



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE RFU

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO AGM 2022

Today marks the end of my final season as President. What started as a one-year appointment has, thanks to Covid, been a three-year journey through the most challenging time for our game since the War Years of 39-45. That our clubs and County have emerged in good health is a testimony that our game is in good hands and all concerned are to be congratulated.

Having the opportunity to visit our clubs this season after a season of no rugby, has been a privilege and a joy. No two clubs in the County are the same yet the rugby ethic is a constant through all and the work being put in to keeping what in Bucks is an entirely volunteer run community activity is a common thread holding our clubs together. The effort shown in returning to competitive rugby in the face of declining numbers is obvious and is yet again a credit to all those who volunteer their time to our game. I'd also like to especially thank those nurturing the women's game in County. Following our County teams this season was a real pleasure, but the success of the women's team, who had it not been for a cry-off would have probably featured in another Twickenham final, was a particular high point and I'm delighted to learn that we've secured funding to launch a girls DPP at U16 level next season.

In handing over the Presidency I sincerely hope all our clubs make Melvyn Peters as welcome as you've made me in the past three years. I honestly cannot single out one club from another in the welcomes you've given me as your President and the visits I've made during my term of office will not be the last time I enjoy visiting every one of you.

The game has many challenges to be faced going forward. The revised league structure now provides big clubs with direct access to community clubs talent whilst computerised fixtures means clubs no longer have Fixtures Secretary to rustle up games at short notice when opposition cry-off. Late cry-offs and opposition not stopping for team teas also need to be addressed but stabilising the numbers playing the game and re-establishing the firm base in each club from where we grow the game remains core.

As I reach the end of my Presidency, after almost 20 years involvement with Bucks, I'd like to thank all those colleagues along the way who've made my time so pleasurable. It started with Aylesbury's Trevor Palm who first persuaded me to get involved with competitions, through Peter Trunkfield who invited me onto the Bucks committee through to Neale Baker our current Chairman who has served the county extremely well during these last three difficult years. To my club, Slough RFC and in particular their Treasurer Shelley Pigott, thank you for your backing and support and to my wife Joan and daughter Karen-Marie my heartfelt thanks not only for your support but also ensuring I was mainly free of dog hair prior to club visits!

With pre-season training having started at most clubs it seems the opportunity to wish you all an enjoyable summer break has already passed, so instead to each and every one, thank you!