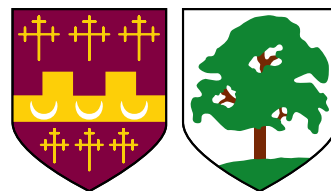




**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

OLNEY R.F.C.



1877

Olney Rugby Football club has been awarded the prestigious Queens Award for Voluntary Service, in an announcement made today (2nd June 2020) by Buckingham Palace.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work done in their own communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate the Golden anniversary of The Queen's coronation. It is the equivalent of an MBE for volunteer groups.

In making the award it was noted - "The work your group does for the community was very much admired by the Independent Assessment Committee, chaired by Sir Martyn Lewis CBE, and I am delighted to inform you that your group has been selected as a recipient for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS) 2020. This represents a tremendous achievement for your organisation and we hope that everyone involved, and particularly your volunteers, will feel immensely proud of it."

Club President, Tom Salsbury, said "Olney Rugby Club is very honoured to receive this award which pays tribute to the hard work and commitment by all our volunteers. We have over 150 volunteers active in the club. That includes coaches, first aiders, BBQ teams, bar teams, committees right through to those people who quietly clear up the patio and empty the bins after each busy weekend. To each and every one of you, I say thank you on behalf of the Club for everything you do. Without you there would be no club. Once the club can reopen and social distancing is no longer a necessity, we will have a get together with as many of our volunteers as possible to celebrate the award and say a big thank you in person"

Representatives of Olney Rugby Club will receive the award from Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher, Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire later in the year - once the club is allowed to resume playing rugby after the current Covid-19 restrictions. Furthermore two volunteers from the Club will attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace in May 2021.

Dan Cooke, Chair of the Mini & Junior Section, said "It is the rugby players of all ages at Olney Rugby Club who benefit from the great work of the volunteers at the Club. Speaking as a coach and a parent, to see so many people willing to give their time to the club and the benefit it provides to the children is fantastic."

Olney RFC is the first rugby club to receive the award, and one of 230 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year. The number of nominations has increased year on year showing that the voluntary sector is thriving and full of innovative ideas to make life better for those around them.

Additional quotes

Duncan Taylor (Saracens and Scotland)

"I'd like to give my congratulations to all the volunteers at Olney RFC on receiving this award. Knowing firsthand, from playing many years of youth rugby there, it is the generosity of all who help run the club that make it the great place it is. Well done!"

STRICTLY EMARGOED UNTIL 2nd JUNE 2020

Gail Emms MBE (Olympian, World champion and mum to mini's player Ollie)

"I am so pleased for Olney Rugby club to be given this award. From my own time as a youngster and as a professional in sport, I know how important volunteers are to a club and what a difference their input makes to the players of all ages! To come here, with my own son, on a Sunday morning and see so many people giving their time as coaches, first aiders, bbq & bar staff shows the love they have for this wonderful club. Congratulations to everyone!"

Notes to editors

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Olney RFC, established in 1877, has gone from playing games on meadowland with a hay-filled sprig bag to developing into a large community club with fantastic facilities, awarded Bucks and MK Sports Club of the Year in 2017.

In the early days fixtures were hard to come by and early reports tell of a drawn game with Northampton. Bedford were also regular early visitors to Olney. World War One took a toll on Olney players with 16 losing their lives, including Edgar Mobbs who was at that time Northampton's captain – he had formerly played for Olney and was one of three at the time to play for England.

Olney developed to being a top Junior club and has a history of players selected for the East Midlands and Bucks RFU sides, something we are still proud to boast today. Olney's junior section was established in 1973 and this is a massive success story, winning the National Rugby Award for Youth and Mini section of the year in 2016. Many of the youngsters have transitioned to the senior club or continue to play rugby elsewhere – a number at a higher level (Bedford, Saracens, Coventry, Northampton Saints). Notable among them is the Saracens player and Scottish International Duncan Taylor who came through our ranks.

There are now over 450 boys and girls developing their rugby skills at Olney. Key to their development is the promotion of the core values of Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship. In the mid 90s a ladies team was established which at its height won the National Cup. It is still going strong, and we have seen more junior ladies players progress to the England U20 and England Students sides, including Lucy Attwood who recently made her debut for the England Women's Red Roses side.

The club regularly fields three senior sides, Ladies, Vets and a strong Colts side, and runs one of the premier Sevens tournaments in the area which is part of the England Rugby 7s series.

The Queens Award for Voluntary Service

Information on the QAVS can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/queens-award-for-voluntary-service>

As an awardee, the club's name and citation will be published in a special edition of The London Gazette on 2 June, available to view online

QAVS logo and use guidelines at https://qavs.culture.gov.uk/content_only/logo_guidelines

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Details of previous awardees can be found at <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/all-notices/content/100981>