



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

13th January 2026

1. Welcome and Apologies

Roll call and confirmation of quorum and apologies for absence

• Attendance: James Davies, Adam Rowland, Richard Hibbard, Clive Griffiths, Phillipa Lang, Matthew Thomas, Mark Lovering, Matthew Porch, Joanna Thomas.

• Apologies: Adam Malcolm, Robert Deeney and Andy Morgan.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Review and approval of minutes from the last meeting

• Cascaded via email as the output of the board meeting from January 2026 and will be added as an agenda item from the next board meeting as per action.

3. Matters Arising

Follow-up on action items from previous meetings

• Updates provided on ongoing actions (see Action Table below).

4. Chairperson's Report

Overview of recent activities and developments

Chairman Overview

• Chairman James Davies welcomed the attendees and gave brief purpose of the board meeting due to new attendees.

• All board members were **requested to submit "pen pics"** (including a photo, current role, and personal motivations) to update the "Who's Who" section of the WRL website

• Introduction to **New Board Members**

◦ Joanna Thomas (HR Consultant) shared her background in people strategy and culture, previously working with the WRU.

◦ Matthew Porch (Accountant) shared his experience in professional sports finance (Bath Rugby) and his commitment to sustainable growth for WRL

5. Financial Report

• **Financial Position:**

◦ WRL ended December 2025 with a healthy **cash position of £68,181**.

◦ **Fixed Costs:** Monthly running costs (wages/IT/expenses) have been successfully reduced to **£2,500 per month**.



- **Reserve Policy:** The minimum cash reserve policy was officially amended from £30k down to **£15k** to allow for more strategic investment in the game.
- **Commercial Partnerships:**
 - **Equifax:** Lead sponsor for the Women's and Wheelchair teams for the World Cup, valued at **£45k + VAT**.
 - **Dunbia:** Negotiating a **£13,000 package** for the U19s and Student programmes. WRL has countered their offer to exclude full student sponsorship in favour of a "back of shirt" deal.
 - **Credit Dinner:** WRL has the opportunity to present at a high-level dinner involving **FTSE 250 companies**, which could lead to significant future investment.
- **Annual Accounts (YE March 2025):**
 - The Board noted that while turnover dropped, **profitability increased** due to cutting staff salary costs to zero to protect the game's future.

6. Strategic Plan Update

Progress on strategic objectives and discussion on upcoming initiatives

- Discussion on the finalisation of the scorecards and quarterly strategy review are being introduced that KPIs linked to WRL 2030 strategy which will include stronger accountability and board oversight.

7. Governance and Compliance

Review of governance policies and compliance updates and issues

- **Sport Wales Framework Model:**
 - WRL is transitioning to the new model based on **five core principles**.
 - Demonstrable evidence (e.g., annual insurance policies, community game wordings) is now stored in a **structured folder system on Microsoft Teams** to ensure transparency.
 - The **Self-Declaration form** must be submitted for investment by the **23rd January** deadline.
- **Governance Improvement Plan (GIP) 2026:**
 - The Board formally approved the GIP as a **live document** to track "Amber" and "Red" risk items as they move toward "Green" status.
 - Specific focus for the next quarter includes **EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion)** policy drafting by Steve Jones and board succession planning.
- **Board Recognition:**
 - WRL successfully achieved the **Insport Silver Award** following a successful panel review.
 - The Board noted that the current composition does not yet fully reflect the **Articles of Association**, particularly the need for an **Independent Chairperson**.

8. Development and Performance

Performance updates and reports on player development programmes

- **National Teams & Pathways:**
 - **Senior Men:** Strong start under **Paul Berry** with a victory over Ireland; the squad included **six debutants**, reinforcing the "World Cup Ready 2030" transition.



- **Wales A:** Formally established as a curtain-raiser to senior games to bridge the gap between U18s and the first team.
- **Pathway Depth:** Approximately **50 Welsh youngsters** are currently attached to professional academies in the North of England.
- **Inclusion & Disability Performance:**
 - **Wheelchair:** Secured a win against the UK Armed Forces; a new **Strength & Conditioning (S&C) programme** by Chris Combs has been implemented.
 - **PDRL World Cup:** A proposed application for a Physical Disability Rugby League World Cup was deemed **financially unfeasible**, as it would cost **£100,000** without clear commercial leverage.
- **Commercial Opportunities:**
 - Discussions are opening with **London Broncos** regarding using their Wimbledon facilities and potentially integrating Welsh players into their reserve competition.

