



Kent County Rugby Football Union Limited

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Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Kent County Rugby Football Union Ltd will be held at **Weaving Warriors RFC, The Heathers, 271 Bicknor Road, Maidstone Kent ME15 9PS** on **Monday 21st September 2026, 7:00 pm registration for a 7:30 pm start**. The Executive Committee hopes that you will be able to attend.

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. In Memoriam:
 - a. **Russell Bramwell (Snowdon RFC and KSRFUR)**
 - b. **Eric Coombs (former President KCRFU & President, Westcombe Park)**
 - c. **Marc Feeney (Deal & Bettshanger RFC)**
 - d. **Colin Foreman (Sevenoaks RFC)**
 - e. **Alan Gosney (Gillingham Anchorians RFC)**
 - f. **Andy Manston (Sittingbourne RFC)**
 - g. **Alan Marsh (former President & Hon. Secretary, Sidcup RFC)**
 - h. **Paddy McAdam (Dover RFC)**
 - i. **David McClean (Dartfordians RFC)**
 - j. **Graham Murray (Beckenham RFC)**
 - k. **George Nelson (Medway RFC)**
 - l. **John Pemble (former President of both Tonbridge RFC & Tonbridge Juddians RFC).**
 - m. **Dave Phillips (Dartfordians RFC)**
 - n. **Bruce Purgavie (KCRFU member & Croydon RFC)**
 - o. **Simon Shaw (Medway RFC)**
 - p. **Don Turner (Folkestone RFC)**
 - q. **Tony Thatcher (Gravesend RFC and KSRFUR)**
 - r. **Jim Walters (Sheppey RFC)**
 - s. **Colin Whitely (Thanet Wanderers RFC)**
3. Approval of Minutes of the last AGM, held on 29th September 2025 (attached, below – **Annex A**)
4. Financial report and presentation of 2025-26 accounts.
5. Address of the President, who will propose the adoption of the Annual Report, 2025-26.
6. Questions to the Executive Committee.
7. Amendment to KCRFU Rules.
 - a. To reconcile Rule 22.3 with s.103 of the Cooperative and Community Society Benefits Act 2014. See paper, circulated with this Calling Notice / Agenda.

8. Honours.
 - a. Election to Life Vice-President (Taff Gwilliam)
9. Election of Officers for 2026-27.
 - a. President
 - b. Senior Life Vice-President
 - c. Hon. Secretary
 - d. Hon. Treasurer
10. Election of Committee for season 2026-27.
11. Appointment of Auditors.
12. Any other Business.

Should any individual member and or member club wish to propose any items for discussion at the AGM, they are invited to inform the Hon. Secretary (honsec@kent-rugby.org) **by no later than Friday 18th September 2026.**

Nigel Fray
Hon. Secretary & Director of Governance

Kent County RFU Ltd. Annual Report 2025-26

Summary

- **Executive Committee:** The Committee continued normal business, with a continued focus on player recruitment, retention and future leadership, while taking deeper soundings from key areas including Women and Girls, Competition and Schools activity.
- **Recruitment, retention and succession:** New initiatives included Walking Rugby Festivals, a County "Super Vets" side, exploration of a Women's U20 or U23 team, and small grants for Age Grade recruitment and retention. Succession planning remains active, especially around RFU Council Member transition, the Executive and key volunteer roles.
- **Governance review:** The CB reviewed its internal governance arrangements and found them broadly satisfactory, while identifying some operational and reputational risks to address. Recommendations included periodic independent external review and recruiting an Honorary Solicitor for preliminary legal guidance.
- **RFU Councillor's report:** The season included significant work on RFU governance reform, Regional Growth Partnership Boards, T1 Rugby in schools and RFU staffing changes in Kent. Kent opposed RFU governance proposals that it believed would reduce community influence, and further work will continue under Sir Bill Beaumont.
- **Schools and staffing:** Four Schools Rugby Managers coached 7,072 pupils, including 3,669 girls, with plans to expand the programme and strengthen school-club links. RFU staffing changes saw Adam Cottingham move roles succeeded by Tim Holmes, while Mark Finnis (Rural Kent) is joined by Sally Russo as Metropolitan Kent Club Developer.
- **Discipline:** There were 125 adult cases, with Match Official Abuse and sideline behaviour, particularly from coaches and spectators in Age Grade rugby, remaining major concerns. Age Grade cases fell to 31.
- **County Representative Teams:** Senior Men faced a difficult Bill Beaumont Cup campaign after three consecutive national titles, while Senior Women had two narrow Gill Burns Cup defeats and will transition to a new coaching team. Strong performances were reported across U20 Men, U18 and U17 Boys, U18 Girls and U17 Girls, with several players gaining representative recognition.
- **Game Development Committee:** Minis rugby grew strongly, with 365 festival teams and 5,068 registered minis, while youth approvals and playing-up requests increased significantly. The Committee also focused on girls' rugby growth, coaching development, competition structures, refereeing, and the expanded Wooden Spoon/SEND programme.
- **Club Development Committee:** The Committee, now chaired by Graham Withers addressed facilities, safeguarding, D&I, volunteering, wellbeing (incl. mental health) and membership. Volunteers were recognised across the county.
- **Women's and Girls' Rugby:** Recruitment remains strong and the county programmes were successful, but retention at key ages and the widening gap between established and developing teams remain concerns. Planned responses include league and waterfall restructuring, greater use of GMS, and continued support through forums and county programmes.
- **Competitions:** Most clubs engaged well with county knock-out competitions, but availability issues and late withdrawals caused challenges. Finals Day at Canterbury RFC was successful. The structure of competitions is being reviewed, including possible reinstatement of the Kent Cup in 2027.
- **Refereeing:** The season was generally positive for the Society, with increased referee appointments driven by growth in Women's teams, Age Grade leagues, youth festivals and finals, alongside successful joint referee training and recruitment with KCRFU. However, ongoing Age Grade match official abuse, poor fixture information for some competitions, and continued RFU representation issues remained key concerns.

Executive Committee (Roger Clarke)

The KCRFU Executive Committee in 2025-26 comprised: Roger Clarke (Chair); Alan Thompson (President); Nigel Fray (Hon. Secretary and Director of Governance); Ben Ashby (Hon. Treasurer); Jarrod Lawrence (Chair of the Game Development Committee); Graham Withers (Chair of the Club Development Committee and Inclusion and Diversity (I&D) Lead); Amanda Johnston (Women and Girls Chair); Will Disbrey (Youth Lead); Tracy Pettingale (Office Manager and Assistant Treasurer); and Adam Cottingham RFU CB Liaison Manager.

In Depth Sessions: Apart from the normal business of the Executive, the Committee continued to take in-depth soundings from areas across the County's activities, including Women and Girls, Competition, and Schools Managers' activities and plans.

Other New activities and Responsibilities: Graham Withers took over the role of Kent Club Development Chair filling the gap vacated by Kevin Cope; he also took on the role of I&D lead and key link to the RFU on this topic from Nigel Fray who was becoming somewhat overloaded with various roles.

Jarrod Lawrence has enjoyed an active second year in his role as Game Development Chair having taken over from David Clent bringing a range of recruitment and retention projects to fruition with the help of his Committee and the Executive.

