



**LEICESTERSHIRE
RUGBY UNION**

**ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING**

At Leicester Lions RFC

**President:
John Brindley**

Wednesday 28th July 2023

7.00 p.m.



Annual Report: Season 2022 - 2023

This report reviews the activities of Leicestershire Rugby Union Ltd. for the season 2022 – 2023.

Obituaries

Once again this season we have sadly lost a number of members, players, volunteers and committee members which have been paid tribute to throughout the season. However, for this report, and on behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to specifically name past President Eddie Gregory, past Executive Committee member John Allen and referee Rob Knapp.

Club Anniversaries

Congratulations to all clubs who have celebrated BIG anniversaries this year:

Lutterworth RFC – 150 years

Belgrave RFC – 140 years

Market Harborough – 100 years

Vipers RFC – 100 years

Oakham – 100 years

Administration and Governance

Attendance at the Executive Committee meetings has been:

G. Bates	4	C. Hayward		P.Howard	4	L. Causon	3	R. Grant	1
J Brindley	3	N. Haagenson	4	S Green		R. Bailey	2		
M. Jinks	4	B Crellin	2	H. Wrighten	4	G. Cree	1		

This has been my second term in as Hon Secretary and began the season with significant challenges to the structure following the departure of Dean Toon as Chair and Marc Birr as Director of Rugby. We were also still absent of a Treasurer and no President Elect. That left myself manning the bridge with support from the committee, in particular Peter Howard and John Brindley who stepped in to Chair the Executive meetings.

Following a number of seasons without a Treasurer, we were delighted to have Martin Jinks be recommended for the post and he happily accepted. He was appointed by the committee in readiness for the season and has made significant strides in bringing the finances and administration in hand with assistance of Helen Wrighten. I personally would like to thank Martin for bringing his accountancy knowledge and board room experience to the Executive and providing much needed support to the team.

The Executive also welcomed Graham (Paddy) Cree as President Elect and you will no doubt be hearing from him about visiting your clubs in due course, if not already, and Neil Haagenson as Facilities and Funding Manager. We are pleased to have Neil stand again for 23/24.



Unfortunately, Shona Green stepped down from her role as Safeguarding lead in December due to work and personal commitments. We thank Shona for the time she gave to the Executive and the work she did in ensuring clubs completed their Safeguarding audits. The role remains vacant although currently being supported by Helen Wrighten until a volunteer can be recruited. This is a priority.

This season also sees Liz Causon stepping down from her role as Age Grade Chair after 4 seasons. Liz has done a phenomenal job in keeping age grade rugby running in the CB and being on top of regulation changes, registrations and doing a sterling job in promoting and supporting the festivals and competitions. Her first season in role ended with all the festivals being cancelled due to Covid and it was only as we both stood talking at one of them in 2022, that she reminded me that that was her first set of festivals!

Thank you, Liz for giving the role your all. Thank you for supporting myself when I needed it too. And thanks for brokering the County Cup Finals date this season. We wish you the best with your future endeavours and spending more time with your family.

Constitution and Structure

We stated at the AGM in 2022 that we would be reviewing our structure and constitution. Work continues on this and much has already been done to create a draft document to bring to the members. However, with the challenges in vacant positions, we have not progressed to a point where we can release a first draft. We will have this ready for distribution at the SGM when we approve the accounts (or otherwise).

I would like to place on record, my thanks to Steve Mounfield for the hours of time and work he has put into reshaping the constitution and I know he is as keen to see a first draft out to members in due course.

Along with reviewing the constitution we said we would review the structure. We have done some work on this over the summer of 2022 and again created some working documents. However, manpower has been somewhat reduced for a number of reasons, tackle height being one, and that has also stalled. I did initiate a working party to assist with recruitment and there was good interest and enthusiasm, but it was decided that this could not happen until the structure was set and we knew the direction of travel. Very much work in progress, but we are making progress now we have key roles filled with the Executive and some new members on board. We feel somewhat more positive as we move into the 23/24 season.

