

RFU Special General Meeting approves governance reforms

At yesterday's RFU Special General Meeting at Twickenham, following a year-long process of consultation with the RFU Board, Council and the game, the members approved a series of governance reforms and subsequent rule changes which improve the rigour and transparency of decision making and ensure that the RFU complies with the new Sport England Governance Code.

The main changes agreed yesterday are:

1. Clarifying the roles of members, Board and Council. Members remain the ultimate safeguard for the game, the RFU Board has the day-to-day authority to run the RFU, and the RFU Council has the responsibility for monitoring and oversight on behalf of the members.
2. Term limits for Council members. Term limits for Board members have been in place since 2014, but for the first time Council terms will be limited. There will be a maximum limit of nine years (with very limited exceptions and some transitional provisions).
3. A robust process for making appointments to the Board and other senior appointments. The Board will make more appointments, but appointments to the Board will also require Council and AGM ratification. There will be a guaranteed three independent non-executive directors on the Board.

All three of the above required changes to be made to the rules in the RFU constitution and these rule changes were approved today.

RFU Chairman Andy Cosslett commented: "The RFU has been on a journey to improve its governance over several years. These latest improvements have been driven by the RFU Council, and improve our decision-making processes, while ensuring that the community game and those who represent it remain at the heart of the RFU's governance structure.

"This follows earlier decisions by Board and Council to adopt a target of at least 30% female representation on the Board, and to establish a detailed plan to increase diversity and inclusion within the RFU and the game more broadly."

The RFU already has three female Board members and four independent directors including the Chair.