Tracy Pettingale has become our Registered Players 'guru' as having now been fully trained on the new 'Tableau software' which enables detailed analysis of our clubs' relative success in recruiting and retaining active players across the Adult and Age Grade game. This will enable us to devise some key Player Strategies in conjunction with our 55 RFU Voting Clubs in Kent and our 11 affiliates. Contact with Clubs on this will come from Tracy, Mark Finnis in Rural Kent, and from Sally Russo, our new Club Developer in the Metropolitan part of the CB. This work will, we believe, help the County towards its target of 20,000 registered players in 26-27.

I am grateful to Adam Cottingham, our RFU CB Liaison Manager who at the end of 2025-26 moved to take responsibility for South Central. Tim Holmes has succeeded Adam.

Plans for setting up a Youth Council for the County are still being explored as Will Dibrey moves on in his graduate studies having chaired the RFU National Youth Council.

Amanda Johnston has represented Women and Girls as we moved through the lead up and legacy of the Womens World Cup. Amanda and her team achieving increased recruitment of Age Grade Girls and an increase in active players in the Women's game.

Finally, the Executive Committee extends its deepest thanks to Taff Gwilliam, our Director of Representative Rugby and our Coach Development lead for all he has done over many seasons. His achievements are many and the 3 successive wins at Twickenham / Allianz for the men in the Bill Beaumont Cup Division 1 has only been equalled once in the Competitions 100-year history by Lancashire. Taff will continue as Coach Developer when he retires from his County Representative role at Christmas.

Sponsors: Our thanks to Shepherd Neame as a Company and Giles Hilton as their representative for their continued support of our Merit Leagues and our Senior Men's representative side. Thanks also to Henderson Rowe who have taken on sponsorship for 3 years of the Boys' U17 and U18 Representative teams. We are keen for Shepherd Neame to be able to meet with Clubs to outline their current offer and more of this as the season gets going when we will write to Chairs.

New Player Recruitment and Retention Initiatives: This year has seen us agree a number of new initiatives. These include:

- Support for Walking Rugby Festivals in Kent one of which was held at the end of the 25-26 season.

- Support for A County Representative 'Super Vets' team of over 55s to keep a range of players in the game but in a gentler manner than the over 35s Vets Club Competition.
- Exploration of setting up a Women's U20 or U23s Team to play other Counties.
- A small grants Scheme of £15k which has allowed Clubs to apply specifically for money to encourage the recruitment and retention of Age grade players.

Succession Planning at Executive Committee Level: Our Strategy Day reviewed the big strides we have made in the past year to ensure all of our key roles are occupied by volunteers of the right motivation and stature.

Jarrold Lawrence is now well established as Game Development Chair, while Graham Withers has made the transition from Women and Girls Chair to the vacant position of Club Development Chair, with Amanda Johnston taking on the role Graham vacated having built a robust Executive Committee for the Women and Girls.

I have now commenced my last year of nine as RFU Council Member - the maximum that Governance rules now allow. If you add the 5 years I served as Chair of London and South-East Rugby World Cup 2015 Lead Up and Legacy Group this means the end of some 14 years of direct involvement in representing the game at Twickenham. If it is the Kent Executive's wish I have agreed to Chair the Committee for one more year up to July 2027, making at a rough estimate some 20 years serving in this position which has been an honour. The Selection process for Kent RFU Council Member will commence immediately after the start of the New Year with potential candidates nominated by their respective clubs and by the County. If there is to be an election - if there is more than one candidate - then this will take place during March 2027. With the County informing the RFU of the successful candidate's name by the beginning of April.

Finally on succession I would like to thank Alan Thompson for his time and support of the Executive during 2025-26 in his role as President of Kent. He and I and others on the Executive would welcome the opportunity to visit your clubs and discuss your objectives and how the County or the RFU might help with these during the season

CB Internal Governance Review (Nigel Fray)

The CB undertook in the first half of 2025-26, a review of its internal governance arrangements to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and if not, what steps must be taken to remedy any shortcomings.

A Review Group was established under the chairmanship of the Hon. Secretary, supported by CB colleagues reflecting the breadth of the CB's playing and non-playing activities, viz:

- Alan Thompson (President of the KCRFU)
- Taff Gwilliam (Director of Representative Rugby)
- Amanda Johnston (Chair, Women's & Girls' Committee)
- Ali Boyd (Player and Volunteer Well-being Officer)
- Tracy Pettingale (CB Administration and Finance Manager)

The Group found that the Kent County RFU's internal governance arrangements are broadly satisfactory, with the CB meeting its obligations under RFU regulations and, as appropriate, government legislation. However, there exist certain areas which, together and if not addressed, have the potential to expose the CB to operational and reputational risk. These are being addressed, including the proposed amendment to the CB's Rules (Rule 22.3 - Register of Members – Use of Personal Data), which is being submitted to the 2026 AGM for approval.

There exist sufficient diversity of thought, skills and experience across the CB's principal Committees, which negates the need to appoint an independent non-executive director(s). However, the need for periodic objective and independent challenge should not be dismissed. The CB should therefore subject itself to an independent external review every 3-5 years.

With much of the CB's work and responsibilities being subject to regulation and legislation, it would be beneficial for the CB to appoint an Honorary Solicitor, to provide, on an *ad hoc* basis, preliminary legal

advice as and when required by the Executive Committee. The CB will be seeking to recruit a suitably qualified individual during 2026-27.

Diversity & Inclusion: (Graham Withers)

Having taken on responsibility in this area earlier this year, I am working with the RFU to get up to speed with the subject (having, unfortunately not being able to attend the annual I&D Conference).

The RFU has previously developed a Toolkit to assist the community game in how we should encourage and support equity when it comes to establishing genuine inclusion and diversity within our game. However, in addition, the RFU has been working on a game-wide inclusion framework for the past two years and this was shared with I&D leads in June.

Background: The RFU is often asked for more resources and support to help CBs with their I&D journeys, which is challenging as there are such varied demographics, areas of interest and resource etc. that they cannot take a one size fits all approach. The Framework has been built with this in mind, as a tool to support CBs wherever they currently are with inclusion, through a series of outcomes and actions under three pillars:

- Leadership & Accountability
- People & Inclusive Culture
- Engagement & Experience

There have been multiple stages of consultation across the game to gather insights and feedback, to understand what support and resources are required before producing a finished document to share.

Using the Framework: There are three levels of the Framework – Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced – however, only Foundation will be launched now, to ensure that actions are delivered sustainably, and reflect the commitment to long term change. The RFU do not want to add work to the volunteer load, so there is no expectation to get through everything in one season, and they appreciate that CBs will be at different stages going into this.

They are piloting guidance notes and resources with a limited number of CBs to support delivery of the outcomes and actions, and once these have been tested and reviewed, will be available to all CBs.