9. Community Game

Performance update and key activities

- **School & Youth Programmes:**
 - Successful launch of the **CHIC and WRL programmes** within junior schools of the **NPTC (Neath Port Talbot) borough**.
 - Re-establishment of the **Secondary School Championship**, with teams showing potential to progress to national finals at Wembley or Super League grounds.
 - Build-out of the **East Wales girl's origin programme** is underway to support the female pathway.
- **League Structure & Competition:**
 - Proposed **two-tier league structure for West Wales** to address the issue of established teams beating newer teams by **60-70 points**, which leads to club dissolution.
 - The "Bronze" phase of this proposal involves established teams playing more fixtures while newer teams play taster sessions to grow sustainably.
- **Barriers to Growth:**
 - **Coach Education:** A critical challenge remains "unlocking" Level 1 and Level 2 accreditation for community volunteers due to financial and logistical hurdles.
 - **Touchline Management:** Concerns were raised regarding touchline conduct, DBS compliance, and the lack of first-aid-certified personnel at the community level.
- **Accreditation:** Unlocking Level 1 and Level 2 **coach education** remains a significant barrier due to financial and logistical challenges.

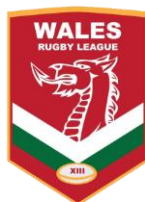
10. Marketing and Communications

Update on marketing campaigns and Media/public relations activities

- Discussions were held in the financial report section of this month's board meeting.

11. Any Other Business and date of next meeting

Open floor for additional topics



Board and Executive Structure

- The board reviewed the distinction between **Executive Members** (responsible for day-to-day strategic direction and policy implementation) and **Non-Executive Members** (providing independent oversight and challenge).
- The board identified five "blue" roles to be formally recognised on **Companies House**: Chairperson, CEO, and Directors for People, Governance, and Finance.
- James Davies noted the goal of moving toward an **Independent Chairperson** to align with the Articles of Association, as he currently handles many executive duties.

Review of Self-Declaration Form

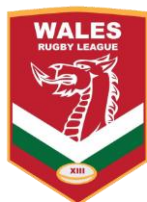
- The board reviewed the transition to the **Sport Wales Framework Model**, which is built on five core principles.
- Adam Rowland confirmed that folder structures have been created on Microsoft Teams to store evidence for compliance, such as insurance policies and community game wordings.
- The **Governance Improvement Plan (GIP) 2026** was formally **approved** as a live document to track progress from "Amber" to "Green" status.

AGM Planning

- The AGM is set for **28th January 2026** at 18:30 via Microsoft Teams.
- Despite three reminders, **no nominations** were received for the three member-elected director positions.
- Marc Lovering noted that this likely reflects the high pressure on club-level volunteers who lack the time for national board responsibilities.

Action Table:

Action	Who	When	Update	Status
Add player positions to scholarship/academy contract list	Clive Griffiths	10/12/24	Waiting confirmation – move to performance	Complete
Finalise MCRS and scorecards	Matthew Thomas & Adam Rowland	13/12/24	To be finalised, presented and approved	Ongoing
Review strategy and propose performance measurement approach	Matthew Thomas	12/08/25	To be finalised, presented and approved	Ongoing
Discuss and decide way forward with TicketPass	James Davies	12/08/25	Discussions with LiveIT ongoing	Ongoing



Rob Deeney to provide costs for upcoming men's and women's games	Robert Deeney	12/08/25		Complete
Set up quarterly meetings for "2030 World Cup Readiness"	James Davies	12/08/25	Various reviews in place	Complete
Agree on appointment of future Welsh coach	James Davies	12/08/25	Paul Berry appointed	Complete
Lead discussions on two-tier league structure in West Wales	Robert Deeney	12/08/25	Within the community update	Complete
Confirm home venue for Wheelchair Rugby League	Robert Deeney	12/08/25		Complete
Develop performance scorecard in collaboration with Adam R.	Andy Morgan	12/08/25	Duplicate from previous action	Complete
Promote WRL Golf Day and Annual Dinner online	Andy Morgan	12/08/25		Complete
All board members to complete personal picture pen form [Link]	All	05/03/26		New
Contact Andy Morgan formally announce new board members online (Joanna and Matthew)	Adam Rowland	05/03/26		New
Respond to James Davies's previous email if can attend NED WSA course online	All	05/03/26		New
All to upload relevant documents to sports self declaration ms teams page [Link]	All	05/03/26		New
Finalise and circulate WRL GIP 2026 and ensure captured in relevant governance forums	Adam Rowlands	05/03/26		New
Organise a familiarisation session on "Introduction to WRL governance" for Joana and Matthew	Matthew Thomas	05/03/26		New
Develop a recruitment plan with Joanna – board/exec/programmes (e.g. head of youth, team of managers etc)	Adam Rowlands	05/03/26		New



Circulate annual funding opportunities once approved by Sport Wales to WRL board.	Phillipa Lang	05/03/26		New
Consolidation of programme inputs with focus on timelines budgets and next steps/actions to be reviewed by NED's for executions	James Davies	05/03/26		New
Organise a familiarisation session for the community element with Rob Deeney along with Joanna & Matthew	Adam Rowland	05/03/26		New
Add an agenda item to approve previous meetings minutes and actions in the next board meeting and circulate the last board meeting minutes.	Matthew Thomas	05/03/26		New



Wales Rugby League

Rygbi Cynghrair Cymru



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