

## D&W Council Reports – 2025-04-15

### Administration

Please can we ask you all to review and update your section of the D&W Website.

Please see attached the latest version of the D&W staffing matrix.

During the monthly Age Grade Discipline meeting the following statement was minuted.

*Finally, Brian Welford updated everyone on the changes at the ERFSU which is now to be known as the England Schools Rugby (ESR). CSUs would not operate as a committee as they have previously but would now have a member representing schools on the CB Board and refer to them.*

Sad news from the Devon RFU over the weekend, with the news of the passing of Treve Mitchell.

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### Area Representative

The next South Wilts huddle will take place at Devizes RFC on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025 starting at 7.30 PM, the meeting will be Face to Face

#### Agenda

- New chair of S Wilts group
  - Review of season:
    - Men's league and cups
    - Womens leagues and cups
    - Age Grade competitions and Age Grade issues
    - Representative Rugby
  - Other forms of Rugby – including plans
  - Player registration
    - Adults
    - Age Grade
  - GMS data
  - Facilities
  - Grants procedure
  - RFU points and Issues – Hopefully, Ben or Scott will be present
  - AGM notification and voting
  - Contact list for the meeting – does it need updating? Role changes at club AGMs
  - AOB that clubs with to bring up
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### Governance

#### GMS:

The one thing that is showing here is clubs not updating their golden roles and some clubs having key officials missing - see the area reps report for more details - how we as a council deal with that should be up for discussion.

A lot of clubs still need to cleanse data and remove the deceased and legacy folk who are nothing to do with them anymore - this is also a GDPR issue so perhaps Nicola could lead on that. Clubs with a couple of thousand people attached and only a couple of teams are the obvious ones to start off with. Clubs cannot keep people accounts on "in case they want to contact them" - it isn't allowed.

Some clubs who use club email addresses are complaining that invoices are sent via GMS to the default address on GMS and telling us to change who we send to - only that person can make that change and it's frustrating when volunteers get these messages.

While on the subject on email addresses, there are still far too many unverified, duplicate and missing addresses on the system. Clubs must rectify this. I write out to data officers regularly about this. FSI are fixing the issue that is allowing new accounts to complete without a verified address.

## Registration:

I attended the meeting with Matt Bryan on changes to Adult Registration and review of first season. Seems it went fairly well. The changes is that the intention is to clear all those players who did not renew last season so those legacy players - who probably aren't still players - will no longer be tied to the clubs they haven't played for years. There are discussions around whether clubs only at L9 and below who have players renewed at RFU level will appear this season as club registered - if they can make it work. That will help clubs and players, but of course these can always be reset to club registration anyway once season finishes at end May. There were discussions as to whether L8 should still be RFU registration, but that's not going to change for next season, also whether the transfer deadline for RFU registered player is serving any useful purpose - again above our groups level.

AG Registration - no change envisaged, seems to work fine, however we should be wary of players dual registering within locality overplaying.

## Discipline

To view the current Case List, please [Click Here](#)

### *For information*

If a player receives a Red Card but they are injured during the incident.

If the Discipline Panel proves the case any sanction imposed will not start until they have recovered from their injury.

Please see attached a letter from the Rugby Football Referees Union.

## Safeguarding

What is a reasonable expense claim, are overnight hotel bills a reasonable claim.

