

Intro

On and off, this journal has been going for nearly 10 years. Some might have forgotten its origin – it was begun to provide the membership with a quick and concise digest of the Board minutes of the RAE. It was even called the *News Digest* in the early years. The reason was that the membership was far from happy with the lengthy and detailed minutes of, originally, the RA Council and subsequently the RAE. We got a lot of stick because the minutes were “boring” and the first County RA Liaison Meetings called for an easier read. Rule 9(o) permitted the production of the abridged version and we went to pains to ensure everything significant that should be disclosed, was. We intend to do just that so here goes

Board meeting 30 November and 1 December 2013

Over the two days, the meeting lasted over 12 hours. We covered an extensive agenda of useful, detailed and amicable discussion. With previous engagements, Eddie McGrath was unable to attend either day; Laura Ritchie missed Saturday.

Roy Cheshire has tendered his resignation from Board duties as he is finding it too demanding of his time. We do thank him for the effort he has put in over recent months. His specific responsibilities have been reassigned; Laura will be dealing with the **Quest Programme** and the forthcoming events.

Albert referred to a meeting he had attended in Lancashire, addressing membership issues.

Pursuant to a question raised at the 2013 AGM, Reg Pullen will be asked to lead an **‘audit’ of Board Members’ expenditure** following the finalisation of the current year’s accounts.

The draft Interim Report of the **Constitutional Review Team** was accepted. It will be circulated as per the timetable to all CRAs, ABSs and Life Members. A delegate meeting of all CRAs is to be called for 5 January at Warwick University to be presented with the principal findings. Details of this will be circulated during early December.

Committee reports were discussed. **Internal Communications** reported that a number of **50-year Membership Awards** had been received and recommendations of grant were made. The **Grand Draw** has been under review. The Board thanked all those ABSs and individuals who responded to the appeal for views on it continuing. Participation in the Draw has continually dwindled to the point where a lot of Board and staff time is expended for near zero income to the Association. A statement by the Board will be published within the next few days. An edition of **RA News** would be produced following this meeting.

F&GP had circulated the latest accounts. Efforts continued to set aside sums of money into temporary deposits so that at least some small investment income was achieved.

In partnership with **F&GP**, the **Head Office Committee** reviewed head office operations. With a continuing decline in membership, albeit it at a slower rate, we are concerned about the **income/expenditure** balance. We are a long way from insolvent but we have little in cash reserves [which has been the case since 2002]. This is being addressed. As was analysed in last year’s financial report, the **cost of operating the head office** is significant.

Further, we came close but not close enough to filling the **General Manager** vacancy in the summer. A very high specification had been set for a full-time post and none of the applicants quite matched all the criteria. Not having anyone occupying that seat has placed enormous stress on the Board and the staff, who have done their best to cope. The Board made two significant decisions that are separate but linked:

- Karen, who has for some time been working full-time, will revert to part-time on a basis to be agreed with her. That will take effect on 1 February 2014.
- Paul Field, who is now self-employed and freelance, has been asked to be Acting General Manager, also part-time, starting officially on 1 January although he will do some initial work during December. There is no conflict of interest between his Board duties and his operational work. The contract that he will work to – there has to be one under the rules – will be open-ended in terms of length of time. An urgent task will be finalising arrangements for the 2014 and 2015 Conference Weekends. This year’s is largely in place based on a multi-year agreement that was struck in 2012. The venue, in particular, for 2015 is an urgent consideration with several alternatives being pursued.

Working as a team, we are sure Paul and Karen will be able to cover the full range of work that is demanded. The situation will be monitored closely in 2014.

External Affairs reported on a meeting with the FA at which the **FA Q&A Session after the AGM** was discussed. Unless there was something of great topicality to be covered, it would not be a regular feature in future years.

The success of the **RAFA Youth Council** was recognised and its extension into equivalent County branches was continuing successfully. Fourteen of these are now established with more in preparation. The FA stated that, because of economies, only one edition of **Refereeing magazine** per year would be produced. It will be supplemented by two electronic editions circulated by email. The FA reported that there had been 450 applications for **Carlsberg Referee Awards**; its success had led the sponsor to continue support next year.

The **Membership Database [RAMMS]** continues to show its deficiencies. The decision has been made to replace it and two alternative off-the-shelf systems have been considered. Both have many virtues and similar costs. One that has the greatest flexibility and is easiest to tailor is marketed by Participant and has the ability to integrate normal membership database requirements with add-ons such as on-line booking facilities for meetings and conferences, for which it is used by FA Learning. A decision to proceed should be made early next year once we are assured none of the current problems we have will be repeated.

On the subject of IT, the current **website** is being developed so that it is easy to populate with information and to update. That should also be live in early 2014.

The 2012/3 Treasurer's report mentioned considering **outsourcing our supplies operation**; the Board is convinced a professional sportswear distributor could do the job in co-operation with us more efficiently than we can ourselves.

