

**MINUTES OF A CRICKET WALES BOARD MEETING HELD AT 10.30am ON THURSDAY 11th MARCH 2021**

**BY TELECONFERENCE**

**Present: Rod Jones (RJ) (Chair); Tony Moss (TM); Leshia Hawkins (CEO); Colin John (CJ); Huw Morgan (HDM); Richard Penney (RP); Jeff Bird (JRB); Sian Webber (SW); Jennifer Owen Adams (JOA); Gareth Lanagan (GL);Richard Penney (RP); Kerry Lloyd (KL); Sue Phelps (SP); Mark Frost (MF); Matt Thompson (MT); Ieuan Watkins (IW); Rebecca Rothwell (RR);**

1. **Welcome from Chair:** RJ welcomed all to the meeting.
2. **Apologies for absence:**  Apologies for absence were received from Hugh Morris and Sohail Rauf.
3. **Declaration of Interests:** RJ wanted it noted that he would have a vested interest in the discussion regarding the new rules pertaining to the appointment of a new Chair.
4. **Approve minutes of Previous meeting:** Subjectto one minor amendment to paragraph 6.2. requested by IW, the minutes of the 3rd December 2020 Board meeting (distributed previously) were accepted as a true record and were signed accordingly by the Chair.
5. **Matters Arising:** RJ confirmed that most of the matters listed on the agenda would be discussed under other agenda items in this meeting apart from the following:

**5.1. Glamorgan Representation on CW Board**: RJ confirmed that Glamorgan CCC had agreed to reduce its representation on the Cricket Wales Board to one Director.

1. **Chair’s Report:**

**6.1.** RJ thanked everyone who had contributed to the recent Board appraisal process. He also thanked those involved in the selection process for the various sub-committees and in particular, the outgoing and incoming Chairs of these committees.

**6.2.** RJ said that at the last meeting in December, he had been optimistic that we might begin to see some cricket activity in the new year. That was not to be the case with the advent of the second lockdown. However, as a result of that lockdown and the on-going vaccination programme it would appear that there may be good news at the First Minister’s next briefing later this week paving the way for some form of cricket activity to recommence.

**6.3.** RJ concluded by thanking those who had contributed to the excellent content and quality of the papers submitted to this meeting.

1. **CEO’s Report:** Prior to the meeting, LH distributed a copy of her CEO report and discussed the main points as follows:

**7.1**. LH said she was also optimistic for a relaxation on restrictions which would allow outdoor sports to recommence activities provided they are able to comply with those restrictions that remain. There is no likelihood of any indoor sporting activity taking place in the short-term following the announcement this week.

**7.2.** LH advised the meeting that a zoom meeting had been arranged for all staff on 18th March during which she will, summarise the key points from today’s Board meeting, share our top-line plans & priorities for 2021 and hopefully generate some optimism for the re-opening of cricket throughout Wales.

**7.3.** LH reported that ECB are still very much in transition and face challenging times in the short term. As a result of this, as well as the on-going challenges posed by Covid, the CPA Partnership Review Process has been put even further back to the end of the season.

**7.4.** LH advised the meeting that she had held discussions with Masuri with regards to a multi-faceted supply and sponsorship agreement with Cricket Wales.

**7.5.** LH reported excellent progress on our Digital, Marketing and Communications programmes with significant increases in followers over all forms of social media platforms. This was particularly true on the recent International Women’s Day which is strong evidence of the increasing interest in the Women & Girls game. JOA and GL congratulated LH and her team on the excellent progress made on our social media presence and the recent branding initiative.

**7.6.** LH said she was pleased to announce that we had received 86 entries for this season’s Welsh Cup which are higher than they have been for many years.

**7.7**. On the Disability front, LH said that we will be submitting, as part of our wider Disability Cricket Plan for the CPA, an application to Lord’s Taverners for funding for officer(s) to deliver their Super 1s programme. We have also had 2 ECB Disability Champion Clubs approved and are actively seeking 1-2 more.

1. **Safeguarding Report:** Prior to the meeting IW distributed a copy of his Safeguarding Report.