Previous month's activity:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Continuing to approve 17 yr olds to play adult rugby, several were submitted in advance of the player turning 17 so were held until after the relevant date. Reminders given for full playing assessments to be completed, especially where clubs do not have colts teams and so colts coaches are unable to assess.</li><li>2. Festival and tour applications continuing to come in. We have had several where the hosting club has not gained permission for incoming clubs to attend the festival or tour, these have been picked up when the WRC ask about them. Clubs are constantly reminded of the need to ensure these are fully completed. We have had several that have gone to Gerald, but the clubs have not been notified of approval which has meant we have needed to chase. This is difficult if there is no communication coming through to confirm if this has been processed</li></ol>
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	<p>or submitted with errors. I would like to work towards a more streamlined process for next year where the safeguarding team can be sure that any incoming or outgoing permissions are being worked on as it is causing extreme stress for club organisers as well as additional work for myself and Joe.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have been notified that people have been appointed to the representative team but no volunteer form, DBS check or play it safe check has been completed. Can I please have assurance that someone is looking at these and that we are not just appointing friend to fill posts? We need to be consistent across the CB when appointing to roles, a volunteer form must be completed for every single person ( We missed this on one person, and he was totally unsuitable and had been under investigation by the Police, but we appointed him Girl's coach!) We cannot leave ourselves open to this type of risk. I was not copied into the notification of the Coaching / Management team but was forwarded the email after appointment! As the Safeguarding Manager all appointments involving U18 staff should be notified to me so I can check the GMS is correct and there are no outstanding issues. I've also been advised that one of the games has been scheduled for the end of May bank holiday which will automatically exclude some lads as holidays will have already been booked, these need to be planned further in advance and avoid the school holidays surely?</li> <li>Multiple clubs have reported an increase in poor behaviour on the touchlines, reminders have been sent out about the code of conduct and the need to ensure parents agree to comply with them. Bystander training was delivered locally last week for several clubs.</li> <li>The CSO Spond group continues to be used to share relevant safeguarding information including a great photo to explain emoji's being used by children that can be shared with parents, a Ted talk about talking to kids following games and many other resources that are being shared online.</li> <li>Five Play it Safe courses have been held across the region, with a new tutor in place based near Trowbridge this has meant that I have been able to plan the courses with someone else delivering which has freed up time. Another 6 courses are scheduled for coming weeks. Getting people booked onto the course continues to be challenging, mainly because people find GMS unwieldy and are struggling, we continue to ask if we can look at an alternate way to get people booked on but no movement yet. Ideally the CSO should be able to trigger a booking with the person able to confirm and pay. We have been told to turn away anyone who attends without a booking.</li> </ol>
Current Budget update:	No idea as have not been advised of the budget for Safeguarding
Proposed Activity (including estimated cost)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued attendance as needed at clubs for whom issues have been raised.</li> <li>Audits to be scheduled for several clubs where incidents have not been managed well.</li> <li>Plans for a CSO update event are required. I am speaking with the CSO to try to find an appropriate date/ time as we will not manage to get everyone required together at the same time.</li> </ol>
Items not for publication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I attended the Blandford v Swans Quarter final as had reports of several incidents involving the Blandford players being played in adult rugby with no permission as well as playing unregistered players. There were also multiple complaints of player and parent behaviour along with the behaviour of the manager. Nothing major occurred</li> </ol>

during the game, I made all parties aware that I was onsite to watch at the start of the game. I had a long conversation with Tom ( ex chair) regarding the issues, I was assured that nothing untoward was occurring despite evidence that the player selection that had been shared with Clare was different to the team sheet submitted. None of the games had been photographed or recorded so we were unable to quantify these allegations. There was an incident in the carpark after the game that left Clare upset and I am aware this has been subject to multiple conversations over the following weeks.

