

World Deaf Rugby

Trustee/Executive Operating Policy

April 2024

Introduction

This World Deaf Rugby *Policy* document details the agreement reached at the 16 March 2024 *Trustees Meeting* regarding:

- Trustee/Executive Committee **Decision-Making Responsibilities**
- Trustee/Executive Committee **Operating Arrangements**
- Trustee/Executive Committee **Communication Protocols**
- Trustee **Task/Area of Activity Arrangements**

The document provides guidance on how the *Board of Trustees/Executive Committee* will operate, communicate, share information and make decisions consistent with the *WDR Constitution*. It also suggests how tasks/areas of activity might be allocated and shared amongst Trustees to achieve the best outcomes for World Deaf Rugby and WDR Members.

World Deaf Rugby has a 13-person *Board of Trustees* responsible for governance and managing all its affairs. It is important that the organisation productively harnesses, in a cohesive and coordinated way, the depth and diversity of knowledge, skills and experience brought to the table by these *Trustees*. The allocation of task/activity areas amongst *Trustees* enables the WDR workload to be appropriately shared, all *Trustees* to have an opportunity to actively contribute in their areas of interest/expertise, and organisation outcomes to be optimised.

Trustee/Executive Decision-Making Responsibilities

The *WDR Constitution*

- Makes it clear that the *Board of Trustees* is fully responsible for managing all the affairs of WDR, which means making all **major** decisions about the organisation and what it does
- Is entirely silent on any general or specific *Executive Committee* responsibilities – *there is no specific mention whatsoever of an “Executive Committee”* though the “*Officeholders*” are mentioned, but only regarding them automatically being “*ex officio*” *Trustees*

However, consistent with other organisations, it is considered reasonable that:

- The ***Trustees***, in their role of managing the affairs of WDR, should be responsible for **major decision-making**; and

- The **Executive Committee**, in its' role of the day-to-day running of WDR, should be responsible for **minor decision-making**, including bringing matters for consideration/decision by the full *Board of Trustees* as required, and noting that the definition and delineation between "**major**" and "**minor**" decisions will always be somewhat subjective.

The following **Decision-Making Responsibilities** have been agreed:

- The *Trustees* to be responsible for all **major decision-making**, including decisions on policy; strategy; the Budget; expenditure approval; constitution change; event scheduling; event bid selection; Deaflympics inclusion; sponsorship; marketing strategy; event support; women's deaf rugby initiatives; barbarian teams initiatives; *WR & ICSD* relationships etc.
- The *Executive Committee* to be responsible for all **minor decision-making** about the day-to-day running of the organisation
- The *Executive Committee* to ensure that the *Trustees* are informed and their involvement sought on any issues that may benefit from *Trustee* input or should be decided by the *Trustees* rather than the *Executive Committee*
- Where there is any doubt as to whether a particular matter should be decided by the *Trustees* or the *Executive Committee* – *i.e. whether it is a major decision or a minor decision* –, then the views of the *Trustees* should be sought and, if there is a difference of opinion between the two, the views/decision of the *Trustees* should take precedence and prevail
- The *Trustees* and the *Executive Committee* to be jointly responsible for deciding which matters need to be taken to the *General Committee* (*i.e. the wider WDR Membership*) for information, consultation, discussion and/or decision

Trustee/Executive Operating Arrangements

The **WDR Constitution** does not set down any rules as to **how** the *Board of Trustees* or the *Executive Committee* should undertake their responsibilities, hold their discussions or make their decisions – *i.e. there are no specific real-time meeting requirements, with nothing to prevent most if not all discussions and decision-making taking place via email or other messaging platforms.*

Given the language, interpreter access, translation and time-zone challenges faced, email discussion/decision-making might well, in general, be preferable in many situations to frequent real-time meetings, supplemented by periodic formal *Trustee* meetings via *Zoom* – *e.g. quarterly, 6 monthly or as required.*

The following **Operating Arrangements** have been agreed:

(i) **Trustees Discussions/Decision-Making**

- Primarily via formal email processes, facilitated/coordinated as required by the WDR Secretary
- Quarterly/6-monthly real-time *Zoom* meetings as required

- Ad-hoc real-time *Zoom* meetings as requested to the WDR Secretary by three or more *Trustees (as per the Constitution)*

(ii) Executive Committee Discussions/Decision-Making

- Primarily via email and WhatsApp
- Ad-hoc real-time *Zoom* meetings as requested to the WDR Secretary by any Executive Committee *Member/Officeholder*

Trustee/Executive Communication Protocols

Open, transparent communication and information sharing without communication/information overload is clearly critical to the smooth working within each of and between the *Board of Trustees* and the *Executive Committee* respectively, as well as with the wider WDR Membership.

