

# JSG – Cymru

## Zoom Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> July 19:00

### Attendees:

Crys16	Barrie Jones, Ian Lewis, Paul Casey
CF10	Lynn Glaister, Andy Baker,
Cardiff S.C	Simon Harrington
D.O.S.C	Daniel Hallett, Ryan Price
O.S.C	Grant Berni, Cathy Green, Keith Collins
CEO's/Club Reps	Simon Muderack (Scarlets), Alun Jones(Cardiff ), Paul Whapham (Ospreys), David Buttress(Dragons)

### Apologies:

Ospreys CEO – Nick Garcia (Replaced with Paul Whapham)

### Items Discussed

1. Barrie Jones welcomed everyone and gave an introduction to the meeting explaining the principles of JSG Cymru and agreeing the terms for the review and issuing of the minutes.  
He welcomed the 4 Representatives of the clubs.
2. The 4 Club representatives gave some welcoming words and a discussion around the principle of the meeting and what they hope to achieve from the meeting as well as the expectations of the JSG.
3. A discussion then took place regarding the usefulness of the meeting with the Club representatives and the timing interval for future meetings. It was seen that the meeting is a positive and important part of the JSG and all were keen to see it continue.
4. Discussion regarding the JSG–WRU Relationship and how are the clubs working within the PRB and WRU
  - (i) The Club representatives gave a summary of how and what they want to see in future:
  - (ii) They were keen to show that the 4 clubs are working together with PRB/WRU
  - (iii) They are looking for a funding model not just for 12 months but a model that will sustain them into the future – Multiyear

- (iv) Malcolm Wall (New PRB Chairman) has been really beneficial to the PRB and his contribution is being well received
  - (v) The Club Representatives were keen to show that real progress is being made
  - (vi) Answers to the issues must be collective answers, applicable to the 4 clubs
  - (vii) The time is right now for a Fix once- Fix for all
  - (viii) They accepted that the final agreement is difficult but the 4 clubs are working to achieve this and remain positive
  - (ix) They recognised the difficulties that Covid has brought to the clubs
  - (x) They need a plan to get the clubs out of debt
  - (xi) WRU – if this doesn't work then it will be down to people and not the plan
  - (xii) All 4 clubs are showing alignment and camaraderie which was welcomed by them
5. Are there any reasons for why things cannot be achieved/moved forward?
- (i) The culture in Welsh rugby is very difficult to move
  - (ii) Pro Rugby in Wales is intrinsic to Welsh Rugby.
  - (iii) There is a need to establish Club Rugby
  - (iv) A bottom-up Model is seen as a possible fix from grass roots recognising that the current Model is broken
  - (v) It is seen that a change in the WRU Governance model is needed
  - (vi) To do the changes which clearly need to happen will require time
  - (vii) Welsh Rugby can still attract good people
6. Question was asked regarding the WRU's lack of presence at this meeting
- (i) This particular meeting was a JSG/CEO meeting
  - (ii) The last meeting with the WRU was Aug 2021 and though many emails and communication were initial forthcoming, no further meeting has been forthcoming even though one was initially proposed after the 2021 autumn internationals.
  - (iii) This issue will be raised by the CEOs at the PRB.
  - (iv) A general debate then took place regarding the scrutiny of the WRU and the relationship the PRB/clubs have with the WRU
  - (v) It was felt that Malcolm Wall would be of benefit to the meeting and would probably welcome his participation as long as Steve Phillips (WRU) was to attend.
7. Question raised regarding the Dragons ownership.
- (i) To progress this matter DB made it clear that a sustainable financial model was required, not just for 1 year but to be seen as a 3-4 year model so sustainable plans can be put in place.



8. Question raised regarding the Financial Models

- (i) A discussion took place regarding the financial model including (WRU) player funding – it was seen that there has to be a better way than how it is currently
- (ii) There has to be accountability to the funding and recognising that there are things the 4 clubs can do together such as shared procurement.
- (iii) However, the clubs must be competitive.

9. URC Relationship

- (i) The relationship with the URC is improving and the product does have a strategy and is seen as a supporter friendly product
- (ii) The league has to grow and the Welsh clubs need to be competitive in that league and will go from strength to strength. It was felt that without a comparable budget and access to our best players throughout the season, this would be difficult to achieve.
- (iii) The Club representatives feel that the addition of the South African clubs as being a bonus and in time will show big benefits to the league. It was recognised that travel to away matches in SA was difficult.
- (iv) Debate regarding the timing of kick offs and the difficulty due to ground sharing. Scheduling of the games is very complex and not always to everyone's liking. The fixtures are disjointed and can result in long periods of home and away games. This will not help in growing the game.
- (v) It was recognised that quite simply the Welsh Clubs do not win enough games.
- (vi) A general discussion regarding how league can be improved.
- (vii) Welsh clubs need to be competitive; they need player access more than is currently given. In respect of this it was felt by all that we must strive to get the best players available to the clubs.

10. League refereeing standards

- (i) Clarity was sought about the current referees. URC being seen as a “training” ground. Discussion regarding how Welsh referees are funded and match allocated. . CG - feel that the English prem clubs and supporters clubs would not accept the same level of officiating as we have in the URC. It would be interesting to know the finances, training and expectations of the URC for the officials used in the league. While inexperienced and inconsistent officiating is still an issue, she feels that the image of the league will never appear professional, and supporter buy in will continue to reflect this. The Cardiff, Scarlets and Dragons CEOs said they would take this concern back to the URC.
- (ii) Discussion took place about how the standards, especially in the current English set up, is much higher and consistent.

11. Premier TV

- (i) Discussion regarding the product supplied by Premier TV
- (ii) The Club representatives feel it is value for money – every game is televised.
- (iii) No consistency in approach – favouring some teams
- (iv) No after match analysis
- (v) The JSG view is that the commentary can be very suspect/biased
- (vi) The Club Representatives will raise this issue with the URC/Broadcaster

12. AOB

- (i) Fixtures will be made available shortly (before end of July)
- (ii) Discussion regarding timing of meetings
  - a. 6 Monthly with PRB/WRU
  - b. 6 monthly with just JSG members

Meeting closed 20:45