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## Chairman's Address

By Chris Brady

Welcome to the first edition of the new Congleton RUFC newsletter, "The Grizzly".

The Grizzly is now your monthly go-to, letting all members know about what the club's been up to and what's coming next. So, keep an eye out for the next edition.

As we come to the end of the 2021/22 season, and we take stock of what has been at times, a difficult but generally positive few months as we return fully from the prolonged, enforced Covid break, it's good to reflect on the positives and the plans that are being put in place, to ensure that as a club, we continue to move with the times and develop. And The Grizzly will keep you updated on all the above.

Due to Covid, and its implications, for the last couple of years, we have unfortunately not been able to celebrate the end of season with our traditional Dinner Dance and M&J

Awards. However, we are trying our best to get this back up and running, and we have already confirmed an M&J Awards event, which will take place at the club house on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May. Plans are also being drawn up for an end of year event for the senior and social sections of the club. It will not be the usual formal dinner dance event, but we are hoping to get back to that in all its splendour next year. More information will follow on this ASAP and we are also looking at an event to thank the people and companies who have sponsored us and helped us through this tough period.

As I have previously announced, this will be my final year as Chairman. It has honestly been one of the greatest honours of my life to be Chairman at this historic club, and who knows, in a few years' time when the family is older and doesn't want me hanging around all the time, I might well be back. But what we need now is a new person to step into the role and continue the great work that has been done by all areas of the club over the last few years. So, if you have a passion for the club and the willingness to step up and get involved, then please let me or any of the Trustees know.



The First XV in action against Hoylake on gloriously sunny day on 9th April. After a tight first half, Hoylake ran out 16-29 winners. Result aside, it was great to be back on the park pitch in the sunshine - courtesy of the renovated changing rooms.

## Trustees' Update

By Matt Smith

The Trustees' focus for the club over the last couple of years has changed, driven by a lack of relocation opportunities and COVID. Following our planning refusal at Back Lane, and with no viable alternatives in the short / medium term, improving our existing facilities became our priority.

Phases 1 and 2 of the Clubhouse and Changing rooms renovation are now completed, paid for by a combination of fundraising, grants and the club's development reserves. We encourage members to make as much use of the facilities as possible. We have also established a new Trading company which will enable usage of the club for non-members (e.g. to hire for private events like birthdays, club meetings etc.) driving additional revenue into the club. Options and costs for phase 3 are currently being assessed, which will encompass renovating the outside area of the club, including the gents' toilets.

Through securing grants, we have been able to protect the club financially through these difficult times. Whilst we can continue to invest in our facilities, that investment will be wasted if we can't run the club effectively.

Over the last couple of years, we have seen a big drop off in the number of volunteers across all sections of the club. Whilst the recent volunteer evening brought some success, we still have many holes to fill in the M&J, Bar & Facilities and Finance & Admin teams. Volunteers are the lifeblood of any community club; many hands make light work. Please get in touch if



you want to get involved in any capacity and help support your club.

The resplendent refurbished club house, complete with top barman, Chris Gledhill and Chairman Chris Brady (with dodgy barnet). Come on down for a drink sometime soon.

# Senior Rugby Update

By Lee Pickles: Director of Rugby

We are back at the club!

This month has seen a return to playing at the rugby club. Both the 1st XV and 2nd XV have played games using the newly refurbished changing rooms, it was great to get man of the match stood on the chair and drinking again!

Whilst we are nearly at the end of the season Congleton Rugby is moving forward, we have managed

to gain new players to the club over the last 4 weeks and these players have already proven to be great for the club.

We are already building for next season wanting to give a better experience for the senior players. We've managed to obtain some sponsorship to get some new training and off field kit, we have renewed a match ball deal to enable us to play with the best equipment on match days.

If you're wanting to get involved with supporting the club then please get in touch and we can discuss any sponsorship, playing or any admin roles, rugby isn't always about playing we have a role for everyone.

(See below for an exciting opportunity to get more involved with senior rugby at CRUFC).

# Schools / Community Update

By Simon Jones, Mini and Junior Director.

Last term, the schools' focus was in two Biddulph Middle Schools: James Bateman and Woodhouse Academy. This involved Year 5 (Under 10s) to Year 8 (Under 13s) boys & girls receiving a block of coaching, culminating in the Year 7 and 8 Staffordshire Moorlands festival with both schools competing well against 4 other schools from the Leek area. James Bateman have also introduced house rugby into the school, and this was hotly contested the week before the Easter Holidays. Over the past two weeks the club have recruited two new players to the Under 11s from these sessions, boosting the numbers at the club.

The summer term sees a change in focus to primary schools and teacher education. With festivals and teacher training events planned for May and June to increase the awareness of rugby within the local schools. We will also see the first inter school girls' game between Eaton Bank Academy and Congleton High School at year 7 and 8.

The amount of rugby being played in the local schools is on the up and the teachers are very positive to the opportunities that rugby can offer within their schools for the pupils.

Things are getting back to normal, and the schools are open to new opportunities.