2. Attended the game Blandford V Bridport again to observe the Blandford coaching team behaviour. My husband and I observed the coaches joining in the pre-game scrum, and some continued shouting/ intimidation of all of the coaches along the game line. We could hear the Blandford coaches shouting from the other side of the pitch and all seem to move as one up and down the line. The Bridport boys reported to their coaches that they felt intimidated and some of the shouting was directed at them, I advised them to submit any reports necessary as we will be unable to resolve anything without something in writing. This has been reported back to the CSO at Blandford to deal with and manage.
3. I have had several complaints about Sherborne U12's sent to me by parents, I have raised this with Sue Lonsdale (CSO) One parent has been suspended from the club and his colleague raised issues this weekend. I have been advised by Sherborne that there are no issues and Friday training was observed by a level 2 coach who found nothing amiss. Caroline Durston D&W Girls lead was the person who observed the training. I do have concerns that there is something going on that is being hushed up within the club but am not sure what else can be done at this stage as when observed the coaches appear to be doing the required work. The U12 are training on Friday night and then again on Sunday, but this appears to be within guidelines.
4. I attended the Bournemouth rugby club festival over the weekend. There were some poor behaviours displayed from a Welsh U15 team in several matches, with some vocal opposition parents from an English club, that needed to be spoken to. Although there were these incidents no formal action was taken so we are unable to follow it up, it does appear that the Welsh teams attending were fired up from the start which didn't help. There were yellow cards issued so I am waiting on some further information to see if it is enough to send in to the WRU, this will be sent to Gerald to deal with. I also had to speak to several parents who thought it was funny to ask the boys if they wanted a pint in front of me, which then had to be dealt with by means of speaking to the head coaches and reminding of the rules.
5. Attended the EGM for Oakmeadians regarding refusal of membership for a woman with additional needs, the process on the day was comprehensively checked and support was provided for the individual and the club. The club refused the membership, and no further action is needed. This has been a long process that was not supported well from the start at the RFU causing unnecessary delays and stress to coaches at the club and members.
6. Attended Bournemouth to support club to deal with ongoing issues within age group. Several parents have decided to remove their children due to complaints about team selection following behaviour issues.
7. Held a phone call with parents and coaches from Corsham following a

red card situation at a game that was distressing. Multiple view of the issue was raised, and this was forwarded to Gerald for follow up with Trowbridge.

8. Reports and video of children taking part in Eating / Drinking games at Salisbury were sent to me, these are being investigated by the Salisbury Y&M lead and will be disciplined within club.
9. Issues at Lytchett – DBS checks expired, reports of players not registered, coaches with no qualifications etc all raised with the club who are working through the issues
10. Reminders sent to the CSO at Swans to advise me of incidents as I have been advised of several incidents by others that have not been reported correctly.
11. Reminders sent to several clubs about keeping appropriate records of their workforce as their GMS is not correct and it is impossible to identify who is currently in the age grade workforce at clubs and check DBS compliance etc
12. A police investigation is underway following reports of abuse to a parent by Oak's supporters, Oaks checked, and the person involved was not a current parent at the club but was an ex-step parent. They have been banned from the club. No further RFU action is possible currently due to the police case
13. A report has been made to children's social care for support for a child who had posted some disturbing content on social media, luckily a friend noticed it and reported to his parent. The child is being appropriately supported at present.
14. There were more than 15 referrals to the RFU team since the last meeting, most are actually discipline and so are being dealt with at club level.
15. The new rfu referral system has meant an increase in the number of referrals being made, the majority are being triaged and returned to the club for action. This means that there have been referrals that are not necessary but are being dealt with by the team as needed.
16. There have been 5 rejections of DBS, mainly due to information being discovered that needed more information to make a decision on approval, these had not been dealt with within the required time so are automatically rejected.

## **Inclusion & Diversity**

Since being appointed I've researched the role from the RFU information available and checked that clubs have someone responsible for EDI.

Once family things settle, I will be contacting the clubs to offer support in their work in the clubs and seeking to hold a meeting with the clubs virtually. Including attending a workshop (call) on the 14th of May about inclusions and Diversity toolkits.

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## **Club Support**

The Facilities Survey response rate is currently 50% so clubs can help themselves by completing it via the link.

The two projects included in the RFU Impact '25 Facility Fund - Social Space Award – are at Trowbridge RFC and Supermarine RFC. The Trowbridge Scheme is nearing completion.

Supermarine's project continues to progress nicely and to the programme timeline. The builder is due to start 14<sup>th</sup> April to complete the second stage of works, with the remaining works due once rugby operations finish at the club for the summer period.