Tackling sexism and misogyny: In July, the RFU announced its strategic partnership with Women in Sport and launched a comprehensive programme of work, aimed at tackling sexism and misogyny at all levels of rugby, throughout the country. This includes research and a game-focussed toolkit, led and developed by Women in Sport, and a rugby union specific anti-sexism and misogyny policy, a first for a major sport in the UK. The research combined survey data and lived experiences to explore how sexism and misogyny are experienced, perceived and understood in rugby environments. Whilst the research focused on volunteers, the findings that underpin this toolkit are applicable and important to everyone involved in rugby.

RFU Councillor's Report (Roger Clarke)

The 2025-26 season was my eighth and penultimate year as the Council Member for Kent. I attended all of the Council meetings except the last of the year which Nigel Fray attended as the Kent alternate.

Positions within the RFU which I held or carried out during the year were as follows:

- Member of the Community Game Board (CGB).
- Chair of the RFU Game Development Sub Committee (responsibility for Coaching, Refereeing and Injury surveillance and prevention).
- Trustee of the Rugby Football Foundation (RFU Charity responsible for the Community Game).
- Member of the Council Services Committee, which supports Council Members.
- Member of the County Championship Review Group.

Volunteer Reward and the RFU Councillor Role: A good year for rewarding County volunteers with Pam Kilmister and Tracy Pettingale joining our President Alan Thompson and our volunteer of the Year at the Red Roses game vs Ireland. In addition, Jarrod Lawrence and Nigel Fray attended the Australia Autumn International to thank them for the huge amount of time they put into volunteering on behalf of Kent.

RFU Governance & Representation Review: The RFU SGM on 24th April 2026 proposed changes to Governance and the role and influence of Clubs, Counties and the Council.

What started as a Council initiative to overhaul current Governance standards in the RFU became an epic exercise taking over 4 years and 3 separate Committees and Chairs. Ultimately, despite the views of the geographical CBs (Counties) a swingeing range of changes were proposed which would have removed the Council's decision-making role in the Community game and removed the voice and influence of the Clubs who are the RFU's shareholders.

Kent submitted two substantive papers to the groups considering this issue but received little acknowledgement. Our Executive was happy to see a range of structural changes being introduced but were not prepared to see all Community influence and decision making removed. A large number of our clubs (39) felt similarly (3 clubs were in favour of the RFU's proposals) and assigned their proxies to me to vote accordingly. As a result - and with the majority of clubs across the country also opposed to the proposals - they were substantially rejected.

Further work on Governance change will now be undertaken under the Chairmanship of the new RFU President, Sir Bill Beaumont. I have been invited to sit on the new Group to represent the views of our County and the Council. The Committee will need to look at what would be acceptable change without undermining the decision made to reject the proposals put to the SGM earlier in the year. We will keep all clubs in touch with this exercise as it progresses.

Regional Growth Partnership Boards (RGBs): A large amount of work has been progressed in 2025-26 to set up 7 RGBs throughout England under Independent Chairs. The role of the Boards is to look at opportunities for greater funding for the Community game through public bodies and major corporate sponsorship and to contribute new ideas on how to recruit new active players and help clubs to hit the target of 50,000 new players into the game in the next 4 years.

These Boards should be up and running by the end of the calendar year and counties will need to liaise closely with them. In Kent we will be part of the London and SE Board which will be chaired by **Nicky Affleck**. She is an experienced and skilled Sports Management and Education Specialist who is CEO of her own Sports Management Company.

T1 Rugby and RFU Schools Manager Activities: The last year has seen the recruitment and deployment of 4 Schools Rugby Managers in key areas of Kent where we can work with the State School system. These areas are predominantly in North and Metropolitan Kent. During the second half of the year substantial contact has been made using T1 Rugby as the introductory tool as we try to spread the playing of rugby wider into Kent Schools. Our Managers and current areas covered are as follows:

- Ricky Adam's focus area Dartford.
- Adam Younis (Sheppey and Sittingbourne).
- Spike Kenny (Greenwich, Lewisham and Southwark).
- Alne Kloppers (Kent, Surrey and Middlesex Schools).

These Managers coached a total of 7,072 pupils during the second half of the year working 2 days a week and there were some 3669 Girls amongst this total.

The objectives for this initiative for the coming year is to employ more Schools Managers and to ensure in time that strong links are made between the Schools they are working in and local clubs in the areas above and in new ones. The onus will be on Kent Clubs to be properly organised to make the most of these links and to build the right sustainable bridges with the Schools. This was sadly not the case in some instances when the RFU All Schools Initiative was introduced or when Kent County carried out Schools Development initiatives.

RFU Staffing in Kent: As we enter the new season, a range of changes have been effected by the RFU as some Development staff move over to provide resourcing for the Regional Growth Board Partnerships. As a result, Adam Cottingham - CB Liaison Manager has moved to South Central within London and SE. We thank him for his 5 years of work with us and welcome Tim Holmes who will pick up some of Adam's role.

Mark Finnis - a huge asset to the County as Club Developer - will continue to work with us but only now with Kent Rural as we welcome Sally Russo- previously based in Essex- to the role of Club Developer for the Metropolitan clubs. Sally brings a wealth of experience and is an ex-England Womens International.

We also have the 4 Schools Liaison Managers and will have more by the end of the coming season.

Summary: There are of course a huge raft of other activities and initiatives going on within the relationship between the County and the RFU. Coaching where we offer TV coaching guidance to all County Coaches, Refereeing, Liaison with Premiership Academies at Saracens and Harlequins, Safeguarding, Discipline, Age Grade Regulations and Competition Regulations and structures. If you have questions or comments to make on anything in this brief report or other issues you wish to raise, I'm happy to come and see you at your club during the week or at a game just let me know.

Discipline (Andy Gent)

The Discipline Committee reports to the Executive Committee, which the Discipline Panels act independently of, and maintains an operational link with the RFU Head of Discipline. Members are trained and accredited by the RFU to deliver and oversee the requirements RFU Regulation 19, on behalf of the CB and all Kent Clubs with teams operating at Regional 1 and below. Three Members form tribunal-style Discipline Panels to hear cases of red cards, citings and misconduct. The progress and outcomes of all discipline cases (Adult and Age Grade) are published, in anonymised form on the KCRFU's website, to provide all Clubs and players with transparency to inform, educate and deter.

This year we have seen several changes to the Committee with the departure of Chair, Huw Gronow, who we thank for his contributions and service. The Committee now comprises Mark Huntley (Chair), Andrew Gent (Discipline Secretary), Jayne Ashdown-Denney (CB Age Grade Discipline Secretary (CBAGDS)), Paul Woodhouse, Tim Cross, Michele Mayhew, Jerry Pickers and Steve Brightman.

We have also welcomed new members and, during the 2026-27 season, will seek to expand membership to a wider Club audience through an 'expression of interest' recruiting process. This initiative being part of a wider emphasis on a partnership approach with Clubs to address disciplinary issues through education, guidance and consultation.

Adult Discipline: Less serious cases, accompanied by an acceptance of the red card or citing are dealt with in an expedited process without an in-person hearing, which allows for sanctioned players to return to playing as soon as practicable once the sanction has been served. More serious cases, denials or repeat offenders, are heard at a full hearing on Zoom as quickly as possible. Only the most complex or egregious cases are heard in person at the Holiday Inn, Wrotham.

