



**LEICESTERSHIRE
RUGBY UNION**

**ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING**

**Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic
this year's AGM will be held Via Zoom**

**President:
Barbara Crellin**

Thursday 12th August 2021

7.00 p.m.



Annual Report: Season 2020 – 2021

This report reviews the activities of Leicestershire Rugby Union Ltd. for the season 2020 – 2021.

Administration and Governance

The season 2020 – 2021 unfortunately followed on from the 2019 – 2020 Covid Ravaged Season and has continued to be unprecedented. The devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continued to sweep from East to West and has changed its tactics by producing numerous variants, however human ingenuity has developed a front row of vaccines to suppress the pandemic and move the world closer to a return to normality.

The following Annual Report has been completed as far as we are able in a second incomplete season. We are now some 16 months into a time where the only rugby played is at a professional and international level. We continue to improve our IT and Media Skills, Zoom, Teams and Webinars are the new normal as they beam us into a virtual world of meetings.

The Executive Committee and Operating Committee have continued to meet and there was one Special General Meeting. Once again, the season has seen varied attendance at the latter meetings and there remains, a number of clubs who were not represented at our meetings and it is hoped that these clubs will review their representation and become more readily available and absorbed in county matters. It is at this moment that I must report that one of our clubs Aylestonians despite assistance has been dissolved.

Attendance at the six Executive Committee meetings has been:

P Green	3	K Whitcombe	6	D Toon	5	J Brindley	4	P Howard	5
B Crellin	6	G Bates	5	S Green	4	M Birr	3	L Causon	5
K McNamee	1								

During the season, we continue to review the committee structures within the union, its constitution, and its processes.

There will be discussion at tonight's AGM regarding the appointment of officers and committee members for the 2021 – 2022 season.

On funding the membership will be aware that in late 2018 the CB was informed that there would be a new process introduced in relation to the way we are to be funded, the Planning Funding and Reporting process was replaced with a Local Rugby Plan [LRP] which will move the CB, its member clubs and the RFU locally to adopt a more pragmatic approach to rugby delivery at its grassroots. This process continues however the funding we receive from the RFU, and other sources has been very much reduced. Those funds made available to the union throughout the last season have been used to support an emergency fund that has purchased Covid PPE and hand sanitiser that has been disseminated to our clubs for them to implement covid mitigation procedures and improve the safety of all.

The Leicestershire Rugby Union will continue with its' Development and Fiscal Plans during the season 2021 – 2022 but will do so on a much-reduced budget.

The Leicestershire Rugby Union at present continues with its use of its head office at 47 Highmeres Road, Thurmaston, Leicester, LE4 9LZ. The move to this permanent site was seen at the time as necessary for the Constituent Body to become more effective and professional in its administration of the business of delivering grassroots rugby across all levels and gender. However, as our use of IT enhances the way we conduct our daily but virtual business our requirement for estate is being reviewed.

The number of RFU Non-Voting Member clubs currently stands at 6 (including the University Clubs) with 27 RFU Voting Member clubs. There are now 24 clubs in Leicestershire that have become incorporated to give them some form of limited liability. It is hoped that those eligible clubs not currently incorporated will consider incorporating during the next twelve months to give their officers and members some protection against any legal action for negligence that may be taken against their clubs.

As Hon-Secretary of the Leicestershire Rugby Union may I extend my appreciation to all those volunteers serving on CB committees, at times it is not easy, especially at this most difficult of times, nevertheless we continue to manage and administer the business that is the Leicestershire Rugby Union.

I end this section of the annual report by informing the membership that I will be stepping down as the Honorary Secretary to pursue other interests, but before doing so I would ask the membership to consider the granting of Privileged Person status to those members of the CB who have given their time to developing and serving the CB. Those persons are Kim Swift (Former Treasurer) Mark Powell (Former Director of Rugby) and Simon Chaperon (Former Team and Equipment Manager)

May I ask that we all take time to remember Paul Green a former president of the Leicestershire Rugby Union, Executive Committee Chair and member of Hinckley RFC who sadly passed away this season.

