

Somerset County Rugby Football Union Limited



ANNUAL REPORT
2019 / 20

Somerset County Rugby Football Union Limited

Incorporated with Limited Liability under the Industrial & Provident Societies Act 1965. No. 29084R

County Secretary: Gareth Chew, 20 Fairlands Way, Cheddar, Somerset, BS27 3NN
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20th July 2020

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of Somerset County Rugby Football Union Limited will be held virtually via **Zoom on Wednesday 12th August 2020 at 7.30 p.m.**

Join Zoom Meeting at:-

<https://zoom.us/j/95796718939?pwd=UkpIN3k3MIZndDFvZi8xTW9HNzZiQT09>

Meeting ID: 957 9671 8939

Password: 2ziF5z

Each affiliated club may be represented by a single member of that club, in addition to any Individual Members of the Union and Members of the County Committee.

Due to this being a virtual meeting please could I ask you to confirm your attendance or absence in advance and indicate if you are representing a club or individual member.

To be received via post or email by no later than Friday 7th August 2020.

Gareth Chew
County Secretary

A G E N D A

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. To confirm the Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting, held on Wednesday 24th July 2019 at Gordano RFC a copy of which is appended at the rear of this booklet.
3. To consider any matters arising from these Minutes. Matters must be submitted in writing by post or email in advance and received by the secretary no later than Friday 7th August 2020.
4. To receive the Treasurers report for the year 2019-20. It has been recommended by the SCRFB's Covid 19 Emergency Funding Sub Committee that Club subscriptions for the 2020-21 Season be suspended until the 21-22 Season. Individual membership should remain unchanged at £20 for the 20-21 Season.
5. To receive reports from the following:
 - (a) Secretary (Page 8)
 - (b) Competitions Sub-Committee (Page 10)
 - (c) Discipline Sub-Committee (Page 12)
 - (d) Senior Playing Sub-Committee (Page 14)
 - (e) Age Grade Sub-Committee (Page 14)
 - (f) Club Development Sub-Committee (Page 9)

(g) Safeguarding (Page 18)

(h) SRRS Report (Page 19)

6. To elect the Officers and Committee for 2020-21.

7. To appoint Auditors for the ensuing year.

Representative of the Somerset Clubs on the RFU Council

In accordance with Rule 18 of the Rugby Football Union, the following individual has been duly elected to serve as the RFU Representative for the year 2020-21:

Mr S J Mead

Officers

In accordance with Rule 8.3 of the Somerset County Rugby Football Union Limited, the following nominations have been received and duly found to be in order:

President	Mr S J Mead
Past President	Mr M Hawkes
Secretary	Mr G Chew
Honorary Treasurer	Mr M Wicks

Committee

In accordance with Rule 8.4 of the Somerset County Rugby Football Union Limited, the following nominations have been received and duly found to be in order:

Division A	Mr S J Mead Mr J Wheatley AN Other*
Division B	Mr J Harding Mr B Briffitt
Division C	Mr S Arnold AN Other*
Division D	Mr N Robins Mr N Prescott AN Other*
Division E	Mrs A Bennett Mr H Davies AN Other*

* These vacancies may be filled on appointment by the Committee, at its discretion, under Rule 13.

Referees' Society Representative TBA

The County Committee would like to thank all the clubs and individual members for

their patience and understanding at these very unprecedented times. There will be an opportunity to have a face to face meeting and for clubs and members to ask questions in the future once current Government restrictions allow.

SOMERSET COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LIMITED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	30.6.2020		30.6.2019	
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
Profit/(Loss) on match accounts		-		(232)
Subscriptions		4,079		4,175
Cup and Vase Competitions:				
Gate income	-		3,980	
Less: Allocated to Clubs	-		2,653	
Staging and general costs	758		4,563	
	758		7,216	
		(758)		(3,236)
RFU financial support – 2019/20		109,293		91,760
Leagues sponsorship		-		-
Cup sponsorship		2,833		2,833
Advertising income		100		100
Investment interest		6,827		6,546
Profit/(Loss) on sale of Investments		4,765		-
Disciplinary	1,725		2,220	
Less: Costs	-		(1,162)	
		1,725		1,058
Kit sales		4,364		2,245
Sundry income		1,996		2,691
		135,224		107,940
LESS EXPENDITURE:				
Playing costs:				
Age groups:				
Under 20	900		2,372	
Under 18	5,091		3,507	
Under 12-17	11,662		14,327	
Senior	429		-	
Ladies' and Girls' rugby	3,205		8,339	
Players' insurance	1,920		1,920	
Clubs' support:				
Retention Recruitment/RFU				
linked Coaching etc facilities/Innovations	29,638		45,546	
Covid-19 Grants	61,181		-	
		114,026		76,011
Carried forward	3	21,198		31,929

SOMERSET COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LIMITED
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020
(Continued)

	30.6.2020		30.6.2019	
	£	£	£	£
Brought forward		21,198		31,929
ADMINISTRATION:				
Committee meetings and travelling		3,327		8,418
Printing and stationery:				
General and Webmaster	4,484		2,382	
Year book	1,708		1,723	
Advertising	-		-	
Secretarial salary and expenses		6,192		4,105
Sundries		8,965		8,387
Audit fee		484		964
Donations and subscriptions		2,315		1,780
Insurance		79		399
Bank charges		389		362
Depreciation		243		250
Investment management fees		41		48
Professional fees		120		958
		65		70
		22,220		25,741
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		(1,022)		6,188
(Loss)/Gain on fair value adjustment of investments		(10,700)		1,671
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR BEFORE TAX		(11,722)		7,859
Taxation		-		-
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR AFTER TAX		(11,722)		7,859
NET (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR TAKEN TO GENERAL RESERVE ACCOUNT		(11,722)		7,859

