put on record the huge amount of work put into this by Trish Sellors, Mark Finnis & Simon Parsons. We held 4 zoom sessions for each age band to support and educate the girls. Topics covered included Activate, Headcase, Laws, Game Understanding, Principles of Play and Player Reflection. We believe we are the only County to offer any such sort of links and support. The final session saw a discussion on rugby academies and how these can support the players' progress whilst studying.

Four Girls are currently in the Under 18 England Talent Development Group, and were selected in the starting XV for a North v South match at the end of May. The girls are Nicole Whyte, Hannah Smith, Tori Sellors & Tess White. Nicole, Hannah & Tori will be assessed for England U20s during August/September. Tori & Tess will be having assessments for the U18s in September.

Womens' Clubs: Clearly having no rugby for over a year was a worrying issue as we all seek to grow the female game. However, there has actually been significant growth in the number of teams competing in the senior game, which is very encouraging. For the 2021-22

season there are over 360 team entries nationally, which is a near 20% increase from the 2019/20 season and also an increase of around 13% from the entries that there would have been last season, which given the COVID-19 situation is remarkable. Our entered clubs are:-

Level 2 Championship One (South): Blackheath (10 teams)

Level 3 Championship South East Two: Beckenham & Medway (10 teams)

Level 4 NC1 South East (East): Blackheath II, Beccehamians, Canterbury, Cranbrook & Tonbridge Juddians Pink Ladies (8 teams)

Level 5 NC2 South East 2 (East): Aylesford Bulls, Dartford Valley, Gravesend, Lordswood and New Ash Green (9 teams)

County Women's programme: Head coach Nathan Morris has kept in touch with the initial cohort of 2020/21 players via a What's App group and spirits seem high. He has also brought new coaches – from Blackheath and New Ash Green - on board.

A fuller version of the Women and Girls' report can be found on at kent-rugby.org, About Us, County Documents.

Club Development Committee

The 2020 / 2021 season has been a unique and challenging experience for all clubs across the County, with Covid-19 curtailing all playing and social activities and re-focussing our perspectives for the future.

Our Club Development Committee (CDC) has continued to meet remotely with the excellent assistance of our Office Manager Tracy Pettingale, most of us having made the adjustment to 'Zoom' seamlessly.

'Zoom' has become almost as commonplace as the mobile phone, yet has been the principal way in which we have remained in contact with club representatives, responding to the fluctuating guidance coming from government and the RFU, as Covid ebbed and flowed amongst our communities. As part of our mission to communicate more directly with clubs, we have continued with our approach of encouraging the sharing of experiences and ideas by introducing local Club Cluster Forums. Our key objectives as identified by clubs previously; Player Recruitment & Retention, Volunteer Recruitment & Retention and providing Covid safe club Facilities.

Club Cluster Forums

We launched the first set of local Club Cluster Forums in August 2020, with a series of six geographical and specific cluster meetings. Each Cluster was led by a volunteer, these were: Ben Ashby (North Kent), Trevor Martingell (Metropolitan Kent), Graham Withers (Women & Girls), Dominic Clare (West Kent), Dan Phimister (Mid Kent) and Pete Macaulay (East Kent). I am grateful for the time and effort each of these individuals dedicated to this endeavour and would like to record my sincere thanks for their time and commitment.

In establishing these 'Clusters' we focused upon the following key objectives;

- Providing a fast and efficient two-way communication network between geographically located clubs and the County volunteer leaders, who ensured that information and any issues affecting our clubs were brought to the attention of the County Executive and hence our RFU Council member and RFU Area Representatives.
- An insight into the needs of Kent clubs, during these Covid affected times on a regular basis, while keeping a perspective of future needs.
- Collecting data which enabled a regular health-check on our members and their club's priorities.
- Created a platform for clubs to share their ideas and identify ways of working together, supporting each other to ensure our game remained sustainable within the County. The sharing of these ideas and experiences across all our clubs and beyond with the RFU.
- To help ensure that all 69 Kent clubs survived these challenging times and restarted rugby.

The first set of six Cluster Forums was held in August 2020, with 99 representatives from 46 clubs attending. With the impact of Covid having disrupted rugby extensively at this point our primary topics of discussion focussed on; the changing 'Rugby Landscape' as we emerged from the first lockdown, sharing the concerns of clubs identified during the Kent Clubs June 2020 Return to Play Survey, Funding support for struggling clubs, the sharing of ideas and club successes, and the provision of 'free' support from Club Champions.

