



West Norfolk Rugby Club Limited Annual Board Report

June 2019 – July 2021

July 2021

1. Background

The strategic plan written approximately two years ago has focused attention particularly on the development of the club. It has proved to be a valuable document and helped to keep us on the right track. We have now reviewed this document, fine-tuned our thinking, and responded to the changes that have taken place during the last twenty-four months. Ideas have been developed and specific proposals have been put forward so that we can start a serious fund-raising campaign for the club which will enhance the playing provision at all levels.

The number of players at age grade rugby remains buoyant, despite the limitations of the covid-19 restrictions. This is an achievement for the club, its age grade coaches and managers, and overseen by a highly competent club coaching co-ordinator.

Since our last formal face to face meeting of the club, two former players, Ali Price and Georgie Lingham, have emerged as players at an international level. The club is proud of their achievements at the highest level.

The club has gone through the process of incorporation, to better protect the financial liability of its officers, board members and trustees. This will further safeguard the club and its estate, as legally separate but culturally joint entities.

The club had followed the RFU plan of the club accreditation process during the latter part of 2019 and into 2020 and had completed its documentation when the pandemic began back in March 2020. This process was never completed due to the major cuts made by the RFU and the subsequent restructuring. We believe the RFU are developing a new system of measuring club performance, and this is likely to be based on the GMS computer system.

The President and Secretary have recently completed the Eastern Counties Playing Review on behalf of the club – this response was well received.

2. WNRFC Mission Statement

In our last full playing year 2019/20 the club was awarded the ECRU Presidents “Club of the Year” title – an outstanding first-time achievement. This was reward for all activities, both on and off the field, coaching, managerial and administrative, and by the senior side remaining unbeaten throughout an entire season of league and cup rugby. Other playing sections also had cause to celebrate their progress, a sure indication of success across the board.

3. Summary of Objectives

There is much evidence that in these difficult times the progress of the club’s development has continued to improve. Our structural plans to develop the clubhouse and grounds facilities is already proof of the work being done. We are indebted to Ian Trundle for the work he has led with his staff and the production of a complete set of architectural plans which have been approved by the RFU, a significant achievement. We have already raised some monies via the RFU and the local authority in the form of grants. We are conscious that to fulfil the designed plans we will need to launch a significant fund-raising timetable and activity programme to see the development completed over

several phases of work. We aim to be careful in our planning to avoid the lure of large loans from the RFU and other sporting bodies in case they hang like a “financial millstone” around our neck for years to come! Whilst it would be great to have all the designed and approved plans completed by the time our centenary arrives in 2025, this is not imperative. If we decide that it cannot be achieved, we intend to be flexible and prudent enough to extend the completion date to a more convenient time.

We also intend to identify, through various events and activities, further sponsorship campaigns and fund-raising activities e.g. summer balls, auctions and much more. We have already formed a small strategic working group who are already working on a fund-raising road map, which will very soon be published. We hope all members will accept the responsibility of working as valuable parts of the organisation and take on the management of individual events. We envisage that those people will work in conjunction with the strategic group who will be accountable to the board.

4. People

The aims and objectives of the club remain the same. Much work has already been undertaken here but many of the issues need to be constantly reinforced – they never go away.

Great strides have been made regarding the transparency of the funding of rugby within the club. We have constructed a playing budget process. This requires each playing section to work to a budget which is agreed with the board for the coming season – this of course includes membership fees, coaching subsidies alongside physiotherapy costs. This document is currently under review as part of its annual cycle.

Playing development meetings involving all playing sections are regularly held and notes of these are available for all to read. Safeguarding is always a standard agenda item. First aid and DBS requirements are reviewed and upheld.

The club also now has a coaching policy document in place which is reviewed regularly. This has been developed by our Club Coaching Co-ordinator - Roland Smith.

The development of coaches is a priority for the Playing Development Committee and provision of CPD for coaches is discussed in this forum.

Key personnel are kept up to date with developments from the RFU e.g. the launch of the new online learning courses recently revamped in some cases, along with new ones which are requirements of the RFU.

eLearning: Headcase Concussion Awareness Training

eLearning: Introduction to Safeguarding

eLearning: TackleSafe

This summer, the RFU will make some regulation changes. The biggest impact will be in **RugbySafe**. New regulations will come into force over the next twelve months which will lay out the requirements for pitchside First Aid and Immediate Care provision. We will be announcing shortly several first aid courses to be hosted by the club in August. There are also be a number of regulation changes that will change the way the game is played.

The huge success of the last full playing season saw promotion for the 1st XV along with an unbeaten cup run. Other teams/age groups also had successful seasons with some getting to county finals which never regrettably took place due to the disruption of Covid-19.

As we move towards the start of the new season, we are currently recruiting a number of coaches to fill vacant roles with adult teams. We are aiming to have these positions filled by the start of the season.

We are pleased to announce that the club is to re-launch a veterans team for the new season. At present fixtures are being arranged and a new membership category is to be created.

West Norfolk RUFC would not survive without the huge contribution from all our sponsors and volunteers, and we would like to thank all those who contribute to the smooth running of the club; whether it be at meetings, coaching, first aid, cooking, cleaning, the list goes on and on.