The following ***Communication Protocols*** have been agreed:

- WDR Secretary, on behalf of and as agreed by the *Executive Committee*, to periodically provide regular email updates to the *Trustees*
- WDR Secretary, on behalf of and as agreed by the *Executive Committee*, to alert the *Trustees* via ad-hoc emails of any emerging issues/developments possibly requiring *Trustees* attention
- *Trustee Committees (and individual Trustees who have taken on particular tasks)* to periodically provide email *Progress Reports* to the *Trustees* directly, or through the WDR Secretary
- *Trustee Committees (and individual Trustees who have taken on particular tasks)* to alert the *Trustees (directly or through the WDR Secretary)* via ad-hoc emails of any emerging issues/developments possibly requiring *Trustees* attention
- *Executive Committee Officeholders* to regularly communicate and share information with each other via email and WhatsApp
- Individual *Trustees* to initiate communication/discussion with the *Trustees* as required or desired, either directly or through the WDR Secretary
- Individual *Trustees* to contact the *Executive Committee* with questions, comments and/or suggestions as required or desired
- WDR Secretary to provide information updates to WDR Members as requested/agreed by the *Trustees* and/or the *Executive Committee*
- WDR Secretary to respond to WDR Member communications on behalf of and as agreed by the *Executive Committee*, copying the other Executive Committee *Officeholders* into such communications

Trustee Task/Activity Area Allocation Arrangements

WDR has a 13-person *Board of Trustees* with the potential to contribute greatly to the running of the organisation and growing Deaf rugby nationally, regionally and internationally.

The diversity and depth of knowledge, skills and experience brought to the table by these *Trustees* needs to be productively harnessed in a cohesive and coordinated way so that the WDR workload can be appropriately shared, all *Trustees* have an opportunity to contribute in areas of their particular expertise or interest, and overall outcomes can be optimised.

Twelve (12) task/activity areas have been identified that *Trustees (including Officeholder Trustees)* could individually, jointly and/or with the support of a Committee comprising *Trustees & non-Trustees* lead, take responsibility for and progress. The *Attachment* provides details.

The following ***Trustee Task/Activity Area Allocation Arrangements*** have been agreed:

- The 12 *task/activity areas* listed below to each be allocated to one or more *Trustees (including Officeholder Trustees)* who have an interest in that particular area
 - Fundraising (*grants & sponsorship*) (**Gwynne**) - Governance
 - Marketing & Media (*including streaming*) (**Lauren & Tim**) - Governance
 - WDR Online Presence/Profile (*website; social media – FB, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter*) (**social media - Mark, Mariano, Michael O, Lisa; website – Johanna**)
 - WDR Plans & Policies - Governance
 - WDR Graphic Design (*external resource via Johanna*)
 - WDR Championships Bid Selection Process (**Johanna, Mariano, Tony**) - Performance
 - WDR Championships & Event Support - Performance
 - Deaflympics/ICSD Liaison (**Mariano, Michael O, Johanna**)
 - World Rugby Liaison (**Michael O, Gwynne, Mariano, Johanna**)
 - WDR Support for Developing Member Unions (**Asia – Atsuhiko**) - Community
 - Women’s Deaf Rugby Development - Performance
 - Barbarian Teams Coordination - Performance
- *Trustees* to then work on their respective *task/activity areas* either on their own or by setting up small Committees of other *Trustees* and/or *non-Trustees* to assist
- *Trustees* to be required to periodically provide short *Progress Reports* on their respective *task/activity areas* to all *Trustees (directly or through the WDR Secretary)*
- *Trustees* to be required to submit major decision items relating to their respective *task/activity areas* to all *Trustees (directly or through the WDR Secretary)* for discussion and decision by all *Trustees*

The above 12 tasks/areas of activity are to be linked to the three pillars of the WDR Strategic Plan – *Governance, Performance & Community*.