This was followed by further Club Clusters held in October 2020 and February 2021, responding to the changing opportunities for clubs to engage with their players, as the RFU introduced our roadmap back to playing rugby. Across all three Forums we had engaged with 309 club representatives with only 3 playing clubs not represented, an exemplary achievement for which Kent clubs should be congratulated, as a credit to the rugby community.

The output from this Club Cluster Forum initiative has been both informative and celebratory, Kent clubs have shared with us the many extraordinary things they have been doing to both support their members and their local communities. There were many examples from online club quizzes, puzzles, skill & fitness events, individual walking / cycling challenges to improvised tours to each of our six nations grounds, together with some amazing club videos each engaging players and members of all ages. However, some of the most impressive activities have been in support of our local communities, reaching out to others beyond our game. I record some of those impressive and worthy activities here and there are many others:-

- Aylesford RFC - providing food parcels twice weekly to families who have been identified through local schools and have children that get free school meals.
- Medway RFC - donating laptops, tablets etc to support the digital divide in local schools, 104 devices donated and raised circa £1,000 for their refurbishment
- Bexley RFC - working through St Paulinus Church and school in Crayford, donating essential items to the 'Bexley Food Bank'.
- Cranbrook RFC - donated bar stock to NHS first responders at Secamb in Paddocks Wood.
- Medway RFC girls section - raised £6,000 from their sponsored steps challenge, providing support for local Paramedics based nearby in Chatham.

Our Club Clusters model has now been adopted across all the newly restructured RFU areas teams, being used as an effective way of engaging with clubs. In April 2021 clubs attended an RFU Area Club Development Team 'Return to Play Workshop', attended by 23 clubs, these identified a number of common challenges for clubs during restart and shared ideas on how to overcome them. Once again "Clubs working together, all part of the same Rugby family'.

Club Champions (Marketing & Sponsorship)

In October 2020 we agreed a partnership with 'Club Champions (CC)', the UK's only business club for community sport. With the impact of Covid, our principal sponsors have withdrawn their support to Kent rugby, this together with the removal of RFU funding has meant the County has looked to explore other ways to raise funds to support clubs and our rugby priorities.

Kent RFU along with several other County Constituent Bodies' purchased membership for all of our clubs to the 'Club Champions Scheme' which provides an opportunity for clubs to profit from an informative training programme to help each of them increase their commercial sponsorship at a time when it is most needed.

Clubs have free access to the 'Squad Member Education Programme'. This consists of a series of high-quality modules and interaction with CC experts, guiding through a 6–9-month programme designed specifically to help them learn how to define/refine their club brand values and commercial proposition, how to then take it to the market, win business and deliver on club promises. Split into six parts, there are two introductory modules to establish what each club currently has, in effect to strengthen their brand — and then four core growth, or progressive, modules. At the launch of our scheme, we had 43 attendees from 23 clubs, all receiving free access, sponsored by our CB, we expect as clubs and the partnership grows success, further members will join. It's hard to understand why all our clubs have not taken advantage of this offer, our colleagues in other CB's report a much higher inclusion rate.

Club Champions will lead us on a programme of commercial change, creating a new sales and marketing campaign that will unlock the latent potential in the county CB as a commercial partner to the business community. To do this we will create a three-channel strategy that focuses on what the CB has to offer, to whom and what investment is needed to be successful. It will necessitate change – of purpose, of vision, of commitment and of resources - but if successful it will provide a revenue generating platform for the county that will reduce the need to rely on Twickenham for financial support. With this in mind we have joined Kent Invicta the county's Chamber of Commerce and a 'marketing brochure' which demonstrates our 'brand' and the potential within our sporting communities has now been produced to promote the benefits of partnering with Kent RFU. Our strategy is to seek the following types of sponsorship;

Headline partners - who will become indelibly associated with the county CB and its rugby community. The headline partner will feature prominently in all our media and communications channels, and we will, wherever possible, connect their senior people with influential people from the rugby and country networks.

Official partners - This can be any type of business and by supporting the county we will make them the official partner in their sector, giving them category exclusivity.

Directory profile - providing access to our clubs through promoting their brand on our website and extensive media channels.

In addition, we are keen to encourage suppliers who can provide our clubs with advantageous discounts or product promotions.

