



A BETTER FUTURE FOR RUGBY AT ALL LEVELS

The first steps on a path to grow English rugby and give power back to members

The egregious bonuses of senior RFU executives brought into focus the mismanagement of the game. The Board and in some cases, Council, have failed in their duty to hold the administration of our beloved game to account.

Ours is not the actions of a disgruntled few, but an expression of widespread discontent.

The SGM called for by hundreds of members was principally aimed at registering dissatisfaction with the Chair and the CEO. However, our issues are not just with those personnel who have let all of us down so badly, but also with processes for decision-making they have

employed. The responsibility for this situation rests with the Senior Executive Directors and the Board of Directors.

Furthermore, rather than listening to the members, the leadership have taken a hostile stance against volunteers who raise legitimate concerns.

Members of the RFU are the custodians of the game and it is our right to call for an SGM. To that end, further motions will be tabled at the Annual General Meeting in June, so **we can all return the RFU to being a well-led, responsibly-governed national body, financially successful and serving the needs of all its members.**

CURRENT STATE

1

Poor Governance and Decision-making.

The UK Corporate Governance Code has not been followed by the RFU. Committee meetings and key decision and policy making meetings have been exclusively chaired by Independent NEDs lacking deep rugby knowledge or an understanding of how the game is structured and operated in England.

2

Unsustainable underlying losses.

Excessive underlying losses during the last two rugby world cup cycles, and a RFU forecast underlying loss of **£40.9m** over the next four years. RFU debenture debt is **£236.9m** on top of a current debt of **£77m**, with total debt increased by **£15.9m**, contrary to the Board's claims.

3

Remuneration and reputational damage.

Board signing off egregious bonuses for senior executives (**£1.1m**) in a year of underlying losses of £40m, redundancies and greater burden on volunteers. Tackle Height implementation.

4

Bloated and centralised staffing structure.

The RFU should attract talented people, but the membership demands that these talents must include the selflessness that exemplifies a membership organisation primarily run by volunteers. While senior exec pay has increased exponentially, more staff work at the centre and fewer work at local levels to support the game. Average pay per employee RFU is £81,700, compared to **£68,118 at the FA.**

5

Elite rugby focus.

Unprecedented support to 10 loss-making professional clubs (£33m per year), representing an increase of 58% in funding per club over the PGA, whilst neglecting the second tier of our game, and reducing investment in the community game from 43% in 2015 to little more than 30% in 2024.



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HEADLINE FAILURES

The Board, led by a Chair with no rugby background, allowed the CEO to significantly expand the workforce to 633 employees, many of whom do not directly contribute to the development of the game. The remaining bloated administrative structure has diverted essential funding away from grassroots rugby.

REASONS FOR CHANGE

- 1 Neglected grassroots clubs, who feel abandoned by the Union.
- 2 The Championship financially adrift, with promotion to the Premiership nearly impossible due to restrictive policies.
- 3 No clear strategy for financial recovery, with leadership instead framing these losses as part of a planned four-year cycle that forecasts further deficits.

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Vote for the SGM and future AGM Resolutions so together we can start driving the following changes:

- 1 Restructuring the RFU staffing model to prioritise local rugby development, ensuring dedicated support for grassroots growth and community engagement – the future of professional and England rugby.
- 2 Appointing an interim Board to lead a strategic turnaround, implementing a balanced investment plan across professional, semi-professional, and recreational rugby.
- 3 Restoring financial sustainability by achieving profitability over each Rugby World Cup cycle, so that greater direct investment is made to the community game.
- 4 Reforming the RFU Board and Council to enhance transparency, accountability, and representation, ensuring they truly reflect and serve the interests of the membership.

RFU SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING (27TH MARCH 2025)

It is resolved that the members have no confidence in the CEO (Mr Bill Sweeney) and call upon the RFU Board of Directors to terminate his employment at the RFU as soon as practicably possible.

RFU ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (JUNE 2025)

Refine the rules to restore democratic accountability to members and align the RFU with high standards of governance. This should include refining the composition and powers of the Board, and changing the size, composition and powers of Council.

To have your say, and chat about your priorities, join the team at our Alternative Virtual Roadshow to be held on Thursday 20th February at 18:00hrs For further details or to register to attend our meeting, please contact us at; wholegameunion@gmail.com



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IF YOU CANNOT VOTE IN THE SGM ON THE DAY, YOU CAN APPOINT SOMEONE TO VOTE ON YOUR BEHALF. HERE'S HOW:

1

Follow this link to the SGM web page: <https://web.lumiagm.co>. This also has further meeting information.

2

Enter meeting ID: 167-805-670, and enter the user ID and unique PIN in your individual Calling Notice.

3

Click on the PROXY/PREVOTING tab.

4

Choose whether to appoint the Chair of the meeting, or someone else, to vote for you. If someone else, add their details.

5

If you want to direct them how to vote (for, against or abstain), you can do this, or vote yourself, when voting opens on 13 March 2025. You must log in again to do this.

6

Click "SUBMIT".

If you have any questions, please contact the Company Secretarial Team at CoSec@rfu.com

VOTE FOR CHANGE AND SUPPORT OUR MOTION