Communications, Marketing and Sponsorship.

Date 03/07/2023

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

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

Website
Work is continuing between Claire, James Barnett, MD of Aspire Digital Marketing, and I on the new website. This is very finished and should be ready to go live shortly.

James has also kindly offered to run Northumberland RFU's social media presence free of charge for us as part of a sponsorship deal (See below)(Ongoing).

Sponsorship discussions
Ian Richardson and I have met to discuss developing this area with a flexible raft of proposal levels from which potential sponsors can pick what suits their product/ profile best and looking at a list of potential sponsors to approach. We will be looking at this in more detail over the Summer when the season is over (Ongoing).
As stated before, Northumberland RFU's Diversity and Inclusion policies may prove key to unlocking sponsorship with these organisations (Ongoing).
As previously stated, Dave Penny has kindly agreed to be the main sponsor for Northumberland RFU for this coming season. I am meeting DP to discuss and sign in readiness for the new Season. (Ongoing).
Three other sponsors have agreed to come on board inc. James Barnett (Ongoing).

Gilbert sponsorship
The new renegotiated contract with Gilbert with the alterations requested by Henry discussed with Gilbert and largely agreed has now been signed. (Finished).
Dave Pennet of Gilbert attended the last General Meeting to ensure that Clubs are aware of the benefits of using Gilbert as a kit supplier and Dave also initiated conversation with NRURS through Graham Crozier who is keen to explore working more closely together. I am in the process of oprganising a meeting with Graham Crozier of NRURS to discuss a joint kit deal (although we are finding it difficult to find a time when we are both free).

Marketing (ongoing)
DG and Ian Smith (IS) had approached the BBC about covering the Senior Men's County matches online. This was being actively considered as BBC Newcastle is committed to covering local sport. I will raise this again when the fixtures are available. The BBC now has a new Sports Editor and I will be involved in rugby coverage again this coming season even though IS has now retired although my exact role is yet to be discussed. Ongoing).

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Social Media – Facebook/Twitter/Website
We 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. (Ongoing)

The new website will have feeds from Facebook and Twitter direct on the home page (current site only has Twitter available like this).

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 £338.50 for 200 received from Proad (Carlo Nardini) (Ongoing)

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 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 again) (Ongoing)

The Former County players' Reunion Event was postponed from the Summer.
I have e mailed Graham Ward about this to see if we can get this resurrected and I am happy to help him plan/ promote. Unfortunately Graham has decided to stand back from this and so we will need to look at how best to progress this given that- suggestions are welcome. (Ongoing)

Many of the above projects can be more easily progressed when Separation of Accounts has taken place (which it now has).

I have also recently been invited to become a member of a Whats App Group (NURFC 40 (plus 2) of former Newcastle University Players of a vintage (late 70's and early 80's)- some of whom also played for Northumberland and I have posted to ask if any of them would be interested in attending such an event as a catch up (inc former Scotland International and Board member of World Rugby John Jeffrey – who would make a terrific guest of honour). (Ongoing).

Communications
Figures are – F/book 1600 (Up 14%). Twitter 3562 (up 22%) Instagram 184 (new site just gone live). Linked in 31 (Static).

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. This project is to be readdressed given GW's reluctance to get involved.
ID Cards timing and offering to County members (all) (Ongoing).

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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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