Age Grade Rugby – Liz Causon

Whatever the new normal is we will be glad to get back to it. When the 2019-20 season ended abruptly in March 2020 no one really anticipated that a further year down the line we would still have a global pandemic hanging over us.

The 2020-21 season has been taken up navigating our way and advising where possible clubs through the regulations coming out from the RFU to try and get some type of rugby been played. This has been fraught with challenges as initially we as a CB were getting the information at the same time as the clubs.

Thankfully, the government did realise the importance of physical activity for young people and through detailed negotiations clubs have been able to deliver a format of rugby if not a little disjointed. Age Grade Rugby was able to be played from September until Christmas but then nothing until the end of March. To be fair the weather would have put pay to most activity anyway.

The RFU extended the season to the end of May 2021 and have also pulled together a Summer Playing Guidance if clubs want to access it all to try and keep young people in the game. They have also published guidance for our return in September to avoid injury and to allow for clubs with low numbers to have some meaningful options available to them.

Whilst throughout the pandemic the competitions team and I have tried to look at ways to run things, it was not to be this season, but we hope to get things back up and running in the new season. My thanks to Dave and Wayne for their patience during this time.

A positive from the pandemic has been a new way of working that has led to Midlands Age Grade Advisory Group being set up and run via virtual meetings, this has enabled shared thinking and learning to take place and is set to remain with us. This group gives a direct feed into the Age Grade Leaders at the RFU.

As rugby has started to return it has become glaringly obvious that there is not the provision in state schools for rugby as there once was and sitting on the Leicestershire Schools Rugby Union Committee will enable us to have a real handle on things and in time enable clubs to support school's delivery of rugby and hopefully have schools feed players into the clubs.

I would like to place on record my thanks to the wider LRU AGR personnel in Safeguarding and Discipline who have supported me through another year, fingers crossed we will be able to get some rugby played next season.

Leicestershire Schools Rugby Football Union- Jason Button

It has been frustrating and challenging year for Schools Rugby and for the whole world in general with the ongoing pandemic. Hopefully things will continue to improve, and we will see school's rugby return in 2021 in some form. The opportunities missed for so many students to experience the great game of rugby have been vast and it is vital we continue to work hard to ensure everyone gets to play the game in the school environment in some form as we move forward.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all the members of the committee who though the role of the CSU has been somewhat dormant over this time have continued to ensure that we remain ready to push on as soon as things improve.

I have managed to speak to several individuals during lockdown about the current state of school's rugby especially in the state sector and how best we can work together to move things forward. The conversations have included talks with the RFU, Leicester Tigers and LRS Sport. I do believe that there is a real chance to make some significant developments for school's rugby and there are people outside of the school environment willing to help with this.

As I have mentioned every year, I do have major concerns going forward on the continued existence of the CSU here in Leicestershire. As the oldest school's union in the country, it would be an absolute travesty for it to cease. The added pressures of the pandemic and the proposal from the RFU to see CSU's take on more responsibility does worry me with the lack of support from the teaching community. It has been great to see that outside agencies/clubs do want to help but it does need more support from within to drive things on the ground. It has been brilliant to see the support from 2 school to offer venues for competitions and also a member of teaching staff coming forward to help run the competition programme, but I still think we need more.

Unfortunately, I will not be standing for Chairman this year as both work and personal situations have changed, and I cannot give up the time the role requires for me to be effective. I have enjoyed the opportunity given to me and I want to thank Phil and Brian for their continued support. Though I cannot commit to the Chairman role I am more than willing to remain part of the committee in some form and help out where I can. I am hopeful a suitable candidate will come forward and they will lead the school's game in the County to new heights.

Jason Button

As with all areas of rugby, Schools have been severely hit. Priority and focus on Exams and academic catch up has led to very little rugby being provided in Schools for the season 2020/21. Further to this a decision was made to send a survey out to all Schools to assess the impact of coronavirus on the state of school's rugby in Leicestershire.