Supplier partners - The proposition is that the county negotiates a deal (sponsorship fee, commission on sales and discounted rates for the clubs) with the business and then acts in partnership with them to actively promote their products as an "official county supplier".

Our first 'Supplier Partner' is;

Vevo, formed in 2015 they are a company that provides a portable, simple to use and affordable solution that enables sports teams to record and analyse matches and training sessions without the need for a camera operator. They currently operate across a range of different sports and are keen to develop their offer within Community Rugby, having recently partnered with Yorkshire RFU and Hampshire RFU.

Already embedded within the football community they are working with many professional clubs; Manchester City, Roma, Feyenoord, Chelsea and Everton to name a few, as well as some high-profile rugby enterprises; Wasps, Richmond, Saracens Women, Gordon School and the Rugby Academy Ireland.

The system can be used to record matches; training sessions, or used to support / review the CB's selection of players at Kent RFU representative trials. The software platform is capable of learning and providing focussed portions of any aspect of the recorded material eg scores, scrumage, line-outs etc.

A discount for clubs purchasing the system has been agreed, together with the use of a demonstration system which can be used at Kent events and around the county clubs to promote its benefits.

Leadership Academy

During the 2020 / 2021 season we welcomed Trevor Martingell to our Club Development team as our new Leadership Academy lead. Many of you will know Trevor from his association with Student rugby in Kent and from his excellent work with the TAG Rugby Trust that took our game to young people in Africa.

We have been establishing a new look Academy using a modular course with online learning, supported by mentoring support. The course will develop individual learning and enhance existing skills in personal development, and essential club and playing matters. It will help individuals, and their club, the county and the game to flourish and grow. Trevor is seeking applications from interested parties during May to August and can be contacted by email at Leadership-Academy @kent-rugby.org with the course expected to start in September 2021.

Safeguarding and Rugby Safe

With rugby curtailed by Covid there has been little activity associated with playing our game, however, there has been the need for other activities. The annual Safeguarding Audits were completed by Kent clubs in accordance with RFU regulations although there was an initial poor response which required chasing. Clubs are reminded that sanctions can be applied to clubs if they do not comply with safeguarding regulations, at the time of submitting this report we still awaited submissions from three Kent clubs, an unsatisfactory situation.

One Rugby Safe issue that emerged during our Covid isolations was the impact on the mental health of our members. Clubs were encouraged at our Cluster events to reach out to their membership and to check on individuals' welfare. To help our players and volunteers both Kent RFU and the RFU launched initiatives to support individuals who were struggling with their isolation, with our members sign posted to The Harlequins Foundation Mental Health Workshops and Kooth Mental Health Workshops.

Sadly, our Rugby Safe Officer Trevor Hopper has stood down from the role to explore other challenges. I would like to thank Trevor for his dedication and efforts on behalf of clubs in Kent and wish him well for the future.

Volunteering

With the challenge of Covid restricting our opportunity to celebrate our rugby volunteers the usual annual Volunteer Awards event was not held, however we did seek club nominations for contributions during the 2019 / 2020 season. As an opportunity to celebrate the successful candidates did not present itself, we finally took the decision to inform the winning individuals separately, in the hope that a reception to celebrate their contributions might be possible during the 2020 /2021 season. We congratulate all the candidates that were nominated, those who were successful in their category can be viewed on the Kent RFU website.

As no significant playing opportunities have presented themselves during the season Kent will not be seeking nominations for the 2020 / 2021 awards.

Our President's Award winner for 2019 / 2020 was **Gary Hodkinson** Sittingbourne RFC and was our nomination for the Mitsubishi Motors sponsored RFU President's Value the Volunteer Outstanding Contribution Award.

The Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer of the Year Finalists Awards 2020 presentation took place on Friday 19th March 2021. Due to Covid restrictions the event was held virtually, hosted by RFU President, **HH Jeff Blackett**, Mitsubishi Motors Managing Director, **Rob Lindley** and **Alex Payne**, Sky Sports Presenter. Finalists from each County were invited to the event and were joined with a number of special guests to make the event memorable. Congratulations go to **Karen Gray** (Sheppey RFC) and **John Heaver** (Ashford RFC) who were the Kent nominees, both who were recognised for their exceptional efforts in supporting rugby at their clubs

Mitsubishi Motors have recognised club volunteers during the Covid disrupted 2020 / 2021 season by providing three national award categories, for individuals or a group of volunteers, which look beyond the playing of our game. These were:

- **Resilience in Rugby Volunteer Award** - This award will recognise an individual, or group of rugby volunteers, who have demonstrated significant success in supporting their club and its members over the course of the last year
- **Beyond Rugby Volunteer Award** - (Community Focused): This award will recognise an individual, or group of rugby volunteers, who have supported their local community in new and innovative ways during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Diversity & Inclusion Volunteer Award** - This award will recognise an individual, or group of rugby volunteers, who have demonstrated significant success in championing diversity and inclusion within their club and the wider rugby community.

