

# BEACONSFIELD RFC



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Windsor End, Beaconsfield,  
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# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

23/24



# Chair's report for 23/24

## Annual General Meeting



30th September 2024

### **Welcome**

Thank you to all attending this AGM in person at Oak Lodge Meadow and for those that have voted by proxy. I also hope that members will continue to support the club's vision, which is to make Beaconsfield Rugby Club the best amateur rugby club in the local area.

I'd like to thank our Honorary Secretary Fran Kučera for his hard work and assistance in preparing the proceedings for the AGM and the Treasurer, Richard Saville, for his contribution throughout the season. I would also like to thank the Officers of the Club, the Committee, Coaches, Age Group Managers and Volunteers for their hard work throughout the season. Their dedication sets this club apart.

### **Governance**

In order to improve governance the Honorary Secretary has proposed a more streamlined Committee structure and there is a motion to add an Independent Officer to the Committee. The aim is to improve decision making and ensure that sub-committees are able to focus more effectively on their areas of responsibility. The Committee will remain focused on making the club a safe, fun and attractive place for club members and members of the community to enjoy rugby.

### **Finances**

Given the Treasurer's report I feel that it would be helpful to offer more insight into our finances. I would also like to make it clear that controls are in place to ensure that any significant items of expenditure, borrowing, contracts of employment or contractual relationships are agreed by the Committee in consultation with the Chair and the Treasurer.

The accounts have been audited and signed off. The club is solvent, and we have sufficient cash reserves, holding £117k in "Restricted Funds" with no major capital projects to finance. We have also brought in more than £60k in membership fees and £40k in sponsorship already this season. The generous support of sponsors and other significant donations have allowed the club to navigate a period of instability whilst promoting the launch of Women's Rugby, keeping prices down and making significant investments in the facilities and coaching setup at Beaconsfield RFC.

## **Budget**

This year's budget forecast has been shared and agreed with the Committee and shows a return to profitability in contrast to previous seasons. This approach offers an opportunity for greater transparency and for expenditure to be tracked more closely. The aim is to encourage more constructive discussions on priorities, make it easier to control expenditure and ensure Committee Members are accountable for their areas of responsibility.

## **Clubhouse Operations**

We have received some complaints from members but there has also been very positive feedback from others, from visiting teams and our guests. The experience of the clubhouse bar and catering at pre-match lunches, the Sportsman's Dinner, the Sponsor's Lunch and other big events has been excellent. I would like to remind all members that we have a duty of care to our staff. I am very grateful for the effort they put in and believe that their hard work has made the club an enjoyable place to come and watch our players perform each weekend.

I would like to say a big thank you to the Rugby World Cup Committee for volunteering their time to help make Beaconsfield RFC the place to come and watch. Unfortunately, despite their efforts, the trading deficit last year was £31.3k, up from £23.4k in 2022/23. Trading conditions have made it difficult to make a margin on Clubhouse Operations. There are a number of reasons for this but the whole of the hospitality sector has been in crisis along with the wider economy. Despite this, there are some positives as bar and kitchen sales increased 14.5% year on year and in the first 8 months of this year, the clubhouse has generated approx. £50k in revenues from events, equivalent to 35-40% of annual clubhouse revenues. Financial targets have met, and staff bonuses awarded, suggesting that they may no longer be adequate for the club to make an operating profit.

Local hospitality businesses operate on much higher margins than the club. Many have increased their margins and adjusted prices regularly over the last two years because of rampant food, drink and wage inflation, the increase in the minimum wage, poor economic climate, changing drinking habits and a reduction in footfall. Most establishments have struggled, and a large number have gone out of business. Through all of this, the Committee has tried to keep membership and bar prices low to ensure that the club remains accessible to all members. It has only been possible because of the reserves we hold and cannot continue indefinitely. Membership has increased 10% year on year which is good to see.

Looking forwards, service excellence, higher margins, increased buying power, an increase in sales and an acceptance from Members that prices have to go up are all necessary for Clubhouse Operations to be profitable. To help achieve profitability we are working, on a trial basis, with the team from The Lion Beaconsfield to help develop our offering. Dan Parle and his team are already working hard to turn things around as they have done at The Lion where they increased gross sales by over 250% since taking over.

## **Cleaning**

Cleaning costs remain a concern however, we are effectively subsidising the cleaning of the changing rooms from clubhouse operations which does not reflect that it is a rugby related cost. The same could be said of the food and drink that we give away to our players and match officials after training and matches.