At our virtual AGM on Thursday 10th June our chairman's position became vacant and we are hoping that at the first Committee of the new season (Weds 18th August) the role will be filled. One encouraging outcome from the AGM was a desire for as many bodies as possible to work more closely to cater for Schools and Youth rugby in Leicestershire. Representatives from the Tigers, Leicestershire & Rutland Sport and AGR all agreed that we need to collaborate more to provide as much rugby, in all its forms, to as many pupils/students in as many Schools/Colleges as possible!

Phil Smith

Director of Rugby – Marc Birr

There has been no Representative Rugby played in season 20/21. The DDP played two games in May to select players to go into the Tigers Academy for the coming season. All moneys received from the RFU will be carried over to next season.

There is a review taking place on the County Championship at Senior Men's, Woman and U20 Levels at present, we will know the outcome some time over the summer. Either it will be scrapped or revamped in some way.

Women & Girls – Eleanor Wilkinson

Despite the abnormal season the women and girl's forum have still managed to hold meetings over zoom. We have had a lot of thought-provoking conversations about how we can improve and grow the girls game that we hope to put in to action in the new season.

Midlands Leagues – Steve Mounfield

There has been considerable time and effort put into the RFU plans for both restarting 21/22 and restructuring for 22/23.

These plans, with which not everyone agrees, have now been put to RFU Council and approval given. However, everything that follows from this is subject to Government decisions on the way forward from the Covid crisis.

The Structured Season for 21/22, together with Midlands Leagues structure and fixtures have been agreed and issued to clubs. These will also be on the RFU website shortly if they are not already.

Many clubs have continued or begun pre-season training and warm-up fixtures though we are aware of a few clubs who are or may be struggling for numbers. The RFU Midlands Development team are in contact with the clubs that they are aware of with a view to helping them assess their position and I am also in touch with one or two clubs who are

considering whether to continue in the MLOC or drop into the LRU merit leagues. Any such decisions will have to be made by June 30th to enable replacements to be found where necessary.

Decisions have yet to be confirmed as to whether the “Game On” principals will continue to be available to clubs, particularly as the Covid “Delta” variant is giving rise to concern over whether the June 21st unlocking can be achieved. Should this not happen then all current arrangements will depend upon the severity of any anticipated or actual Third Wave and thus the length of any resultant lockdown.

Competitions – Kevin Hick

The competitions set up welcome a new person to help in the management of the various senior county tournaments. Sam Allerdyce from Oadby Wyggs is coming on board and will oversee the County Cup Competitions and as a present player will hopefully bring a player’s perspective to the debate and will improve our attempt to deliver competitions that reflect what the counties players want.

Competitions are preparing for what we hope will be a totally normal season commencing in September. A set up has been issued for the Merit leagues with 39 teams competing across four merit leagues. The County Cups will be as in the past few seasons and the participants in the various cups are being finalised and it is proposed to issue 1st round draws in late July/early August to enable the 1st rounds to be completed as early as possible. All expenditure will be in the final quarter and relate to the final days and trophies.

Leicester Society of Rugby Referee’s – Mark Elliott

Current Officers of the Society (Executive Committee)

President	Kerrel Wills
President Elect	David Edkins
Chairman	Mark Elliott
Secretary	John Hill
Treasurer	Jenny Burrows

Committee Members

Appointments Secretary	Mark Elliott
Re-Appointments Secretary	Kerrel Wills
Mid-Week Appt. Secretary	Louis Massarella
Sunday Appt. Secretary	Duncan Chandler
Exchange Secretary	Rob Knapp
Training Secretary	George Richardson
Recruitment Secretary	Cliff Hawkins
Society Advisor Development Sec	Geoff Blackburn
Grading Secretary	Peter Bower
Promotions Secretary	George Richardson
Data Secretary (co-opted role)	Andrew Forsythe

The Society was devastated to lose Mr Nick Lacey during the autumn. Nick was a massive figure within Leicestershire Rugby and will be sadly missed by us all, as a friend, Colleague, and member of the Referees Society.