A number of nominations were submitted from Kent with the outcome not known at the time of this report, however all our volunteers should be congratulated and deserve our thanks on behalf of their local communities and rugby as a whole.

Concluding; The new season has provided a very different challenge for clubs and how the County focuses its efforts in support of our rugby community. As chair I have found myself engaging through Zoom more regularly with colleagues in other CB's and sharing our experiences, and seemingly putting in more hours to this voluntary role. I am grateful for the enthusiasm and commitment that our own CB and Club Development volunteers have shown and thank; Tracy Pettingale, Trevor Hopper, Nigel Fray, Owen Smith, Steve Homewood, Dave Pratt, Trevor Martingell for their time. I have also been overwhelmed by the resourcefulness of our clubs and their commitment to local communities and members. I strongly believe that our rugby family will grow stronger as the result of these testing times we have faced together.

COVID Relief Fund

The Executive Committee announced in April 2020 that it would be implementing a **COVID Relief Fund**, overseen by a Sub-Group chaired by Nigel Fray, to provide financial support to those clubs that are experiencing or are in imminent risk of experiencing financial harm (including winding-up) as a direct result of the national lockdown and suspension of all rugby activity arising from the COVID pandemic.

To support the Fund, monies (both from the County's own resources and from the RFU) were diverted from planned programme spend, and reprioritised to supporting clubs through the lockdown. The total sum reallocated to the Covid Relief Fund was £110,000.

The Sub-Group set up to oversee the Fund, considered in detail all the applications received on a case-by-case basis, making its funding decisions on the following principles:

- Grants should not be awarded simply to replace revenue foregone, either from on-field (e.g. hosting of tournaments) or off-field activities (e.g. hiring of facilities for social events).

- Grants should not be awarded to clubs that have a failed/failing business model and where financial difficulties were already being experienced before the COVID lockdown.
- Grants should be awarded only to those clubs in immediate financial need and which within the next 3 months are / will be unable to meet their fixed costs, as a direct result of the COVID lockdown.
- To maintain a 'watch list' of clubs, to identify those that may fall into difficulty over the next 6 months.

In making its decisions, the Sub-Group was aided greatly by applicant clubs providing accurate and up-to-date operational financial information. It also frequently judged that the first best option was that clubs might benefit from being better placed to help themselves, for instance by receiving general advice to ensure sustainability into the new season (eg on accessing other funding support that is available, either from Government, Local Government, the RFU and Sport England, advice on VAT, etc). More recently, clubs have also been able to apply through the RFU for grants and loans under the Government's Winter Sport Survival Package.

Of the 27 clubs that applied for support over the past year, only one was deemed to be in sufficient need that it required financial intervention (receiving a grant of £5,000).

We welcome the fact that very few clubs experienced severe financial difficulty. This reflects clubs' great efforts to manage their respective financial positions prudently and to seek to reduce costs as much as possible.

We are exploring how best to support clubs in gearing up for a return to playing. However, we need first to avoid complacency, to ensure that we are able to assist clubs whose sustainability and viability remain at risk. While, at the time of writing, the lockdown is due to ease and rugby is about to embark upon the RFU's 'Return to Play' protocol, the Executive Committee has decided that the Covid Relief Fund will remain open to applications, to provide emergency financial support should that in the end prove to be necessary – and again, provided that the application criteria have been met.

International Tickets 2020/21

Following the resumption of the Autumn International matches, all fully paid-up Associates of the County may apply for tickets to England's matches at Twickenham, however such tickets are provided on the condition that they are for the sole use of Associates and their guests. Recipients will be asked to acknowledge their acceptance of the RFU's terms and conditions for the sale of tickets, and any transgression will be the subject of disciplinary action by the County. Payment for the tickets is now by bank transfer only.

