**WRU Status Update 29/04/2020**

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**1.**     **Gareth Davies comment:**

***At a meeting of the Welsh Rugby Union Board last week we discussed the upcoming elections for the next World Rugby chair, to be contested by Bill Beaumont and Agustin Pichot.***
***We have also consulted both the Professional Rugby Board (PRB) and our own executive board for their views. As always, it is vitally important to us that due and proper process is followed in the governance of our game in Wales and I would like to formally confirm to our members clubs the Board’s conclusion to support Bill Beaumont in his bid to be re-elected for a further term. We have spoken to both candidates and assessed their manifesto commitments in turn. We have digested the dynamic drive for change presented by Agustin and understood the commitment to progress but also stability and the steady hand provided by Bill. Some members of our Board expressed direct support for Bill and others acceded to take their steer from those of us who are closest to the issues at play.  There were members of both our exec board and the PRB who expressed a preference for Agustin, and this was by no means a ‘one horse race’ in the Board’s eyes, but our final collective decision was reached based on evidence provided, due diligence and research of each candidate. We are strongly of the belief that this was the proper way to conduct ourselves, just as when we were deciding on how to vote for the 2023 Rugby World Cup host candidates – where we followed the recommendations of the technical evaluation conducted by World Rugby – we have followed the evidence before us and, we are sure, backed the best candidate for the job.***
***It is this determination to follow due process in an open and transparent manner that led us to postpone our own National Council elections which were due to be held almost as the pandemic lockdown first came to us.  There is a further update provided below on where we currently stand with this particular election, but suffice to say we will ensure that we respect the proper process wherever possible – against the backdrop of current inhibiting conditions – and ensure that member clubs and all three candidates are afforded the fair contest they deserve.***
***Integrity and honesty are two of the key core values of Welsh rugby and they will continue to be upheld in earnest despite current adversity.***

***Yours in rugby,***
***Gareth Davies***
***WRU chair***

**2. Club funding and audit**

The most common query we have received from Clubs to date is when will the 4th and final funding payment of the 2019/20 season be made and we can confirm that the final instalment of the funds for this year – which were calculated by the 2018/19 audit - will be received by clubs tomorrow, Thursday 30th April 2020.
The amount due to clubs in this payment has been communicated previously by email, which should have been received on 10th January 2020.

**2019/20 AUDIT** (which relates to payments for 2020/21) – also known as ‘Community Funding Model’
Due to exceptional circumstances caused by Covid-19 and as a result of numerous and lengthy meetings with staff, WRU Board members and your District representatives, the Community Game Board has agreed to **cancel**the 2019/20 audit:
-         *There will therefore be****no****requirement for any club to complete the current audit (2019/20). Whilst we appreciate clubs will have evolved their offering in the last year it was felt that, in an incomplete season, this was the fairest solution.*
-         *Payments to clubs for the season ahead (2020/21) will obviously, therefore, not be audit based and we will meet again later in the year (July and August) to determine distribution. This will be done through a consultation process with the aim of safeguarding the game and keeping every WRU club intact. The ultimate decision will be made by the Community Game Board in consultation with an established “Working Group” which consists of WRU Board Members and District Members and your nominated District Club Representatives. The aim will be to agree a solution that helps all of our clubs get through the challenges being experienced across the country.*
-         *Finally, next year’s ‘audit’ (season 2020/21) – which determines funding for season 2021/22 – will continue to be revised and aligned with the new Community Strategy.  This will be taken to the Community Game Board for approval once the “Audit” working group, made up of WRU Board and District members plus the District Club representatives, chaired by Jon Morgan (WRU Council Member) have input into the consultation process.*
The Community Game Board has taken the above decisions to help and safeguard all our clubs and, as stated, once we know more we will make sure that we communicate with member clubs to re-engage the established working group to make the correct recommendations and decisions to support all our clubs and the rugby family.
Any questions or clarification sought should please be directed to WRU community director Geraint John or your WRU District representative or regional manager.