The Society currently has 89 active referees and 18 other members, 10 of which are active Referee Assessors/Match Observers. During the season, we have recruited 7 new probationary referees and, as rugby activities recommence, they are just beginning to do their first games.

During what has been a very unusual season, all our members have been kept up to date with current news, via e mail and information on our website at www.lsrur.co.uk.

The Committee have continued to meet via Zoom monthly and our Executive Committee (President, Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) are meeting fortnightly, again via Zoom.

Members meetings have continued monthly and these have also been integrated with fortnightly training sessions, all via Zoom. These have included sessions on Law, management, amended Covid Law variations and 4 separate presentations by Premiership Referees. Society fitness sessions have now resumed, at 3 separate locations around the county each week.

We have a coaching/mentoring strategy within the Society, where the more experienced referees are paired with less experienced colleagues, to help them develop into the refereeing role and fulfil their potential, whatever that may be.

LSRUR is joined in a Federation with the Notts, Lincs & Derby Society. It is through this Federation that referees who show the potential to move up to Midlands Group and beyond to the National Panel, are identified and put forward for consideration. Our Federation representatives meet with those from NLD on a regular basis.

Overall, the Society is in very good health. We are prepared and looking forward to the new season, hopefully under normal regulations once again.

Discipline – Chris Hayward

The impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic could not be more evident than in the LRU Discipline Report for the, almost, not existent season 2020-21. Unlike previous seasons, 2020-21 was eerily quiet in the world of red cards, citings and allegations of bringing the game into disrepute!

With the Panel's secretary from 2019-20 season, Ofure Ugiagbe leaving to focus on family matters following the birth of her first child, Brian Hesford stepped back into the role of Disc Sec albeit temporarily. The consistency Brian affords the LRU discipline team must not be underestimated and whilst a potential successor to the role has been identified we needed more activity than took place in the last 12 months before we were able to successfully induct that person into the role. We anticipate the forthcoming 2021/22 season will provide us with more opportunity to further develop the team and integrate a new secretary. The discipline team has also had a couple of potential new members declare an interest in becoming panellists and we will look to further develop the team by bringing them in to the collective.

Due to the ongoing situation and under the guidance of the RFU it is expected virtual hearings by Zoom or other similar video conferencing will continue to be a feature of Discipline going forward but this is to be reviewed and monitored on an on-going basis, subject to The Governments Guidance and the rules/laws prevailing at various points in time.

Noel Devonport, who took on the role of CB Youth Discipline Secretary (CBYDS) at the start of the 2019 season, has had a change in his personal circumstance over the last few months; Noel now needs to concentrate on his family and business commitments for the foreseeable future so has recently advised he will not continue in the role going in to the 2021-22 season. Thanks go to Noel for his dedication and valuable contribution to the CBYDS role for the last two seasons.

Noel's involvement in the discipline team will, however, not end completely as he will continue to sit as a member of the Senior panel, a role that is less time consuming than that of CBYDS.

We are currently reviewing the situation and considering our options in relation CBYDS role for the forthcoming season.

So far as senior disciplinary matters are concerned it has not proven necessary to formally convene a panel during the 2020-21 season due to the lack of playing time leading to almost no disciplinary issues.

From a Senior/Club related perspective the only two incidents that have required consideration have been COVID related. Both were considered together with the support of the RFU and members of their COVID team. After investigation it was considered the most appropriate actions in relation to both incidents was a warning letter be written to the Clubs/individuals involved. No playing sanctions or financial penalties were considered either necessary or appropriate on these occasions.

Again, it has not proven necessary to hear any cases at the end of the season with clubs answering to the charges brought pursuant to RFU Rule 5.12 (...conduct which is prejudicial to the interests of the Union of the Game) in that they had accrued five or more discipline cases through the season.

Age Grade Rugby Discipline presented only 1 club related case, again due to the significantly reduced amount of playing time. This was an on-field incident that was dealt with by way of a playing sanction.