## **Kitchen**

I'd like to thank Angie Elliot for her hard work and Jane Wood for the pre-match lunches that bring an important group of members to every home 1st XV game. That arrangement does not generate a profit for the club but it provides members with an excellent experience to keep them engaged. Overall, food is a significant cost to the club as meals are provided for free to senior players after training and the team in the kitchen also gives the post-match meals and hot dogs to the Minis and Youth players for free each week. The cost of running the kitchen and buying food has gone up considerably with food inflation running at over 20%.

## **Facilities**

We have tarmacked the rear car park to provide better disabled access and invested in clubhouse facilities and remediation associated with the development of the changing rooms. A huge thank you to David Kennett and Roger Levesley.

## **Sponsorship**

Despite the economic gloom, the club was able to secure over £55k in sponsorship from a wide range of local businesses. I would like to extend the club's gratitude to all of our sponsors. In particular to our main sponsor Dr Now for their generosity. I am delighted to say that the majority have already committed to supporting the club this season. Thanks to Luke Davis and Dan Wilson for helping with player sponsorship. The support of sponsors is vital and allows the club to develop on and off the field.

## **Summer Ball**

I would like to thank the Summer Ball Committee and Mike Doyle as Chair in particular. I would like to express my thanks to him and everyone that gave their time or donated prizes. A special thanks to Dr Now for sponsoring the event and to SmartComm for their assistance on the night. Despite their generosity, less money was raised than in previous years. This may have been a consequence of a wider economic malaise when tickets went on sale in January or a scheduling conflict with local school balls. There may also be a need to refresh the format. Feedback from the 70th anniversary ball suggested that the event was too big for some and that food service had been too slow. Both were addressed, however, a focus on more frequent, smaller events may offer an answer.

## **Marketing and Comms**

I would like to thank all of the volunteers that help to generate content on social media, take photos, write match reports and contribute to the regular communications that inform our members. In particular Richard Gommo, Luke Davies and Ross Thorburn. I would also like to thank my daughter Olivia Sargent who has done a professional job with the print and social media posts and graphic design. Their efforts saved the club over £10k on agency fees whilst ensuring that we remain attractive to our followers and membership.

## Membership

A huge thank you to Mike Tackley for doing an excellent job with the membership. Membership in SportMember at the end of the 2023/24 season increased 11% with 1086 members in total. Mini and Youth membership increased by 23% which is a great reflection on the hard work all of our volunteers put in, week in week out.

Membership Category	23/24	22/23	+/-
Sibling Mini and Youth Membership	582	473	109
Y2S	51	54	-3
Bobcats	10	6	4
Student Members	74	77	-3
Senior members	75	68	7
Coaches	130	126	4
Life Members	31	31	0
VP	26	44	-18
Social	97	97	0
Club Official	10	2	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1086</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>108</b>

Last season, with the cost-of-living crisis, the Committee focused on remaining competitive whilst recognising that operating costs were likely to continue to rise due to inflation. This season the Committee has agreed on a small increase in membership fees and the removal of cash on membership cards. The 20% members discount in the bar and kitchen will remain and social membership fees have been reduced from £90 to £50 to encourage more supporters to join us on the touchline.

## Club Management System

I'd like to thank Russell Green who continues as Data Officer this season. We will continue to use the Sport Member system in parallel with the RFU's GMS platform which still requires members to register and affiliate themselves with a club each year. It is important that we do this as affiliated membership and the recording of fixtures in GMS will help to determine our international ticket allocations in future seasons. Following an RFU consultation, further integration is still planned that will allow platforms such as Sport Member to manage the GMS registration and affiliation processes more efficiently in the future.

## Safeguarding

Andy Galligan continues as Safeguarding Office with the help of Rachel Harmen. I'd like to thank them both for their hard work. As a club, Beaconsfield takes the safety and well-being of our players very seriously. We are able to do this in no small part due to the hard work of the safeguarding team.

## Grounds

Our grounds are in the best shape they have been in years thanks to the hard work of our Groundman Ben Taylor working under Matt Jordan who is the Committee member with responsibility for the grounds. The addition of a new tractor has helped to deal with heavy rains and keep the pitches in immaculate condition throughout the season. I have never seen them looking better!