SOMERSET COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LIMITED
MATCH ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A
	£	£	£	£
Expenditure:				
Travel and accommodation	-	-	-	-
Catering and host club costs	-	-	-	-
Kit and other requisites	-	-	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	-	-	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
 Income:				
County Championship Pool 2019/20	-			
Financial support – Sponsorship	-			
	<hr/>			
	-			
	<hr/>			
	<hr/>			
 NET PROFIT/(LOSS)	 - <hr/> <hr/>			

SOMERSET COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LIMITED
BALANCE SHEET
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	Note	30.6.2019		30.6.2018	
		£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS	5				
Tangible assets			230		271
 INVESTMENTS	 6				
Quoted securities			137,024		162,959
 CURRENT ASSETS					
Sundry debtors and prepayments	7			3,005	
Cash at bank/in hand		98,897		55,041	
Stock		3,463		1,925	
		—————		—————	
		104,643		59,971	
		—————		—————	
CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	8	34,187		3,769	
		—————		—————	
 NET CURRENT ASSETS			70,456		56,202
			—————		—————
TOTAL ASSETS					
LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			207,710		219,432
			=====		=====

SOMERSET COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LIMITED
BALANCE SHEET
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020
(Continued)

	30.6.2020		30.6.2019	
	£	£	£	£
CAPITAL AND RESERVES				
Called up Share Capital	9	251		251
General Reserve	12			
Brought forward		209,181	201,322	
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year		(11,722)	7,859	
		197,459	209,181	
 Tour Fund		 10,000		 10,000
		 207,710	 219,432	
		 207,710	 219,432	

County Secretaries Report 2019-20

I would like to start my report by thanking the Officers and members of the County Committee.

What a strange season it's turned out to be. It started off with floods and ended with a worldwide pandemic that looks to have brought communities back together with local rugby clubs at the heart of them, that just highlights the core values of this sport we all love.

Thank you to the NHS and Key workers for keeping the country going, let's hope we can get back to playing Rugby in whatever shape or form the new normal will take.

It's been a rocky road this season which started by taking on the additional task to facilitate Age Grade representative rugby for the County due to the ongoing vacancy of an Age Grade Chair, a tough volunteer role that we have to date found no one either suitable or willing to fill.

There have been lots of people without who's help this would not have been possible but we were determined that the young players of Somerset should not miss out on the opportunity to represent their County, although we may not have got it all right we managed to do this until the Covid 19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown cut the season short.

It highlighted how much work the previous Chair, Jason Wheatley had put into this role and the need to identify and appoint his successor as soon as possible.

If you are interested in getting involved with a volunteer role at County level please get in touch with me and I can pass on more details about the opportunities that are available.

The County currently has the following volunteer vacancies: -

- County Treasurer
- Discipline Secretary
- Age Grade Chair
- Divisional Representatives

One advantage though was that I got to watch our talented young players play some fantastic rugby and demonstrate a real pride and passion to wear the county colours. I hope that all these young players will go on to enjoy a healthy rugby career.

With the season brought to an abrupt finish it led to the end to the Junior and Senior County Cup competitions as well as the Leagues and County Championship.

Despite the early end to the season the RFU devised a system to decide promotion and relegation issues.

Congratulations to the following clubs: -

- Tribute Western Counties West Champions – Wellington
- Tribute Somerset Premier Champions – Burnham on Sea
- Tribute Somerset One Champions – Old Redcliffians 2nd XV
- Tribute Somerset Two North Champions – Nailsea & Backwell 2nds

Tribute Somerset Two South Champions – Morganians
Tribute Somerset Three North Champions – Stothert & Pitt 2nds
Tribute Somerset Three South Champions – Cheddar Valley 2nds
Taunton Titans as Champions in National Two South
Hornets Champions of Tribute South West 1 West

Of our clubs who do not play in Somerset Leagues, Frome gained promotion from Southern Counties South as Runners Up , Avonvale topped DW1N and Bath Saracens, the same in DW3N.

The CB understands that these are financially stressful times and so put together an Emergency Covid 19 Fund Committee. Grant Payments have been made to all voting member clubs during the pandemic with the situation continually monitored with the future so uncertain.

Clubs have also been helped in securing additional Funding through the RFU, Local Authority and Sport England schemes and many have also been able to use the Government Furlough scheme.

With the easing of lockdown, it is important to follow Government Guidelines, the RFU's Return to Play Road Map, RFU Regulations and Safeguarding/Risk Assessment procedures.

Virtual meetings have become the new normal and in this the County are no different, holding meetings via Zoom (other providers are available) These will continue until the guidelines allow us to have safe personal attendance at group meetings.

Thank you to all the club volunteers who are the life blood of your clubs and have been so important to clubs and local communities during the pandemic.

Let us hope we can return to the sport we all love soon but until then I hope you and your families stay safe.

Gareth Chew
County Secretary

Somerset Club Development Report 2019/2020 Season

Club development activity whether it be club facilities development, upkeep of the grounds, recruiting and retaining players and volunteers, supporting coaches in their development through funding support, recognising the valued roles of all the volunteers continues to grow from strength to strength.