Before the start of the 2021-22 season the LRU Discipline team will seek to make contact with Clubs to remind them that discipline is part of rugby's 'journey' and needs to be constantly monitored; it is not a 'destination' that is reached at either the start or the end of the season or at any single point in between; it is something which requires constant monitoring and consistent attention. We consider that particularly relevant after the lack of club/playing activity over the last 12 months, so it is a timely reminder as the new season starts.

Also, the panel will continue to make themselves available to help and support clubs within the CB; we remain keen to be seen to advise and assist rather than simply discipline and impose sanctions where Rules and Regulations are infringed.

2020-21 Season summary:

2 senior rugby/club related cases from 2 clubs
2 letters of warning written.
1 AGR case from 1 club,
No School cases

By Club:

Ashby 1 + 1 AGR
Loughborough Town 1

Safeguarding – Shona Green

This has been a challenging season for the CB and the clubs in which we support. The completion of the online audit though GMS was extended until the end of November, but some clubs were still unable to complete the audit by this date and support was given to these clubs by the safeguarding team. The audit will continue to be an annual requirement.

This season saw the introduction into regulation 21 of the requirement for all individuals to complete an e-learning package developed by the RFU, prior to a DBS being completed. This has been challenging for clubs, mainly due to access through the GMS system. No play it safe courses have happened this season and no in touch courses either. The RFU have now commenced interclub play it safe courses, but it is the responsibility of the club to book these directly rather than through the CBSM.

A number of temporary changes to regulation 15 have led to a number of queries from clubs and the CBSM has worked closely with the AGR chair to provide support to clubs in this area. There have also been amendments for the next season in relation to regulation 15 and the combining of age groups. Playing up and playing down regulations remain in place.

There have been a number of face-to-face visits to clubs where covid regulations have permitted and other correspondence has been undertaken through e-mail and telephone.

A number of changes to club safeguarding officers have been implemented throughout the season and the safeguarding team have been supporting these new CSO's.

The CBSM attended the RFU safeguarding conference (virtual) on the 12th June 2021

I would like to say thank you to Mike and Noel for all their support this year as this has been my first season in the role. From the start of next season Mike Flatt will be stepping down from his roles within the safeguarding team and also rugby safe lead.

Volunteer Co-ordinator – Helen Wrighten

The Mitsubishi Volunteer of the Year Awards is the only recognition award that has carried on during the pandemic with the Black-Tie evening being held virtually with nominees receiving a picnic basket to enjoy during the event. Barbara Crellin was the nomination for Leicestershire and was awarded the runners up award. Congratulations.

Facilities and Funding Coordinator – Pete Shaw

The group has continued to assemble during the past 12 months despite the on-going challenges that the pandemic present in allowing clubs to progress projects and development.

The group comprises of three volunteers in Mick Higgins, Pete Shaw, and John Upton. With the latter performing the Pitch Advisor role for the County. The group also enjoys the strong engagement and support of the RFU staff, predominantly Stu Eades and Jason Bowers from the RFU Facility Development Team along with insight from Tim Westwood (Club Developer). Meetings have been restricted to MS Teams calls but has still allow most activities to be undertaken, with increasing club engagement during the last few months.

External/RFU Funding

This report will most probably under-estimate the level of external funding that has been secured by clubs as many are pro-active in securing local, regional, and national sources of support.

Eleven clubs have successfully secured via the RFU, government grant funding under the banner of the Rugby Union Winter Survival Support Fund (RUWSSF) to support on-going costs of operating their facilities and activities. The total level of funding amounted to £495,010.

Three clubs have progressed RUWSSF Loan applications with the RFU to support key club projects with an expectation of delivery within the next 12 months.

- **Ashby – Changing Rooms.**
- **Hinckley – Land Purchase including 3G pitch.**
- **Lutterworth – Changing Rooms.**

Clubs are still being encouraged and directed to sources such as Sport England, Local Authorities and Landfill Operators.

Pitch Review Visits

Despite the restrictions, John Upton has completed visits and provided advice to the following clubs over the past 12 months.