Trustee Task/Activity Areas

Fundraising (*Grants & Sponsorship*)

Identifying & pursuing sponsorship opportunities; Negotiating & putting in place sponsorship agreements **as approved by the Board of Trustees**; Identifying & submitting applications for Grant funding; Entering into, administering & acquitting Grant agreements/arrangements **as approved by the Board of Trustees**

Marketing & Media (*including streaming*)

Developing marketing strategies/approaches **for Board of Trustees approval** to increase participation in Deaf rugby, enhance WDR recognition and promote WDR/WDR championships; Developing & implementing merchandise agreements **for Board of Trustees approval**; Negotiating opportunities for the broadcast & streaming of WDR championships and putting such arrangements in place, **as approved by the Board of Trustees**

WDR Online Presence/Profile (*website; social media – FB, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter*)

Managing the WDR website including content creation & editing, content updating, technical administration and website development; Ensuring WDR has an active social media presence/profile by regularly posting updates and items of interest to WDR members

WDR Plans & Policies

Developing new WDR Plans & Policies and/or reviewing & updating existing WDR Plans & Policies **for consultation with and approval by the Board of Trustees**, including the *WDR Strategic Plan, WDR Equality & Diversity Policy, WDR Hearing Loss Policy etc.*

WDR Graphic Design

Developing/designing and producing various stationery, letterheads, business cards, document cover sheets, flyers/posters, event-specific & media-specific logo tailoring and other templates requiring graphics skills/experience

WDR Championships Bid Selection Process

Clarifying the overall *Bid Selection Process* including the steps in that process, timings, responsibilities, selection criteria and safeguards to insure against subjectivity and conflicts of interest; Developing the *Request for Bid* documentation, *Response Template & Bid Assessment/Selection Criteria* **for approval by the Board of Trustees**; Consulting with Members on any location preferences *vis-à-vis* Visa/travel/cost issues; Recommending the preferred *Bid* **for approval by the Board of Trustees**

NOTE: Given the breadth and intensity of this activity area and the need to ensure the Bid Selection Process is, and is seen to be, as transparent, fair and free of conflicts of interest as possible, it is envisaged that this activity area would involve 3 or more Trustees or 2 Trustees plus non-Trustees if the number of Trustees eligible to participate was insufficient due to actual or **perceived** conflicts of interest).

WDR Championships & Event Support

Establishing a *Standing Committee* to provide support to countries hosting a WDR championship or regional event; Recruiting individuals from Member countries having experience/expertise in rugby event organisation, competition management, marketing, sponsorship, event logistics, event support requirements etc. to be part of that *Committee*;

Developing a “*WDR Event Guidelines*” document to assist countries who wish to host a WDR championship or regional event by providing information on the protocols & procedures to be followed and advice on the planning & organisation of such events – *including “Deaf”-specific requirements*

Deaflympics/ICSD Liaison

Liaising with ICSD on possible *ICSD Associate Membership* and the inclusion of Rugby 7s in the *Deaflympics*; Consulting with WDR members as to their interest in the *Deaflympics* and their abilities to mount a 7s team at the *ICSD* hearing loss eligibility level of at least 55dB in the better ear; If agreed and **approved by the Board of Trustees**, progressing the requisite *ICSD* application process including all prerequisites for both *ICSD* membership and the inclusion of Rugby 7s in the *Deaflympics*

World Rugby Liaison

Liaising with World Rugby on future working relationships, WDR member relationships with their home unions and potential research projects that would benefit World Deaf Rugby **for approval by the Board of Trustees**

WDR Support for Developing Member Unions

Mentoring and supporting the smaller developing Member unions in their establishment and growth

Women’s Deaf Rugby Development

Liaising/consulting with member countries to promote the development of Women’s Deaf rugby in their countries; Providing advice & support to member countries in establishing/growing the sport

Barbarian Teams Coordination

Compiling information about individual players and member countries having insufficient players to mount full 7s Teams or players in excess of requirements who might be interested in participating in Barbarians Teams; Maintaining contact with these individuals/organisations; Exploring ways to increase the base of such individuals in readiness for future WDR championships & regional events