



CIRENCESTER RUGBY

SPRING NEWSLETTER APRIL 2022

OPEN TIMES

Fri 6.30 - 10pm
Sat 1.00 - 10pm
Sun 12.30 – 4pm

Theakston Best &
Guest Ciders

VETS NIGHT

Friday 10 June
Guest speaker:
Ben Kay

AGM

Tues 28 June
7pm in the
clubhouse

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter, as the season draws to a close, we would like to take the opportunity to update you on activity at the club and provide you with some useful information about events over the Spring/Summer.

The focus this season has very much been about the return to rugby and establishing some sort of normality post the easing of COVID restrictions. It has been a turbulent and challenging 2 years, and the Club like all of us has not escaped the impact of the pandemic. It has been a huge effort to re-establish the routine at the club and encourage members back to the Whiteway after such a long break, especially when so many people turned to other interests during the lockdown and were naturally hesitant about the potential risks of returning to the sport. I am pleased to say that with the enthusiasm of all the coaches and volunteers, along with pragmatic COVID mitigation measures, normal routine quickly resumed despite the ever-looming potential for further lockdowns.

Senior rugby kicked off with some competitive pre-season friendlies before the league started in earnest in early Sept. Despite some early success we went into the Christmas break in the lower half of the table. However, with growing availability and a regular turn out of our 2XV, the post-Christmas performance was much improved, with a final league position of 6th just 4 points separating us from 3rd place! There are many positives from this season, especially the fielding of a competitive 2XV, something many other Clubs have failed to achieve this season. This season we have also welcomed the RLC Corps Rugby Team to the Whiteway, who have chosen CRFC as their home ground for Army fixtures. Not only does this bring some great rugby and revenue to the club, but it also brings players who have chosen to play for us as a direct result of the great welcome and friendly atmosphere they have experienced. Our M&Y section continue to go from strength to strength. There have been some strong performances this year from all of our age groups, reflecting the fantastic efforts of players and coaches alike. Also, a large number of our players have participated in the Gloucester DPP programme, including several players representing Gloucester Academy U17s and County.



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In parallel we continue to work hard to recruit players of all ages but of particular note has been the efforts to resurrect Girl's rugby, which has been attended by some really enthusiastic girls keen to get a team up and running at CRFC.

As with the rugby the wider Club continues to go from strength to strength. The general numbers using the Clubhouse appear to almost increase week on week. The presence of Cirencester Hockey Club, who have used our facilities for post-match hospitality and functions has really added to the vibrant atmosphere within the Clubhouse. My thanks specifically go to Diane Slater who as the Clubhouse manager has been instrumental in the efficient running of the bar and facilities for the benefit of all our members, but also who has personally organised two amazing functions, Halloween and NYE. In addition, we have held two Club Members lunches, the last of which resulted in a capacity crowd inside the Clubhouse with barely space to stand!

As we move into the closed season there is still a huge amount of activity going on in and around the club. There are still the Combination Cup matches for the Seniors to play, but also the return of our Annual Youth 7s competition on 1 May which has been running for over 40 years! But as the rugby finishes, we will use the opportunity to begin our planned renovation work on the downstairs changing rooms and the kitchen. Both are in much need of some TLC and as a direct result of some sound financial management and healthy income generation this season, we can invest in the continued improvement of our infrastructure. In parallel to this we will continue to work on the general grounds and clubhouse to ensure it remains a first-rate facility for our members and wider community users.

Finally, this year we are saying farewell to several key personalities from within the Club. Will Mawby our Head Coach has taken the decision to step down to spend more time with his young family. Will stepped up at the beginning of COVID to take over the vacant role and has worked tirelessly in challenging circumstances to keep the rugby going during the pandemic and departs having set the foundations for the future success of #WeAreCiren. After nearly 7 years Caroline Hibberd is hanging up her oven gloves and leaves the role of Kitchen Manager. She has been at the heart of the club throughout her tenure and literally prepared, cooked and served thousands of meals for our players and visitors. We have a reputation for providing amazing post-match food and she will be sorely missed by us all.