- **Loughborough**
- **Belgrave**
- **Oakham**
- **Sileby Town**
- **Hinckley**
- **Shepshed.**

I would encourage more clubs to take advantage of the advice and support that John can offer due to it being free to clubs and will undoubtedly help clubs to improve the pitch provision whilst informing decisions on the operations to undertake. It may even simply serve to confirm what you already know!!!

LRU Small Grants

The group has recently accepted the first tranche of club applications which offers support towards additional pitch maintenance and grant support towards small facility projects under the banner of 'Welcome Back'.

The pitch maintenance element received applications from 9 clubs: Vipers, Shepshed, Old Newtonians, Market Harborough, Market Bosworth, Hinckley, Belgrave, Oakham & Sileby Town.

The 'Welcome Back' scheme received 5 applications: Syston, Hinckley, Belgrave, Oakham & Sileby.

The group is due to review all applications with a view to issue awards during June.

Risk Assessment Action Plan Support

The LRU accepted an offer of £1600 from the RFU which was required to be match funded to support clubs in the undertaking of actions contained within their respective Risk Assessment Action Plans via the RFU Risk Assessment Tool portal.



To date, three clubs have responded to the offer with a further 5 clubs available to be supported with £400 towards the costs of completing tasks within the risk assessment.

The RFU's Risk Assessment Tool website is currently being reviewed and re-developed to allow greater utilisation and ease of access for a better user experience. The support is available for the next 6 months.

Marketing and Media – Gail Bates

This season has been mainly focussed on posting and sharing much information around the pandemic and the roadmap, rules changes and guidance for how to keep playing with revised rules.

I have shared good news stories where I have seen them, particularly with clubs who have been raising money for charities through varying events.

Throughout the 'off season' I worked alongside a DMU Sports Management student (Vlad) to build a campaign around the Return to Rugby for the September season. He was tasked with building our Instagram audience and worked alongside me with the distribution and reporting of the hand sanitiser units across the county over the course of the first few weekends in September. This was well received and helped to grow our Instagram audience.

Vlad also created a variety of assets for social media to assist clubs with some quick can do and cannot elements of the Covid guidance being released by the Government and also by the RFU.

The constant changes in rules and guidance have been difficult to keep up and maintain when working single handed most of the time. My employment has been quite challenging in the last 6 months which has reduced the amount of time and enthusiasm to dedicate to the role. I am sure we have all struggled with enthusiasm at point. In addition, the restructure of the RFU meant that comms was not as forthcoming as we would have liked, but as a direct result of the restructure, the RFU now have a dedicated Comms Group of people from all CB's in the country who meet to discuss how comms can be improved and to be a part of any projects for the future. I was also part of a working group that began that process and highlight how important it is for clubs and CBs to appoint someone to the Golden Role of Communications to ensure the right person is receiving information to get out quickly and through the right channels. It is still early days, but already we are receiving the CGU at the same time as clubs where we were not before and are being provided with the relevant assets to post on website and SM quickly.

I am looking to recruit an individual to assist with social media management so if any clubs have anyone who they think would be an asset to the county, please let me know.

Current Facebook page likes – 2251 (2381 followers) Club Leicestershire – 785 members

Current Twitter followers – 3296

Current Instagram Followers – 681

Website – approx. 47 views/day.

Our YouTube page is still a page waiting to be awoken with new content, but without county games, we have none.

I am looking forward to hopefully a much more positive season in 2021/22 and being able to get around to clubs again.

RFU Council Member – Peter Howard

The last year has been as difficult a one as anyone might imagine, both in life and especially for the game we love. Most of us have spent both lockdowns in captivity, and Leicester perhaps more than most, with too many Zoom and Teams meetings for most people's liking. Whilst video conferencing is a wonderful tool, I'm sure that too many of us have become addicted to it and are only now getting used to the idea of leaving home to actually go and meet people.