We co-opted Ross Grant to the Executive in May following a recruitment process with the view to appoint as Chair. Ross has much experience in board room level politics and chairing meetings along with having played rugby most of his life and now coaches his son at Oadby Wyggs RFC.

The role of Director of Rugby has sat with Ross Bailey this season following the Executive asking him to look after it while we re-structured. Ross has managed this role along with his substantive post of Game Development Officer and Inclusion and Diversity Officer on the Executive. This is a large portfolio which carries much responsibility, particularly financial. The Executive discussed how we should move forward on the role of DoR following last year's decision that we were reviewing all roles and tabled the idea of it becoming a paid role. We welcome the members thoughts on this ahead of us making a decision on that role as we move into 23/24.



It goes without saying that we thank Ross for the work he has put in with all the team managers in delivering a representative rugby programme under some sometimes challenging periods of time.

I am pleased to report the success of the County Cup Final matches held at Mattioli Woods Welford Road and for the first time, we have not only broken even, but made a slight profit. Thanks to Liz Causon for helping secure the date a little earlier and to Helen Wrighten for assisting with the organisation.

The Leicestershire Rugby Union continues with its use of its head office at 47 Highmeres Road, Thurmaston, Leicester, LE4 9LZ. We hold the majority of our meetings there face-to-face with some, namely finance, held virtually. The premises also stores any stock of kit we hold.

The number of RFU Non-Voting Member clubs remains at 6 (including the University Clubs) with 27 RFU Voting Member clubs. Sadly Cosby RFC have folded this season.

As Hon-Secretary of the Leicestershire Rugby Union may I extend my appreciation to all those volunteers serving on CB committees. I would particularly like to thank Steve Mounfield who is stepping down from his role as Midlands Regional Organising Committee rep for Leicestershire. Steve has given 10 years service but has also given much more to the game of rugby at his own club, Stoneygate RFC.

Treasurer – Martin Jinks

This report is quite unusual, and difficult, for me. Whilst the rest of the Executive can produce “*end of season*” reports, we are yet to get to the end of our financial year (*which is the end of June*). Whilst I am not expecting any more income, there are still some bills and expenses dribbling in – particularly in respect of the recent representative matches. However, I am not expecting anything of significance that we are not already aware of. If I am elected, I look forward to going through the accounts in more detail when they are presented later in the (calendar) year.

This is still my first year involved with LRU; although I continue to learn every day, I feel far more familiar with the figures than when I presented last year’s accounts at the Special General Meeting just over six months ago.

One of the biggest stumbling blocks has been getting access to the building society and bank accounts. Market Harborough was, eventually, conquered – however, we are still to get there with Barclays. At least we have been able to exert some control over where we place our reserves, and we should see the benefit of increasing interest rates over the next year or so.

It is clear to me that our biggest challenge is to manage the cost of running our adult representative sides (*Ladies, Men’s and under 20s teams*). The RFU are reasonably generous with support for the younger sides; however, we only receive £2,000 per team for the senior sides – this is woefully short of what is required. Philippa Duffus has proved very adept at getting some commercial sponsors for the ladies’ team – we need to find a way to replicate this in other areas. Another area of frustration is the passing on of grants from the RFU. We receive various funds with the aim of passing these on to our member clubs. The idea is to encourage the development and participation of the game at grass roots levels. It has, at times, proved difficult to pass these grants on due to the lack of engagement from some clubs (usually due to a shortage of volunteers;



a concern throughout the game). The worry is that these unspent funds will be clawed back from us.

On a positive side is the County Cups' final evening held at Mattioli Woods Welford Road. I understand that historically our showpiece event has been run at a significant cost. This year, we have made a modest surplus! There are, I believe, three main reasons for this success: having four different clubs represented on the evening, having several weeks' notice (*courtesy of the Tigers*) and the incredible hard work of Helen Wrighten, Gail Bates and everybody else involved. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the treasurers of our member clubs for their support and for settling all invoices (*subscriptions, entry fees, discipline etc*) without too much chasing. Furthermore, I would also like to thank the various team managers for their assistance in submitting and approving expenses. Finally, I must also thank Helen Wrighten for her (*continuing*) guidance and for carrying out the role as administrator.