## The 200 Club Draw

*The draw took place on 18 Mar 2022.*

### JANUARY

£50..... Congleton Cycling Club  
£50..... R Hassell  
£25..... M Smith  
£25..... A Franklin

### FEBRUARY

£50..... K Marsh  
£50..... S Greeney  
£25..... S Kirkham  
£25..... S Ridgway

### MARCH

£50..... N Cooke  
£50..... J Hamilton  
£25..... R Burkard  
£25..... M Somers

Want to be in with the chance of winning? Join the 200 Club by contacting: Mike Davies ([Treasurer@congletonrufc.co.uk](mailto:Treasurer@congletonrufc.co.uk))



## Tell us what you think

This is your newsletter. We want to hear from you with ideas of how we can make it better. Send your feedback to [companysecretary@congletonrufc.co.uk](mailto:companysecretary@congletonrufc.co.uk)



## Job Offer: 1<sup>st</sup> XV Team Manager

The first XV are looking to recruit a first team manager. The role would suit someone who is available Saturday afternoon in the main.

Job spec:

- Set up changing rooms for match days. Playing kit hung up ready, water bottles, match balls and warm up kit ready to play.
- Organise kit for away days to be transported to away locations.
- Organise the setting up of the pitch on match days.
- Warm up kit to be easily ready for the players

- Organise the collection of the equipment post game.

The person will also be able to get involved more if they wish; this could be in the match day coaching and mid-week training depending on experience and willingness to learn.

This could suit someone who is unable to play anymore but still wants to have the interaction and social aspect of rugby in their lives.

Interested? Email Lee at [directorofrugby@congletonrufc.co.uk](mailto:directorofrugby@congletonrufc.co.uk)



Vets on Tour: or lock up your zimmer frames

By Jez Lea



Essential pre-match warm up for ageing bones

After a two-year COVID enforced hiatus, Congleton Vets set out again for their end of season tour to our great friends the Southport Shipwrecks, with an expectation of playing two games as Southport had also invited Kenilworth to join the party.

The Vets employed a modern, state-of-the-art preparation regimen by eating their own body weight in oatcakes & sampling the beer kindly donated by Beartown Brewery on the coach on the way to the game.

On arrival, we were informed that we had been drawn to play after the first game between Southport and Kenilworth, so we retired to the bar. Congleton usually enjoy a close game with Southport and the first feelings of trepidation at seeing the Southport pack being shunted backwards on rails. With Mr. Steven Whitaker telling us that this was good as Kenilworth would be tired, we took to the field.

Undaunted, Congleton stayed on the park to play Southport but suffice to say that whilst this was a closer affair, it wasn't that close.

The next 25 minutes were not exactly vintage Vets, packing down behind Mr. Lincoln Evans guesting as tight-head, the author was surprised to find that Mr. Evans had departed from the scrummage early and Congleton found the same rails as Southport, the rest of the game was not close fought as Vets 10, Mr. Ridgeway launched excellent restarts to the biggest back row player he could find and then invited said player to take a 30m run-up.

After the game we were dismayed to find out that Kenilworth 10 (ex-Swansea) and 12 (ex-Wales U20) may have played the game to a higher level, prompting inquiries as to whether this was permitted against the



Congleton “legends” Vets.

Still got it (albeit only when breathing in) Having declined to play any sort of rugby, Congleton repaired to the bar where I can happily report we recorded our first victories of the day by winning both eating and drinking contests. Coarse rugby at its finest.

An impromptu court session followed where Mr. Evans was prosecuted & answered for his long, long list of charges. His prison uniform was considered highly appropriate.

Following a night on the town, where aches, pains and joint compression were anaesthetised, the Vets regrouped at the Southport Wetherspoons for the more traditional Court session where the weekend’s misdemeanours were highlighted, discussed (not) and punished, including Mr. Vandersteen’s desertion in the face of the enemy to....referee!

It should be noted that Mr. Procter did not even make it to the outskirts of Southport before requesting the first pitstop.

An excellent weekend was enjoyed by all. Roll on next season and games against more suitable (less athletic) opponents)!!



Editor’s note: the pictures provided are the sanitised version, for this is a family-oriented publication. I’m sure Mr. Lea can provide the fully uncensored snaps for a fee (most likely a pint or multiples thereof).

Meet the Sponsors: Cockbain & Associates Wealth Management

For the 2021/22 season, the CRUFC First XV match balls have been generously sponsored by Cockbain & Associates Wealth Management. A managing Partner Practice of St. James' Place, Cockbain and Associates are a trusted and well-established wealth management office based in Merseyside, specialising in tax planning, retirement planning, investment planning and more. We provide a wide range of services whether you are looking to build, grow, protect or preserve your wealth.

They are available to help for any and all financial matters. Get in touch to discuss your financial needs in confidence with trusted, expert advisors:  
Website: <https://www.cockbainassociates.co.uk/> Telephone: 01704 32 0385.



Call for Sponsors for 2022/23 season

We would be interested in hearing from any person or organisation who is interested in sponsoring any section/part of the Club – even the Club house. Please get in touch with Chris Brady for more details: [Chairman@congletonruffc.co.uk](mailto:Chairman@congletonruffc.co.uk)