The following members have been recognised for their contribution since the last AGM.

Eastern Counties Rugby Union	Damien Fish Darren Clarke John Mellor	Certificate of Appreciation Certificate of Appreciation Certificate of Appreciation
Norfolk Rugby Football Union	Bob Cranna Edward Mellor Oliver Slater	Life Membership of Norfolk Certificate of Appreciation Certificate of Appreciation

The club was also awarded a Certificate of Recognition as Club of the Year 2019/20 by Eastern Counties Rugby Union.

As we begin to see a route to return and restart rugby, we at West Norfolk need to take time to reflect on those members, players and supporters of the club who have passed away since the last AGM.

W. Wilbraham	G. Howat	T. Ruane	T. Barnes
L. Phelps	M. Wiles	S. Jelfs	R. Christopher
J. Woodcock	K. Fostervold		

5. Environment

Schools Programme

The pandemic has put a stop to almost all the work in this area.

When schools open their doors to allow access to their pupils, we will need to rebuild the links that were in place prior to the pandemic. We need to make the most of the opportunity of Smithdon High School coming on board as a major sponsor.

Community Engagement Activity

Community engagement links will also need to be rebuilt when restrictions are lifted. We need to promote ourselves so that the community make more use of the facilities available. Our proposed development plans will greatly assist in this area.

To kick start community engagement following the pandemic West Norfolk hosted a Haka Summer Rugby Camp. This was well attended, and players had a unique opportunity to experience the New Zealand culture, Maori protocols and kiwi life like a professional rugby player.

Facilities

Work has begun in earnest on the development of the clubhouse. Since the strategy was published the bar has been refurbished along with the toilets and the disabled access to the ground floor of the clubhouse. A new outside bar has been provided.

We have utilised NatWest funded work force activities to maintain the ground, lights, posts and surrounding horticultural/arboreal area.

During the second wave of the pandemic the electricity supply was removed from the squash club which allowed the club to move forward with the demolition of the building.

Work has now taken place to make safe the base of the old squash club so that it can be turned into a viewing area and a more spacious location for the outside bar. This will be upgraded this summer and, in the future, used as the base of a new extension.

Work has been undertaken to secure funding for the building of the external lift to provide access for all to the first-floor social area of the clubhouse. This is being supported with an on-line fund-raising campaign. It is intended to recognise the generous contributions given by donors within the clubhouse.

Further developments are planned for the summer, these include a number of long overdue maintenance items such as: -

- Replacement of glass panels in some windows.
- Replacement of old wooden framed windows.
- Blocking up windows at the rear of the clubhouse.
- Shop refurbishment.
- Function room refurbishment to include new double doors, blocking up the meeting room door, replacement ceiling.
- New landing and stairs floor.
- Replacement of hot water system cylinder and its relocation.
- First aid room refurbishment.
- Replacement of pitch 3 floodlights.

It is hoped that we can complete the list above, but this is all subject to finance being available.

6. Business

Incorporation has provoked changes to some previous working practices and the positions held by some members.

The establishment of the Company Board of Directors and the appointment of seven directors has meant that this body has replaced the old executive committee. We continue to develop our new corporate structure which is based around the Operations Committee (general facility management), Playing Development Committee and the recent development of a Strategic Fund-raising Working Group. Each of these working groups is accountable to the board.

We need to recruit volunteers who will organise social events for members that raise much needed income to continue the development of the club. These members will work in conjunction with the strategic fund-raising group.

Fund-raising is going to be a more important part of life in the club. To this end the board is looking to maximise income. Having incorporated the club, we are now actively looking at registering as a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) with our legal and financial advisors. This is so we can open more doors to access grants and to take the tax advantages of Gift Aid donations.

The '200 CLUB' is a monthly draw for cash prizes. It also provides a valuable source of revenue for the club. It only costs £5 a month, payable by standing order, to take part. There are four prizes each month (currently £120.00, £90.00, £60.00 and £30.00).

To join please contact the secretary by email: - secretary@westnorfolkrugby.com

You may have more than one number, so existing members of the 200 CLUB may purchase additional numbers if they wish. The more taking part the bigger the prizes and the more money West Norfolk Rugby Club receives.

The recommendation of the board regarding membership fees for the new season is that a new category **Veterans** be created and the fee to be charged is £60.00 for this first season. All other fees are to remain unchanged.

7. Summary

These have been difficult times for all sporting clubs over the period of the Covid-19 pandemic. The board has been diligent in managing all the processes and protocols that have arisen during this period. It is vitally important we re-establish the playing morale as well as our organisational development. We are now even more dependent on maintaining our stated principles of social inclusion and diversity, whilst at the same time providing a recognised centre of excellence for community rugby.

We now embark on a major fund-raising journey in which we hope all members, volunteers and sponsors will become fully engaged and with team spirit will be stimulated again to attain the stated objectives of our Strategic Plan.

West Norfolk Rugby Club Limited Board of Directors

Graham Woodcock
Chairman

Ian Trundley
Vice Chairman

Bob Cranna
President

Clive Dodds
Treasurer

John Mellor
Secretary

Keith Davis
Director

Steve Smith
Director