This season we have had un-presented times with the lockdown since March which has resulted in a lot of plans that clubs may have had being put on hold with a need to focus on everyone staying healthy and looking at the financial security of the clubs during this time. To this end Somerset CB set up a small committee to manage the COVID funding issues so all the funding streams previously managed by club development came under that banner.

Up until the start of lockdown, this season we had approved an even larger number than before of Recruit and Retain grants and clubs have been very positive with the

feedback as to the effectiveness of this funding to support their initiatives. We offered, again, second applications and the uptake of this was very encouraging before the start of lockdown.

Nat West Rugby force funding applications, for applicable clubs, were strong again this season, NatWest is aimed at supporting hard to reach clubs that perhaps haven't previously or can't access other RFU investments.

The CB continued to fund pitch aeration projects, clubs have registered for a 3 year programme with a sliding scale of funding enabling additional clubs to be involved each year. This has proved, from the LRP survey we completed, to be a key support initiative and the County will continue to support this activity as fully as we are able to. There are a series of webinar sessions aimed at club grounds men taking place and I hope that many of our clubs have taken advantage of the advice that is being given.

Ben Briffitt has overseen the work in recognising volunteers within our clubs and during the season there have been three main initiatives where we have celebrated the work of the volunteers who have been instrumental in supporting grass root rugby in Somerset. Club Secretaries nominated volunteers who were awarded a pair of tickets to the English Roses v France at Exeter in November 2019. We also had plans to award tickets for the Quilter International matches - which we have had to postpone for now - as soon as we can confirm a suitable match we will reach out to all our clubs for nominations. The Mitsubishi Motors awards will go ahead in a virtual format as there was going to be two events - our clubs have nominated a great list of worthy volunteers which made it challenging to choose a shortlist of winners which will be announced soon.

As we hopefully begin to come out of lockdown and clubs reflect on the last few months it would be good to be able to recognise volunteers who have gone above and beyond in helping at clubs or in their wider community so please let us know so that we can recognise their contributions.

My thanks, as always, to the members of the committee for their support, I would also like to thank Gareth Chew for his untiring work in assisting in the communication with the clubs to ensure they are aware of the initiatives.

Alison Bennett Somerset Club Development Chair

Competitions Report 2019/20

The fourth consecutive season in which the County's three senior knockout competitions were once again generously sponsored by Webb Ellis proved to be subject to the twin obstacles of the weather and the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in none of them being able to be completed despite everyone's best efforts. We remain immensely grateful to Webb Ellis for their most generous support.

The Competitions Committee would like to thank all those Clubs who entered and we hope they will all do so again next season along with as many other clubs as possible to make these competitions as competitive, enjoyable and valuable as possible for both players, supporters and in financial terms for all clubs concerned.

Sadly, the same fate befell the Somerset RFU Junior Cups which were also unable to be completed because of the early cessation of the season due to the coronavirus situation. Hopefully all clubs will consider participating next season to make these a tremendous success for everyone.

The Tribute League Presentation Evening was obviously also cancelled as the restriction on holding large gatherings and the need for social distancing prevailed so the winners of the various divisions were unable to celebrate with the league sponsors, St Austell Breweries, as would normally be the case. The Committee once again sincerely thank St Austell Breweries for their continuing generous support for the leagues which is invaluable to everyone involved.

Despite the disruption and early cessation of the leagues the RFU devised a system to decide promotion and some relegation issues on a fair basis which resulted in the following outcomes involving clubs within the county.

Tribute Western Counties West Champions – Wellington
Tribute Somerset Premier Champions – Burnham on Sea
Tribute Somerset One Champions – Old Redcliffians 2nd XV
Tribute Somerset Two North Champions – Nailsea & Backwell 2nds
Tribute Somerset Two South Champions – Morganians
Tribute Somerset Three North Champions – Stothert & Pitt 2nds
Tribute Somerset Three South Champions – Cheddar Valley 2nds

The league structures for the 2020/21 season have been agreed by the South West Divisional Organising Committee although the fixtures have not yet been published due to the ongoing uncertainty as to when the community game will be able to restart. A copy of the structure of the Somerset leagues can be found on the Somerset RFU website. From this it will be noted that in addition to the above promotions there are promotions for Crewkerne to Somerset Premier, Nailsea and Backwell 2nds to Somerset One and Martock to Somerset Two South to balance numbers evenly and these were decided on the same basis as defined by the RFU. Congratulations to all those clubs for their success.

There has also been a very welcome number of extra sides being put forward by Clubs at Somerset Three level from Nailsea and Backwell, Gordano, Somerton, Crewkerne and Tor with a new Club, Huish Tigers, having been accepted into this level for the first time. Hopefully these sides will be able to provide enjoyable rugby for their participants and will be able to fulfil all their fixtures.

Whilst these structures have been completed for the coming season Clubs will be aware that beyond this the RFU continue to work on revisions to the Adult Male Competitions Structure nationally although the outcome is still uncertain with the debate continuing.

The introduction of Electronic Match Cards at levels 10 & 11 proved to be somewhat traumatic in many cases with the inevitable difficulties of obtaining and recording players details on GMS and operating the results system but my thanks goes to everyone who persevered with the exercise and to the RDO's who gave some great support to clubs in getting on top of this.

We wish Bath Rugby all success for what remains of the 2019/20 season and for the next as well.

Congratulations go to Taunton Titans on their successful season as Champions in National Two South and their promotion to National One which is an outstanding achievement and the County wishes them well next season.