In 2025-26, Panels dealt with 125 cases (a marginal increase from 119 last season) including 48 (59) red cards and 9 (10) citings; Reported MOA cases (on and off field) saw a rise to 25 (16), this is not including 5.12 cases arising from sideline behaviour. This remains a significant issue and represents the focus of the Committee's attention and initiatives for the next season. It is noticeable and disappointing that 47 (17) of the 125 Adult cases arose from the Age Grade game. While Regulation 15 breaches accounted for some of these, most arose from sideline behaviour of coaches and spectators. The Committee puts Clubs on notice that a more robust approach will be taken in relation to offending coaches in the forthcoming season.

The most severe individual sanction this season was a one-year ban from Age Grade Rugby administration for a conduct issue, a 9-match ban for MOA and a 14-match ban for a punch. Several

clubs had actual and suspended 1st XV points deductions with 16 points for Reg 15 breaches and 10 points for 5.12 behaviour of its Age Grade players, spectators and coaches.

We will continue to support our referees through the disciplinary process and work with the Kent Society of Referees on initiatives to reduce disciplinary issues, particularly MOA.

Age Grade Discipline: The CBAGDS oversees the U13 to U18 ages at all club and schools in the CB. For the last four years Kent has played an integral role in the development of a national RFU to Age Grade sanctioning arrangements to reflect a more modern approach to education, prevention, and restorative sanctions alongside or in combination with match bans which has now been adopted by all CBs in the country. All Age grade cases that are not contested are dealt with as soon as practicable by Zoom panels Chaired by the CBAGDS with other members of the Club.

The 2025 - 26 season has seen drop in Age Grade cases to 31 (55), 7 (11) of which were from schools. These were predominantly at Colts level (18 cases) for various offences. The headline offences across the age groups were 5.12 MOA or entering the Field of Play (11).

The most serious sanction was 14 games (4 of which were suspended) for a kick to the head and two punching offences. Most cases involved an additional sanction reflecting either technique training, written apologies or Club Community Service.

In summary, the number of Age Grade hearings has significantly reduced from last season. However, the significant increase in adult misbehaviour on Sunday mornings, particularly from coaches, is disappointing and worrying and is now the focus of the Disciplinary Committee's attention.

County Representative Teams (Taff Gwilliam)

Senior Men: Having won three consecutive National Championships, Kent's efforts to retain the Championship this season was severely hampered. Post-season play offs, an extended league programme and other factors meant we could field a side made up of players only from level 5 and 6 clubs against a what was a very strong Cornwall Squad. The first of the double header fixtures of the Division 1 Bill Beaumont Cup saw Cornwall run out 73-14 winners at Camborne RFC. The return at Charlton Park RFC a week later saw Cornwall complete the double with 19-56 victory.

Whilst these results are not exactly flattering on paper, it does not tell the story of the efforts put in both on and off the field to ensure Kent honoured their commitment to the Bill Beaumont Cup but also to the integrity of the County and the competition itself. Coaches Nathan Morris, Sam Evans and Tom White (who all came in at short notice) prepared the team well and on the match days the selected players played with heart and commitment. Nobody's head dropped and everyone involved had a very positive experience. Team manager, Peter Johnson, deserves a special mention and thanks as he acted as Team Manager for both the Senior and the U20s men this season.

The RFU is currently conducting a review of the Men's County Championship, the result of which is expected in the coming weeks. Once the outcome known, the work to identify a new coaching team for the Senior men will take place.

Senior Women: The Senior Women competed in Division 1 of the Gill Burns Cup. Their pool fixtures both ended in narrow defeats. The first against Hampshire at Havant RFC by 19-12 and the second by 8-14 against Surrey at Charlton Park RFC. Both games were very competitive, and Kent had their chances to win them but sadly it was not to be.

Head Coach Peter McCallister has decided to stand down after leading the group for several years. He came to group at a difficult time and leaves it in a much stronger position. He will be succeeded by his assistant, Andy Miller and supported by Bex Goodwin and Fiona Beaumont. Gabby McCallister will continue as Team Manager and Bethany Gayson as the physio.

With substantial growth in the Women's and Girls' game within Kent, next season will see the introduction of a new group to bridge the gap between Junior Girls' and Senior Women's rugby. This will provide a recognisable pathway for the development of players within Kent. A new coach, Mimi

Jupe, who has senior professional experience, will lead the new coaching team. For continuity purposes, Gabby McCallister will act as Team Manager for both the new group and the Senior Women.

Under 20 Men: Kent was drawn against Surrey and Hampshire in the opening pool matches of the Jason Leonard Trophy. We defeated Surrey at Esher RFC 29-31 and Hampshire at Ashford RFC 22-20. Kent went forward as pool winners to take on Hertfordshire in the National Quarter-final at Harpenden RFC. Hertfordshire proved too strong for Kent, running out worthy winners 64-29.

A positive for Kent was that Canterbury Openside Flanker, Issac Divine, was selected to play for an England Counties XV versus the Army. Our congratulations go to him; a just reward for some excellent performances over the last two seasons in the Under 20s. Our thanks also go to the Under 20 Management team of Chaz Spence from Tunbridge Wells RFC, Graham Longstaff from Medway RFC and Mike Melford from Westcombe Park RFC and Physio Caroline Surtees also of Medway RFC.

Under 18 boys: The Under 18 boys continued to be led by Dermott Gillivan supported by Team Manager, Jon Rowlinson, and coaches Terry Papworth, Anthony Parish and Rob Dengate. A solid campaign saw them defeat Essex 40-30 at Shelford RFC, followed by a 64-19 victory over Eastern Counties at Harpenden RFC, and finally, at Dartford Valley RFC losing narrowly to Hampshire 28-35. Special mention must go to 4 young players from Kent who all represented England Under 18s: Zac Jones of Westcombe Park RFC, Tiane Elone of Westcombe Park RFC, Ediz Karrack of Sevenoaks RFC, and Charles Morgan of Aylesford Bulls RFC

Under 17 boys: Kent's Under 17s had an excellent season finishing unbeaten. Led by Coach Dan Webb and his team with Rob Dengate as Team Manager the programme started with sessions at Gravesend Grammar School to finalise the squad.

The fixtures started with the first game against Eastern Counties at Charlton Park RFC, Kent ran out winners 69-17. The second game saw them take on Essex at Thurrock RFC and another convincing win 69-22. The final game at Charlton Park RFC saw Kent fight out a 28-28 draw. A lot of young talent has been unearthed by both the Under 17 and Under 18 Management teams and the future of Kent Representative Rugby is assured. We are extremely grateful to Henderson Rowe, whose support has been invaluable in developing the County's talent pathway and ensuring that the talent in the community game has the opportunity to succeed. As the company states, "At Henderson Rowe, we believe in backing ambition and investing in the future. Supporting Kent County's U17 and U18 teams allows us to contribute to the growth of young athletes who represent teamwork, integrity, and determination – values that resonate with our own."

