



ANNUAL REPORT 25/26 TO BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CB

In summary the Referees Society have had a good season, the previous year had been dominated by a small number of significant challenges and subsequent changes, so the plan was to have a season bedding in those changes and new policies, which has been successfully achieved.

The society have continued to recruit new members, both at the experienced level, with referees moving into the county and new referees largely through the RtR courses a number of clubs have hosted this season.

Every game requested has been covered, and Bucks remain one of the few counties that support every adult game, and all competitive junior games from U16s upwards both Male and Female, this has become more challenging due to the increase of Girls rugby, as well schools rugby both midweek and Saturdays, Over 700 club and school matches had a society appointed referee this season.

The society continue to have an active development policy, incorporating fitness, laws and game management, its a minimum requirement for match officials at L7 and above to have achieved the relevant RFU Fitness standard,

and this is also encouraged at all levels. The society have run monthly meetings with an active agenda to continuously develop the knowledge and skills of all officials. The society has adopted the new RMDE process for managing referee development.

Across Buckinghamshire incidents of Match Official Abuse are relatively infrequent, however they do still occur so we must remain vigilant, and unfortunately we have experienced one incident of physical abuse resulting in an injury to one of our members, this can never be tolerated under any circumstances. We thank the CB and Disciplinary Committee for their adherence of strict guidance and policies, ensuring all clubs and players are aware of their responsibilities.

Safeguarding is an important aspect of our game, and the society works hard to ensure every member is fully compliant, so we can retain maximum flexibility to appoint any referee to any match.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all clubs, that management of their fixtures appropriately is essential to ensure the continuing support of the society, please don't forget our limited resource is trying to manage relationships with over 30 clubs and schools, small changes can quickly add up to big issues for us.

Financially the society has had a robust season, however we must note that RFU and RFRU have responded to recent HMRC increase in travelling expenses of 12%, recommending this be passed down to all referees next season.

I would like to remind you that Buckinghamshire has one member active in PGMOT and one active in NLMOT, and next season we will have two members accepted into the Southern Federation pathway. Also next season I am joining the Executive Board of the RFRU, the national referees body.

Finally I would like to make some thank yous, firstly to every active member of the society, we must never forget without a referee we don't have a match! My hard working committee that have made a very significant contribution to ensuring the growth and success of Community Rugby in Buckinghamshire. A&C RFC for hosting our meetings and providing kit storage and our major supporter Peter (Digger) and Jack Kenyon at Arnold Funeral Services.

Richard Bobbett - Chairman