

The Referees' Association

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31st August 2015

RA BOARD EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Colleagues:

Having listened very carefully to feedback from our membership across the country, we totally agree that everybody in the RA has the perfect right to know what is going on at Board level and what decisions are being taken in your name and on your behalf.

Therefore one of these “Executive Summary” documents will be circulated after each Board Meeting going forward, in which will be shown all the major topics discussed and decisions made which are of interest to our members. Please feel free to let us have your feedback on this new initiative. All we ask is that your comments, whether favourable or not, are phrased in a constructive and helpful way.

These reports will be comprehensive, and will only exclude matters of a sensitive and/or confidential nature. Such exclusions will be kept to an absolute minimum. In this way, we will avoid the need to circulate redacted Board Minutes where, for very good reasons, certain discussions held during Meetings of the RA Board cannot be included in a document which is circulated on a wide general basis. Any redacted version could look like a poorly constructed governmental Freedom of Information document which raises more concerns than it ever answers. In addition, the format of these new reports will hopefully be easier on the eye and more appealing to its readers.

Our last Board Meeting was held on 18 & 19 July 2015, but the situation was then complicated by the subsequent resignation from the Board of Albert Astbury. This required a total redistribution of the many varied roles and responsibilities which Albert had previously held within the Association.

This particular Executive Summary therefore also incorporates on this occasion the necessary restructuring actions within the RA Board following Albert’s departure (as agreed at a special meeting of RA Full Board Members held on 10/08/15), plus the consequential activities that first needed to be organised and confirmed before they could be publicised.

So brace yourselves, and here goes!

- Bill Darby (ill health) and Albert Astbury (personal reasons) have both resigned since the AGM.
- the RA Board therefore now comprises just 5 elected Full Members instead of the usual 9:
 - **Paul Field** = Chairman;
 - **Ian Campbell** = Vice-Chairman;
 - **John Wilson** = Chair of IAC / Membership / Head Office & Facilities;
 - **Eddie McGrath** = Chair of EAC / Press & Media;
 - **John Key** = Quest.
- to take on the role of Association Treasurer, **Reg Pullen** has been co-opted on to the Board.

- an accountant by trade, Reg brings a wealth of financial experience and expertise with him.
- Reg will also concentrate on our ongoing accounts, general finances and sustainability planning.
- Eddie has therefore stepped down from the post of RA Treasurer so he can focus on other areas.
- **Will Finnie** and **Tom Bowkett** from the Youth Council have also been co-opted on to the Board.
- these appointments of Will and Tom last until AGM 2016, and both of them have full voting rights.
- in addition, we have created a number of Honorary Officers, each with clear skills and objectives:
 - **John Harvey** = Rules and Constitution, plus general support;
 - **Derek Mansfield** = IT / website / office systems, plus general support;
 - **Vince Penfold** = LRA Officers' Manual and RA Manual of Guidance, plus business marketing;
 - **Arran Williams** = social media, plus focus on attracting younger members to the Association.
- **Mike Potter** (though not as an Honorary Officer) remains a consultant on RA Rules & Constitution.
- the aim of these additional appointments has been two-fold in the interests of our membership:
 - to widen the knowledge and expertise base amongst members of the current RA Board;
 - to take on extra hands to assist with the workload and delivery of expected service levels.
- **David Crick** has been reconfirmed as our RA Representative to the FA Council for 2015/16.
- Ian Campbell and John Wilson have become Trustees of the RA Benevolent Fund.
- they replace Arthur Smith and John Starkey, whose previous tenure is gratefully acknowledged.
- Eddie McGrath will be continuing regular publication of the excellent new Voiceover magazine.
- any news or articles to be considered for future editions of Voiceover should be sent to Eddie.
- another request that, if your LRA holds any QUEST Award/s, this is confirmed back to John Key.
- our previous records regarding QUEST were, to say the least, incomplete when John took over.
- he wants to reverse this situation as promptly as possible, and move forward in a robust manner.
- we have received numerous feedbacks on various aspects of the 2015 Conference weekend.
- all of these (especially the AGM) will be considered at the **next Board Meeting on Sun.04/10/15.**
- responses will then be sent out to everyone who originally contacted us with their views.
- we will continue to press the FA for an early re-introduction of their Referee Incentive Scheme.
- but no news is likely for at least twelve months, and even then a positive outcome is uncertain.
- in particular, we will have to wait and see the effects of the FA's current cost-saving exercises.
- as you will be aware, the FA's way forward depends mostly on their ongoing restructuring plans.
- the RA's representatives for RA-FA Meetings are now Paul Field, Eddie McGrath and Ian Campbell.

- but September's Meeting has already been postponed by the FA in view of that restructuring.
- and we must wait and see what happens about the next one, planned for early-March 2016.

Are you still awake and fully with us?! You did all ask for these details, and you are certainly getting them! But bear with - the good news is that we're already over half way through, so it's well worth you ploughing on! Hence head down and onwards into the second period of play!

- all future RA Board Meetings will be one-day events in line with our focus on reducing costs.
- the need for financial caution and a robust sustainability plan stay at the very top of our agenda.
- building plans and agreements for our new separated office within Ryton HQ are well advanced.
- we hope to have firm news regarding all relevant aspects by the time of the next Board Meeting.
- as you know, RA membership for 2015/16 has reverted to RAMMS due to issues with Participant.
- we will however continue to use Participant for Conference 2016 as it performed well this year.
- the Board continues to focus on upgrading our IT performance, email system and Website.
- it is hoped that **all** RA forms will soon be available for downloading direct from the Website.
- this will include Awards, Insurance claims, applications to the Benevolent Fund, and so on.
- the Manual of Guidance is now in the process of being updated - and not before time!
- funding of the Youth Council by the Referees' Association will remain at £8k for season 2015/16.
- but, in present climates, this money will be accompanied by measurable KPIs plus time deadlines.
- a sub-committee is now re-examining our Constitution with a view to updating plus compliance.
- with all the recent Board changes, the issue of County Buddies has been temporarily put on hold.
- now stability has been achieved, allocations will hopefully be decided by the next Board Meeting.
- regarding the various RA events in 2016:
 - **Eve-of-Final Rally** on Fri.20/05/16 in central London:
 - to be renamed "Meet the FA Cup Final Officials";
 - entry will be £15 for adults and £10 for under-18's;
 - its viability for 2017 onwards will be scrutinised;
 - Sat.04/06/16 will witness:
 - our **AGM** and **CRA Meeting**;
 - to be held in a central-UK venue;
 - Sat.16/07/16 will host:
 - the **YC outdoor training event**;
 - our **National RA Quiz Final**;
 - joint **RA & YC Annual Dinner**;

- **RA Conference** itself will take place all-day on Sun.17/07/16.

- **but please note:**

- these dates are all still to be finalised and confirmed - **nothing** is yet set in stone;
- Conference Weekend 2016 will almost certainly be heading back to a Midlands venue;
- it is crucial that we reduce the overall cost of holding our Conference Weekends;
- at the same time, we need to maintain the high prestige and favourable perception of it;
- the Quiz might undergo a change of format to re-invigorate it and gain far more support;
- on all these matters, we will keep you fully updated as things develop over coming months.

Best Regards,

Ian.

Ian Campbell - RA Board Vice-Chairman
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