Under 18 Girls: Adam Vosper and his Management team led a comprehensive development programme for under 18 girls within the County. The emphasis of the programme was to develop both the core skills and game understanding of the girls who came through an early selection process, which ran from September to March and was an outstanding success. Six training sessions and a squad development day with Essex RFU saw the group develop into a formidable squad. Subsequent inter-County matches saw victories over Hampshire 20-10 at Dartfordians RFC and away in Sussex 21-32. A very successful campaign.

Under 17 Girls: The Kent U16 Girls' squad is formed from girls who are in school years 10 and 11, and to further qualify girls need to either play their rugby in Kent or live in Kent. If invited to join, they become part of the England Rugby Women's Player Development Group (PDG) Foundation Programme, which is designed to help support their development as players, and is the first step in the England Rugby women's pathway.

Assessments were held prior to the start of this season, and this process culminated with the selection of a squad of players who received training sessions throughout the season. From these sessions, teams were then selected to play for Kent in festivals against other counties. The girls played Essex away in Dec 25, then Hampshire, away Feb 26. In March, Kent hosted Hertfordshire at Medway. None of the scores were recorded officially as they are not at this level. That said, Kent won 9 of the 12 games played. The group, led by Tony Wood, for this comprehensive programme were:

Lead Coach Tony Wood (Ashford)
Manager, Anna Burns (TJs)

Jeff Anderson (Sidcup)
Steve Powell (Dartford Valley)
Justine McDonnell (Sevenoaks)
Tom Castleton (Dartford Valley)
Lucy Howard (Bromley)
Ollie Jones (Ashford)
Chris Musgrove (Whitstable)
Charlotte Simpson (Dover)

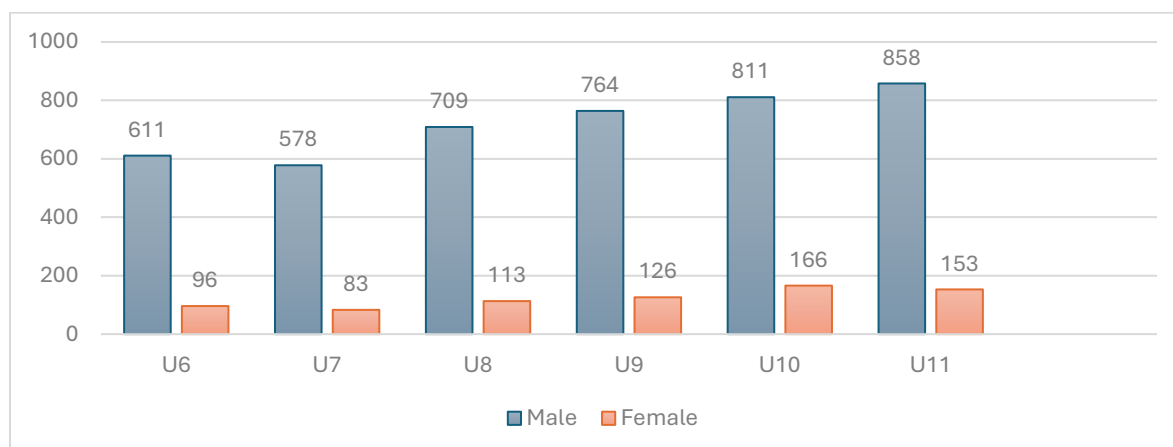
Game Development Committee (Jarrod Lawrence, Chair)

Across the season, the Game Development Committee focused heavily on Minis growth, rising approval workloads, challenges across the girls' game, club–school tensions, coaching development, and increasing operational strain across competitions and refereeing.

Minis Rugby: Minis activity saw sustained expansion. The Minis Festival grew 6.1% year-on-year, rising to 365 teams in 2026. Reflecting the growing scale and complexity of the Minis programme, the CB appointed Jamie Calloway as Minis Vice-Chair, doubling leadership capacity and supporting Dawn Waters's heavy workload.

Registration numbers reached 5,068 minis, with strong and steady increases across age grades. The chart provides a detailed breakdown of registrations by age grade (U6–U12) and by gender and highlights:

- A stable gender pattern, with males forming the majority in every age group
- Notable increases in both male and female numbers from U9 onwards, reflecting strong retention and recruitment at the older mini age bands



A major theme was the shift toward clubs seeking U11 girls to play up, with reviewers needing to ensure that the request to play up was for player-led reasons. However, the committee repeatedly raised concerns about poor-quality applications, which placed a strain on those reviewing the incoming documents, with many containing errors either of an administrative and/or regulatory compliance nature.

Youth Rugby: Youth approvals increased significantly, rising from 302 to 369 total applications year-on-year. Playing-up requests were the largest contributor. There was continued education for clubs completing the forms, with volumes becoming unmanageable.

County competitions concluded successfully, with Tonbridge Juddians continuing a dominant run in the Colts. Structural changes were planned for 2026/27 to improve competitive balance.

School versus club tensions persisted, with hours played becoming a concern and the levels of communication between certain clubs/schools being required to manage player workload.

Women & Girls: The girls' game continued to grow, but showed large disparities in team strength, leading to discussions about splitting waterfall competitions into development and performance tiers. Recruitment challenges, clustering needs, and concerns about poaching were recurring themes. These are all similar themes as seen across the boys' game as clubs built out that particular segment.

U16 and U18 county programmes were strong, with large squads (50+ girls at U16; 35 at U18) and positive feedback. National Cup performances were notable, including Tonbridge Juddians reaching the U16 semi-finals.

Coaching & Representative Rugby: Representative rugby remained healthy. Several coaching changes were underway, including the planned advertisement of the Women's Lead Coach role. A new U20 Girls' programme was being established.

Coach development expanded through CPDs, TV coaching (coordinated by Miles McKinnon), partnerships with Coach Centred, and a proposed intensive programme for selected coaches.

Competitions & Refereeing: Met B and Kent Rural C leagues struggled with player availability, leading to forfeits and structural reviews. Referees saw improved behaviour, but persistent issues in Age Grade games, especially with coaches and spectators, with regards to Match Official Abuse – something that the CB is keeping a close eye on. Ready2Ref course increased referee numbers.

Wooden Spoon / SEND Programme: The programme expanded significantly across Kent SEND schools, with funding increased to £12K to cover current and future spend on this important area of support.

Club Development Committee (Graham Withers, Chair)

I assumed the Chairmanship of the Club Development Committee (CDC) and have quickly sought to get to grips with the remit and role through positive engagement with the existing committee members.

The Committee's membership comprises:

- Nigel Fray (KCRFU Hon Sec & interim Facilities Officer)
- Steve Homewood (Kent Membership)
- Tim Holmes (RFU Club & Volunteer Manager)
- Pamela Kilmister (Volunteer Officer)
- Ali Boyd (Wellbeing Officer)
- Dawn Stanford (Safeguarding Officer)

We continue to have vacancies in both the Facilities and Marketing & Sponsorship roles, and these are currently being covered by the Hon. Secretary and Exec Chair respectively. In addition, I have responsibility for "Inclusion & Diversity" (see separate report, above).

I am endeavouring to "re-engage" with clubs to re-introduce the work of the Club Development Committee and seek opportunities for ongoing discourse and support - and have already used four club visits (for matches involving eight Kent clubs) to do this. Monthly meetings with Mark Finnis, our RFU Club Development Officer, are also proving integral to this work.

