Northumberland Rugby Steering Group to coordinate school to club projects

3pm 25/09/2024 Newcastle Flacons East Wing meeting room.

Attendees:

Keith Atkinson (KA): Director Club Development for Northumberland Rugby

Mel McGee (MM): CEO Newcastle Rugby Foundation / representing Newcastle Rugby Foundation Scheme

Gavin Beasley (GB): Operations & Delivery Manager Newcastle Rugby Foundation / representing Newcastle Rugby Foundation Scheme

Jim Coulson (JC): Trustee Northumberland Rugby Trusts

Liam Nicholls (LN): RFU Regional Club Development Officer

Steve Fear (SF): Director Wallsend RFC representing North of Tyne Partnership (RFU) (to be referred as NTP) (previously referenced as the North Shields/ Wallsend/Northern Axis Scheme)

Jon Nugent: Gosforth RFC Scheme

Apologies:

Rob Snow (RS): Representing Northumberland Schools (Kings School Rugby game)

Ash Smith (AS): RFU Club and Coaching Development Officer/ Representative Coastal Partnership Scheme (Illness)

Charlie Maddison: Newcastle RGS Scheme (Calendar mix-up)

Dougie Hall: Berwick Scheme. (Unavailable)

Minutes:

Keith Atkinson (KA) with thanks to Liam Nicholls (LN)

Introductions:

Welcome to Jon Nugent (JN) followed by a 'round the table' introduction to other attendees.

Adoption of minutes

Group agreed minutes from Steering Group meet on 23/08/2024.

Review of Actions from 23/08/2024

~~SF.LN & MM: Falcons Scheme to seed North Shields/ Wallsend /Northern Axis Scheme.~~

Completed: GB: Agreed with NTP. Refer to minutes. Seed at Walker Tech/ John Spence High School/ Gosforth Junior High)

~~AS. MM: Falcons Scheme to seed Ashington involvement in Coastal Project~~

Completed: GB: Agreed with AS. Seed at St Benebiscop Bedlington

~~MM: Falcons: Develop and produce Generic Flyer for transition events~~

Completed: GB/MM. Please see minutes and attached example. Fusion for Business agreed to assist with funding for flyers and T-Shirt 'give aways' at Transition events. Please see attached example.

Further Action: MM to look at funding a generic banner to be placed outside all Northumberland Rugby Clubs.

MM. Falcons/AS: Produce 60 second promotional video to support school to club rugby

Not completed: GB/MM/AS to produce at forthcoming festival. Action to 'roll over' to next steering group meeting.

~~AS.GB: Produce school/event calendar for school to club schemes~~

Completed: GB: Please see attached

MM: Falcons team to seed West End U11 side – continual development separate project required

Ongoing: GB/MM. West End's Ready to receive coach has had to step back due to illness. GB to concentrate on developing rugby in nearby schools with an objective to take rugby into West End club during Yr2. Also going to have a look at Prudhoe and Stocksfield RFC as part of this project. Action to 'roll over' to next steering group meeting.

~~GB: To inform Gosforth RFC of decision.~~

Completed: Gosforth scheme to join and participate with Steering group and will no longer 'stand alone. Please refer to minutes

~~RS: To introduce rugby on the SOG calendar at the head of P.E meeting~~

Completed: RS met with all P.E Heads and rugby is included on the SOG calendar

Minutes

1. Newcastle RGS Scheme Introduction and description of scheme. Where delivering. Any assistance request.
   Apologies received from Charlie Maddison. To be introduced at our next meeting on 13/11/2024.
2. Dougie Hall Berwick Introduction and description of scheme. Where delivering. Any assistance request.
   Apologies received from Dougie Hall. To be introduced at our next meeting on 13/11/2024.
3. Jon Nugent Gosforth Scheme Introduction and description of scheme. Where delivering. Any assistance request.

   Jon Nugent – New group member from Gosforth RFC outlined their current thoughts & plan;
   - During the last 12 months GRFC decided to be proactive and begin to develop a plan themselves to encourage more kids to play rugby.
   - Chance conversation with an activity provider and club member led to discussions being opened.
   - Currently 120+ kids in teams at the club which grew from around an initial 10 kids of all ages around 10 years ago.
   - The senior team runs itself at the moment and focus is on the youth system and how players can be brought in and transitioned through the age groups at GRFC.

- Some delivery commencing after Oct half term with yr 7/8 girls (Curriculum and Extra Curriculum) then links developed to GRFC. (Cost circa £900 with a grant from the NRU Trust for £2,000 - £1100 left over and club looking at how they can utilise this best and may use the services of the Falcons)
- They are looking at additional delivery options and potential to access more funding if required.
- Currently the programme is helping to build from the bottom and the emphasis is very much on the transition of players 'through the club' but also from 'age grade to senior' rugby.

Action: GB: To meet with JN to facilitate Gosforth RFC into Falcons scheme.

