

Dear Member,

BRFC Members Newsletter – August 2016

By anyone's standard it's been a remarkable summer so far. England white washing Australia on their own turf, Andy Murrays second Wimbledon Championship triumph and of course Brexit - but we won't dwell on that! Swiftly moving on, I hope you are enjoying the summer sunshine and looking forward to what will be a most exciting season ahead of us as we play in the dizzy heights of National Two South. I hope you will continue supporting us with your membership subscription and vocal support on match days. This will be particularly important this season where we look to welcome our new visitors and make Pottington Road a fortress for the home teams.

Playing Matters

Head Coach, Steve Perry, says "Thank you members for your continued support. You are what makes this club great and Saturdays at Pottington so special. Your influence on the players is immeasurable. We are in uncharted territory after an unprecedented season. Last year was fantastic in so many ways, it has opened up the opportunity for everyone at the club to challenge themselves at the next level. On the playing front, with the exception of Chris Lowrie (work relocation) and Stephen Pape (coaching), we have retained all players including club legend Mark Berry. Added to the squad are: Jake Murphy (Plymouth Albion), Rob Dugard (Cornwall All Blacks), Matt Hague (Tiverton) Paul Thomas (Bideford) and Corey Moore (Navy). Tom Dunbavin, Matt Morrish and Ryan Lee are among the Colts players progressing up." A good turnout for the first training session bodes well for support for the Tics and the Buccs now they have meaningful fixtures in Devon 1. Finally, it was pleasing to see the Colts concluding another successful season retaining the Devon Cup in the final at Sandy Park to cap off a memorable year for the Club.

Mini/Juniors

The Junior section continues to flourish, so well in fact that waiting lists are needed due in part to their popularity outgrowing available facilities. The demise of the adjacent Ammies football team may help in this regard with access to additional playing areas. The deal is, we maintain the playing surfaces for the two soccer teams replacing the Ammies and our Mini/Junior teams have use of the area on Sundays. In total that's a lot of grass to frequently cut and strim for our volunteer grounds men, chiefly Tony Wasley, Lewis Joce, Shaun East and Monty Gear.

Close Season works

Our volunteers have been very busy with a number of major projects. The old cricket pavilion has been gutted and transformed into a weight training/fitness centre incorporating a physio room. The dug outs have been relocated to the opposite side of the pitch allowing unobstructed viewing from the main grandstand and clubroom terracing. This also allows seating to be provided pitch side for those that are not so nimble these days. Access to, and around, the small stand has been improved by extending the pathway. The regulations governing National Two are quite strict and have meant providing additional facilities to accommodate the playing squads (20 in total now) and match officials (the referee, two touch judges and assessors). Plus, fencing off the other pitches and carrying out essential maintenance.

Membership Fees

National Two rugby is proving to be much more demanding in terms of finances than is obvious at first (a bit like coming out of the EU is proving to be!!). For a start, we have to pay for three, possibly four, match officials who have to be able to talk to each other during play. Each game has to be videoed with the official's commentaries synchronized. Because of the travel distances many of the away games will involve an overnight stay on the Friday night incurring significant costs to be borne by the club. We do receive some reimbursement from the RFU but it falls short of the total cost by a considerable amount. In the light of these increased costs and the fact that the membership subscriptions have remained the same for a number of years your committee has found it necessary to increase the fees for next season. We have tried to keep the increases to a minimum and we hope you will understand the reasons why and agree that it still represents good value for an afternoons entertainment. Match day entry has also been increased to £6 for members and £8 for non-members with no concessions for oap's. I should point out that there are two extra home games now and the Blue and Gold memberships offer incredible value with free entry to home league games, discounted admission for your partner and free entries in the 100 Club Draw. The new prices compare very favorably with other clubs in our league – check out their websites and you will be surprised at what other clubs charge.

Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) Status

Changes to HMRC rules mean that we no longer enjoy CASC status. Crucially, this prevents the club gaining mandatory grants for local authority rates and applying Gift Aid (an additional 25%) to any donations we receive – another budget challenge for your committee.

International Tickets

Members only may apply for tickets for England's home games through Trevor Edwards on the application form enclosed with this newsletter. Please reply directly to him.

Fixture List and KO times

A working copy of the full fixture list is attached for a heads up while the final version is being prepared. Please note that a number of Chiefs games will Kick Off at 2pm to allow the visiting teams travelling long distances to return home at a reasonable hour.

Club and Player Sponsors

Huge thanks go to those companies and individuals who support us so generously with their sponsorship and donations. Without their support we would not be able to provide this level of rugby to the extent that we enjoy today. Your contributions help to provide first class rugby facilities for our local population with ages ranging from six to sixty and hopefully we will repay your support with our patronage.

Yours Sincerely

Trevor Shaddick
Membership Secretary