All those who have previously applied for tickets will be contacted. Any other members who wish to be added should contact Tony Power direct by email: athpower@btinternet.com or by post: 7 Foxgrove Avenue, Beckenham, BR3 5BA.

Kent Notices: Subscriptions

These are due on 31st October 2021:

Member Clubs £50

Individual Associates £10

Corporate Associates £250

Associated Clubs £20

Please ensure that your club's standing order is for the correct amount as some have not amended it to reflect the current subscription rate.

Minutes of the Annual Financial General Meeting held on 11th December 2020, via Zoom at 7.00 pm

The Meeting was chaired by Roger Clarke, Chairman of KCRFU.

Clubs represented: (A record attendance)

Old Colfeians RFC, Old Elthamians RFC, Tunbridge Wells RFC, Aylesford RFC, Bexley RFC, Tonbridge Judds RFC, Canterbury RFC, Askeans RFC, Sheppey RFC, Vigo RFC, Blackheath RFC, Folkestone RFC, Bromley RFC, Dartfordians RFC, Gillingham Anchorians RFC

Apologies: Brockleians RFC and apologies from 7 Individual Members

Roger Clarke welcomed all to the meeting, a record attendance of clubs represented.

1. To receive the Company's Financial Statement for the year ended on 30th June 2020 and the Auditors' report thereon and to make any suitable order in respect thereof.

Kent RFU's financial statement had been published on the Kent RFU website and circulated via email to all clubs and those Individual Members with a registered email address.

1a) Although Peter Dessent has since stepped down as KCRFU Treasurer, Peter is in attendance and will answer any questions regarding last year's accounts which he prepared whilst completing his term of office.

1b) All allocated budgets, that were unspent with the closing down of the season due to COVID, were allocated to an Emergency COVID Relief fund for any clubs who were in serious financial difficulty due to COVID. The request for this fund was not needed at the start of the lockdown in April but it may result in more clubs in financial difficulty now that the following season is majorly affected. The fund is still open for applications.

1c) The county has a healthy financial position to cope with the current position that we find ourselves in with the significantly reduced funding received from the RFU, (down 90%). It has always been the plan to be able to fund ourselves in times such as these. 1d) A question was raised as to why Club Development budget had increased significantly. ANS: The budget is incorporating the COVID Relief fund. 2

2. To hear any other relevant financial matter for the consideration of the County Committee during the ensuing year, but on which no voting shall be allowed.

2a) Ben Ashby, the new county treasurer confirmed that our total revenue is down 75% and several initiatives have been taken to reduce the running costs. Investments are being looked at to enable cash to work a lot harder and new sponsorship is being investigated.

2b) Giles Hilton on behalf of Shepherd Neame apologised for not being able to support/sponsor the county this season and would look to try and support the county again when things get back to normal. The county appreciates the support that Shepherd Neame have given over many years and understand the effects that COVID has had on their business and look forward to their partnership in the future.

There were no other questions raised and the meeting closed at 7:11pm.

Election of Officers & Committee for Season 2021/22

Officers

President	Doug Hursey
Hon. Secretary	
Hon. Treasurer	Ben Ashby

Committee Leads that were in place in 2020/21

R J H Clarke	Chair, Executive Committee and RFU Council Representative
Nigel Fray	Director of Governance and CB Facilities Management
Gary Evans	Assistant Treasurer
David A Clent	Chair, Game Development Committee
Kevin Cope	Chair, Club Development Committee
Tim Fagg	Chair, Discipline Committee
Trevor Martingell	Chair, Leadership Academy
John Day	Chair, Adult Competitions Committee
Taff Gwilliam	Director of Representative Rugby
Steve Homewood	Honorary Associates Secretary
Owen Smith	Safeguarding Officer
Trevor Hopper	Rugby Safe Officer
Alan Erskine	Chair, Youth Rugby
Dawn Walters	Chair, Mini Rugby
Dan Phimister	Chair, Coaching and Refereeing
Tony Power	International Ticket Secretary
Dave Pratt	CB Volunteer Co-ordinator
Neil Wiltshire	Chair, Club Kent
Matt Parker	Marketing and Sponsorship
Darren Reeves	Education
Graham Withers	Chair, Women & Girls
Cluster Leads:	
Ben Ashby	North Kent

Trevor Martingell
Peter Macaulay
Dan Phimister
Dominic Clare
Graham Withers

Metropolitan Kent
East Kent
Mid Kent
West Kent
Women & Girls

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