LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Minutes of the Board Meeting
Monday 5th October 2026

Present: Mr D. Clarke in the Chair, & Messrs, C.A. Baker, P. Deakin, C. Gaffey, A.N. Crabtree, H. Hughes, K. Bennetta & M. Downs.

In Attendance: Messrs, D. Westhead & R Jones.

Apologies: Messrs, G.A. Burns MBE & B.H. Stott.

Regional Managers Report.

D Westhead reported:

Staffing Updates

The following appointments were confirmed:

1. Fiona Beckham has commenced as Club & Constituent Body Support Manager.
2. Michael Gains has joined as Growth Officer.
3. A development call is planned with Lancashire representatives to introduce the new team.
4. Staff biographies and contact information will be circulated shortly.

Regional Growth Partnership

5. Applications for Regional Growth Board positions close on 7 October.
6. National response levels have been reported as strong.
7. Recruitment company support is being used alongside RFU staff to shortlist and interview candidates.
8. Appointments are expected over the coming weeks.

Partnership Development

Work continues on developing relationships with:

9. Local authorities.
10. Leisure and community providers.
11. OnSide Youth Zones.
12. Sefton Council.
13. Manchester United.

The aim is to increase rugby participation and widen delivery of T1 Rugby in non-traditional settings through partnership working.

Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Monday 7th September 2026, (previously circulated) were accepted after a slight amendment from RJ and signed per procurationem as a correct record.

Matters arising.

There were no matters arising.

RFU.

DC Reported.

1. Governance Review Group discussions continue. There is greater recognition of the importance of game representation within RFU governance structures and the retention of the Council as a voting body. Further proposals are expected ahead of the RFU AGM.

2. Stadium development works are progressing successfully, including pitch improvements, car parking and toilet upgrades. Funding arrangements for additional stadium development have been approved subject to agreed conditions.

3. Rugby League Impact Working Group - Discussion took place regarding the proposed working group examining the impact of Rugby League on Rugby Union participation. Stephen Pearson will chair the group. Yorkshire representatives remain engaged. Progress is awaited from RFU strategy staff.

Club & Community.

CG Reported.

1. 60 clubs completed the Lancashire Club & Community Survey, an increase from 54 clubs in the previous year. Survey analysis remains ongoing.

2. Initial findings suggest:

   Many clubs do not clearly understand Lancashire RFU's role and responsibilities.

   Communication and engagement remain challenges.

   Club officers are often overburdened and reluctant to take on additional community projects.

3. Planned Actions

   Lancashire has been divided into seven regional cluster areas.

   Committee members have been assigned area responsibility.

   Community WhatsApp groups are being established.

   Cluster meetings will be brought forward into October and November.

4. Salford Rugby Union Cup Proposal

   CG reported encouraging discussions with Salford City Council regarding a Rugby Union community cup competition to complement the Rugby League Valentine's Cup.

   The concept could involve Eccles RFC, Broughton Park, De La Salle & University of Salford

   The working title suggested is the **Jimmy Peters Cup**, recognising the first Black England rugby international who was born in Salford.

Discipline.

No Report.

Finance.

No Report.

Mens & Boys Rugby.

HH reported:

1. U18 Programme
   U18 assessment process is underway. Record nomination numbers have required two assessment events. School nominations exceeded club nominations for the first time in a number of years. Approximately 50 players are expected to progress to final trials.

2. U20 Programme
   Nominations have opened. Good initial interest has been received.

3. County Championship – Senior Mens Div 1 will be selected from Level 4 and down. No details yet have been received from the County Championship committee about either the Mens or Womens Competitions.

Mini, Junior & Schools.

Mini, Junior. No Report

Schools

RJ reported:

1. Support the Safeguarding team give on the CSO Whatsapp group is excellent.
2. Awaiting numbers for U12s and U14s Girls Festivals which are scheduled for the 10th & 16th November respectively. Both will take place at Preston and be delivered as T1 Rugby.
3. Jake Squirrel of the PGH Foundation is working with over 100 girls at 6 Schools.
4. Girls Festival being arranged by Scarisbrick Hall.
5. KB - accepted an invitation to join the Sale Sharks Academy communications forum to represent Lancashire Girls Rugby interests.
6. Trafford Schools – all players are registered with Trafford MV. It is felt this project is outside of regulations and should be raised with Mark Saltmarsh at the RFU.

Safeguarding.

Although unable to attend due to technical issues, Carol's comments were presented.
The Board noted:

1. The recent safeguarding conference was well attended and positively received.
2. Strong support continues to be provided to Club Safeguarding Officers through the safeguarding team and WhatsApp network.

Volunteering.

No Report.

Womens and Girls.

KB reported:-

1. U16 Girls
   130 nominations received. Two county squads selected. A new development squad has been created to support future player progression.

2. U18 Girls
   Only 20 nominations received to date. Significant concern exists regarding player retention at U18 level across Lancashire. Clubs continue to lose players directly into adult women's rugby. Several clubs currently have no viable U18 programme.

   The Board agreed this represents a significant retention issue requiring wider strategic support. Kate to work with RFU staff and competition development personnel to identify solutions.

3. Women's County Championship
   Kate expressed concerns regarding Lancashire competing at the highest level without guaranteed access to players from Sale FC.
   The Board agreed participation level should reflect available resources and player availability.
   Kate to hold discussions with Sale FC and provide recommendations before county entries are confirmed.

Correspondence.

There was none appertaining to this meeting.

New Members.

2 New Life Members applications were approved:-
Hannah Chick
Georgina Chick

50:50 Draw

Oct 2026		Value
	TD Stirk	£39.00
	H Henderson	£6.50
	RTJ Briers	£6.50
	G Spenglar	£6.50
	K & A Andrews	£6.50

Date of next meeting.

Next Meeting: 6:30 pm on Monday 2nd November 2026 by Teams.

Any other business.

HH – Only Lancashire & Surrey have not allowed lower XVs in to RFU leagues. This appears to have been the right decision due to the number of walkovers and cancellations. NOWIRUL Merit Leagues continue to be strong with high completion raters.

DC – Ken Andrews is sourcing a new Lancashire Plate.

DC – President RJ will attend the opening of the newly refurbished clubhouse at Garstang on the 31st October

Meeting ended at 7:50pm



_____Chairman Date: 11th November 2026

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