**8.1**. **Safe Hands Management System (SHMS)** – IW explained that ‘The Portal’ was progressing well although the staffing implications for supporting clubs was greater than first thought.  To that end, any expansion of SHMS to the remaining 50% of Cricket Wales clubs will need to wait until the back end of 2021 to allow the volunteer and staffing teams to push the 96 clubs with access to compliant status.  The ECB expect all clubs with access to show as ‘compliant’ by July 2021 or they will lose their Club Mark accreditation. IW stressed that we want to provide support to ensure that every club has the opportunity to retain their compliance and CM status.

**8.1.1.** SHMS is developing and it is not yet the finished article.  Some roles are not yet ‘tested’ by the system, for example coaching or first aid qualifications remain absent, so a non-compliant coach could technically show as compliant despite not being fully accredited as a coach.

**8.1.2.** There will be a need for the voluntary and staffing team to identify individuals in roles.  There is a concern that clubs may avoid registering individuals they know to be non-compliant to ensure that no flags are identified.  Yet a club being completely honest with fully populating their date (warts and all) may not achieve 100% compliance on the system. This is recognised as a work in progress and the staff and volunteer network will continue to work very hard to support clubs as the systems develop. LH said that this is a funding risk as we will be judged on the number of clubs that are 100% compliant.

**8.1.3.** IW advised the meeting that Management Information from the system is not currently available.  There is currently no mechanism to download or run a report for Leagues, League Safeguarding Officers or the Board.  Without management information it will be difficult to compel compliance or to demonstrate compliance operationally or strategically. There are communications ongoing with ECB colleagues to change this approach.

**8.2.** **Safeguarding Standards**: IW informed the meeting that the Board has been very clear that they expect ECB standards to be implemented, with a line in the sand that is enforceable and consistent across Wales.  The South East Wales and North Wales Cricket league already mandate minimum compliance with point penalties for failure to adhere to expectations.  There is a need to have a similar system across Wales and this will be mandated for 2022.  SHMS should provide us with the data to ensure compliance is visible (subject to the caveats above). League structures are absolutely pivotal to the success of such expectations.  Engagement with all of the senior leagues is to begin asking League SO’s to take ownership of minimum standards with league sanctions for non-compliance that are identical across Wales.  Affiliation to Cricket Wales could be at risk should clubs refuse support and fail to comply – but this is an absolute last resort (see Governance discussion point 10.5.).

**8.3**. **Case Management**: IW advised that the last few months have been relatively quiet, but a number of cases remain live with a number of individuals currently suspended for safeguarding reasons within Welsh Cricket.

**8.4.** **Close the Loophole**: Both Cricket Wales and Glamorgan CCC have been encouraged to publicly stand behind the NSPCC campaign to close a loophole in the law that excludes sports coaches from being in Positions of Trust.  IW has been working behind the scenes to influence strategically with Government and it was immensely pleasing to see a press release this week that the Government will be introducing a bill to plug this gap.  Whilst there is work to do, this is a huge step forward that will provide additional safeguarding security for 16 and 17 year old children across sport and other organisations.

**8.5.** **Board Lead** – IW thanked JOA for her encouragement and support as Board Lead for Safeguarding over the last few years and welcomed Gareth Lanagan to the role, encouraging him to actively challenge processes and development of safeguarding within Welsh Cricket.

1. **Finance:** Prior to the meeting, CJ / LH distributed four papers as follows:

**9.1. Finance Committee Report**: LH explained that this paper presented the proposed operational plan and associated budget for 2021/22, based on the Strategic Priorities identified under Inspiring Generations, and highlighting in the Operational Plan activities which are linked to ECB CPA Standards. On-going uncertainty owing to Covid and the impact this may have on our ability to deliver in 2021 and resulting spend allocations is extremely difficult to predict, but these documents represent what we hope will be our realistic outcomes. LH said that CW Finance Committee had assessed and approved both the Operational Plan and Budget 2021/22 on 4 March 2021.

**9.2. 9 Month Accounts to 31st December 2020:** CJ reported that he has produced these accounts with a “serious health warning” due to the uncertainty surrounding some of our key income sources. He reported that the £49k surplus for the nine months was likely to increase by the year end due to the continued inability to deliver our current programmes. JOA asked whether we will be able to use any surplus the following year? CJ said that he was hopeful that our funding partners would allow us to retain any underspend, but that was still to be confirmed.