There was one grant award to Amesbury RFC for recruitment into their walking rugby scheme.

Christchurch RFC managed to play several non-league fixtures and will continue to actively recruit volunteers and players. They have advised us that they intend to continue in the Hampshire leagues for next season subject to proving their depth of player numbers at the appropriate cut off time for league entry.

## Rugby in Dorset & Wilts

Allocated Budget 24/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Girls U16 PDG – £12,000</li> <li>➤ Boys U17/ U18 – £5,900</li> <li>➤ Girls U18 Girls - £2,950</li> <li>➤ <b>Women's U20 - TBC</b></li> <li>➤ Men's U20 – £5,750</li> <li>➤ Men's XV - £5,750</li> <li>➤ Women's XV - £5,750</li> </ul>
Proposed Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Male U17/ U18 – U18 fixture v Gloucester</li> <li>➤ Male U20 – Trials/ Trg</li> <li>➤ Senior Women's XV – Trials/ Trg</li> <li>➤ Senior Men's XV – Nil</li> <li>➤ Walking rugby – Nil</li> </ul>
Detail  <b>Fixtures list Attached</b>	<p><b><u>U18 Female</u></b> Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Team manager – Kate Berry</li> <li>➤ Lead – Gordon Horsley</li> <li>➤ Forwards – Nick Matravers</li> <li>➤ Backs – Owen Richardson</li> </ul> <p><b><u>U18 Male</u></b> U17 planning block</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Team manager – Paul Mortensen</li> <li>➤ Lead – Kevin Dobie</li> <li>➤ Forwards – Louis Brencher</li> <li>➤ Forwards – Richard Dent</li> <li>➤ Backs – Michael Fordham</li> <li>➤ Backs – Tristan Moore</li> <li>➤ Guest Coaches – Jake Krige, Lia Gingell &amp; Jason Wulfson</li> </ul> <p><b><u>U20 Female</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Team Manager – TBC</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Lead Coach – TBC</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Forwards Coach – TBC</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Backs Coach – TBC</b></li> </ul> <p><b><u>U20 Male</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Team Manager – Mark Adams</li> <li>➤ Lead Coach – Martin Oxland</li> <li>➤ Forwards Coach – Jeff Allum</li> <li>➤ Backs Coach – Matt Sturgess</li> </ul>

	<p><b><u>Senior Women XV</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Team Manager – Sam Briggs</li> <li>➤ Asst Manager – Leanne Brock</li> <li>➤ Mentor – Chris Burton</li> <li>➤ Lead Coach – Lauren Leatherland</li> <li>➤ Forwards Coach – Keiron James</li> <li>➤ Backs Coach – Gareth Wheatly</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Senior Men XV</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Team Manager – Richard Elliott</li> <li>➤ Lead Coach – Don Parsons</li> <li>➤ Forwards Coach – TBC</li> <li>➤ Backs Coach – TBC</li> </ul> <p><b>Points for discussion/ remarks</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gordon Harding has agreed to run on as Program Lead for the female U16 PDG U16 player, is it CB business of RFU? DISCUSS. (£12k Budget).</li> <li>2. Confirm the County Coaching Coordinator and Lead Coach can be the same person.</li> <li>3. We need to agree with the RFU what we need to recruit volunteer wise and what is a must have and what is a nice to have.</li> </ol>
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## **Girls Rugby**

### **Overview:**

As the season draws to a close, I am ringing all clubs with girl's teams. This is taking some time; however it is proving invaluable to developing a true picture of where we are in our progress with girls' rugby.

### **The areas I am discussing are :**

**Current numbers:** This varies across our area greatly.

**Next season:** What they plan! Recruitment, joining with other teams being amongst some of the ideas.

### **Leagues**

Several clubs would like to have a league for the U18s and possibly the U16. I have discussed using the huddle areas as a starting point for the U18's. They would play once every month or 6 weeks with a rotation of venues.