Key issues addressed by the CDC: The Committee considered a broad range of issues, including:

- **Facilities:** Having re-introduced it during the 2024-25 season, the CB again made available a "Small Grants" budget of £14,000 (25-26) to support small and major capital projects, such as providing kick-start/seed corn funding for the building of a new clubhouse or improving changing room facilities, and social spaces. Funds may also be awarded to maintain pitches such as for verti-draining or for AGPs and to contribute towards the costs of maintenance and safety recertification - and the CB awarded grants to seven clubs totalling £12,650. As there has been a relatively disappointing take up of the allocated funding in the past two seasons, the Kent Executive has agreed to take a different route with regards to its financial support for clubs and players via more targeted avenues in 2026-27.

- **Marketing & Sponsorship:** The CB is grateful to Shepherd Neame Ltd for its continued sponsorship of the CB; and to Henderson Rowe, which has also broadened its support, moving it to senior representative Men's squad.
- **Safeguarding:** The CB continues to encourage clubs to embed safeguarding as a key plank of their internal governance and culture, and to complete the RFU's annual Safeguarding Audit. Dawn Waters continues to proactively support all Kent clubs in this crucial facet of our game.
- **Volunteering:** Volunteers, who give their dedication and commitment, are essential to the success and sustainability of rugby clubs and their associated activities. The CB and RFU (supported by Switch) proudly recognise volunteers from across our grassroots clubs, who are nominated by their peers for going above and beyond in their activities to support the game; the 2025-26 season was no exception. Celebration evenings of the volunteers recognised were held at Lordswood and Westcombe Park, and we congratulate all those who received awards (details of winners are at **Appendix I**).
- **Wellbeing:** Having previously worked with the charity 'Bravemind' to provide workshops to train club volunteers in Mental Health Awareness, Ali Boyd has now moved to The Niall Stringer Foundation, following Bravemind's decision to place their offering onto a more commercial (expensive!) basis. The new provider's sole purpose as a charity is to provide Mental Health First Aid training to all sports clubs, free of charge. Ali has run the training once for the identified club leads, with the Foundation then offering ongoing training direct to clubs (which will minimise the work to us and allow clubs flexibility to set up times that work for them).
- **Membership:** Steve Homewood successfully oversaw the distribution and sale of International tickets for the Autumn 2025 and Six Nations 2026 matches.

Volunteers are the "life-blood" of our club and county game and it has been a pleasure both working with my new team this season and also starting to get around the county to meet club activists, too.

Coach and Referee Development (Tracy Pettingale)

The Club Match Official Programme (CMOP) has continued to develop this season and now has 39 members from clubs across Kent.

The programme supports club-based referees who may not yet wish to join the Referee Society, providing them with continued development while they referee within their own clubs. Support has included practical training, mentoring and advice on game management, law application, foul play, Match Official Abuse and dealing with challenging match situations.

A dedicated WhatsApp group has continued to provide an active support network, allowing referees to ask questions, discuss incidents and share experiences throughout the season. Participants have also been encouraged to gain experience outside their own clubs where appropriate.

Importantly, CMOP is providing a pathway into Society refereeing. We have seen referees progress from club and Kent Merit League rugby into higher-level appointments, demonstrating how the programme can both strengthen club officiating and identify referees who wish to develop further.

The programme continues to be delivered collaboratively by Kent County RFU and Kent Referees Society, with the aim of improving the support, confidence and retention of referees across the county.

Women's & Girls' Rugby (Amanda Johnston)

Another great season for all ages. There are a significant number of junior players coming through, but we are still losing volume at key ages. Recruitment is strong. Retention is a concern.

The success of Academies in educational establishments is fantastic for the players, but a concern from a club perspective. Clubs are reporting school playing opportunities clashing with County commitments and the players are either injured or being asked to prioritise school events over club league matches – an example being Woking arranging their tour on a County game weekend. County game dates are published a year ahead of time, so such diary clashes can and should be avoided.

Within the leagues and waterfalls, the divide between the stronger and the developing teams is widening. This is happening throughout the age groups. Consideration to split the leagues/waterfalls into an 'established group' and a 'junior warrior group' is planned for next season.

Clubs in clusters are not expanding as much as we would like to see. Successful clubs are, though, blossoming due to highly driven volunteers and advocates for the girls' game, supported by their committees and/or fund injections. However, this also brings the challenges, especially for smaller clubs, of migrating players looking for stronger clubs and rumours of poaching.

- U12 - playing up process has been painful. Relieved to hear of changes for next season.
- U14 - expansion of waterfall dates over additional weekends has been a success. This will also be introduced to the U12.
- U16 - have introduced Non pathway game time (when the County team is training/playing). Players can come along and grab a bib for additional playing opportunities. This has caused confusion as it was seen as a festival, however it has been clarified as 1 match, multiple clubs. More of a pitch up and play.
- U18 - While many clubs continue to face challenges around squad depth, there has been noticeable recruitment activity, and signs of growth are beginning to show. The long-term outlook remains optimistic as clubs work hard to retain and develop players.

We are looking to organise U16 and U18 leagues through GMS next season. Expecting some teething issues, but it will give greater admin exposure.

- County U16 and U18 - the season has been a success with the majority of the girls having progressed well. Kent Girls Rugby is still going strong.

Women: The introduction of the Women's forum has been welcomed. This is an opportunity for clubs to voice their successes and issues. Discussions include impacts of moving within the leagues, successes and struggles with numbers, lending players and giving stronger players more challenging opportunities.

Competitions (Steve Allen)

The majority of teams that entered the County's knock-out competitions have been proactive in responding to emails and ensuring that matches were played with little or no input from me. However, there are still some clubs that prove to be challenging. Unfortunately, these tend to be the same culprits!

Whilst matches are played on a 'play game on or before [date]' basis, most clubs seem to leave it until this date to play their matches. This can then result in walkovers being awarded due to poor availability. A busy league season and weather impacted weekends doesn't help this. I do try to be flexible where possible. I would like to see this improved as it is not right that a team can reach a semi-final or final without playing a game. This is not helped either if a club pulls out in the week immediately leading up to Finals Day, as was the case this year and after the programme (including team lists for each Final) had been printed. As such, the programme was wrong, which may have hindered sales and which in any event we must work better with the host club to ensure as many programmes as possible are sold.

A very well organised Finals Day was hosted by Canterbury RFC, with the club having done a great job in all areas - the catering especially commended. Despite the difficulties described above, all four scheduled Finals were played. I am especially grateful to Aylesford Bulls who quickly jumped at the opportunity to be in a final which they duly won! All four games had great support and the weather was ideal. The standard of rugby was very good with every player embracing the occasion. It only cements that the competition is still well supported and is a great way to end the season.

We are reviewing the structure of the knock-out competitions, including the possibility of reinstating for 2027 the Kent Cup, subject to determining the eligibility criteria for participation and the consequences for the competitions below it, i.e., Shield, Plate, Vase and Salver, and on which I will be consulting our clubs to gauge their thoughts.

The winners and runners-up of all league and cup competitions are at **Appendix II**

Kent Society of RFU Referees (Alan Crane)

The past season was largely positive for the Society in most respects including our interactions with the KCRFU.