## Senior Men's Rugby

A huge congratulations to the Beaconsfield RFC 1st XV on winning a magnificent Counties 1 Tribute Southern North league title with three games remaining and going unbeaten in the league.

Having won the Papa John's Men's Regional 2 South Shield at the end of the 2022/2023 season, the 2023/2024 season picked up where we left off. The 1st XV hit the ground running and, rather than having to count losing bonus, we were in the unusual situation of picking up winning bonus points in almost every game. As the season progressed, we recorded victory after victory and the pressure increased on the players. We ran in wins home and away against mixed opposition but performed particularly well against stronger sides throughout the season.

It was an amazing effort by the players and everyone supporting them across the whole club. In particular Head Coach, Phil Smith, supported by an excellent senior coaching team including Aled Lewis, Rob Beck, David Rendell and Manager James Taylor. Director of Rugby, Noel O'Mahony put together a remarkable team to get us back to Level 6. I would like to wish Phil Smith every success in his new role this season.

Selected as RFU Team of the Month and Bucks RFU 'Tribute' Team of the Month for November the players enjoyed an unbeaten run of 22 matches going unbeaten in the league and scoring 1027 points. The highest number of points scored by any Level 7 team in the country! Beaconsfield RFC 1st XV played with flair all season, making the game look easy even when up against strong opposition. Getting the simple things right allowed us to take our chances and everyone knew their role both on and off the pitch.

To score over 1000 points in any season is exceptional and requires complete focus. The players showed grit and determination and took a fearless approach to every game. Fitness levels were excellent and the defensive work rate was second to none allowing us to capitalise in the latter stages of games and to score more tries than in any season before. Here is just one excellent example, featured on ITV Rugby's Grassroots Beasts in January: <https://x.com/itvrugby/status/...>

## New Head Coach

This season I am delighted to welcome Russell Bolton as our new Head Coach. Russ' experience and rugby philosophy are aligned with our approach and aspirations. He joins us from Tring (Level 5) where he coached the backs for the past four seasons. Before that was Head Coach at Maidenhead for four seasons, bringing them from Level 6 to 3rd in the table at Level 5. Russ is an ex Rugby Development Officer for the RFU and a level 3 qualified coach

## BRFC 2nd XV

Beaconsfield 2nd XV had a mixed season, starting slowly but rising from the ashes after the Christmas break like a phoenix from the flames. This was in large part due to the efforts of Max Wright and the injured Luke Davies who helped to inspire the players and ensured better availability. Their hard work and encouragement helped to keep us from relegation. It is vital that we maintain a strong 2nd XV to ensure that we have the necessary strength in depth to support the 1st XV and to allow Youth players to progress up the ranks.



## BRFC Bandits

The Bandits played their first season of Friday night matches under floodlights against local opposition in a social league. Thank you to Noel O'Mahony for working with other Directors of Rugby and starting a format which has proved a big success with all the teams involved. Thanks also to Finlay Currie, Bandits Captain and BRFC Disciplinary Officer for his efforts rounding up the troops and organising all of the games. The Bandits is a team for all players of a certain age and a great first step for many playing their first senior games for the club. We have had many father and son pairings selected and a number of Colts step up to play during the season.

## Women's Rugby

I am immensely proud that Beaconsfield Rugby Club has launched a Women's Rugby team to give all of our players a pathway to develop and a team to aspire to play in. A huge thank you to Ladies Chair Katie Rawlings and Coaches David Rendell, Richard Gommo, Kwong Lin and Nick Stroud in particular for their tireless work all season. Thanks also to FitWorks who helped to get the sessions underway with strength and condition fitness sessions. Tuesday evening sessions for the Women's team have been engaging and fun thanks to their efforts.

It has been hugely fulfilling and will ensure that the culture of the club better represents the community. With one of the largest minis sections in the country we want every player to have a team to play in as they move through the age groups and start to play senior rugby. With our new changing rooms, we can accommodate players of all ages in a safe and fun environment. Be part of the journey and join Beaconsfield Women's Rugby for [#Fitness](#) [#Fun](#) and [#Friendship](#)



# Beaconsfield Women's Rugby Launch



## **Bobcats**

There is a need for the club to increase playing numbers in the girls U12, U14, U16 and U18 “Bobcat” teams. Numbers have been disappointing despite clustering with a number of local clubs. However, with a Senior Ladies team to aspire to and a renewed focus on the Minis girls we are optimistic that more girls will stay on up to U12s, especially with the Women’s Rugby World Cup 25 in England on the horizon.

