

BRENTWOOD RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

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Dear BRFC players, members and supporters

As we now head into the festive break which marks the mid-point of the 2023/24 season, the Executive Committee and I wanted to provide you with an update on the season to date, reflecting on the achievements across the Club both on and off the pitch and focussing on a few key messages as below.

On the pitch

Our **1st XV** currently sit mid-table in what is turning out to be a very competitive league. With 5 wins from 13 games, perhaps the most telling statistic is the 5 losing bonus points we have accrued to date (including one against runaway leaders Southend) showing just how close these games have been and highlighting the opportunity ahead of us in the New Year if we improve our performance even by a small margin. Our **2nd XV** have had a tough first half, but a couple more early wins in 2024 will see them surge up the league table. It has been great to see some of the senior Colts getting their first experience of senior rugby with the 2nd XV, continuing the great tradition we have here at BRFC of growing our own players. Our **Colts Academy** have had a mixed start to the season, struggling in the league, but through to the quarterfinals of the Cup after a very strong performance to go through the previous round against unbeaten league leaders Westcliff.

Our **Girls** teams have enjoyed successful starts to the season as the U14's have taken part in the Bancroft pitch up and play as well as a few games alongside Harlow. Our U16's are currently unbeaten in the league after a win against Thurrock and a draw with Dagenham. Please note in the new year our girls section aims to start a girls minis group for girls in the U9's, U10's & U11's year group as an alternative to mixed gender rugby, so if you have any girls interested, please reach out to Harry Adams.

Our **Youth** and **Kids First** rugby remains a strong element and key contributor to the and success of BRFC. It is great to see vibrant group squads participating across almost all age groups, with some great results on the pitch as well as an increasing number of age-group related social events taking place in the Clubhouse. Our annual Golden Boot tournament for U16s was successfully delivered with many thanks to Harry Adams and his army of volunteers that delivered this great event. A huge round of applause for the **U11s** (squad, coaches/admins and parents) who have delivered two hugely successful sell-out events already this season. There is always room for more Youth and Kids First players and more age-related events, so please be an advocate for the Club to others that you think may be interested.

Off the Pitch

We continue to make great headway in terms of improving club life and the standard of hospitality at the Club, while putting the Club's finances on a surer footing. Key operating improvements so far this season include:

- secured a new primary club sponsor, GB Global, for the next five years (more below)
- implemented a new brewery partnership with Shepherd Neame
- made improvements to the kitchen, with new storage units and a new dishwasher
- completed some much needed upgrading of the Club's plumbing
- installed new awnings from Art Blinds in Hadleigh (huge thanks to Shepherd Neame for sponsoring these). Please note Art Blinds are offering a 10% discount to club members if of interest.

In terms of events at the Club, we have seen many highlights, including having the Mayor of Brentwood opening our first senior home match, a cracking Gibbo Cup day enjoyed by many, some wonderful age group functions, opening of our Club Shop, and our first Christmas Market. In particular, our Presidents Lunches are thriving, with our inaugural Ladies Lunch and our ever-popular Christmas Lunch being our two biggest club lunches ever and immensely successful. Huge thanks to Elliot Shaw for organising and to Vicky Killington and Donna Freeman for their great work in getting the Clubhouse ready for these. We have three more President Lunches due in the New Year so would be great to see as many of you as possible at one or more of these (please contact Elliot for bookings).

Thanks to some great work by Steve Killington, ably supported by Vicky, we have seen an increase in the number and variety of private events successfully hosted at the Club. This is a key source of additional funding for us and we are keen to see these continue throughout the year so please bear us in mind for your next function or special occasion. Please contact Steve in relation to booking enquiries.

Remembering John Cottrell

On a sadder note, you might have seen the note and obituary by Richard King in relation to the recent demise of John Cottrell. John joined BRFC in 1959 and was the Club's President between 1977 and 1981, and President of Essex RFU in 1983/84. He remained a devoted supporter of the Club for the rest of his life and our heartfelt condolences to his wife Barbara and their two sons. It is right that the Club recognises the huge contribution made by John and we will resolve what this should be in due course in consultation with John's family.

Huge thanks to our sponsors, our hospitality staff and our many volunteers

I know that you will all join me to providing a huge thank you to the following groups that are vital to the Club's ongoing operation:

Firstly, our **sponsors** who collectively continue to support the Club and enable us to provide the great rugby experience on and off pitch at BRFC. In particular, I would like to heartily welcome our new primary sponsor, **GB Global**, who have generously agreed to support us for the next five years. GB Global, which is parent to a large group of enterprises including the Uniserve Group which is the UK's number 1 independent Logistics and Global Trade Management provider. GB Global has come on board as we say a fond farewell to **DavLav** who have been one of our core sponsors for the last five years. Also huge thanks to our other ongoing core sponsors, in particular Bill Bassenger at **Kind**

and Simon Fenton at **Fenton Sports** who continue to provide immensely valuable support to the Club alongside our wider pool of sponsors which you can see on our website.

Secondly, a huge shout out to our **bar and kitchen staff** who work hard to provide us all with a high standard of hospitality on match days, special events and other social gatherings.

Lastly and by no means least, the many **volunteers** who continue to provide their time and effort, whether on the pitch as coaches/administrators/medics, or off the pitch in terms of helping out at events or providing key skills to help with building/maintenance work to keep the Club in good order. As a community sports club, we remain hugely reliant on the voluntary efforts of our members and supporters and there is always room for more so please reach out to your age group coaching team or any of the ExCo if you are able to help.

Couple of important points to note

Pitches: at this stage of the season, we need to take good care of our pitches which are a critical enabler of our rugby - both training and matches. Many of you will have noticed the current state of the pitches, particularly Pitch 2 which is our only floodlit pitch for mid-week training during the 'darker' part of the season. To minimise any further detrimental impact on the pitches, we have decided to cease all training on them until the first week of January so please respect this decision. The ExCo is working with the Youth and Kids First coaching teams to ensure that we get a better balance of mid-week training, particularly across Wednesday (too few teams) and Thursday evenings (too many teams), to alleviate some of the impact on the pitches.

Pitch-side behaviour: as I mentioned in my start of season message, we need to ensure that we all play our part in ensuring that the game remains enjoyable for all by maintaining high levels of discipline and respect, whether player or supporter. In particular, it is vital that we all respect the match referees irrespective of whether we agree with decisions or not. The referees in community rugby, many of whom themselves are volunteers, are critical to the sport of rugby union and it is essential that we make them feel welcome and do not alienate them through inappropriate pitch-side behaviour at matches. Please note that the Club has zero tolerance for any form of abuse of referees.

Clubhouse furniture: we need to better look after our clubhouse furniture. Please could parents ensure that, if children come into the Clubhouse in muddy clothing after training or playing, they stay off the clubhouse furniture.

Merry Christmas and here's to a great 2024!

In summary, BRFC has made a great start to the 2023/24 season with many achievements on and off the pitch, so we look forward to the New Year as an opportunity to build further on the this great start. From all of us on the ExCo, please enjoy a restful festive break with friends and family and we look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Terry, Richard, Steve, Vicky, Matt, James, Elliot, Mike, Harry, Alfie, Rhys, Dan and Glenn
Your BRFC Executive Committee