Peter Howard - RFU Council Member for Leicestershire & Rutland

Last season was my seventh in the role of RFU Council Member, and I look forward to my penultimate season in the role. I take this opportunity to remind clubs that my term ends at the conclusion of the 2024/25 season and it will be necessary to elect a replacement by 31 March 2025. Please consider the role and if you would like a confidential chat about what is involved do contact me. I continue to visit as many clubs as possible each season to watch the rugby and chat to committee and club members alike though this becomes more difficult with the increasing demands on time for Council Members. If you would like me to visit your club or to discuss issues with your committee, please let me know and I will do my best to do so. As always, number of clubs have contacted me throughout the year for advice and assistance on various matters and to intervene at Twickenham on their behalf and I am always happy to try to assist. Please do not hesitate to pick up the phone or drop me an email and I will endeavour to respond as quickly as I can.

Tackle height reduction

This debate and the lack of meaningful consultation with the game cast a huge shadow over the season. I think my views have been well-aired already and I do not propose to revisit them here. Suffice to say the decision has been made and we must now learn to live with it and hope that it improves the game. Belatedly, the WRU has now followed suit.

I did, however, manage to get myself appointed to the Tackle Height – Lessons Learned Review Group which has met weekly through the Spring to interview those involved and to try to ascertain how matters fell down so badly. We have interviewed all the key-players and report to the next Council Meeting, in July, with our recommendations.

Following the announcement of lowering of the tackle height details of engagement sessions planned was released to the Game in a recent CGU. It has been promised that, should demand require, additional sessions will be held. Key resources can be found on [Englandrugby.com](https://www.englandrugby.com) under the Tackle Height hub. This is constantly being updated and all players, coaches & clubs should be looking for more information over the coming weeks. Injury and especially concussion data will continually be monitored.

Finance

RFU financial forecasts still give major cause for concern, and core funding for the CB next year remains static. Any hope of an early recovery has been slowed by the current financial climate, the huge rise in utility bills and lower TV income. To exacerbate matters we are in year four of the RWC four-year cycle.



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Revenue across the current four-year cycle is hugely reduced (some £15 million/year) and the revenues for 23/24 are again a lot lower pre-pandemic forecasts. The RFU has also faced the high inflation costs all clubs (and homes) are facing around utilities, people (wages), technology and Insurance. It is likely that the RFU will face a £12 million deficit for the 2022/23 season. Thus the reality is that the game has finite resources and far less to invest than pre-pandemic, but there is a willingness by the RFU not to further reduce its' investment in the Community Game. The updated business plan anticipates a significant loss in 2023/24, a £36.4m underlying loss, and a £50.6m overall loss. Although a loss in year four of a RWC cycle is expected due to match profile, it is nonetheless significantly higher than the corresponding year in the previous cycle; whereas one would have expected a significantly lower underlying loss of c.£20m, rather than £36.4m.

Professional Game Agreement

Good progress is being made with PRL on the new Professional Game Agreement. A joint vision of 'World beating English teams and thriving professional leagues delivered through a fully optimised system in partnership with our players'. Going forward the new PGA is likely to be referred to as the 'Professional Game Partnership' showing that it is more of a working partnership between all bodies involved. The role and effectiveness of the Academy system will be included in any Agreement. It was also confirmed the new 'partnership' will not take any more money away from the Community game.

Adult Male Recovery Plan

The major focus still is around the Adult Male Recovery Plan. Linked to this the five top priorities will include Tackle Height Implementation, Preserving a targeted number of Adult Male teams perceived to be at risk, Increasing the number of 12–18-year-old girls playing the game, sustaining the engagement of more 16–21-year-old male players and completing the Community game strategy/plan for implementation from season 24/25. Travel funding is also being looked into together with increased match official costs.

Communications around Tackle Height, Papa John's Community Cup and the County Championship were noted by the CGB and pressures on the Communications team were acknowledged. Match Completion in the leagues is back to the same level as pre-pandemic but match completion in merit tables is below what was hoped for. Teams are encouraged to use 'Game-On' where it is possible to get a game played.

