Hello,

We have now largely completed a demanding phase for the team at the WRU where we have taken the necessary actions to close down or suspend rugby activities.

We have taken as many cost reduction measures as possible, changed our working practices to adapt to the lockdown and, where required, have supported the conversions to the hospitals that are now operational in our Stadium in Cardiff and at our high performance base in the Vale Resort in Hensol.

We are now moving to the next phase which requires us to keep operations running, but with a significantly scaled back team, along with turning our attention to how we manage the transition back to what a ‘new normal’ might look like for Welsh rugby.

This is, of course, currently an unknown quantity but we are working through trying to predict and forecast what the future may look like, as well as taking the very real opportunity to introduce changes that would be good for the game generally.

We are scenario planning to try to predict in which cases habits and behaviours will return to what they were before the pandemic, but also try to predict where changes brought on by the COVID-19 crisis might become the ‘new normal’.

Our stakeholders, supporters, partners, players and all who engage in Welsh Rugby at every level, may form new and permanent habits and come back to us with different expectations, needs or demands. For example, some of the questions we are working through are:

• When our community clubs open again how will we make sure they are safe, welcoming and that our communities want to return. It’s possible that people will return in larger numbers as society ‘goes local’, so how can we make sure we a ready?

• How do we engage with clubs to shape the most suitable return to play scheduling of games, leagues and competitions based on medical advice and possible restrictions?

• How do we give confidence that returning to play remains an attractive proposition and that rugby remains a form of physical activity which provides an accessible offer for all in our communities?

• How will we cater for elements of our society who may remain vulnerable to the virus and continue to allow them to be engaged and part of the rugby family?

• How do we stage events, both large and small, within the restrictions that might still be in place as we transition through the period beyond lockdown?

• How will our business model need to change as we recover from the financial stresses we have been placed under?

• How should we engage positively in the various reviews that are underway to reshape the professional season both in the short and long term. To, where possible, remove issues that have historically held the game back?

• What is the ‘new normal’ for revenue, costs and investment in Welsh rugby and how do we live within our means in that “new normal”?

• How will we continue – as we know we must – to fund areas where we had earmarked significant new investment, such as Women’s and girls rugby, in a changing financial landscape? - How should we adapt our working practices so that we take advantage of changes that have occurred, maximising the opportunities created to travel less, continue with best practice communication online and continue to further enhance our digital offerings?

• How do we work with all of our partners to understand how they have been affected and adapt our own new ways of working to meet their changing needs?

Lastly, and importantly, we are energised to play our part in both supporting the national and international response to this virus and also in helping Wales to adapt. We will continue to do the right thing where each new opportunities presents itself.

Whilst this is a daunting list of issues to be addressed, we are already a significant way down the line to finding solutions to many.

**What remains unclear is timing.**

We don’t know when we will be able to move towards those solutions as the course of the virus remains uncertain, but what is certain is that we have specific plans in place to be utilised as and when required.

Our exit from lockdown will be both an opportunity for us as a business and also a threat to our established way of working, surviving and thriving. Our mindset must be exclusively on taking the opportunity presented, to bring about lasting change and long-term benefit to Welsh Rugby and it's extended and loyal family.

Stay safe,

M Phillips

WRU Group, CEO