**3. National Council Election**

At the end of March, after naming the candidates for the contest, the election to find a new WRU National Council Member was suspended due to restrictions imposed by the pandemic.
This situation remains the case but we would like to reassure member clubs and the three nominees – Nigel Davies, Ieuan Evans and John Manders – that we are continually monitoring the current situation matters and that it is our stated intention to complete the election as soon as practicable and to do so before any other election that is required this year. However, as our chairman Gareth Davies states above, it is vitally important to us that we follow as fair and proper a process as possible despite current ongoing issues. We are acutely aware that cancelling our current season means clubs are not meeting and that their main concerns at this time are financial.  Some clubs have not had the opportunity to meet candidates or discuss their credentials and there are also no district meetings taking place.  Whilst it would be possible to campaign, canvass and even vote entirely through postal and electronic means this does not currently seem like the fair and proper way to do things.  Not least because the WRU Articles do not currently provide for the ability to undertake the election electronically.
It is envisaged that Welsh rugby may be in a better position to achieve a fair election around the July period – still some months before our scheduled Annual General Meeting in October – but if we get to that stage and less progress has been made than expected in terms of our community game then we will rethink the situation.
We hope that candidates and member clubs understand the current position, but of course welcome further discourse on the matter.

**4. COVID-19 Club Guides**

Over the next few weeks our Club Development Team will be providing a set of easy to follow guides for clubs on a range of business continuity topics. Last week the focus was on assisting clubs to access all Welsh Government financial support that may be available.  Club Guide 1 circulated to all secretaries included a flowchart to determine eligibility for clubs to either the Welsh Government Business Support Scheme administered by Local Authorities or the Economic Resilience Fund. For this week, Club Guide 2 will provide advice and guidance relating to financial planning for our clubs focused on reducing expenditure, forecasting and budgeting.

**CLUB WEBINARS**
The Club Guides will be followed by a series of webinars addressing issues that our clubs are experiencing or will need to be covered if, and when, Government advice changes.  The webinars will be delivered by the WRU Club Development Team or guest speakers with external expertise in certain industry sectors.  Information on how to access the webinars will be provided in future information updates to our clubs.

**5.**     **News from the Community Game**

Clubs have continued to show huge resilience and innovative approaches to helping themselves and their whole community:

**DON’T BE SHEEPISH**
Brecon chairman Paul Amphlett, who is also a shepherd and a retired paramedic, has come up with a unique way to combine his passion for rugby and farming – to the benefit of both – to produce the third effect of releasing him to return to former duties with the Welsh Ambulance Service at this time of great crisis and, as if that wasn’t enough, his inspired project is also raising money for the NHS.  Faced with the same prospect of loss of trade and income experienced by rugby clubs around the country, Paul hit on the idea for his 73-strong flock of sheep to spend some time down at Parc de Pugh to both graze the grass and naturally fertilise the ground – with the shepherd paying appropriate rent for the space.
Paul was now free to return to Ambulance duties, but he wasn’t finished there, he is also offering sponsors the opportunity to ‘adopt’ one of his flock - with added incentives for the highest bidders – and had raised over £300 within the first five minutes of making his offer.  Any sponsorship enquires should be directed to ron.rowsell@btinternet.com and, of course, all monies raised will be donated directly to the NHS.

**GOING THE EXTRA MILES**

Well done to the 48 members of Pencoed RFC who have completed a 48 hour run and raised £7,000 for local ICU Units!

Welshpool have conducted a virtual club run, clocking up almost 2000 miles between them via the Strava app and raising £2,500 for the local NHS Charity – that would get you to Bucharest!

Crickhowell rugby club are engaging in a 5km to £5k run to raise money for the Aneurin Bevan health board. For every minute it takes participants to run 5km a pound is donated.  The club began fundraising last Saturday and, with thanks to Steve Carrington for the update, they had raised £2.1k by the following Monday evening.
Pentyrch have donated edible goods and soft drinks worth around £700 to the local hospital and care home and conducted a raffle with their alcoholic drinks, donating the proceeds to local Health Board Charity and local causes.

