



DEVON RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Management Board Minutes

Date: 23rd March 2026

Venue: Exeter Athletic

Present: Simon Farmer, Rob Masters, Nicola Vaughan, Graeme Gillard, Keisha-Ann Down, Chris Forster, Sian Brooks, John Drew, Tim Warren.

Apologies: Glenn Channing, Sas Huntwood, Simon Fuller

Declaration of Interests

None

Minutes of Last Meeting

Approved by Keish and Seconded by Simon Farmer

Actions

1. Tim to notify Devon Counties Three League Secretary of our decision to approve new applications for 2026/27.
2. Tim to organise an online meeting for interested clubs to discuss proposed RFU management changes.
3. Tim to organise date for summer planning meeting.
4. Tim to collate feedback and develop second draft of Role Descriptions.
5. Tim to draft Induction Process.
6. Tim to draft Volunteer Recruitment Process and share with Glenn and Mark.

Additional Points

1. League Applications – Devon Counties Three (2026/27 Season)

The Board reviewed applications from three clubs seeking to join Devon Counties Three for the 2026/27 season:

- Torrington RFC
- Ilfracombe RFC
- Devonport Services RFC (3rd XV)

Following a recommendation from the Competitions Sub-Committee, the Management Board agreed to support all three applications.

This reflects continued growth and strong engagement across the county game, with the addition of these teams set to further strengthen the league structure for the upcoming season.

2. RFU Special General Meeting – Governance Review

The Board discussed the upcoming RFU Special General Meeting, which proposes changes to the national governance structure, including:

- A reduction in Council size
- A transition of Council to a more advisory role

While recognising that the proposals are not without challenges, the Board is minded to support the direction of travel.

Before confirming a final position, Devon RFU will host an online meeting with member clubs to:

- Share details of the proposed changes
- Gather feedback
- Ensure clubs are informed and represented in the decision-making process

3. Review of Devon RFU Management Structure

The Board undertook a constructive review of the current management structure, identifying opportunities to further strengthen effectiveness and support for the county game. Whilst there have been some successes this season, there have been significant weaknesses that need to be addressed to strengthen us for the 2026/27 season.

Key areas of focus include:

- Clearer accountability across the Executive for delivering agreed actions
- Enhanced communication between Board members and with clubs
- Ongoing review of roles and responsibilities, including representative rugby provision
- Continued support for dedicated leadership across the male and female game
- Recognition of the need to appoint a Director of Age Grade Rugby

Looking ahead, the Board agreed to:

- Use the summer planning day to develop a clear Local Rugby Plan, supported by defined KPIs for each Director
- Streamline role descriptions to ensure clarity and impact
- Encourage Directors to strengthen engagement within their teams
- Increase visibility by inviting team representatives to attend Board meetings to share updates and insights

The importance of long-term sustainability was also highlighted, with a focus on:

- Developing a strong volunteer pipeline
- Introducing a structured induction process for new volunteers

4. RFU Update

The RFU Constituent Body Officer provided an update on national initiatives, including:

- The upcoming Women's Rugby World Cup Trophy Tour

- The sharing of county participation and playing statistics, which will support future planning and development

5. Vice President

Nominations to be made as soon as possible

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday the 29th April: Club Voice Meeting Exeter Saracens

DRAFT