**9.3. Budget 2021 / 2022:** CJ said that due to the unprecedented events of 2020/2021, he has excluded that year as a basis for comparison and has instead used the 2019/2020 budget for this purpose. CJ reported that the 2021/2022 budget indicated a surplus of £29k but stressed that this could be subject to future amendments as a result of Government policy. CJ advised the meeting that LH had been requested by Sport Wales to complete a Certificate of Expenditure (COE) to detail any expected underspend for the current financial year. This reported a potential underspend of approximately £246k. CJ said that the worst possible scenario would be a clawback of part, or all of our underspend coupled with falling foul of the new Sport Wales funding model. CJ concluded by informing the meeting that the Finance Committee had agreed that the budget be put to the Board for approval.

**The meeting accepted the budget as presented.**

**9.4. Operational Plan:** LH advised the meeting that, with an impending change of the Financial investment model by SW (starting in Financial Year 23/24) and ECB’s Financial year starting on 1st February, it is proposed the CW Operational Plan year is aligned to the Financial Year (1st April to 31st March) and that, going forward we should consider presenting a rolling 6 month budget and operational plan.

**9.5. Independent Board Finance / Fraud Risk Assessment:** CJ advised that as part of the Anti-Fraud & Bribery policy agreed in October 2020, the Board had requested that Board members Gareth Lanagan and Ieuan Watkins undertake an independent review of Cricket Wales’s main finance and money-handling procedures to test their robustness. CJ informed the meeting that their report had highlighted a number of potential issues which, while acknowledging the need to limit excessive layers of administration and paperwork, any sensible improvements (however small in detail) to our existing processes should be adopted to reduce risk. The report had been considered and accepted by Finance Committee. CJ expressed his thanks to IW and GL for their contribution to this important exercise.

**9.6**. **Salary Review:** CJ advised the meeting that the Finance Committee had approved recommendations put forward for salary increases certain members of staff as at 1st April 2021, with other members of staff to be reviewed in September 2021.

1. **Governance Group & Board Business:** Prior to the meetinga number of papers had been distributed for discussion. TM, as the new Chair of GovComm thanked JRB as the out-going Chair for his leadership and contribution since the inception of the group. TM explained that agenda items 10.4. – 10.6. were as a result of new ECB guidelines to which we are expected to conform. In the past we have been held in high esteem in the area of governance and so we need to make these various changes to retain our high standards.

**10.1. Revised Member Voting Proportions:** Prior to the meeting, MF had distributed a paper outlining the proposed new voting structure of the Cricket Wales membership at AGM’s. TM said that his only concern was whether the Groundkeepers Association should be receiving the same number of votes as the WACO or any votes at all. RP offered a view that the Groundkeepers Association did no longer warrant a vote. MT also questioned whether WNC should now be receiving a vote as this organisation was now under the umbrella of Cricket Wales. RJ requested that both these issues should be given more consideration, but it was agreed that the remainder of the proposals were accepted.

**10.2. Board Sub-Groups Proposals:** Prior to the meeting, MF distributed a paper which had been approved by GovComm at its last meeting. He explained that the paper was designed to give Governance Committee Members a picture of the current range of sub-board councils and groups and make recommendations to ensure consistency, relevance and clarity of purpose for the future.

**10.2.1.** The paper proposed that the Senior and Junior Councils be replaced by Innovation Groups to provide new vehicles for discussion in these important areas. Consideration needs to be given to the make-up, frequency and the format of these meetings in view of the advent of the on-line facility. JRB said that the new format would provide an opportunity to bring a younger element into these groups. MF agreed saying that the on-line meeting facility would provide an opportunity for young players to be represented at these meetings.

**10.2.2.** TM said that GovComm had also recommended that the current purpose and structure of the Area Boards become subject to review. He said there was a need for flexibility in such a review to ensure that consideration be given to the individual needs of each area rather than trying to apply a blanket approach.

**10.3. Nominations Sub-Committee:** Prior to the meeting, LH distributed a paper in response to a recommendation from GovComm regarding the establishment of a formal Nominations Committee, staffed by Board members, who would be responsible for all holistic people matters, including the succession planning of Board members and formal recruitment process of Board members and Chair, as appropriate. She explained that ECB Standards and advice in respect of the CPA, the Code for Sport’s Governance and a statement from Sport Wales were the basis for these proposals.

