County Office and Hon Secretary Report

Date – 8th April

Report compiled by Graham Crozier and Claire Sharpe

Key events, issues, and achievements

We are now into the time of year where Festivals, Grand Finals Days and Cup Finals are taking place.
Festivals – U6, U7, U8 and U9 all took place on 29th March
Grand Finals at U13, U14, U15, U16 Boys took place 22nd March
Cup Final for U18 Girls took place 22nd March
New Initiative – U16s Boys Fun Festival took place 6th March
Colts Cup Finals (Cup and Plate) have taken place in March
Adult Cup Finals are taking place now with a number to be played over the coming weeks in April.

Current and impending issues, events, and work streams

CB Digital Systems – 1,380 forms have been received and processed so far this season. At the time of writing, 166 concussion reports have been submitted and where permissions are in place GRAS letters have been sent out.
At the time of writing 28 IPW forms have been submitted from clubs and these have all been followed up and where necessary advice and assistance offered.

As we have moved into the second half of the season, there have been catch up and planning meets with Age Grade Rugby leads (Andrew and Nicola), Womens and Girls leads (Ruth and Ben) and Comps lead (Craig) as there is a lot to organise second half of the season.

Work is now underway with the new Age Grade Calendar for Season 2026-27. So far meetings have been held with Andew and Nicola (Minis and Age Grade Boys) and with members of the Girls CB Organising (Ben, Pete Jones and Adam Lenham). New ideas being followed up on with neighbouring CBs and dates now being added to the new calendar. Dates also being communicated out to relevant age grade contacts.

Value the Volunteer– work now underway to organise this event held in conjunction with end of season presentations for league and cup winners. Big piece of work as its combining two events into one – Value the Volunteer + End of Season Cup and League Presentations, but all under control.

Rep Rugby season well underway now. The U18s Girls and Boys have now finished, the U16s Girls have their last playing opp this weekend coming at the Residential at Barnard Castle, the U17s Boys are now underway as are the Senior Women and Senior Men. The U20s pick up again now after a 4 week break in their programme.

Catch ups with RFU staff have taken place too with a working lunch two weeks ago with Andrew Souter and Liam Nicholls. Liam often now popping in when he is over in Northumberland and using the office as base between meetings so he can cover off any admin while he is over here.

I am meeting with Liam later this week to talk about CB Funding for next season from the RFU. Andrew has confirmed the criteria for funding and now that we have the basic outline for core, we need to look at the information around additional funding as this is going to require some work from the CB and the Clubs. (Meeting is also with Chair and Board Member John Austin.)

Working with John Austin on "brand" – linking social media backgrounds to player headshot backgrounds so we have consistency across what we are doing. Very much developing this as we go having brought back the headshots, but working well together and keeping in touch. We have revised the plans for team photos for Cup Finals (given the finals are on so many different dates) and have revised how we do headshots for players. Very much an evolving project re brand but we think, is heading right way.

CANDY and Merit Leagues – matches still taking place. Issues with claims for matches having to be dealt with on a case by case basis and agreement that one of the rules for CANDY (re claiming points for matches) needs to be removed for next season.

Organised Womens and Girls Health Workshops with Jojo Hall and Lindsay MacNaughton "Girl Power, the Science of Female Rugby Players". Aimed at U14, U16, U18 and Womens Players and Coaches at Clubs. Two workshops this week at Morpeth and WBR, covering off everything from menstrual cycle, pelvic floor and pelvic health to fuelling and recovery nutrition advice.

Meeting Cathryn Clark on Friday to go through the CB RugbySafe Audit and then in a couple of weeks Cathryn and I will go through it again formally with Rachel Faull Brown from RFU.

Other items of work about to launch
Summer Raffle
Pie and Pint
CANDY Entry for season 2026-27
Age Grade entries for 2026-27
EOI hosting Festivals and Finals (boys and girls)
Updates to club contacts (with set window for responses).

The Office is now getting very busy as we reach the business end of the season, but timelines and deadlines are being hit.
There may be delays with responses to mails – just down to volume of work and tasks being covered off.

Issues requiring Decision, Discussion or Dissemination

Discussion around changes to the County Match Programme. As no progress has been made, has been agreed with Chair and Secretary that this is now shelved and picked up again in the summer.