



Bucks RFU 2026

Buckinghamshire RFU Chairs AGM report 2025/6

As we look forward to the new season, and whilst trying to enjoy a break from the last one, can I start by wishing Marlow Rugby club our heartfelt condolences on the sad passing of their current Chair, Nigel Ashton who recently passed after a short illness. A very sad loss to our sport, both at club and County level. We wish the club and indeed Nigel's family strength after their sad loss.

As we look back at the season, I know a lot of you that try to follow sport, will feel a bit dizzy about the goings on at HQ, as it seems to seek change at all costs and with little explanation or true consultation. There seems little doubt, in my opinion, that the focus is moving away from community (Club) rugby towards the professional element within our game, as they attempt to concentrate and consolidate all the decision making that affects our game to paid staff at the RFU. *"None so blind, so deaf as those that will not hear, that will not see"*

We need to continue the fight to have our voices heard at a national level to ensure that what is important to you is listened to whether you are the biggest or smallest of clubs. All clubs matter!

After being told that we would have a 5% increase in funding to support our clubs this coming season, we have recently been informed that in fact we will now no longer get that increase and will actually now face a reduction in funding from last season... and it goes on!

We are due to hold a club senior leaders forum in September and will bring all your representatives up to speed.

On a positive note, this season we decided to create a County Super Vets (over 50's) Presidents XV, and easily found a couple of other Counties to play. What a fantastic affair it turned out to be! My thanks must go to Steve Swindel for his organisation and persistence; it ended up with over 100 players on the WhatsApp group with loads more being turned away as they were not "old enough"!! A massive congratulations to all involved (It will be continued!).

I will leave it to our illustrious Director of Rugby to talk about our other county sides and how they have fared this past season.

We have supported our clubs (and some individuals) during the course of the season in many various ways, and I know how they have appreciated our advice and involvement when it has been called upon. I thank all of the County executive for that with special mentions for Finlay Gemmell and Chris McCombie for their outstanding support for our clubs, to Mike Wild for his tenacity in putting together our Value the Volunteer awards and finally to Andy Blake for his unstinting work with the senior County sides.

To all the club Chairs and the respective committees, can I thank you as always for the unseen work you all do to ensure rugby is played week in week out and to all our other volunteers, you really are the lifeblood of this fantastic vibrant game of ours, thank you.

I will end by confirming our support to all our clubs in Bucks, we will help, advise, seek clarification and generally be on the end of a phone should you need us at any time. Our aim is, and will always be, to help our member clubs develop and grow and to work alongside you at every opportunity. We will work in furtherance of these aims at the start of the season.

Please enjoy the summer and let's go again!

Take care

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Neale Baker Bucks RFU County Chair