Hornets also ended their campaign as Champions of the Tribute South West 1 West Division to move up to South West Premier division next season so congratulations to them also for their tremendous result.

Frome also gained promotion from Southern Counties South as runners up in that division and is another great effort deserving full credit.

In Dorset & Wilts Avonvale topped the DW1N division and Bath Saracens did the same in DW3N and both are to be congratulated on their efforts.

Two Somerset Clubs represented the County in the RFU Cup competitions with Wellington entering the Intermediate Cup and Bristol Harlequins in the Junior Vase unfortunately no club felt able to enter the Senior Vase.

Bristol Harlequins lost their South west Counties semi-final match 6 – 46 to the eventual national semi-finalists Old Cryptians from Gloucester. Wellington however progressed through their South West Counties semi-final overcoming Barton Hill from Bristol 23 – 14 at home before triumphing in the South West Counties final away to Bideford by 14 – 5 to progress to the South West Divisional Final away to Swindon where they were again victorious in a close match by 17 – 14. Sadly, their journey ended there with the season being suspended and subsequently cancelled with only a home match against London side Old Colfeians between them and a place in the national final.

Somerset County RFU Competitions Committee – Lawrence Davies, Andrew Derry, Steve Mead, Neil Prescott, Nick Robins (acting chair), Andy Shorney

SCRFU Discipline Annual Report 2020

I guess like everyone else, I had no idea the season would come to an abrupt end in March or that currently we have no idea as to when the game will be restarted.

We had 60 cases to deal with. They were for a mixed bag of offences ranging across all levels of our game in Somerset and again it has been interesting to note only a few of these concerned a 1st XV, the rest were all 2nds 3rds and one where the club only have one team; we also had more Ladies cases in the season than over the past 15 years combined.

A summary breakdown:

Adult Cases 53

Age Grade Cases 7

35 cases were for Foul Play offences

14 were for Match Official Abuse /Disrespect

11 were for 2YC

RFU Discipline decided all cases with suspensions running at the shutdown but due to end before the end of the season were regarded as complete; those running over into next season ended on 10th May 2020 and recommence from 5th September. We have only two cases where this will need to be applied.

There are a couple of unwelcome trends which we have to address during the close season, the main one being an increase in the number of cases for disrespect to a match official and/or abuse by players amounting to 23 % of all cases. We continue a zero-tolerance approach to either of these and will come down increasingly hard on offenders, including players, coaches and club officials.

There is a reported upsurge in the number of referees being abused from the touchline by spectators and in conjunction with our GRFU colleagues, we became part of a working party targeted with addressing how this can be eradicated. The idea is to come up with a formulated policy for us to get the message across that this type of behaviour is absolutely unacceptable; no easy solution as we all know.

A number of issues involving Age Grade events, mainly arising from poor behaviour of adult spectators who are not club members, are also on the increase and has led to a rise in references to Safeguarding. It is worth noting it is rarely if at all that the young players are involved.

We had one cited case, a first for Somerset, for Racial Abuse, which was dealt with and a hefty suspension given to the guilty party. This gives us a base to work from and we take an absolute zero tolerance stance on proven cases. Racism has no part in our game.

As for many seasons now, clubs dealt with cases in the correct manner and with our guidance, so we were able to deal with most cases on a papers basis and endorse decisions and sanctions on each one so far. My particular thanks to those who had cases to deal with right up to the point the game was suspended. It means we have no carrying over of cases.

My thanks as always to the Discipline Panel for their help and support, also Larry Davies and Fred Stapleton for their help, who both kept me from being idle for many years! I also want to thank Tracey for her involvement where there have been Safeguarding issues.

As many know, I have completed 15 seasons in this role and on a rough count dealt with about 1500 cases. I am standing down as soon as a replacement can be found so if anyone reading this might be interested, please let either Gareth or myself know. I am happy to go through the role needs at any time.

I hope we all come through the present situation safely and well with a return to normality soon.

Steve Mead
SCRFU Discipline Secretary

Somerset RFU Senior Playing Report

Firstly, I would like to say how honored I 'am to be in post but not the season I could have ever imagined.

U20's Men XV

The squad trained but due to the weather then Covid they never had the chance to take to the field. A big thanks to all the guys in the squad for their commitment and attitude to being part of the county setup.

The guys were coached by Roy Davies and Luke Payne.

Senior Women's XV

The squad didn't get started due to Covid, Luke Payne was reappointed as Head Coach and Jake Ellis assisting.

Senior Men's XV

Another victim of Covid saw the County Championship cancelled, while we were in the planning stage. The county has appointed a new coaching team of Dan Cox Head Coach with Jack Gadd and Harvey Skelton assisting.

Lastly, I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to Jason Wheatley and Kevin Innals who stepped away from their coaching roles for this season, for all their work and commitment to the county and the development of Somerset rugby players.

Steve Arnold

2019-20 CB Age Grade Representative Rugby Annual Report

With the County still looking to appoint an Age Grade Chair for this role I found myself with the task.

On behalf of the County and myself, I would like to thank the coaches and Managers of the Bath and Bristol Academies, all the Age Grade Group Managers and Coaches, Physio/First Aid support staff, Somerset Safeguarding and RugsySAFE team and those Clubs and Schools who provided their facilities for training and/or matches.

Without their support and hard work, this programme would have been impossible this season.

Under 17s & 18s Boys

U18's, With the lack of an Age Grade Chair this season, County representative rugby very nearly didn't even get off the ground.