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Dave Cater, Chief of Grass, Coach and general Bonne Oeuf. Dave started his early volunteer days as a Coach when his boys Dan and Sam came through the MY section, culminating as the head Colts Coach. As a man of many talents Dave soon was involved with House and Grounds, where he excelled on all matters relating to the growing of grass and general maintenance. He has worked tirelessly in this role and spent countless hours working on our pitches and grounds which we all are incredibly fortunate to play on. His shoes will be big ones to fill, literally, but we all wish him and Lucy the very best of luck in their future endeavours.

A big thank you to the Exec Committee who are all hardworking and volunteers and give some much of their time behind the scenes.

I hope that you all find this Newsletter helpful. Should however you have any questions or suggestions please do not hesitate to get in touch with any of us.

Cheers, Dave Reeves, Chairman

OUR MEMBERS – NEIL OWEN, MEMBERSHIP SEC.

Year to date we have managed to generate a very healthy membership revenue stream from over 500 members which is a fantastic effort, but the club can only survive and grow if we all commit to making sure we keep on top of our playing membership at all levels. More details at the AGM.

I would encourage all coaches to look at your current numbers before moving on to next year to ensure that everyone who has played this year is encouraged to return next year. I propose to send out to all coaches the full list of paid-up members by age group before the end of season at the same time as providing enough forms for next year's membership.

As ever the committee will be looking at way's parents can pay membership and are actively looking at the best options available to the club to ensure payment is not an onerous task.



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We are yet to confirm if we intend to keep membership subscriptions at current levels. Further information will be provided after the club AGM. Have a great summer and I look forward to seeing you all next season.

SENIOR RUGBY – WILL MAWBY, HEAD COACH

If anyone would have asked me about club expectations at the beginning of the season after COVID, if I'd been happy with fielding two sides on a regular basis, a first team finishing sixth in a very competitive league and only a bonus point win from third; a second team that has a regular corps of players finishing fourth in the league I would've eaten your arm off. In any season you have good days and have a bad days and players availability has always been a challenge, but we've had some very good days. Beating Fairford at home for the first time in 3 attempts with a huge crowd, was a very good day. A second team forcing a Longlevens 2XV team into uncontested scrums was also very good day, albeit a losing one.

It is the progress that this group of players has made that has been most pleasing. The 2nd XV playing with a consistent style, using patterns and phases. We had a 1st XV that showed consistency, passion and individual brilliance at times. Supported off the field by the exec and inspired by a coaching team that was led by Ash Stephens who brought technical expertise and New Forest grit, supported by Andy Ramsey with his knowledge of the club and players that can't be beaten. Couple this with a consistent 2nd team focus and a hugely hard working 1XV and senior captain in Ollie Gibson, who did as much off the pitch organising as he did on it, ensured the players were very well led.

With this consistent foundation came an atmosphere that players wanted to be a part of. A player's base that started at 35 and almost doubled by the end of the season. With links with RAU, 29 Regt RLC and old players coming back from regular attenders to cameo appearances, there was a genuine want to play for Cirencester and be part of this community club on and off the pitch.

So going back to expectations at the beginning of the season:



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This is a young side. Over previous years many players have left for various reasons. Players that are now coming back. We have seen colts come through and play senior rugby and they have been welcomed by all, as they should be. I'm delighted with what this group of players has achieved. This has been a strong foundation year and with the club in a good place the playing basis is doing the remainder of the club justice. I have no doubt they will exceed expectations in future years, and I will happily watch from the stands content I played my part. Very exciting times lie ahead for this club! 🏉🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿

FINANCE – MIKE TIMBRELL, TREASURER

The Club finances are in a healthy position. Through sound financial diligence and making the most of the opportunities presented to us during COVID we have been able to mitigate the risks through loss of income during lockdown against the grants we were eligible for, whilst minimising expenditure where possible.

