



Fordingbridge RFC

5 year development plan 2019-24



September 2019

Introduction and welcome

Welcome to Fordingbridge Rugby Club. This plan sets out our aims and objectives for the coming five years.

We are an ambitious, energetic and friendly club, rooted in our community. We have a diverse membership across all ages and teams, and we look forward to seeing what our future holds.

As we head into the 2019/20 season, and in particular in Rugby World Cup year, the club is in good health. We will seek to grow our membership, maintain a healthy financial position, provide a great club for members and supporters, and above all, play some great rugby!

We hope that you will be a part of it with us.

Tim Willcocks
Chairman



Fordingbridge RFC is an England Rugby Accredited club built on firm rugby values with the community at the heart of everything they do. The club is run by a dedicated group of friendly and hardworking volunteers that provide rugby from under 6 through to adults and catering for the needs of all. If you are new to the community and looking to play rugby, I can guarantee a friendly and warm welcome will be waiting.

Ivan Torpey
England Rugby Development Officer



Our heritage (with thanks to John Mouland)

It all began in the autumn of 1983 when Tony O'Connell and his family had moved into the Load of Hay (now the Augustus John) Public House and over a pint one night with the local vet, Brian Fuller, it occurred to them that it would be a good idea to start a Saturday Rugby club in Fordingbridge.....

Brian and Tony, along with John Mouland canvassed opinion and inserted an advert in the local press and invited interested locals to a meeting at the Albany Hotel. It was at this meeting that the Fordingbridge Rugby Football Club was launched.

Our first fixture in November 1983 was against "Old Portcastrians" (now East Dorset RFC). We beat all comers until the end of the season! All this period was played in the days before leagues, with just friendlies and cup matches.



Since those early days, the club has experienced the many highs and lows of local club rugby. Success has come over the years in a number of ways, from the first promotion to Hampshire 1 in 1988, a number of league titles for both 1st and 2nd XVs, and regular success at junior festivals.

Our first Fordingbridge player to represent England was James Greenwood at under 18 level in 2002, and last season saw former Mini Lewis Dennett playing for Richmond in the Championship.

The club has gone from strength to strength over the years, with the addition of an occasional Blues/Vets team, the flourishing Junior and Minis section which has produced many of the current senior squad, and in recent years, a Ladies section.

Minis and Junior rugby began in the late 1980s. Mike Noke, Chairman at the time felt that for the club to survive we would need to 'breed' our own players for the future and the best way to do that was to start Mini-rugby. Around twenty boys attended the first session, and with a few restarts and reinventions over the years, today over 200 boys and girls play Minis and Junior rugby at Fordingbridge.



The club celebrated its 35th anniversary last year, and the scene is set for the next thirty five!

Where are we now?

As a rugby club, Fordingbridge are a part of the wider community. We have two Senior Mens' sides, playing in the Hampshire leagues (Premier and Division 3 in 2019/10), a Ladies touch rugby team competing across the county, a Veterans' side competing in the cup and a growing social touch rugby group. At Junior level we have excellent numbers, with teams from u13 through to u17, and our Minis are in rude health, with teams from u4/5 through to u12.

We have close to 500 members, including players, supporters, parents and vice presidents, and an incredible team of over 60 volunteers who help the club to run as efficiently as it does.

Our home is Fordingbridge Recreation Ground, a public space that we also share with the Fordingbridge Turks Football Club and the Whippet racing club. Brownseys Field, our main pitch was acquired in 2010 and is regularly spoken of as one of the finest playing surfaces in the county at our level.

The club is well supported, financially strong, and well run. Our new five year plan is not looking to change any of that. It is a chance for us to consider how we might grow that strength over the coming years.