Unable to find a venue, coaches and someone to organise everything I found myself with the daunting task. Unfortunately, it was too late for the trials and these were sadly cancelled at the last minute.

Thankfully last years u18's coaching team of Roz and partner Jervis agreed to step in at the last minute.

32 boys played in the SW trials over the 2 weekends at Hornet's RFC.

1 Somerset player, Tom Burge, was invited to attend the South West u18 Divisional Trials.

With Roz and Jervis onboard, it was decided to work on a development squad looking towards u18's next season. Over 80 players attended trials at Cheddar RFC to which 42 were selected and given the opportunity to represent Somerset against Dorset & Wilts and Gloucestershire.

Sadly, the final game scheduled against Cornwall became victim to the Coronavirus pandemic that cut the season short.

CB U15's & U16s Boys

Continued support from Bristol and Bath academies with training facilities and coaches has provided a positive learning environment for players to experience and enhance their development. Over 140+ players have represented the County (East & West) at these age groups against Bristol Schools, Dorset & Wilts, Cornwall and Devon.

CB U15's & U18's Girls

Girl's rugby has continued to flourish within the County. A record number of players attended the open training/development assessment days. RFU player pathway restructuring saw the continuation of three Festival days offering a choice of two out of three playing formats, XV a side, 7s or X Rugby 7s.

18's

72 players attended the trials at Downside School, 40 were selected to which 32 played for Somerset due to availability, Injury and the shortening of the season.

Fifteen U18s players were to be shortlisted for the RFU Centre of Excellence programme once the pandemic restrictions are lifted.

15's

80 players attended the trials at Downside School, 40 were then selected for the festivals at Gloucestershire and Cornwall. Sadly, our home festival was a victim of the virus.

Gareth Chew
County Secretary

RFU Local Delivery Team 2019/20 Report

Key Objective 1 - Support club coaches to deliver safe, progressive, player centred sessions across all team's/age groups

27 senior team coaches from clubs across Somerset are engaged in a communities of practise, regularly engaging with one another online and in person throughout the season to share best practise, discuss pertinent issues and potential solutions within the senior team community game. The group are signposted to applicable local and regional CPD opportunities with the majority attending Danny Newcombe's 'constraints led coaching' in Bristol in December and participating in an online Coach Logic seminar on 'players driving video analysis' delivered by Premiership Rugby. It has been fantastic to see so many experienced and new senior team coaches

engaged, sharing their experiences and raising the standard of coaching behaviour and practise across Somerset.

Two members of this communities of practise are Al Simons and Jed Franklin who continue to prepare their applications for their RFU Level 3 coaching award. Both are being supported by the Community Rugby Coaches to continue their development, on and off the field, both through modelling best practise themselves and supportive reviews of Al and Jed's coaching delivery.

The number of clubs organising coaches' evenings, both in and out of season, continues to grow. Minehead, Wellington, Winscombe and Yatton RFC hosted a number of events organised by their Coaching Coordinators to check in with all their coaches, say thank you for their time and efforts and signpost to the next relevant CPD or award course opportunity. These quarterly coach's evenings are a major reason why Somerset clubs having the largest attendance on coaching, refereeing, medical and safeguarding courses throughout the South West.

Thank you to those clubs who have requested additional coaching support from the RFU Community Rugby Coaches throughout the season. It has been fantastic to support Hornets RFC and Bristol Harlequins RFC coaches and players developing their individual and unit scrummaging technique and skills, Frome RFC and Yatton RFC coaches to develop their player's physical literacy for lineout movement and introduce lineout lifting safely, and Bristol Barbarians RFC, Bristol Telephones RFC and Oldfield RFC coaches develop their use of Game Zone and Skill Zone through the principles of play.

Key Objective 2 - Increase clubs understanding, and reward those who, schedule fixtures to meet their players needs away from Saturday 2pm

There is nothing better than when our clubs work collaboratively to grow the game and develop club rugby across the county. At the start of the 2019/20 season Chard RFC, Chew Valley RFC, Hornets RFC and Yatton RFC were looking at running single U17s teams with none or very few U18s players to supplement meaning they could not run dual band U18s teams or enter the league(s). The four clubs pulled together to play in 4 festivals over the season on Friday night under lights, utilising smaller sided formats such as XRugby and 7s, to provide appropriate playing opportunities for their U17s in an effort to retain them in the game. The four clubs organised a number of ad hoc U17s friendly fixtures throughout the season and now look in a strong position to field U18s teams in 2020/21 season.

Congratulations to Gary Saunders, Steve Bomers and the management committee at Somerton RFC who oversaw the growth of their new 2nd XV over the 2019/20 season. Organising numerous friendly fixtures at Saturday lunchtimes and Sunday afternoons over the season has seen a number of new players join the club and several lapsed players re-join the club, enjoying the flexibility of the fixtures offered fitting in with their personal and professional commitments outside of the game.

For the second season in a row Midsomer Norton RFC organised an U18s transition fixture to aid their players transition into senior rugby the following season. In alignment with RFU Regulation 15 and 21, all appropriate U18s players were given

the opportunity to play in a senior team friendly fixture vs opposition abiding by similar principles. The fixture saw 12 U18s experience their first senior team game, supported by senior team players they will likely be playing with in 2020/21 season. A brilliant concept and one we hope other clubs will look to replicate moving forwards.