**STAY AT HOME BALDY**
One of the players at Treorchy club initiated a particularly hair-raising scheme to support the NHS during this emergency. Through the Just Giving website players, coaches and supporters of the Zebras were invited to shave their heads through the slogan #stayathomebaldy with the initial ambiton of raising £1,000. At the start of this week the sum raised was £8,162, a tremendous achievement for such a worthy cause and thanks to Bryan James for the details.
We’ll keep in touch to get updates on all the ‘running’ totals, but if you’re fundraising or contributing in another way we would also like to hear from you – get in touch so we can share your Welsh rugby story – email clubdevelopment@wru.wales .

**6.**     **Around Welsh rugby**

**THIS TIME LAST YEAR**
A year on from a first national trophy for both Abergavenny and Brecon, we caught up with the two former internationals in charge of the clubs’ victorious coaching teams.
Despite having played on the highest stage of the international game, Nathan Thomas and Andy Powell are now lending their experience and expertise to another level of the game – and finding huge satisfaction in the process.
In the first of our two-part series looking back to last year’s WRU National Finals day, we hear from former Wales back row Nathan Thomas - with a special mention to Abergavenny co-coach Simon Williams who, a year on from lifting the Plate is currently playing a very different role at Principality Stadium as an NHS Facilities Manager part of the Cardiff & Vale UHB Project Board at Dragon’s Heart Hospital. *Read more here:* [https://community.wru.wales/article/on-this-day-abergavenny-claim-bowl-honours/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=463A471A1A1180)

**MJ’s PLATE**
For part two, Andy Powell’s friendship with Matthew J Watkins goes all the way back to when he joined Newport Youth at the start of his rugby adventure:
***“We were together at Newport for a few seasons before I went to France and then we were reunited at the Scarlets. We would share a lift and remained good friends.***
***“I look back at last season now and think it was just meant to be. I have a photo of Matthew, myself and our defence coach Matthew Lewis up in my house that I look at every night and have a little smile. Looking at that drives me on and I know he’d want me to go on and do well. “I invited Matthew to become Brecon backs coach alongside myself and he just said ‘why not’. He embraced that challenge as he embraced everything that he was faced with…”***
*Read more here:* [community.wru.wales/article/powell-the-plate-win-was-meant-to-be-for-matthew-and-brecon/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=463A471A1A1181)

**YOGA GOT THIS**
Like many of her team-mates, Wales Women’s international Alecs Donovan is busy away from the field – in her case founding and running her own, unique yoga business.
For Donovan, the two aspects of her life overlapped constantly prior to the coronavirus pandemic hitting.
The seven-times capped centre, now in the Wales Women Sevens squad, is helping rugby players go to the next level by implementing ‘yogability’ into their fitness sessions.
*Read more here:* [www.wru.wales/2020/04/donovan-how-yoga-can-help-players-reach-new-heights/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=463A471A1A1182)

**STAR POTENTIAL**
Kayleigh Powell ranks scoring Wales' first try on the Sevens World Series, becoming a senior Wales international and mixing with Tom Daley at the Commonwealth Games as some of her biggest achievements to date - but there is a lot more to come from the young starlet.
The unassuming 21-year-old was capped by Wales this season following a steady but impressive rise to the international scene after being introduced to the game by an encouraging headteacher and rugby coach – Mr Emmanuel of Llantrisant Primary School.
*Read more here:* [www.wru.wales/article/powell-excited-for-the-future/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=463A471A1A1183)