## **Youth Rugby**

The youth section of the club have had another positive season with over 200 players signed up and just under 100 fixtures played across the youth age groups (u13-colts) combined, despite losing several weekends to the weather. Thanks to the team at Bucks for extending their Structured fixtures programme down to u13s, meaning that all youth age groups now have a core set of fixtures for the season which they can supplement with friendlies to fill out the fixture list.

As ever, we were competitive in all age groups with u15s and u16s both reaching the finals of their respective Bucks Cups but coming up agonisingly short against teams from A&C who were better adapted to the torrential conditions. The colts made it through to the 3rd round of the national cup before availability took its toll, and the u14s were very unlucky to be the odd team forced to play an extra match to even up numbers after winning in the first round, and going out to eventual finalists.

Once again thanks to all the Coaches, Age Group Managers first aiders and volunteers who keep the section and the club going and make us the envy of most we play. It's also been great to see links strengthened between the Junior and senior sides of the club with several of the first team players getting heavily involved in coaching some of the junior sides. Long may that continue.

Special thanks to our qualified referees Ian, Nathan, Nick, Rick, Andrew and everyone else who stands in the middle to give everyone a game week in week out.

## Minis Rugby

I'd like to thank Andy Batchelor who is stepping down as Minis Chair and welcome Nick Stroud to the position. Nick is passionate about supporting all our young players as they start on their rugby journeys and will bring a renewed focus on retaining our girls so that they can step up to the U12 Bobcats team.

I'd like to say a huge thank you to them both for helping to organise the Autumn and Spring Minis Festivals where a combined total of over 2000 players came to play at Beaconsfield RCC. There was some great rugby on display on both occasions but next year we will try not to schedule the Spring festival on Mother's day which should make it easier for a few more clubs to attend. I'd like to thank Davenies School for their sponsorship of the festivals. Thanks also to the coaches, AGMs, volunteers and to the clubhouse team for helping make the season a success.

## Touch Rugby

Finally, a huge thank you to Mark Holmes, who has taken over from Richard Gommo to deliver "Touch For All" which has continued to be well attended every Sunday throughout the summer. There are regularly three or four matches running simultaneously and there continues to be fantastic representation from boys and girls of all age groups, the parent body and Senior players. A great effort, thank you!













Finally, I would like to thank the outgoing members of the Committee for their hard work throughout the season.

Many thanks to those of you that have attended the AGM this evening.

Kind regards,






Dr Laurence Sargent  
Chair, BRFC



#	TEAM	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	+/-	TB	LB	Pts
1	 Beaconsfield	22	22	0	0	1069	172	897	19	0	108
2	 Windsor	22	17	0	5	846	360	486	18	1	87
3	 Wallingford	22	13	3	6	663	411	252	12	3	73
4	 Oxford Harlequins II	22	14	0	8	650	448	202	14	2	72
5	 Buckingham	22	13	1	8	603	603	0	15	2	71
6	 Grove	22	11	2	9	582	614	-32	10	1	57
7	 Bicester	22	9	1	12	481	538	-57	10	1	49
8	 Chinnor III	22	8	0	14	502	656	-154	9	4	45
9	 Bletchley	22	6	1	15	398	626	-228	8	3	35
10	 Bracknell II	22	7	0	15	430	797	-367	8	2	33
11	 Rams III	22	5	0	17	416	857	-441	7	3	30
12	 Milton Keynes	22	3	0	19	348	906	-558	4	2	18

## Points scored

Match info powered by the Game Management System.

1	 <b>Beaconsfield</b> South West Division	1027
2	 <b>Teddington</b> London & SE Division	1024
3	 <b>Hinckley II</b> Midlands Division	1003
4	 <b>Luctonians II</b> Midlands Division	981
5	 <b>Petersfield</b> London & SE Division	968



**BUCKS CUP JUNIOR FINALS**

 **Amersham & Chiltern U14s** **VS** **Aylesbury U14s**   
@ 10am

 **Amersham & Chiltern U15s** **VS** **Beaconsfield U15s**   
@ 12pm

 **Amersham & Chiltern U16s** **VS** **Beaconsfield U16s**   
@ 2:15pm

**@ MARLOW RFC**  
**SUNDAY 10TH MARCH 2023**

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