### **U12's**

It has been suggested by the RFU creating U12 (schools) festivals) I will take this up with D&W Schools.

### **The World Cup:**

- ✓ Womens and girl's games before a match (Curtain Raiser)
- ✓ Sponsored static bike ride – the distance from the club to Twickenham raising money for the Woodenspoon and a charity of their choice. All sessions to be on the same day to maximise publicity.
- ✓ Love Rugby sessions over the summer.

## Love Rugby Festivals next season

The dates are out for the love rugby festivals with clubs coming forward to host. They will be using the RFU Love Rugby webpage to help set up and publicise along with my support.

## Recruitment & Retention of Girls

Discussed at length and recommended to watch the recent RFU Webinar below.

Giving Girls the Chance to Love Rugby (RFU Webinar)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qFxXuJyaNA>

RFU PDG U18 Girls nominations in total we have nominated 18 girls from the PDG FP U16 girls section and 10 from the County U18 section. They will be having a preliminary assessment day on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May. This will enable them to understand the official assessment properly and hopefully not find the process so daunting.

## The U18 Girls :

Gordon Horsley has stepped down as the Head Coach of the D&W U18 girls after 20 years working at County. He has made a major contribution over the years and he will be greatly missed. This leaves us with an opening for Head Coach and a need to recruit more coaches.

## Results

Sunday 01/12/24 – D&W v Oxfordshire - Melksham RFC.- **Win**

Sunday 12/01/25 – D&W v Bucks – N RFC – North Dorset (re-scheduled to 16/03/25) - **Win**

Sunday 16/02/24 – Berks. V D&W – TBC - **Win**

There is provision for an extra assessment day depending on the number of girls being put forward.

## Dates for your diary Season 2025-2026

The following dates from the age grade calendar: County U18 girls dates:

Sunday 2nd Nov. - Assessment

Sunday 16th Nov. - Squad development

Sunday 7th Dec - Train & game Sunday 18th Jan - Match

Sunday 15th Feb -Match - Buckinghamshire (confirmed) Away

## Budget:

Physio		X3	300.00
Travel expenses			£1400.00
Coaches			
Venue hire	£75	X2	£150.00
Food	£4 ph	X120	£480.00
Resources		X60	£115
Bibs			
			£2447.00

I anticipate that the travel expenses should be slightly lower as there have not been the training sessions.

## Walking Rugby

It was a successful festival all being marked on fair play with no scores recorded. 1 comment was that it was is a better not being a tournament, takes the pressure off winning to enjoy the rugby. (I found the atmosphere better than a tournament) We also ensured that those clubs who could not bring a full complement were loaned players from the clubs who had people wanting to come over the maximum of 12.



Based on scores given by the referees Wheatsheaf were awarded the trophy, RWB a close second and 2 points behind Devizes and Amesbury tied for Third. There was not a lot in it at all, which is great.

Marlborough excellent hosts and made it a big day for them with us, an event for their 90th year anniversary and 2 league games. They had 4 marked out pitches waiting for us and kindly provided new match balls as well.

I did send a couple of pictures and request that something went out on the CB social media. Here are some I took on the day

Now thinking of next season. Would it be better to go a few weeks later so all senior men's and women's leagues are over and done with? Should avoid clashes with players having club duties to cover? Are you happy with the festival arrangement?

Finally as mentioned at the end, I've done the role for three seasons so in line with CB Policy I have to step down. I am open to reappointing but want you to know the post is available if anyone else would like to have a go. It involves setting up and running this event and working to encourage other clubs to get started.- I still have three bags of kit for new Wiltshire clubs in my shed that I would prefer were being used - and still some funding! - we desperately need more clubs in Dorset as Wimborne are kind of on their own.

Thanks again for your club's participation in D&W Walking Rugby, and if you need any help advice or guidance please do not hesitate to ask.

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