**UNSTOPPABLE CARTER**
Standing at 1.98m tall and tipping the scales a shade over 116 kgs (6ft 6in and 18st 4lbs in old money), Dragons second row Ben Carter earlier this year played in his first U20 Six Nations campaign and immediately became integral to Wales head coach Gareth Williams’ game plan.
Quietly spoken and unassuming off the pitch, he is a natural born leader on it, even if he hasn’t got ‘C’ next to his name in the match-day programme.
The 19-year-old has represented his country at Under 16, U18 and U19 level and has previously captained the elder two age-groups with aplomb.
He started the 2020 U20 Six Nations campaign in north Wales alongside Jac Price who was returning for his second campaign in the second row.
When the Scarlets lock got injured in the second game against Ireland, Carter stepped up to the plate and seamlessly took over as elder statesman in the boiler house when he was joined by his former Wales U18 teammate, James Fender.
*Read more here:*[www.wru.wales/article/unruffled-carter-proves-crucial-to-the-cause/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=463A471A1A1184)

**7.**     **Martyn Phillips comment**

***Welsh rugby is blessed to be backed by a wide array of businesses and organisations who share our passion for and dedication to our national game.***
***These companies and organisations have stood shoulder to shoulder with us during these testing times.***
***Our agreements are more than mutually beneficial business arrangements, sponsorships or supply deals they are partnerships and that sentiment has never been seen in sharper focus than it is now.***
***NatWest have helped the WRU ease the pressure of loan repayments with clubs and Barclays bank continue to be incredibly supportive both to the business directly and in the community game. The chartered surveyors Cooke & Arkwright have been helping us with issues surrounding business rates and we are grateful for the intervention of the Welsh Government’s Economic Resilience Fund. Our Principality Stadium partners have wholeheartedly supported the construction, development and maintenance of the Dragon’s Heart Hospital now on site at our national stadium and the Welsh Government have also been particularly engaged with us and supportive in this area.  From Heineken, who quickly withdrew product from areas around the stadium being put to new uses, to supplies like Britvic and Walkers, who have donated product to the NHS to ensure they have snacks and drinks to keep them going through this difficult period. We are privileged to work with local welsh suppliers and international suppliers, all of which have supported us and helped us whilst we have been transitioning to our new hospital guise: Castell Howell, Alex Gooch and Total Produce have helped with the supply of food to the team that planned and delivered the early phase of construction. We have also been supported by the likes of Uprise and Harlequin, who have removed all of our treasured items and are keeping them safe for when we become a Stadium again.***
***In the past few weeks, we have been supported by Levy UK, providing us with some key insights across their group of companies, advising on staffing matters, supported with the hospital projects, ensured supply chains remained open and prioritized us whilst we needed them.***
***Corporate clients of Principality Stadium continue to overwhelm with the support they give us. We are of course acutely aware that businesses all over the country are experiencing difficult times and we are grateful for the level of honesty and transparency we have been privy to in the past few weeks from all quarters.***
***In the rugby community AON, our insurance broker, have been working hard with us and our member clubs to provide support, our principal partners Admiral, Isuzu, Under Armour and, of course, Principality Building Society have all sought to help in these trying times. This help has often come in ways which will never receive public recognition or acknowledgment, with neither accolade courted and it is incredibly reassuring to know that this is the calibre of company which ‘has our back’.***
***From our official suppliers S.A. Brain, Guinness, Dove Men+Care, Specsavers, Heineken, Indigo Group and SP Energy Networks who continue to be supportive at our hour of need to the likes of our broadcast partners the BBC and S4C we are all looking forward to the time when we can all be enjoying each other’s company together and return to rugby.***
***But, in the meantime, we hugely value the investments that our partners have made and continue to make so that we can provide the much needed support and revenue to Welsh rugby.***
***Finally we boast a long list of official suppliers who represent the very foundations upon which we are built: from PAS to the Welsh Government, ACE, Peter's Pies, Mom's, Princes Gate, Rhino, Sinclair Mercedes, Perform Better, Britvic, Gullivers Sports Travel, Events International, The Brogue Trader, Sportseen, TM Lewin, Total Gas & Power, Amber Energy, Ticketmaster, Gilbert and Fanatics you can see that scale of the support behind us and I hope you find this as reassuring as I do.***

***Stay safe,***
***Martyn Phillips***
***WRU CEO***