We have maintained a positive cashflow throughout this FY which has enabled us to make informed decisions on expenditure across the whole club business. Our long-term forecast remains strong, and we are now able to consider future projects with the understanding that we can finance them without compromising the integrity of our day-to-day finances.

This summer the club will embark on two major projects: the downstairs changing rooms and the kitchen. Concurrent to this the club has supported many initiatives regarding kit discounts for both seniors and M&Y section along with other subsidised events to kick start our return to rugby and invigorate the use of our clubhouse.

We cannot be complacent, work must continue to seek opportunities to reduce costs and maximise revenue where appropriate and make efficiencies in our day to day running of the club, especially in the current economic climate that we are faced with. Our full accounts will be published as always at our AGM in the Summer, but should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.



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SPONSORSHIP & MEDIA – CAT HAGE, VICE CHAIR

I hope everybody is keeping well and safe and look forward to seeing you at the Whiteway during the summer as we prepare for the new and exciting 2022/23 season.

Sponsorship

In challenging economic times, we have had some great support from local businesses sponsoring Cirencester with their logos on our senior and M&Y kit as well as the website.

Huge thanks to Theakston Brewery, Appsbroker and BPS builder's merchants; also Hardware Group, IGO Bus, Thomas Legal, 4 Lakes Water Ski, D&J Sport, CheckMEND and Immobilise. We have managed to generate pre-pandemic levels of funding, which is excellent news.

Sponsorship continues to buy sportswear and equipment and cover our outgoing costs in these areas. It also allowed us to deliver our 'one club' objective of kitting out senior and junior players in a new, same design shirt across all ages.

Our local retailer in Cirencester town D & J Sports with whom we have a longstanding relationship and friendship and remain our kit supplier for the U6 to U12s. We have an online club shop for the seniors at <https://www.vx-3.com/product-tag/cirencester-rfc/> - check it out.

Pitchboards for 2022/23 – Now on Sale

If you or your firm/employer is interested in taking a sign board on pitch 1 or pitch 3 by the new car park, please do get in touch sponsorship@crfc.co.uk

The costs for one board including production is £300 for one or £500 for 2 boards in each location and a great way to raise profile and awareness while supporting your club.

Website: crfc.co.uk

Phase one of creating and going live with a new club website platform happened! Based currently on the GMS system the benefits include linking with the RFU, fixtures and members / players registered via GMS.



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It's true to say we don't utilise the full capacity of GMS within our website and it certainly has some clunkiness to it, but as you may know the RFU is looking to make changes to this platform following a huge review so it's worth us waiting to find out more before investing time and sweat! Here's a useful link to read the latest from the RFU: <https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/running-your-club/game-management-system>

One thing to mention is that the M&Y coaches, and team managers can upload images to the gallery and post-match reports / achievement news as well as list squad members. We encourage you to do this for the benefits of all members.

Social Media

As one club we run 3 social media platforms on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. The later two pull through to the website automatically with dynamic updates.

We work with the senior captain for 1xv / 2xv content and posts. But is there an M&Y parent (or two) with a passion for social media who can represent the majority of the M&Y age grades and post up game and team news on a regular basis?

We have been working with Matt Harman on building a girls rugby section with some great results and will look at this going forward.

Another pair of hands in this area would be most welcome and extend our M&Y social coverage under the one club banner. Please make contact with me cathryn@pentacomagency.com / sponsorship@crfc.co.uk

I have continued to actively participate on RFU and GRFU seminars and webinars to gain valuable knowledge from other clubs around the region and represent the CRFC brand!

We held a couple of successful members lunches during Six Nations for a fiver, which filled the club house, and we will look to do similar during the Autumn Internationals. Di and her bar team will also look to hold more evening socials in the new season.



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M&Y RUGBY – RICH MILLBANK, M&Y CHAIR

The Mini and Junior section goes from strength to strength. We have seen our numbers grow this year and we have made a full return to competitive rugby after covid knocked rugby sideways! We have a team at every age group, have performed brilliantly on the field and continue to nurture our young players in the rugby values.

