

## OLD CATERHAMIAN'S RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



Firstly may I take this opportunity to wish everyone at OCRFC a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

As we enter 2017 we can look forward to some exciting times ahead, along with some difficult challenges and great opportunities for the club to grow and become a valuable asset to the local community.

As you all know the new Sports Pavilion is currently under construction and is still on course to be completed by the start of next season. With the building work have come a number of challenges with parking and pitch availability. However I am pleased to say that we have had very positive feedback from all affected and the measures put in place to handle these issues have worked very well. A big thank you to all of the volunteers that have stepped in to ensure parking has been controlled and pitches effectively utilised.

The Hamberg was completely leveled and drainage installed during the summer, which is great for the future, but left us a pitch short. This led to further issues with senior training sessions in the evenings where floodlights were required. A big thank you must go to the school and John Dodwell, who stepped in to save the day, for supplying and managing the portable lights that were used while our own portable ones were fixed. Thanks must go to Kevin Potter who had our own portable lights fixed and serviced which enabled the senior sides to train under adequate lighting. Unfortunately the main Hamberg lights have now failed and we are still looking into how these will be fixed. The Hamberg itself is progressing well, but after a big set back due to the torrential rain storms at the beginning of the season, we do not expect to play any competitive games on it this season. On that note could I also remind all players and coaches that the whole of the Hamberg area is strictly out of bounds for all activities. No one should be on the surface as it will delay the root growth and the time when we can start using it.

Although suitable arrangements will be made for the continuity of summer activity, the old clubhouse will be demolished after the end of the season, so we have organised a couple of events to say farewell to the old building. Our first big social is the last VP lunch of the season being held on February 11th. I have to say that the support for this event has been overwhelming and I already have over 80 attendees. I am afraid that I have to cap the numbers at 100 (which will still be a squeeze), so if

you have mentioned to me in passing that you would like to attend, it is possible I have forgotten, so please email me directly to book your place. Mike Garland, Paul Woods, Steve Dalgleish, Kevin Potter and Mike Rippingale are organising tables, so contact them directly if you would like to join their tables.

The big social event of the calendar will be the 'Goodbye Clubhouse' and held on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, where we will be saying farewell to the many memories that the old clubhouse and changing rooms hold for many players. There will be a number of games arranged from senior level through to Junior and Minis. There will be food and drink and a big party atmosphere along with an auction of some of the clubs memorabilia that cannot be housed in the new clubhouse. So put the date in your diary and come along and join OCRFC members from the past and present to say a fond farewell to our beloved clubhouse.

As we look forward to the 2017/18 season, not only can we look forward to a new clubhouse and pitch, but also we will have a brand new club strip that will be worn by all teams across the Club. We have appointed a new kit supplier and will have a range of merchandise that will be available to purchase through a club shop and website when created. To change the club strip across the whole club has a large cost attached to it and am pleased to announce that we have secured a main sponsor for next season in Kph Environmental Services.

We've been very lucky to benefit from some truly amazing sponsors over the years. Many are keen to continue donating in a similar vein, and for that we're hugely appreciative. Equally some have indicated there may be packages and facilities available to the club that could be leveraged to even greater benefit, and we're keen to see if these have more wider appeal.

If you think you may wish to be involved in future sponsorship, this is your chance to shape these packages, and we'd love to hear from you and welcome you into the OCRFC sponsorship team. So if you decide to sponsor a team, or a section, please contact myself or one of the committee.

I would like to end this communication on a high, but unfortunately everything is not all roses at the club as we look at the playing sides. However, on a positive note the Junior and Mini section is going from strength to strength and I have nothing but praise for the players, coaches and volunteers. Their commitment to the club is commendable and their enthusiasm is evident every time I walk around the pitches on a Sunday morning. Thanks must go to Paul Davies, Tony Christian and all of the coaches for their leadership and commitment to the sport and club we all love.

These sections are the future of the club and every effort and support should be provided to these sections to ensure we see players progressing through the club to reach the senior sides. One of these transition points is from under 18's to the Academy; currently we have a very young side that has represented the club admirably against older stronger opposition narrowly losing both games over the Xmas period. These are the players we need to encourage over the next few years as

they disappear to Uni so they return and play in the academy games. Thanks to Martin Corbett and Tony for the effort in organising the games and teams.

On a sad note, our senior sides are not faring well, with our 1<sup>st</sup> XV languishing at the bottom of the division and our Ladies side short of players. It is hard to believe sometimes when you see the talented pool of players we have available, that we find ourselves in a position that for the first time in the clubs history we have had to cancel a 1<sup>st</sup> XV league fixture due to lack of players. We have a hard core of committed players that our desperate to train and play on a regular basis, however without that commitment being instilled in the other players we are struggling with player availability, team consistency and spirit. So I would ask all senior players to communicate with your coaches and managers to let them know your availability and encourage each other to get back to enjoying playing rugby.

I have to however thank our 2<sup>nd</sup> XV squad who are doing very well in their league and always prepared to step up to the 1<sup>st</sup> XV when selected.

We are blessed with a number senior coaches that give up their time and are committed to the players, so a big thank you to them and all their efforts.

To end, I would just like to thank my committee for the work they do and look forward to a successful second half of the season and the exciting prospects next season holds.

George

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