Despite the difficulties and the restrictions, RFU Council business has continued without pause and, if anything, the volume of business and meetings has increased. The result perhaps of the relative ease of arranging a virtual meeting compared to the more challenging prospect of arranging meetings at Twickenham. The result has been that barely a week has gone by when I haven't been called to attend at least two or more meetings, often during the working day and at short notice. I have had to try to balance these with (being one of the lucky ones) continuing to work throughout the

pandemic. Working in the NHS for the last year has presented its own particular challenges as staff have been redeployed in and out and the volume of work has increased exponentially.

All Council Committees have continued their work. The Governance Standing Committee on which I sit has often seemed to meet almost weekly, as we have examined, analysed and debated the numerous changes, many enforced by the pandemic that various RFU teams and committees have brought forward. Most decisions come through Governance at some stage; whether looking at how to support clubs during the lockdown periods, Grants and Loans, Accreditation, how to support Club development after lockdown and Diversity and Inclusion in the Game. I also sit on the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group and the Game Management System (GMS) Steering Group.

The longer-term issue of the Adult Male Competition Review has been widely debated and consulted upon, and in the end, with some pushback from Council, no major alterations will now take place until the 2022-23 season; some details remain unresolved, and the RFU Competitions Team will reopen consultation and discussions soon. As and when more detail is available, I will update clubs and consult as widely as possible.

The GMS Steering Group has reviewed the data available to the RFU, the Game metrics, and progress has slowed as more input has been received. The immediate focus is on providing a simple Match Results service that is cost-neutral – we all want to see how our teams get on, but I recognise that the current process is not effective.

Within Leicestershire and Rutland, and as part of the Constituent Body I was involved with call-rounds to Club Chairs and Treasurers very early in the pandemic, to gauge the financial health of our clubs and to assess their needs. In common with other County colleagues, I have been out to deliver sanitising supplies and, later, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and have been looking at the priorities and development needs of clubs for the return to Rugby, in association with our RFU Field Staff. On the whole our clubs have survived well, and we can now only hope that players of all ages return when the season starts.

As you probably be aware we now have fewer RFU Staff than in previous years and all of them spread over a wider area than Leicestershire and Rutland. There is nonetheless a sound mix of RFU and volunteer staff doing their utmost to provide support and advice as best as they can; the Constituent body volunteer team is always happy to discuss matters with you.

These reductions, combined with a greatly reduced level of central funding from the RFU, will place great strain on the volunteer effort of Leicestershire Rugby Union, and challenging decisions on activity and expenditure will have to be made. It will be all the more important that clubs support the LRU to help it to support clubs.

We can hopefully now look forward to a full season of contact Rugby starting in September – fixture lists are now published, so let's hope that we really do have something to look forward to.

Concluding Remarks

The season 2020 – 2021 unfortunately followed on from the 2019 – 2020 Covid Ravaged Season and has continued to be unprecedented, the pandemic put pay to numerous grassroots games and competitions being played, and for most of the season clubhouses remained closed. The Coronavirus pandemic brought an abrupt end to many other sports as well. These are difficult times as we experienced total lockdown and advised to do that which is essential. At the time of writing, we are moving towards the potential for government restriction being removed and a return to a new normal as we ask what will the future hold for the great game that is rugby? On a personal level I have decided to step down as the Honorary Secretary to pursue other interests and would say to those clubs who may be anxious about their future, or their new normal, the Leicestershire Rugby Union is a family, you are all in this together and your Clubs the Constituent Body and the RFU are here to help. Let us as a family help our clubs to help themselves to help each other.

I would like to thank the Executive Committee, Sub Committee Chairs Team Managers and all those member clubs who have supported and assisted the Leicestershire Rugby Union during these unprecedented times.

In relation to our administrative structure and business continuity plan the membership will be asked at the AGM to vote on maintaining the status quo and instead of extending a vote of thanks to our outgoing President, Barbara Crellin, it is hoped that we can welcome her back for a third term to complete the lost season(s) alongside John Brindley as the President Elect.

Stay Safe

Kevin Whitcombe



LEICESTERSHIRE RUGBY
STRONG HERITAGE - STRONG FUTURE

Honorary Secretary
Leicestershire Rugby Union Ltd
07th July 2021

DRAFT