**10.4. Board Balance and Representation:** Prior to the meeting LH had distributed a paper which had been submitted to GovComm which was designed to give Governance Committee Members an update with regards to Glamorgan Cricket representation on the CW Board, in order to facilitate discussions and proposals with regards to balance of independent and recreational game Directors, which, subject to Board approval, will need to be taken to EGM.

**10.4.1.** TM confirmed that Glamorgan CC has agreed to reduce its representation on the Cricket Wales Board for 2 to 1. He said that the current Articles would need to be revised to reflect all agreed changes.

**10.4.2.** GovComm has proposed that it should be mandatory that the Chair of Cricket Wales be Independent. If this proposal is accepted, it would require the Chair, once elected, to resign from any other office (if any) held within Welsh cricket. It was also proposed that Chair be appointed by a recruitment process rather than elected from within the body of Directors.

**10.4.3.** LH advised the meeting that all these proposals would need to be agreed at an EGM. New appointments for 2021/22 could be ratified under the new proposals at the AGM in Autumn 2021.

**10.5. Affiliation conditions and regulatory non-compliance sanctions:** LH advised the meeting that GovComm had undertaken a lengthy discussion in respect of Affiliation suspension/removal and protections which should be written into the Articles to ensure CW has sufficient ability to apply sanctions to deal with clubs who do not comply with regulatory requirements (Safeguarding and other codes of Conduct and standards/expectations which will be brought in by ECB in the CPA). As a result of these discussions, the Committee favoured the creation of draft, additional interim sanctions, in particular with regards to Safeguarding non-compliance, before affiliation suspensions were considered. These would be separate to any wider, generic Article amends. The amended Articles would merely need to state that sanctions will be applied where clubs are not compliant. The details of the sanctions and how they will be applied (consistently) to be worked on by Governance Group and recommendations presented to the Board.

**10.5.1.** IW stressed the fact that the intention should be never to have to impose a sanction on a club, but the threat must be there. Furthermore, any such sanction must be appropriate to the offence.

**10.5.2.** CJ said that any sanction needs to come from the leagues and so any agreed disciplinary procedures need to be fed down through the pyramid. TM agreed but stressed it is imperative that there is consistency throughout the leagues. IW said that Cricket Wales would need to present its expectations to the leagues for the 2022 season.

**10.6.** **Directors’ Skills Matrix & Reviews:** RJ informed the meeting that this piece of work was not yet completed and would be reported on at the next meeting. **(RJ to Action)**

**Subject to the above, all recommendations provided by GovComm were accepted.**

1. **Club Support / Participation:**  Prior to the meeting MF distributed a copy of a paper which outlined how the game is preparing for the new season and how an extremely significant effort of club support is on-going in the following key areas:
* National Programmes: All Stars & Dynamos
* Women & Girls Cricket
* Digital Promotion of major programmes
* Play Cricket
* Welsh Cup & 2021 Competitions
* Officials
* Workforce Development Plans / Challenges
* Grants

**11.1.** Following a question by RP, LH advised the meeting that, to have an account on Play Cricket, you must be over 16 years of age.

1. **ECB UPDATE:**

**12.1.** Prior to the meeting, LH distributed a paper which summarised the current position with regards to CPA Contract, the principles of the CPA, and information with regards to the Partnership Review Process, which is due to start in 2021. LH said that she was confident that we were “Amber or Green” on all points.

1. **Managing Risk:** Prior to the meeting, LH distributed a paper which, in conjunction with the accompanying Risk Register allowed the Board members to review the risks facing the Company.
2. **Sport Wales Update:** RR advised the meeting it is intended that Sport Wales staff will return to part-time office working when the schools are fully open. RR also congratulated Cricket Wales on the excellent work with regards to its new branding and social media developments.
3. **Groups & Councils:** LH advised the meeting that she and CJ had attended a meeting of the Welsh Cricket Steering Group on 10th March where she outlined our progress against the key strands of the joint strategy.

 **16. Board Meeting Dates 2021 (all to start 10-30am):**

Tuesday May 25th 2021

Tuesday August 24th 2021

Sunday 26th September 2021 – AGM (Date/time tbc)

Tuesday 26th October 2021

Tuesday 7th December 2021

 **17. AOB:** None

 **The meeting closed at 1-20pm**

SIGNED: Date:

**Chair Cricket Wales**