Communications, Marketing and Sponsorship.

Date 08-04-2024

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

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

Website

The new website has now been live for some time. The reception has been extremely positive as more information and forms appear on it but it will still take a little time for it to bed in and people to get used to accessing documentation/ forms etc on line. (Ongoing).

NRURS have opted for a separate website at this time, although it must be said that opinions are divided as to whether that is the right decision as the quality of the new NRU website is widely recognised. Conversations continue with NRURS about giving them a dedicated section on the NRU website **(Ongoing)**

Sponsorship discussions

We have a small but growing number of sponsors who continue to support the growth of rugby in Northumberland but will continue to look to build upon this dependent upon what happens to County rugby moving forward.

Dave Penny is the main sponsor for Northumberland RFU for this season and we have a number of smaller sponsors whose support is hugely valued and appreciated.

The instigation of a former players' lunch will be an opportunity to build upon membership and sponsorship opportunities. I have discussed this with the Presidential Team whom I will support in setting this up around a home County match although I can't attend on the date chosen as I am covering a Falcons match away.**(Ongoing)**

Gilbert sponsorship

The new renegotiated contract with Gilbert is now well established and proving to be beneficial.

The Gilbert Shop is now displayed on our Website in a prominent position and Gilbert have also given the CB three tickets for Falcons matches on a monthly basis. Claire is organising distribution to the Clubs to reward volunteers / as a thank you to our county volunteers **(Ongoing)**

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Marketing (ongoing)

I am the Rugby Correspondent and main Radio commentator for BBC Newcastle- as such I will continue to try to increase the profile of community rugby in Northumberland wherever I can. Following the Hadrian Festival last month the largest LGBTQ+ tournament in Europe, organised by the Ravens RFC, the largest LGBTQ+ tournament in Europe and the biggest yet organised, I have invited two of their representatives to a Falcons home match to talk to them at half time about the Ravens and the tournament, as well as having carried a piece in the Falcons digital programme. I write a piece on rugby in the County either looking at Clubs and/or Representative teams every Falcons home game. **(Ongoing)**

I also approached the new Sports Editor about covering the Senior Men's County matches online but there isn't an appetite and there no budget to do this. However I will be bringing this up again with him. **(Ongoing).**

Team of the Month
Ongoing with Newcastle Falcons with the Committee again voting on whom, amongst the entries should get 20 tickets to a Falcons match of choice. **(Ongoing)**

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. 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)

As stated earlier, 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 separation. This is now complete of course and I am reviewing this.

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 once again on CB Reps Whats App Group) **(Ongoing).**

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Other
In Henry's absence, I applied for and received back the certificate needed to run a small lottery for some of the CB's allocation of Six Nations Tickets. This has been drawn and I have filled in and sent back to the County Council the necessary paperwork post draw.

Congratulations go to Ashington RFC for raising £11,500 for Dementia UK in their game for Albert.

Communications
Figures are – F/book 1800 (up 6%) X (Twitter) 2,871 (static) Instagram 1812 (small increase). Linked in 34 (up 54%).

All Whats App and F/book Groups for information for various County teams and groups are well established and have proper oversight. There have been one or two spark points between clubs and coaches but these have been successfully defused. **(Ongoing)**

Issues requiring Decision, Discussion or Dissemination
Former Players Lunch – date, venue, format. Now being looked after by Presidential Team- **(Ongoing)**
ID Cards timing and offering to County members- **(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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