Community Game Strategy

An oversight Group has been set up by the Community Game Board. The *Community Game of the Future* is one of the main focus points at the moment and a lot of work to date has followed on from the *Game Congress* held in September 2022. This piece of work is important as there is a need to respond to shifting societal trends, evolving player preference and because the profile of the game is changing. This is an opportunity to plan for long term investment and establish a clear role for the RFU where it can have the most impact. This will cover coaching, refereeing and player welfare alongside competitions, Regulations and Discipline/Safeguarding. As the programme is developed the game will be involved in engagement forums and surveys.

Papa John's Cup

An initial report from the review of the Papa John's Cup has been received and some minor tweaks are being considered for the coming season. (These are likely to include much better and earlier communications, earlier draw and draws done 'to the end' so teams can see where they may be going). The advice for expressions of interest for those Clubs wishing to enter the competition will be brought forward to October 2023.



I have continued to attend Council meetings throughout the year, representing the interests of Leicestershire and its clubs; and I have also attended meetings of the other committees I sit on: Governance Standing Committee and the Diversity & Inclusion Implementation Group. I am pleased to report that I have been re-elected to Governance for another year, though the Diversity & Inclusion group has now concluded and will go forward next season in a reconfigured role, under new leadership and with new members. In addition, I attend Midlands meetings and LRU Executive Committee meetings, LRU Finance Committee meetings and such other LRU meetings as I am able to fit in. I also try to support the Leicestershire County sides as well as England Men, Women and u20s.

I have had the pleasure of supporting County sides again this season, from junior age groups to senior women's and men's, both home and away. I had very enjoyable away trips with the Women in Yorkshire and North Midlands and they should count themselves very unlucky indeed to have missed out on the opportunity to defend their Division One title at Twickenham, losing their opening pool game to the eventual winners, Lancashire, by just two points.

Sadly, my free Bar in the Car at home 6N and Autumn international matches fell victim to the move of Council accommodation from the Marriott to Chiswick and the consequent logistic difficulties of operation.

I was delighted to introduce the Hon. Treasurer to the CB and am hopeful that my introduction of a potential Chair will prove as welcome.

President – John Brindley

As President of the LRU I visited about 24 clubs and also several mini junior teams but unfortunately I have only been able to attend about five women and girls matches at local club level. I also attended all the county representative matches of men's rugby for the LRU. I couldn't attend all the ladies County games because the men's games were held at different venues on the same day. I did however watch three ladies games representing the LRU.

Upon speaking with club members at club level they expressed their concerns about the lack of communication with the LRU Committee but also they hadn't tried to communicate directly with the LRU themselves, of the few clubs that had, they complained of receiving no response from those people involved on the committee.

Whilst I attended all the RFU club cluster meetings I found they could have been better attended by clubs.

My general impression of the RFU was that the support coming from them was limited and the introduction of the new tackle laws nothing short of a fiasco, the actual definition of the new laws hadn't been defined, and were only specified later.

The council members that I met explained to me that the current council is decided by the wishes of the RFU and has little or no say for grassroots clubs.

The financial outlook for the RFU in the future is not looking good according to what I have heard and is set to look even worse.

My comment for the moment about council members is, whilst I have been on the present committee for four years, I have not seen any significant reports on their business activities. The impact of this situation is very disappointing for me and may reflect the attitudes of the clubs.



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It is not all gloom and doom on the committee with the election of a new finance officer has brought a lot of confidence to the committee and several elected new positions has fleshed out some more volunteers. However, more volunteers are required and unless they are found some key positions remain vacant. I take this opportunity to implore you to make the effort because you only get out what you put in.

My year has been very enlightening and fulfilling, meeting new friends and re-establishing old friendships, I also was saddened by the passing of stalwarts in the rugby community. Atmospheres in the clubs are still to be enjoyed and my hope is that they continue.

Age Grade Rugby – Liz Causon

This season saw the automation of the approvals process for playing out of age grade which has made the system slicker but also identified some communication pitfalls in clubs.