Tony Warren (Nailsea and Backwell RFC) and Giles White (Combe Down RFC) continue to lead their respective club's development off the pitch by coordinating major floodlight projects. As both clubs continue to grow new teams and expand their playing numbers the need for additional floodlit space has become paramount. Tony and Giles continued efforts should also enable their clubs to facilitate fixtures on a weeknight 'under light', providing their players with additional playing opportunities, additional space to train and give their other pitches the required rest throughout the year.

Key Objective 3 - Improve the culture across Age Grade rugby and the awareness and application of safeguarding within clubs and schools

Our thanks to Rich Berry who kindly gave his time to deliver two additional mental health and resilience sessions at Keynsham RFC and Walcot RFC. Over the last 12 months 72 Somerset coaches have attended Rich Berry's sessions and we hope to enlist Rich's help in running further sessions over the 2020/21 season.

The Club Coaching Coordinators (CCC's) work tirelessly to ensure their respective club coaches are continuously updated with the latest CPD and award course information. The training plans created and maintained by the CCC's in conjunction with the CRCs ensures we can plan and deliver needs led training across the county for our club's volunteer workforce. Before the 2019/20 season was curtailed over 1000 coaches, match officials and first aiders had accessed RFU CPD with an additional 65 attending the England Rugby Coaching and Refereeing Award Courses. We also had 18 new club safeguarding managers attend the In Touch course and more than 300 volunteers attend the Play it Safe course, another record high! Without our CCC's this would simply not be possible and we know from the recent RFU Survey that our players recognise quality coaching and refereeing as one of the main reasons they engage in rugby.

Frome RFC, Keynsham RFC and Yatton RFC organised 'creating a positive learning environment' session aimed at all parents and coaches within their age grade rugby teams with over 180 volunteers attending across the 3 sessions. It is vital we continue to inform, educate and engage the parents of all our clubs age grade players and this session is one way we can do this.

Key Objective 4 - Enhance the recognition and reward given to club volunteers

Thank you to the 27 Somerset clubs who attended one of the four GMS Curry Nights run hosted by Keynsham RFC, North Pethererton RFC, Tor RFC and Yatton RFC this season. Over the four events we supported our clubs to familiarise themselves with the core and key function of GMS, hopefully improving the efficiency of our club's administration moving forwards. The four evenings also afforded the opportunity to say thank you to our volunteers who work tirelessly 'behind the scenes' each and every week within their clubs.

It is great to see more and more clubs utilising the SRFU Recruit and Retain funding and various Mitsubishi volunteer recognition programmes available to enhance their own volunteer recognition evenings and events. Finding spare time in the manic frantic season is tough but we know the recognition we give our volunteers is key in keeping them engaged in the club.

Key Objective 5 - Continue to support existing clubs to grow the women's and girls' game

The women's and girls game continues to grow at a rapid rate throughout the clubs across Somerset. Bridgwater & Albion RFC, Chew Valley RFC, Clevedon RFC, Crewkerne RFC, Hornets RFC, North Petherton RFC, Winscombe RFC and Yeovil RFC all organised recruitment events throughout the season to attract new female players to their clubs. Bridgwater & Albion RFC's 'bring a friend' was a huge success early in the season with 30 new players engaging in the game, as a direct result 3 current female players have also started coaching and have booked on a scheduled England Rugby Coaching Award. North Petherton RFC held a series of open training sessions recruiting 4 new women to their team who played their first league game in the second half of the 2019/20 season.

Chew Valley RFC new girls section continue to grow, both on and off the field, with 11 new players joining the club as a direct result of the local school's engagement across the second school term supplementing their U13s and U15s playing numbers. The club will play their first U15s and U18s fixtures in 2020/21 season. Yeovil RFC continue to enhance the links with their local secondary schools with curriculum girl's delivery culminating in local school's festivals hosted at the rugby club with all girls receiving an invite to club training on the immediate following Sunday.

Another excellent example of our clubs working collaboratively is across our North Somerset clubs U15s girl's team's coaches. Gordano RFC, Clevedon RFC, Hornets RFC and Nailsea and Backwell RFC coaches who attended an ERCA last season committed to training together bi-monthly to model best practise, continue their coach development and discuss developing the local girl's game. 39 players and 9 coaches from the 4 clubs attended the sessions and are looking to schedule in dates to continue throughout the 2020/21 season.

Nine clubs (Chew Valley RFC, W-S-M RFC, Hornets RFC, Cheddar RFC, Bridgwater and Albion RFC, North Petherton RFC, Wellington RFC, Chard RFC and Yeovil RFC) were represented at the very first U13s, U15s and U18s girl's fixtures meeting held at North Petherton RFC. The opportunity was taken to remind all on Regulation 15, 21 and the Codes of Practise regarding the frequency and ratio of training: fixtures. The feedback from clubs was extremely positive with requests to organise annually before the Christmas holiday.

SCRFU Safeguarding Annual Report 2019-2020

This has been my first full season as Safeguarding Manager and along with Kat Swain have tried to guide Somerset RFU in following the RFU's ethos that everyone shares the responsibility for safeguarding and creating safe environments in Rugby Union, whether as a parent, coach, spectator or Club official.

We have been able to engage with the majority of Somerset Clubs as well as some from neighbouring counties. We hosted a Safeguarding & Rugbysafe Conference at the start of the season where 21 clubs were represented. We were joined by the RFU Safeguarding and Rugbysafe Managers, a member of the Avon & Somerset exploitation team as well as Jason Luff, one of our RFU Regional Development Managers.

Following the conference, we have worked to ensure that every Club now has a Safeguarding Officer (CSO) and many have an Assistant too. We maintain regular contact with the Clubs via a closed Facebook page where Safeguarding Officers and Rugbysafe Leads share information and ideas on a regular basis.

