Communications, Marketing and Sponsorship.

Date 10/10/2023

Update Report compiled by **Dean Gray (DG)**

Key events, issues, and achievements since the last report.

Website
Work continues between Claire, James Barnett, MD of Aspire Digital Marketing, and I on the new website. This is now live but is still being developed. The reception so far has been extremely positive but it will take a while for it to bed in and people to get used to accessing document etc on line.

NRURS have opted for a separate website at this time, although opinions are split as the quality of the new NRU website is widely recognised. We will support NRURS by giving them a dedicated section on the NRU website.

Unfortunately, despite discussions, they intend to stay with their current kit supplier at this stage.

Sponsorship discussions

We have a number of sponsors who continue to support the growth of rugby in Northumberland but are looking to build upon these.

The instigation of a former players' lunch will be an opportunity to build upon this.

As stated before, Northumberland RFU's Diversity and Inclusion policies may prove key to unlocking sponsorship with these organisations (Ongoing).

Dave Penny has agreed to be the main sponsor for Northumberland RFU for this season although he is proving elusive.

A contract has been prepared by Henry and we have had a meeting to discuss this and streamline it so it can be used as a template for all contracts going forward (Ongoing).

Gilbert sponsorship
The new renegotiated contract with Gilbert has been checked by Henry Cave, signed and returned. This includes better terms than the previous contract with a Gift of Kit across all sales rather than when a threshold has been reached, with an increasing percentage when certain sales targets have been achieved. The Gilbert Shop is now displayed on our Website in a prominent

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position and Gilbert have also given us three tickets for Falcons matches on a monthly basis. We will distribute to Clubs to reward volunteers / as a thank you to our county volunteers.

Marketing (ongoing)
DG is now the Rugby Correspondent and main Radio commentator for BBC Newcastle. I will continue to try to increase the profile of rugby in Northumberland wherever and whenever I can, as my predecessor did, within the time I have available, visiting local clubs to interview their coaches and players as well as former Northumberland players who are now Falcons (Captain Callum Chick and Vice-Captain Tom Penny for example).

I have also approached the brand new Sports Editor about covering the Senior Men's County matches online again. This is being considered as BBC Newcastle is committed to covering local sport but there isn't a budget to do this (although I've said I will do this free of charge) I will raise this again when the fixtures are available (Ongoing).

Team of the Month
This has now been agreed with Newcastle Falcons with the Committee again voting on whom, amongst the entries should get 20 tickets to a Falcons match of choice

Social Media – Facebook/Twitter/Website

We will continue to try to increase our engagement with clubs and direct people to the website by sharing posts/tweets or information from a club which promotes the development and growth of playing rugby in Northumberland. This has generally worked well other than one or two spark points between clubs - which have quickly been extinguished (Ongoing)

The website will share from Facebook and Twitter direct on the home page.

County Membership Drive (ongoing)

We are still looking at options to increase County membership- and thence potentially-sponsorship by making the offering more attractive.

Laminated ID Cards have been put on hold until the separation of Old Co and New Co has been finalised (estimate of £340 for 200 received from Proad (Carlo Nardini) although this estimate will need updating.
The separation has now taken place and I will be raising this at tonight's meeting to move forward if agreed.

Suggestions made that will be followed up when that is resolved are that when renewing membership, we also send members a lapel pin (I still have plenty) and/or a chitty for a pint or a sandwich when they attend a County game on production of their ID Card or a buffet lunch offer twice during the season where two matches are to be identified and members invited to attend (Ongoing)

All CB Reps are encouraged to become County members (posted again on CB Reps Whats App Group) (Ongoing). A" Role of the CB Rep" Document has been supplied me by Andy Thomson. I will review this and send it out so that everyone knows what their responsibilities are.

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The Former County players' Reunion Event was postponed from the Summer. I spoke to Graham Ward about this to see if we can get this resurrected but GW doesn't wish to be involved. I have therefore spoken to Noel Mather and Ruth Scott to assist in organising an event around a County match (u20's or Senior Men/ Women).

Communications
Figures are – F/book 1600 (up 14% since July and 33% in two years) Twitter 2,884 (static) Instagram 1802 (Up). Linked in 32 (up).

All Whats App and F/book Groups for information for various County teams and groups are now well established with proper oversight (Ongoing)

Issues requiring Decision, Discussion or Dissemination
Former Players Lunch – date, venue, format. Input from Noel Mather and Ruth Scott.
ID Cards timing and offering to County members- (all) (Ongoing).
Broadcast of County games and interviews with Players/ Coaches – ongoing.

NB – This report must not include personal or identifiable data as it may be appended to the Board Minutes. If there is a need to report on a Confidential matter, please forward that communication separately, marked 'Confidential'.

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