The next five years

Set out below are our key objectives for the coming five years:

Playing

- Active and positive recruitment and retention of players across all squads. Make the most of Rugby World Cup year, with suitable opportunities to promote the club and attract new playing members



Senior men

- Consolidate our standing in Hampshire Premier for our 1st XV, and challenge for promotion to London 3SW
- A growing link and a smaller gap between our Senior Mens' sides, with the 2nd XV promoted again to Hampshire 2 or even 1
- Play attractive, high quality rugby.
- A qualified coaching team across both teams, with additional fitness and skills/position specific player development
- A full complement of qualified 'medical support' and physiotherapy

Ladies

- Recruit and retain strong numbers growing the Ladies membership
- Give the Ladies team a higher profile and develop further links with other parts of the club, and with sponsors
- Provide training and facilities for ladies of all levels in an environment that allows people to enjoy their sport and social aspects of the game
- Develop further links with other clubs and coaching programmes
- Ensure we have qualified referees for our games



Juniors

- Maintain a full set of Junior teams from u13s throughout to a re-established Colts group with regular fixtures for all teams
- Continue to develop our Junior players, to see at least half of the squad making appearances at senior level by the end of their u18s season
- All age groups to have a Level 2 Head Coach with added input from Senior players for specific skills sessions i.e. kicking, backs defence, scrummaging etc.

Minis

- Maintain a full set of Minis age groups from u5s through to u12s with regular fixtures and festival attendance for all teams (from u7 up)
- Grow and maintain a strong volunteer base with at least two coaches for every age group, alongside first aid and co-ordinator roles
- Set and maintain an annual diary of community engagement (schools, Fordingbridge festival, summer games)
- Establish coach connectivity/communication groups
- Each season to hold an organised “launch day” to enable us to hit the ground running with existing players and have coordinated events to bring new players in
- Ensure that we maintain our full focus on our approach to safeguarding, in line with RFU guidance



Community

- Improve the club brand and reputation within the community and develop our community links and fundraising efforts, in partnership with other like minded community groups
- Create a calendar of events to be held each year across the community, to include (but not limited to): Fordingbridge Festival, pre season family day, schools/Cubs/Brownies introductory sessions
- Consider events not previously attended, including Damerham Festival, Frogham Fair, Cuckoo Fair etc.
- Improve links with junior and secondary schools, the latter to enable a pathway from youth to senior rugby

Club and facilities

- Maintain our excellent playing facilities at Fordingbridge Recreation Ground, and prepare for the future availability of Brownseys Field
- Continue to develop our training facilities, including the provision of additional floodlight capacity
- Work with the Town Council, Sports Club and Football Club to seek to redevelop the pavilion (changing facilities), to provide high quality, inclusive and suitable facilities for all sides
- Develop a plan to improve the club house facilities
- Maintain our strong ties to the Hampshire RFU and the RFU, with positive club accreditation every two years
- Develop and support the social calendar
- Improve club communications and engagement, both within the club and externally
- Consider the transfer of our website and online presence from Pitchero to GMS/FSI

Financial

- Maintain a strong financial position, with a healthy cash reserve
- Break even in 2019/20 and overall across the five years of the plan
- Improve sponsorship and other financial income opportunities – develop and broaden our sponsorship offer and sponsor base
- Maintain attractive player membership subs, whilst maximising income stream
- Seek sponsorship to enable us to enhance our playing kit and equipment, and offer senior player ‘personal accident insurance’
- Maintain, and look to increase our valuable vice president contributions which currently stand at c£7k per year

Membership

- Maintain our strong membership, including players and supporters
- Ensure that we have a robust recruitment and retention plan, in particular around attracting new players to the club
- Continue to develop our volunteer base, filling all positions
- Create a 'Volunteer Recognition' process, considering local/regional/national awards
- Ensure that we have a full cohort of trained coaches, and aim to lift the administration burden from these roles enabling them to coach
- Ensure that succession planning is in place for key roles, in particular senior coaching and Board positions
- Develop our vice president offer and membership, maintaining and then growing our current VP membership of c100. Develop a recruitment plan to seek new VP members from a variety of sources
- Seek to increase the 'offer' to VPs, including lunches, travel, supporters kit and other benefits
- Maintain the popular end of season dinner, ensuring that this breaks even



Fordingbridge RFC

Fordingbridge Recreation Ground
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