During the season, the Committee co-opted Zoe Strobe as RugbySafe Lead to enhance the RFU's overarching player safety and wellbeing programme, putting player welfare at the heart of rugby. We have worked closely together as a team and the majority of Clubs now have a volunteer dedicated to this role too.

The Somerset RFU website now has a section dedicated to Safeguarding and offers guidance on regulation and procedures relating to many issues including playing out of age grade, touring, camps, festivals, and tournaments. Our aim is to develop the activities into a streamlined process.

This season, in the absence of an Age Grade Chair, Kat and I have worked with Gareth Chew to enable games and training sessions to take place, liaising with players, coaches and parents to ensure a safe environment.

My thanks to Kat Swain for taking on the role of Assistant CB Safeguarding Manager and sharing the load, to the RFU local delivery team; Matt Bray, Jason Luff and their CRC's and to the Somerset Committee for their support, especially to Gareth Chew, County Secretary for guiding me in the right direction.

Tracey Sweetland
County Safeguarding Manager

SRRS Chairman's report season 2019-2020

I started my refereeing career in 1985 with Hertfordshire. In the last 35 years, I have seen many changes, most of them being in law, safety and the move from the amateur game to the professional game. However, for this season to suddenly end as it did, leaving leagues and cup competitions in limbo was a real shock. But, the health of the nation and the world must be more important than a sport.

Somerset Rugby Referees' Society is the oldest in the world, something that we are very proud of and plan to continue to be. We will carry on adjudicating the game both on and off the field of play when the government and RFU allow the community game to resume.

Although we have been unable to enjoy the game of rugby on the field, we have not been idle and through the use of on-line technology been able to keep in touch with our membership and keep them engaged. The monthly meetings since the lockdown have been both interesting and well attended. At the same time, lots of work has been going on behind the scenes to make sure the society will be ready for the 2020-2021 season whenever that begins.

The Society has continued to develop referees; not only for promotion within Somerset but also promote to the South West Group and National Panel. Congratulations to all who have made progress this season, great and small. Development of referees could not take place without the army of volunteers who stand and watch the referee in all-weather conditions. Thanks to you all and that must also include our illustrious cameraman. Next season will see a slight change in the Society development programme with the squad having a change of emphasis. The mentoring system is also undergoing a radical change with every referee being given a mentor. This is all for the good of the game, so that every official can give their best performance, meaning a better contest and enjoyment for all.

When I moved to Somerset in 2013 and joined the Society, I did not expect to be asked to take on the position of Chairman, having already held that role in Hertfordshire. The experience I gained told me that as volunteers, finding the right person to fill the role is better than pressing someone into it. I believe in planting the seed and letting it germinate. To that end I'm pleased to hand over the 'gavel of office' to Chris Murphy who will drive the Society in a new direction.

As chairman, your role is always made easier when you have an executive who work together and just get on with the tasks they are given. I've been very lucky in having such an executive and I thank each and every one of them for their tireless hard work and support.

In looking back, the Young Match Official programme has been a great success in Somerset.

I believe we have uncovered some real refereeing talent for the future of the Somerset Society and beyond. The Sevens refereeing programme has also taken off alongside the growth of the game. The shorter format may not be to everyone's taste, but our 7s refereeing squad really enjoy the very different challenges of refereeing this variation of the game. Also, it's a unique experience (for them) working in a large team rather than being stuck in the middle on their own as they are most Saturdays. In the South West, SRRS has shown the way with its 7s programme; we have attracted support and officials for our major events from our federation partners of Dorset & Wilts, along with officials from the Devon and Bristol Societies and further afield.

Referee Federations were imposed on Societies and some did not, and perhaps still do not, work particularly well together. The Wessex Federation might have fallen into one of those camps. I am pleased to say that thanks to a common desire shared by the current respective leaderships, Somerset and Dorset & Wiltshire Societies have found a way of working together really well that is showing success. It has produced not only referees but also match reviewers and coaches for the SW Group and beyond, as well as providing broader opportunities through the YMO and 7s programmes.

Finally, I look back at two other changes; Somerset becoming a voting member of the RFU and the change of our Constituency Body from Somerset RFU to the RFRU. However, we have never forgotten that we are Somerset Rugby Referees' Society; we exist to support Somerset Rugby Union in all its forms and we must keep our very close relationship with the County RFU. Development of rugby in Somerset needs us to work together as one team and I'm pleased to say that we are improving in that area too.

In closing may I say that there have been times when members have left the society to pursue other careers and challenges. Of course that is life and I have personally been very sorry to see them leave as some have given me great support. I wish them all well. On the other hand, the Society continues to attract new members of all ages and I'm especially pleased that the vast majority report that we are both welcoming and committed to their development. Of course we always need more officials, so if you have stopped playing, just started but think you'd be a better official than player, or you want to play on a Saturday and referee on a Sunday, we can and will accommodate all comers. Contact a member of the committee, your resident club referee or the man or woman in the middle of your next game.

Finally as I leave the Chair, I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone, from the youngest YMO to the oldest member. The oldest society wouldn't exist without you and it's been my pleasure to have been your Chairman.

**Yours in rugby,
Bruce Marshall.**

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24th July 2019 AT Gordano RFC

Present: Mr Mark Hawkes (President & Meeting Chair), 8 Individual Members and representatives of 15 clubs, there were 14 apologies for absence (11 Members / 3 Clubs).

Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting and 2019 Special General Meeting had been published in the annual report and were adopted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

(Proposed by Larry Davies - Seconded by Simon Charles).

Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

Honorary Treasurer's Report:

1. **Accounts** up to the year-end date of 30th June 2019 have been sent to auditors (Haines Watts of Bristol) and have begun their review. Therefore, not signed off and there will be a separate meeting to conclude on this point in the autumn.

2. **Submission** to meet printer requirements for the AGM was only 3 days after the end of the end of the year.

Accounts submitted to auditors differ very slightly due to very late expenses and invoices received as well as SW sponsorship for 18/19 arriving after year end;

- a. Surplus is £5,937 not £5,651 so £286 more
- b. Gain on FV of investments of £1,671
- c. Resulting in deficit before tax of £7,608

3. A **surplus** of £5.7k, down on 1718

- a. Less money received from RFU (£4.3k) vs 1718
- b. £1.6k less sponsorship, although revised to £800 in those accounts submitted to auditors
- c. The administrative costs are showing a small increase partly due to finally agreeing to increase the expense mileage rate

4. In one way or another the County has financially supported to the tune of £45.3k a total of 41 clubs in Somerset during the season, either through allocation of the RFUs PFR or through its own funds

- a. R&R grants £16k
- b. Coaching course funding £8.8k
- c. Club Development grants £4.5k
- d. Winter all weather training pitches provision £3k
- e. Facilities use by SCRUFU teams or Competition prize money £13k

If you would like to know more about how your club can take advantage of any funding then please speak to Myself, Alison Bennett or any other committee members present.

5. **Senior Men** – played 1 home game resulting in a small loss of £232 vs funding/sponsorship received

6. **Webb Ellis Cup** – 2 finals so far this season, 2 for the men but the Ladies final is yet to be played.

- a. Income up from the gate, £2.2k net from the final
- b. Staging costs down on prior year. 22

7. **Investments** - increase in market value of assets from £161k to £163k reflected in FV profit in accounts sent to auditors

8. **Bank** – showing a healthy liquidity position similar to prior year

Treasure invited questions from the floor, there were no matters arising.

County Secretary's Report was printed in the Annual Report.

Competitions Committee's Reports were printed in the Annual Report.

Disciplinary Secretary's Report was printed in the Annual Report.

Playing Sub Committee's Report was printed in the Annual Report.

Club Development Sub-Committee's Reports were printed in the annual report.

Somerset Referee's Report was printed in the Annual Report.

RFU Local Delivery Team Report was printed in the Annual Report.

all of the above were accepted en bloc without further comment, (proposed by Jack Russell, seconded by Ian Pope).

Elections:

Officers

President	Mr M Hawkes
President Elect	Mr S Mead
Secretary	Mr G Chew
Honorary Treasurer	Mr M Wicks

All of the above were elected en bloc (Proposed by Alison Bennett, Seconded by Neil Prescott)

Committee

Division A	Mr S Mead, Mr J Wheatley & AN Other
Division B	Mr J Harding, Mr B Briffitt
Division C	Mr S Arnold & AN Other*
Division D	N Robins, Mr N Prescott & AN Other*
Division E	Mr H Davies, Mrs A Bennett & AN Other

Somerset Referee's Mr L Davies

All of the above were elected en bloc. (Proposed by Ben Hartley, Seconded by Simon Charles)

Appointment of Auditors

No change to current auditors, there will be no change to Subscriptions for Clubs or Members.

Any Other Business

The County President and meeting Chair invited questions from the floor.

Danielle Bayard (Winscombe) Is there any funding available for portable lighting, Alison Bennett will pick up with her after the meeting to discuss options.

Ben Hartley (Bath Combination) Have been told that funds are available for running a merit table. Andy Shorney advised that this had be the case in previous years with a

token payment of £250 being available to help set up cost. He didn't think that this was still the case but would look into it and reply to Ben outside of the meeting.

Ian Pope (Gordano) asked if there could be a Somerset Cup competition to include 2nd and 3rd teams. John Harding explained that the Cup and Vase competitions had been poorly supported and they require more clubs to take part. Ian Pope mentioned that GRFU have less teams in the leagues but more competition, John Harding explained that clubs put forward a team and it is up to them what team they field. He suggested to put forward a request to the County Competition Committee once it had been formed after the new management Committee have met in mid-August.

The Chair asked the floor if they felt that there was an appetite for that sort of competition that involved 2nd and 3rd teams. There was concern from the floor that there should be caution not to flood the current fixture list.

Simon Charles (Cheddar Valley) What happened to the 2 teams who had requested to join the leagues and Clubs had been asked to vote on. John Harding confirmed that both teams had been unsuccessful.

The County Secretary apologised to the county chair, Steve Mead in his absence. He was not able to attend as the venue did not have disabled access. This had been overlooked when the venue was book to which the secretary apologised to those present and Mr Mead.

The Chair introduced the Counties new Safeguarding Manager, Tracey Sweetland to the meeting. He reminded everyone that the county is always looking for new people to perform roles within the counties committee and they would be very welcome should they be interested. More details can be obtained from the County Secretary.

He added, we appreciate the roles within your clubs are demanding. It would be good to see and encourage new faces. He invited those representatives from the clubs attending to introduce themselves to the Committee and Divisional Rep's after the meeting and ask any questions should they wish.

There being no other business the County President thanked those present for attending, Gordano RFC for their hospitality and closed the meeting at 8.10 p.m.