Our overall activity level, measured in terms of number of games to which the Society appointed Referees, slightly increased due to the higher number of Women's teams and Age Grade leagues at U16 and U18 – and despite the sad continuation of fixture cancellations from Rural B & C leagues.

The Youth Festivals and Finals events, 7s included, likewise provided increased team participation which we have been delighted to fully cover with Referees, as these events provide an exceptional opportunity for training and development of our newer recruits.

There was thus a direct link with the joint referee training and recruitment programme with the KCRFU which was very successful, yielding a good number of new recruits for the Society but more importantly for Club Referee positions. We are hopeful that some elements of this initiative will be repeated in the coming season together with the reorganised 'Ready2Ref' programme.

We continued our regular engagement with the Disciplinary Chair and/or Secretary, and cooperation is now considerably improved, indeed satisfactory because of this. We feel that there has been a reduction in the number of Match Official Abuse incidents from the Senior game, but sadly the problem at Age Grade games continues, particularly with coaches and spectators. The recent revised advice that Red Cards should be issued to coaches in respect of abuse may help in this regard.

The feedback reports from our members for the Whistler Trophy showed some improved experiences broadly, and we are grateful for the opportunity at the KCRFU's Annual Dinner to present our Award.

The clear negative from the season was of course the continuing hiatus at the RFU in respect of Representation etc. Hopefully the Board may have learned the need to work more positively WITH the Community Game.

On the games/fixtures scene we continue to enjoy tremendous support from and close liaison with Howard Pearl regarding the Rural Leagues. Similarly, the forward notice & advice for most Age Grade, Women's and Girls' competitions and fixtures were provided reliably and in good time – but, accurate and updated information for the U18 Youth Leagues was poor, and for the Senior Men's Cup/Vase etc and the Vets' Competition almost totally absent.

Election of Officers & Committee for Season 2026-27

Executive Committee Membership - Nominations

President	Dr Alan Thompson
Hon. Secretary	Nigel Fray
Hon. Treasurer	Ben Ashby ¹

Committee Leads that were in place in 2025-26

R J H Clarke	Chair of KCRFU and RFU Council Member
N G Fray	Hon. Secretary & Director of Governance
B Ashby	Hon. Treasurer
J Lawrence	Chair, Game Development Committee
G Withers	Chair, Club Development Committee
H Gronow	Chair, Discipline Committee
A Gent	Secretary, Discipline Committee

¹ Ben has indicated that, due to non-Rugby commitments, he must stand down as Hon. Treasurer by end-2026. The Executive will in the meantime seek to identify and appoint his successor, to be co-opted to the Committee subject to formal ratification at next year's AGM.

A Gent / J Ashdown Denney	Chair, Youth Discipline Committee
-	Chair, Adult Competitions Sub-Committee
A J Gwilliam	Director of Representative Rugby
A J Gwilliam	Coaching & Refereeing Development
S K Homewood	Hon. Membership Secretary
D Stanford	Safeguarding Officer
A Johnston	Chair, Women's & Girls' Rugby
A Erskine	Chair, Youth Rugby
D Waters	Chair, Mini Rugby
P Kilmister	Volunteering Development
S K Homewood	International Ticket Secretary
A Boyd	Player & Volunteer Well-being Officer
-	Marketing & Sponsorship
-	Education
P Thompson	Rugby Safe
-	Social Media Manager

Volunteer Awards for 2025-26

RFU/Switch Volunteer Awards for 2025-26

Finalists who have been selected to go forward to the overall finalist selection, to be held at The Allianz Stadium, Twickenham.

Keeping Players In The Game Category: **Ian Sutton – Kent County RFU**

Game For All Category: **Steve Carter – Vigo RFC**

Kent County RFU Volunteer Awards

Kent County RFU President's Award: Presented to a club volunteer whose efforts, more often than not, are unsung, and who makes an all-round significant contribution to the success of a club, either on the pitch and/or off of it.

Winner **Angela Broadhurst, Beccehamian RFC**
Runner-Up **Mark Scott, Cranbrook RFC**

Kent County RFU Spirit of Rugby Award: This award recognises volunteer non-players who make significant contributions to their club or wider community; be it facilitating training opportunities, back-office administration or taking Rugby's core values into external organisations. This volunteer consistently upholds and actively promotes club/county rugby.

Winner **Stephan Breban, Beckenham RFC**
Runner-Up **Del Manning, Dartfordians RFC**

Kent County RFU Mini Rugby Volunteer Award: Presented to a volunteer who has been nominated by their club as making a significant contribution to the mini section of their club.

Winner **Craig Bamford, Ray Grunland, Jennifer Armstrong, Ian Lynam & Katherine Hardcastle, Blackheath FC**
Runner-Up **Daniel Maynard, Old Gravesendians RFC**

Kent County RFU Junior Rugby Volunteer Award: Presented to a volunteer who has been nominated by their club as making a significant contribution to the junior section of their club.

Winner **Aran Sage, Ashford RFC**
Runner-Up **Richard Warren, Medway RFC**

Kent County RFU Senior Rugby Volunteer Award: Presented to a volunteer who has been nominated by their club as making a significant contribution to the male or female senior sections of the club.

Winner **Katie Skelly, Beckenham RFC**
Runner-Up **Liam Trinder, Folkestone RFC**

Kent County RFU Young Persons Volunteer Award (14–24-year-olds): This award will go to a young person (aged 14-24). This person continues to drive the core values of rugby within their community and among their peers, supporting their club or county on or off the pitch.

Winner **Izobelle Jackson, Ashford RFC, Folkestone RFC & Archbishop's School**
Runner-Up **Isla Laing, Folkestone RFC**

Kent County RFU Match Official Award: This award is specific to those who make the game a reality, whether it's running the line on a Sunday morning for a junior game or picking up a pair of boots and

whistle for a Saturday senior game. This Match Official could be a club referee or county society member.

Winner **Alan McGinley, *Beckenham RFC***
Runner-Up **Mike Hodge, *Old Gravesendians RFC***

Kent County RFU Social Inclusion Award: A new award that seeks specifically to recognise those who bring rugby into the heart of our local communities, improving mental and physical health, encouraging equality and diversity, reaching out to those in hard-to-reach or disadvantaged environments, and growing the inclusiveness of our game. This award targets individuals within Kent rugby who make a positive and visible difference at your club and within the local community. Examples may include establishing new partnerships with non-rugby schools, using club resources to support local organisations, engaging with local supportive projects, etc.

Winner **Kirsten Jowett, *Blackheath FC***
Runner-Up **Stacey Sewell, *Gravesend RFC***

Appendix II

Cup and League Competition Winners 2025-26

Shepherd Neame Kent Cup, Kent Shield, Kent Plate, Kent Vase, Kent Salver

Kent Cup – Not contested.