4. Falcons update

- Falcons plan in place to support the North of Tyne Rugby Partnership and also multiple other areas of the game. GB will circulate document to show where delivery is happening, planned and also currently not happening as a heat map.
- Falcons to look at additional project with West End and Prudhoe and Stocksfield
  Action: GB/MM: continual development project required for West End and Prudhoe and Stocksfield. Update at next meeting.
- Outside of the Project Rugby & NRU Delivery – The Falcons are also delivering with some additional schools who are paying for the support in a variety of areas. Teacher support / development and rugby delivery.
- Some schools fall between 2 clubs and kids should go to both depending on their 'local' offer and if the age group is available. We must be more collaborative off the field for the game to survive and develop.
- Falcons have produced an excellent flyer with all participating club logos and contacts on, this is in partnership with Fusion for Business (FFB), who are also providing t-shirts for transition festivals and feathers/banners to help with promotional aspects of the programme. There will be spaces to write on this promo material training times and key contacts for individual clubs too. This will be coming out to group members for comment shortly.
  Action: MM: Look at funding a generic banner to be placed outside all Northumberland Rugby Clubs.
- GB will send out other documents looking at school mapping delivery and also measurements / KPI's etc… this will provide some consistency across the analysis of the various activities going on across the County.

5. North of Tyne Rugby Partnership update.

- LN updated on the 'North of Tyne Rugby Partnership' as it is now branded, info as below;
- Final meeting before advert on 24/9/24, very positive and currently just sorting out the final JD/PS for the role.
- Timeline is;

  - Advert out ASAP no later than 30th September
  - Closing Date 11th October
  - Shortlisting 12th October (1 person per club)
  - Interview W/C 21st October
  - Appointment & Paperwork W/C 28th October
  - Start Date ASAP taking into account potential notice and DBS Status Etc…

- Offers from Coastal Partnership & Falcons Foundation for an Induction Period (Potentially 2 weeks) to work with current deliverers and support them.
- Ash Smith can integrate into training programme in NRU and even go into Cumbria or Durham if required depending on suitable times for courses. Some are online though so this negates travel.
- Training & Development – Individual should complete in first 3 months;

    - Headcase
    - Tackle Safety
    - Intro to Safeguarding
    - Play it Safe

- Wallsend will take on the payment administration of the post but it will be self-employed.
  Action: NTP to organise induction period with successful candidate utilising other scheme members e.g. Nyle at Coastal Partnership.

6. Coastal Partnership update

   Illness prevented Ash Smith from attending. AS had taken active role in actions and will update group at next meeting.

AOB

- LN: Thanks to all for coordinating the group as it is the envy of many other areas who are asking how it has been achieved. NRU definitely moving in the right direction with this.
- NRU organising a group of 'Club Development' individuals for NRU to discuss common issues and work on solutions together. This will be supported by LN and others and develop a proactive network of people helping to develop the game at grassroots level. A real positive for the County!
- LN talked about the changing landscape of rugby…;

    - 18-22 players would once have got a club through a whole season, this is no longer the case. The average squad size from Electronic Match Cards is now 46 players for one team. This obviously increases when clubs look to run 2nd/3rd Teams too. This has reduced from 54 immediately post covid.
    - Not necessarily that there are less people playing, those that are playing are not as committed and are playing just shy of 12 games per season on average now. This has gone down since covid.
    - Sports that are seeing an increase in participation… running, cycling, swimming & going to the gym… why?? As these are able to be done when the individual is ready, no waiting, so fits into the modern lifestyle for the current younger generation. To play rugby we have to wait until 6:30pm Tues/Thurs or 3pm on a Saturday crudely to play our sport.
    - How can we be more flexible and innovative using adapted formats, T1 Rugby (non-contact) and changing playing times… midweek / Friday nights
    - RFU looking to invest in floodlighting across the country and support this flexible shift in playing times.
    - Covid has been an accelerant of what was already declining regular participation.

- KA/MM/GB: James Ponton (JP) Falcons to look at strategic Coach Development for the long term benefit of practitioners within this steering group members and the 'broader picture' within Northumberland with the aim to ensure quality coaching to aid junior player development.

Action: MM: to circulate Coach Development Strategic meeting

Date & Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 13th November 2024 at 3pm Newcastle Flacons East Wing meeting room.

Summary of Actions arising:

GB/MM: continual development project required for West End and Prudhoe and Stocksfield

GB: To meet with JN to facilitate Gosforth RFC into Falcons scheme.

MM: Look at funding a generic banner to be placed outside all Northumberland Rugby Clubs.

LN/SF: Action: NTP to organise induction period with successful candidate utilising other scheme members e.g. Nyle at Coastal Partnership.

MM/KA: Invite representative of RGS Scheme re Newcastle Schools. GB to update CM in the interim

MM/KA: Invite Dougie Hall Berwick scheme (Teams?)

MM: to circulate Coach Development Strategic meeting

GB: to circulate calendar of events, heat map and project summary for all to work towards

For future agenda:

AS: University Rugby and how we can utilise this scheme in universities.

SF; business intelligence modelling to identify schools to target where participation is low/non-existent

Attachments:

NRU NRF Measurement updated 230924

NRU 24 to 25 Calendar