That said; 9 clubs had approval for 17-year-olds to play adult rugby with 28 17-year-olds playing up into the adult game. A further 45 players had approval to play up, and 27 to play down.

Thankfully for some clubs the extension of Regulation 22 that allowed for the combining of age groups continued this season and saw 4 clubs combining 16 age groups this will also continue into the 23/24 season

This season also saw the revised age banding for the girls' game which led to 13 of all the players playing up being in the girls' game.

The competitions and festivals team continued to organise a comprehensive schedule of fixtures throughout the season. Our thanks to all the clubs who hosted the festivals and the junior competitions which culminated with the Colts Final being played at Mattioli Woods Welford Road.

I would like to place on record my thanks to the wider LRU AGR personnel in Competitions, Festivals, Safeguarding and Discipline who have supported and helped navigate our Age Grade responsibilities through this season.

Midlands Leagues – Steve Mounfield

The first season of the new RFU Structure was, as predicted a year ago, another difficult season for many clubs with the continuing Covid situation and also the reduction in playing numbers across the board. The new structure did not help some clubs with one or two finding themselves with new opposition in new parts of the country and against clubs effectively coming down from a higher level. Coalville, Belgrave and Sileby all felt the impact of this.

Of the clubs at higher levels last year, Hinckley were promoted to National and Syston finished third In Regional 1. The five clubs at Regional 2 had mixed final outcomes with Lutterworth and Harborough finishing in the top half of East whilst Wyggs, Forest and Belgrave finished in the bottom half of North. As mentioned above, Belgrave had a tough season with a lot of travelling and some tough sides e.g. Moseley Oak who were at that level due to points deductions rather than



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playing ability from previous seasons. Wyggs and Forest battled all season and finished close to each other with Wyggs two extra wins prevailing over Forest's better bonus points. Both clubs probably suffered from their positions last year putting them at a slightly higher level this.

At Counties 1 Hinckley 2 stormed through the season winning 21 of their 22 fixtures, scoring an average of 38 points a game to 13 against giving them the best points difference of all LRRU clubs.

Vipers won 18 / 22 Loughborough 17 / 22 and Market Bosworth 16 / 22, meant that all four clubs finished in the top three of their League.

On the other side of the coin at this level were Birstall, Ashby, Coalville and Oakham. Birstall and Oakham fared better, both winning seven games but Ashby and Coalville found themselves struggling badly winning only seven games between them. Coalville have held meetings to discuss whether or not they wish to play within a different scenario but I am not aware of any final decision at the time of writing.

At Counties 3 Burbage again had a moderate season finishing in the bottom half of West (South) whilst Melton finished mid table with eleven wins from twenty-two games, exactly the same as last year. respectively. Sileby again had a contrasting season, mainly as a result of the restructuring which clearly put them in too high a league, especially when viewed against a low performance last year. Relegation will be no bad thing for Sileby who deserve commendation for fulfilling all their games bar one and undertaking a considerable amount of travelling in doing so.

Finally, also in Counties 3, a league of only seven teams, South Leicester ended the season exactly mid-table with 5 wins from 12 games played against some strong opposition for this level.

As I said last year, the outcome of the restructuring has not been perfect and was never going to be given the complexity of the operation. The new Leagues, after promotions and relegations, have not been published at the time of writing but will be published by the time of the AGM. Clubs will have to realise that these tables, as happened when leagues were first introduced, are only the first of a couple of seasons that will shake themselves out.

Competitions – Kevin Hick

Another difficult season post lockdown with player numbers continuing to fall and forfeited games increasing but we did finally manage to complete the leagues and all four produced winners. The experiment of shortening the season to provide a window for further competition at the end of the season did not work and we will not be pursuing that idea further. The cups were an also challenging with the cold weather cancellations and clubs progress in the Papa Johns trophy all proving problematic, but all were managed to be forced to a conclusion with the county cup final at Welford Road with an 83 point game won by a single point providing a fitting finale to the season. Two further excellent finals days hosted by Syston and Vipers also provided some exciting finals including a tie eventually decided on by countback of tries scored. For the forthcoming season we are revamping the setup slightly with three main merit leagues and a fourth separate league for sides that struggled to get a team last season and forfeited a high proportion of games. This



league will be run with the triangular tournament format that was successfully trialled a couple of times in the county last season and has worked well in NLD.