This year we have also launched a handful of new initiatives to increase what CRFC offers to local families. The primary school teachers' Continuous Professional Development Day went brilliantly, so that should open up access to rugby amongst our local primaries, which in turn will bring new players into the club.

We have started running camps during the holidays to both help our parents and increase the opportunities for fun rugby. And most importantly in my mind is the fledgling girls' section which started in March, so that we provide rugby for our girls once they separate out at U12s. This will continue to grow as we lean into the secondary schools to make rugby an option. I want our club to be one of the cornerstones of rugby in the county for both boys and girls.

The running of the Mini and Junior section is only achievable thanks to the commitment and dedication of everyone who volunteers their time. I would like to put on record my gratitude for all the help we receive for the huge numbers of hidden tasks which we need to complete and get right.

We are looking at our volunteering framework for next season and are seeking wider support and sponsorships. We have several areas which I would like to improve on, and I welcome all feedback on what would make Cirencester Mini and Junior rugby the best it can possibly be.

All for now, Rich.



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HON. SECRETARY, SHARON OWEN

Sat 16 April - Beamer Memorial Vets game at Fairford
Fri 22 April - Easter Holiday Camp
Fri 22 April - GRFU U17 Colts Final 7.45pm at North Bristol
Sat 23 April - Junior Cup v Painswick S/F (A)
Sat 30 April - Senior Cup v Dursley S/F (H)
Sun 1 May - Annual Youth 7s Festival at CRFC / M&Y Rugby ends
Sat 7 May – Senior Combination Cup Final at CRFC
Fri 10 June - Vet's Night & guest speaker Ben Kay (book via Bar or Chairman)
Tues 28 June - AGM 2022 @7pm
Fri 26 Aug - Summer Ball (TBC)
Sat 27/28 Aug - Beer Festival

FINAL WHISTLE. PRESIDENT, NICK THEAKSTON

As the season comes towards the end, I believe the club can smile on a season of great satisfaction. There has been a rising tide of success for all the teams, typified by the great victory over our rivals Fairford, followed by nearly 200 in the club house enjoying the atmosphere of an international weekend. The club house has been used more frequently throughout the season and it is marvellous to see the hockey club and lacrosse teams enjoying our facilities.

The club's finances are in good shape, and I am pleased we have the funds available to upgrade the downstairs changing rooms and also the kitchen facilities. Work on these projects will be carried out in the closed season this summer.

The season has had its sad moments too. In March we lost one of our under 11s coaches, Matt Arthur, who finally succumbed to cancer after a brave battle. We also said goodbye to Jonathan "Beamer" Chambers who had been an inspirational chairman at Fairford RFC. This Easter weekend will see several Cirencester vets playing in a match to celebrate his life.



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No club runs itself without much hard work from many people, most of whom are volunteers. I would like to thank all our coaches; all the age grade organisers, players and parents; staff that work in the club house and on the grounds (particularly after the early season visits from our travelling friends); all our senior playing members (who have bonded well as the season developed – please don't destroy the brewery when you visit in May!), our loyal supporters who regularly attend the matches; and of course all the committee, who give much of their time so freely. I would particularly like to thank our Chairman Dave Reeves, who appears to work full time for CRFC. Its lucky his day job can squeeze into his coffee and lunch breaks!

Finally, a note to all vice presidents and want-to-be VPs. It is intended to produce a club membership booklet for next season, along the lines of the booklet that used to be a regular feature of the club at the end of the last millennium. We would want to include the names of all vice presidents in the booklet. My dilemma is that as you would not be expected to pay your VP's subs/donation until the start of the season, I would need to know who intends to be/remain a VP so the booklet can be ready for as near to the start of the season as possible. Could you let me or Neil Owen know by email by the middle of August.

I wish you a happy Easter. All the best, Nick.