Manifesto by Lee Weatherley
Nominee for the role of Chair of NRU and Board

I respectfully request your support and vote for the role of Chair of Northumberland Rugby and Board.

The following manifesto provides an overview of my commitment to develop the Game, in all its forms, across our county. I commit to ensuring a full review of all aspects of rugby in Northumberland and the creation of a strategy that is both bold and transparent and meets the needs of all partners and stakeholders.

Collaboration: it is clear that there is an immediate need to engage with our members, stakeholders and partners. I am committed to ensuring that all partners have a fair and equitable involvement with the direction of the Game. The game has changed in recent years and the needs of our stakeholders have changed with it. We need to work hand-in-hand with our partners: Clubs, Schools, the two Trusts, our professional partners at the RFU and the Falcons, as well as our sponsors that are vital to our long term success.

Clubs: our clubs are individual entities, each with their own specific needs: we need to facilitate growth providing clubs sustainable long term success and stability. If elected, I will ensure that all clubs are supported by the Board and our partners, ensuring their on and off-field needs are met. Clubs have to play their part: through collaboration with the General Committee, I am confident we can deliver a development plan for a stronger rugby offer.

Education: we need to build the base of the rugby pyramid. From an on-field perspective that starts with our schools, colleges and universities. I believe it is vital that we work in partnership to create player centric environments and encourage the transfer of players from schools to local clubs and beyond. Rugby is a game for life: we need to encourage our younger players to become involved with all aspects of the game, whether it be playing, officiating or administering.

Rugby formats: the rugby landscape has changed. We need to embrace the changes and encourage greater participation in different formats. We have experienced tremendous growth in the Women's game and we can capitalise on the Women's Rugby World Cup in 2025. As Chair, I will encourage participation in other formats, both contact and non-contact, including Touch, Sevens, Walking Rugby and of course, our Vets game. We need to address the individual needs of clubs with regard to the adult Male game and support the growth of other formats of the game providing a strong and robust future. Our competition structure has been an area of concern for many and we have had mixed

fortunes with our Representative teams. As Chair, I commit to ensuring we have a structure that works for all partners.

Match officials: I am a member of Northumberland Rugby Union Referees Society, so it should be no surprise that I am committed to working closely with Match Officials. As the saying goes, "you can't have a game without them", and I believe it is imperative that we can grow the numbers of higher qualified Match Officials to make the playing experience as positive as possible for everyone. I am determined to ensure that our Match Officials continue to be respected throughout the game and can enjoy their rugby as much as everyone.

Governance and Finance: it is imperative that we act in accordance with all Legal and Regulatory demands. As Chair, I will ensure we operate in a fully compliant and transparent manner that is fair and equitable for all. It is without question that the financial landscape has changed in recent years and we need a robust road map that allows us to develop and maintain a growth strategy that develops our on and off-field plans. I believe there is a need to encourage the General Committee and Presidential team to play a more fuller role in delivering our development and growth.

Finance Director: the incumbent has elected to resign their directorship and the vacant position did not receive any nominations. The Company Secretary has asked prospective Chairs to explain how they will address this issue. We need to secure a new Finance Director very quickly: it is imperative that the two roles remain separate. Without a clear divide between the positions we may find ourselves in the unthinkable position of not having any checks and measures in place. As important as this role is, we should be aware that the busiest time will be when pulling together budgets for our development and operational plans and as such I will create a Finance Team made up from a cross section of our members. I envisage a small working group working to strict timescales and a transparent plan.

To conclude, I have played an active role in County positions for many years since becoming Chair of Youth in 2007 and then Director of Education and Youth giving me a comprehensive understanding of the "inner workings of County". I have been a member of a club management team and currently serve on the Referees Society executive. I remain committed to growing rugby and have developed, led and been involved with numerous initiatives both on a local and national basis.

I am acutely aware that we are merely the custodians of the game and that Northumberland has a long and proud tradition of developing Rugby Union: we all have a part to play in leading the game to, and leaving it in, a better place, and hope that I can count on your support .

Thank you for taking the time to consider this manifesto and please get in touch if you require any further details.

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