The county cup competitions will for the 23/24 season be managed by Anton Stander and I will look to offer support if and when required. We are looking at some changes to the county cup set up going forward.

Discipline – Chris Hayward

Safeguarding – Helen Wrighten

Following Shona Green standing down as Safeguarding Manager on the 1st December I agreed to stand in until the role was filled.

I would like to thank Shona for the hard work she put in whilst in the role especially during the difficult Covid period.

All Clubs completed their Safeguarding Audit prior to the cut-off date.

The Play it Safe Course continues to be a face to face and a number of clubs arranged courses over the season. The Intouch Course is still being held virtually and there are courses monthly over the summer period.

The Safeguarding Conference is being held virtually this year on the 10th June. It has been opened to Clubs to attend.

Thank you to Natalie Sansome from South Leicester for covering the Colts County Cup final as Safeguarding Officer.

Rugby Safe – Barbara Crellin

My first year has been interesting as due to an IT technical hitch I was not receiving communication from the RFU so have been playing catch up.

However having attended the Rugbysafe Conference I feel more up to speed and very much more aware of the role at both CB and club level.

Rugbysafe is a Golden Role and discreet, although it overlaps with Safeguarding it is actually too big to be part of the SGM role. Please look at the RFU Role Descriptor.

The good news is that bursaries are still available for a primary or even secondary AED for clubs.

Those who have already applied, their application has been referred. The second piece of good news is that I can still allocate vouchers to clubs for the England Rugby First Aid course, the EFARU. If I get no further enquiries, the few clubs who have applied will really benefit. This is now, as of this season, the minimum First Aid qualification required by the RFU at all levels; X 1 per age group team in training and a minimum of X1 per match with best practice as X1 per team in



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matches. The RFU do recognise there is a shortage of trainers and are recruiting. On the plus side the training can be disaggregated again and they are producing modules to do in between the 3 years First Aiders are certificated for. Both of these offers are subject to clubs having a named RSL on GMS as well as having completed the First Aid Risk Assessment. There is a Howdens template on GMS.

RSLs need to ensure they are up to speed with Reg 9 and I really recommend the Rugbysafe Toolkits. There are currently 10 with further ones to be developed. The first being Women and Girls Health and Welfare covering all aspects of female health.

Headcase is being updated in accordance with the recent National Government Guidance for Concussion which applies across all sports at all levels including Schools. This will also be included in new modules on Pro Activ which is the only rugby specific app being developed in conjunction with the RFU.

The Club First Aid Risk Assessment is mandatory; if not completed there will be an RFU letter and eventually (no timescale) there will be sanctions applied.

Activate is very strongly recommended. Research has proved that using it has reduced injuries by 72% and concussions by 59%

On the question of insurance Howdens can offer an annual payment to cover players loss of earnings too.

It is hoped that with increase in Mental Health issues clubs will have a Mental Health lead. The RFU is working with Looseheadz, a great charity which has a great range of ideas in their free toolkit resource and has a discreet number for help TEXT RUGBY to 85258.

Finally Helen the CB Safeguarding Lead and myself are planning a presentation and Workshop in the near future.

Extra finally could I ask that RSL contact details are up to date on GMS please

Any questions please contact rugbysafe@leicestershirerugbyunion.co.uk

Volunteer Co-ordinator – Helen Wrighten

RFU President's – Value the Volunteer Outstanding Contribution Award this season went to Adrian Knight (Birstall RFC). Adrian was invited to:-

- A pre-match behind the scenes tour of Twickenham Stadium
- Two tickets to a Six Nations game
- Two accreditation passes which includes access to Members' Lounge pre match and lunch in the Spirit of Rugby.
- Bed and breakfast accommodation for two.

Congratulations to Adrian.