We have a preferred partner in mind who currently does everything other than referee equipment so it seems a perfect fit. Detailed discussion is in hand with a view to making a change early in 2014. It will be a 'seamless' transition and there are safeguards that the RA branding will be maintained with a quantified level of service.

The RA has been drawn into **some recent refereeing controversies**. Most of these have stemmed from very worrying assaults on match officials that have led to significant media interest. As ever, we can only comment on generalities, never details as most cases are still subject to FA/CFA decisions and in some cases criminal action by the police. We have emphasised our rôle in counselling and supporting our members while leaving the authorities to do their job. Equally, we continue to receive letters of complaint from the public and the media even on what are seen as "bad refereeing decisions". These have to be responded to with a courteous reply but doing no more than stating the law or regulations applicable. It is a policy recommended to be adopted by CRAs and ABSs as well as individual members.

Unaffiliated football was discussed. The RA line must be to advise its members not to participate and it is outside the umbrella of protection that the FA, county FAs and the RA can provide. The Board endorsed the line taken in the last Newsletter.

The 2014 Election approaches

Nomination papers have been distributed seeking candidates to fill the three Board seats that fall vacant next July. We repeat that there are many members who have the right skills and experience to make a real contribution to advancing the RA for the benefit of all. While the RA is a membership organisation, it is a business and needs members particularly with relevant business experience and some time to apply it for the improvements we continue to develop.

Plea from a member responded to

Thanks go to all those who replied to Dean Chilton-Davies of Dudley RA who was looking for a particular training DVD. We found out it had been withdrawn from circulation for understandable reasons that we think it better not to go into!

Here's another one ... an interesting car number plate.

Justin Herrin's father is now too ill to carry on refereeing. He is the proud possessor of a private number plate M12 REF.

The plate is now held on a DVLA 'retention certificate'. It was actually a present from Justin to his father many years ago and his father has requested that members of the RA are given first refusal on purchasing the registration number rather than sell it through an agent. Contact Justin by email: usabigbird@yahoo.com

Joining the RAFA Incentive Scheme

When the referees complete their 6 match form there is a box at the bottom asking them to tick if they would like to join the incentive scheme. Referees who tick the box are registered by the FA who sends the names over to First Media who distribute the log books.

Referees deciding to join the scheme sometime after their first 6 matches can either email Holly.Papps@thefa.com. Any other question relating to the incentive scheme or referees orders need to contact First Media (ra-fa@firstmedia.co.uk).

Northumberland RA Awards



At the County RA Dinner on 15 November, Craig Chatten [Cramlington Branch] received the Achievement of the Year Award. The Len Hayden Memorial Trophy for Outstanding Service was presented to Michael Floyd [Ashington Branch].

*Craig receiving his award
from Mike Riley.*

*Michael being presented with his
award by Monica Hayden.*



Birmingham Newly-qualifieds' Meeting

As a model for what can be done in recruitment through cooperation, Tom Bowkett [RAFA Youth Council] and Laura Ritchie [Board Member] addressed the County FA meeting of nearly 100 new referees promoting RA membership. Also present were the Secretaries from various ABSs in the area who were pressing membership forms on the attendees following an inspirational address by Ray Olivier, now Training and Development Manager for PGMOL referees.

The RA Quest Programme

Announced in January 2013, it is becoming established and already Bath and Brighton have achieved Bronze Awards. Portsmouth has gone one better and been awarded Silver. There are seven more Societies under review at this time, two of whom are going for Gold.

Laura Ritchie [email her at miss_skyblue@hotmail.com] is now promoting the scheme and would be pleased to hear from any new contenders. As a hint, the common reasons found for Societies to up their game are: Rules not being available to members; AGM's – with members not selecting auditors as detailed in their own rules; retention processes – no follow-up to chase people not re-joining the ABS; data base management of members lacking details; failure to submit correct evidence in the application.

National Football Museum

The National Football Museum, now based in Manchester, inducted nine players and a referee into its Hall of Fame.

One of the two posthumous awards was to Wolverhampton's Jack Taylor who refereed the 1974 World Cup final, West Germany v Holland (2-1). Jack is the first referee to have the honour of being included in the NFM's Hall of Fame.

The photograph shows Jack's widow, Mrs Sue Taylor, receiving the award from Keith Hackett, the Referee Ambassador for The Premier League, with the host for the evening, Dan Walker, from BBC TV's "Football Focus". Photograph by Jason Lock, NFM.

Entrance fee to the NFM is free. Besides a huge collection of memorabilia and football related stories, there is a referees' section there too; well worth the visit.



Website address is: www.nationalfootballmuseum.com



WE WISH ALL READERS A HAPPY FESTIVE SEASON



RA NEWS is produced by the Internal Communications Committee and distributed to all County RAs and ABSs as well as by direct mail to our Life Members. It is intended that every member should see it and get to know what is happening. Most ABSs have an email circulation system to their individual members. Please forward this to them.

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