Nominations for the Honda Volunteer of the Year awards opened in January, and we received 31 nominations from Leicestershire over 13 clubs. All nominations were invited to our awards evening which ran alongside the County Cup Finals at Mattioli Woods Welford Road Stadium on Monday 26th April. The awards were presented by Peter Wheeler.

Claire Morris (Oadby Wyggs) was chosen by the RFU and Honda Panel as the Volunteer of the Year for Leicestershire. Claire will be invited to a Black-Tie Reception in September where the Volunteer of the Year for 3 areas will be announced.

Congratulations to Claire.

Volunteers across the board are becoming priceless and I would like to thank everyone that Volunteers in what ever form a big thank you. Without you grassroots rugby in Leicestershire would not happen.



Facilities and Funding – Neil Haagenon

This is my first year on the Executive for facilities and Funding. It is a challenging time with the access to funding is difficult but as you can see below there has been a lot of investment into Social spaces across the LRU.

RWC2025 Impact Funding

The RFU Have completed Year 1 of 4 on the Rugby World Cup 2025 Impact Fund Programme. Nine Clubs in the LRU have received a grant to develop their Toilets or to add sanitary provision, both were open applications. £57,000 of grants have gone to Leicestershire clubs in Year 1 of the programme. Sanitary grants are currently being procured; the package value is £1,000. We are in the process of shortlisting projects for Years 2-4, these will be for Changing Rooms and Social Spaces.

Pitch Maintenance Fund

The RFU in the process of piloting the Pitch Maintenance Fund, this is in collaboration with the Football Foundation. The programme is designed to take clubs with *basic standard pitches and develop them into *good pitches. This is all through the PitchPower online tool, where clubs can regularly update and receive reports from their local pitch advisor. The grant is for £14,400 (per pitch) over 6 years, funding will be tapered to encourage clubs to adopt the new recommendations and practices. 1 LRU club has been selected for the pilot and are to receive grant funding for 2 pitches.

Honda Rugby Grounds Connected

It is the second year of the GMA Pitch Advisory Service, this has now been supported with the addition of PitchPower. Clubs that have had a report carried out across Leicestershire in 2022-23 are: Birstall & Hinckley. They are in addition to the clubs that had a report carried out last season and have now also had their 12 monthly revisits: Syston, Market Harborough, Ashby & Oakham. All clubs are encouraged to get a pitch report. Please contact Neil for more information

I'm keen to visit more clubs next season and if I can be of any help please contact me.

Concluding Remarks

This will be my last season as Hon Secretary and member of the Executive Committee and I will be actively seeking a replacement through the forthcoming season. It was never my ambition to hold the post, but somehow found myself in the role and I will always state I am a reluctant Hon Sec. If



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anyone is interested in the role, please contact me and I will happily provide more information on the role, or any other role.

I, along with the Executive Committee, am feeling positive about the 23/24 season as we begin to see the shoots emerging of fresh energy and ideas to take the CB onwards and upwards. We will be actively seeking a Safeguarding Manager and Age Grade Chair, with some names already being put forward, This is very positive. We will also begin a recruitment for someone to manage representative rugby following the input from members at the AGM.

We have the RWC to look forward to in the Autumn and hope clubs will benefit from showing the matches at their clubhouses and inviting members to watch with their team mates and bring in much needed revenue. The added bonus being no time difference! I can only hope the England squad perform well enough to progress to the latter stages of the competition and encourage recruitment to the game.

The Executive Committee, Sub Committee Chairs and Team Managers would like to thank all those member clubs who have supported and assisted the Union during this season both in supplying players for our teams and for the use of their facilities. I would like to thank those clubs who have hosted County matches and congratulate them on their hospitality.

I invite a vote of thanks to our outgoing President, John Brindley for his four years on the Executive with three of those in waiting as President Elect through the pandemic years. We welcome into the role of President, Paddy Cree from Birstall RFC and who has already been out and about at clubs towards the end of this season assisting with presentations and supporting our representative teams.

One final thank you to all the supporters at clubs and unsung heroes who keep our clubs going week in, week out.

Gail Bates
Honorary Secretary
Leicestershire Rugby Union Ltd
25th June 2023