Kent Shield

Winner – Aylesford Bulls 2nd XV (26)

Runner-up – Deal & Betteshanger 2nd XV (22)

Kent Plate

Winner – Dover 2nd XV (23)

Runner-up – Thanet Wanderers 2nd XV (17)

Kent Vase

Winner – Sittingbourne (37)

Runner-up – Cliffe Crusaders (12)

Kent Salver

Winner – King's College Hospital (42)

Runner up – New Ash Green (19)

Men's RFU Leagues

National 1:

Blackheath (2nd position; and won play-off matches against Plymouth Albion and London Scottish, to gain promotion the 'The Champ'), Tonbridge Juddians (8th)

National 2 East:

Canterbury (5th), Westcombe Park (7th), and Sevenoaks (13th – relegated)

London & South-East Regional Leagues

Regional 1 South-East:

Medway (11th – relegated)

Regional 1 South-Central:

Tunbridge Wells (3rd). Old Alleynians (4th)

Regional 2 South-East – Winner:

Regional 2 South-East:

Sidcup (promoted)
Gravesend (3rd), Old Colfeians (5th), Beckenham (8th),
Bromley (9th), Canterbury 2nd XV (10th), Dartfordians (11th)

Counties 1 Kent – Winner:

Counties 1 Kent – Runner-up:

Old Elthamians
Deal & Betteshanger

Counties 2 Kent – Winners:

Counties 2 Kent – Runner-up:

Tonbridge Juddians 2nd XV
Thanet Wanderers

Counties 3 Kent – Winner:

Counties 3 Kent – Runner-up:

Sittingbourne
Tunbridge Wells 2nd XV

Counties 4 Kent – Winner:

Counties 4 Kent – Runner-up:

Sevenoaks 3rd XV
Cliffe Crusaders

Counties 5 Kent – Winner:

Counties 5 Kent – Runners-up:

Blackheath 3rd XV
Sidcup 3rd XV

Men's Shepherd Neame Kent Leagues

Kent Rural A – Winner:

Kent Rural A – Runner-up:

Ash
Thanet Wanderers 2nd XV

Kent Rural B – Winner: Tonbridge Juddians 3rd XV
Kent Rural B – Runner-up: Medway 4th XV

Kent Rural C – Winner: Canterbury 5th XV
Kent Rural C – Runner-up: Dartford Valley 2nd XV

Shepherd Neame Metropolitan Leagues

Kent Metropolitan A – Winner: Westcombe Park 3rd XV
Kent Metropolitan A – Runner-up: Blackheath 4th XV

Kent Metropolitan B – Winner: Footscray
Kent Metropolitan B – Runner-up: Bexley

Shepherd Neame ‘Spitfire Gold’ Veterans’ Competition

Gold Cup Winner:	Sidcup (39)	Runner-up: Cranbrook (12)
Plate - Winner:	Gravesend (19)	Runner-up: Aylesford Bulls (15)
Shield - Winner:	Blackheath (26)	Runner-up: Maidstone (22)
Bowl - Winner:	Thanet wanderers (33)	Runner-up: Tunbridge Wells (24)

Women’s RFU Leagues

Championship South-East 2 – Beckenham Ladies (Winner), Old Alleynians Women (3rd), Dartford Valley Ladies (8th)

National Challenge 1 South-East (South): Canterbury Women (3rd), Medway Women (5th), Aylesford Bulls Ladies (6th)

National Challenge 2 South-East (East): Lordswood Valkyries Ladies (Winner), Folkestone Ladies (2nd)

National Challenge 3 South-East (South-East): Tonbridge Juddians Ladies (Winner), Tunbridge Wells Ladies (2nd)

National Challenge 3 South-East (East): Old Alleynians Women 2nd XV (Winner), Bexley Women (3rd)

Girls’ Rugby

U12 - Bromley, Ashford, Dartford Valley, Medway, Westcombe Park, Dartfordians
U12 Clusters – T. Wells, Gravesend/OGs, Crimson Beccs, Kent Barbarians, Bass

U14 – Ashford, Dartfordians, Medway, Tonbridge Juddians, Old Alleynians

U14 - Clusters - Beccs Valley (Beccehamians and Dartford Valley), East Kent Barbarians (Thanet Wanderers, Deal, Canterbury, and Dover), GAS (Old Gravesendians, Aylesford and Sheppey), BASS (Beckenham & Sidcup Stars), 7Wells (Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells)

U16 – Ashford, Dartfordians, Medway, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells

U16 Clusters – BASS, East Kent Barbarians, COBRA, BeccsValley, GAS, TJs Academy
[Of special note, Dartfordians U16G who won the National Cup Quarter Final.]

Annex A

Kent County Rugby Football Union Limited

Report of the proceedings of the Annual General Meeting held at Blackheath FC on 29th September 2025

The Honorary Secretary of the Kent County RFU, Nigel Fray, opened the meeting and welcomed those present, including County Officers, Life Vice-Presidents, members of the KCRFU's committees, and representatives of clubs.

The following Clubs were represented at the meeting:

Ashford	Canterbury	Maidstone
Askeans	Charlton Park	Nat West
Aylesford Bulls / KCRFU	Dartfordians / KCRFU	Sidcup
Bexley	Gillingham Anchorians / KCRFU	Tonbridge Juddians / KCRFU
Blackheath	Langley Park	Tunbridge Wells / KCRFU
Brockleians	Leigh	Will Disbrey (National Youth Council)

The **Hon. Secretary** noted that apologies for absence had been received from John Averbs, Colin Barber, Stephen Barry, Alan Bentley, Ali Boyd, Peter Hinkins, Steve Homewood, William Hurley, Pamela Kilmister, Trevor Martingell, Linda Neal, Charlie Perkins, Steph Ralph, Graham Smith, Sylvia Taylor, Alan Tender, David Wrench.

In Memorium

He read a list of people associated with Kent County RFU and its member clubs who had passed away during the past year, as listed in the Calling Notice for the meeting and:

- David Gardner** (formerly, Discipline Secretary, KCRFU),
- David Plews** (President, Beckenham RFC) and
- Phil Ubee** (Blackheath FC).

A minute's silence was held in their memory.

Minutes of the last AGM held on 30th September 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on the 30th September 2024 were confirmed as a true record, with no matters arising. The minutes were adopted by consensus and without comment. (*Proposer – Kevin Cope / Seconder – Shaun Neaves (Maidstone RFC).*)

Financial report and presentation of 2024-25 accounts

The **Hon. Treasurer** (Ben Ahsby) delivered a presentation detailing the key points to note from the 2024-25 accounts. In summary:

- Top-line revenue, including investment income, remained largely static at £178,272 (against £182,807 in 2023-24).
 - This is due to reduced RFU funding of £66,729 (down from £70,462 in 2023-24)
 - Kent County RFU's own resources continued to improve
- Outgoings remained in line at £174,962 (against 177,127 in 2023-24)

- There has been a one-off clean-up to the balance sheet of £82,065
- Overall, the balance sheet stands at £800, 511 (against £670,046 in 2023-24)
- Investment income will continue to move materially higher, but the balance sheet will be volatile.

Doug Hursey enquired as to the outlook for the CB's investment portfolio in the light of the prevailing and volatile economic and geopolitical situation. The **Hon. Treasurer** noted that the CB has very little investment in the US. He considered that a devaluation of sterling is likely and that inflation in the UK is likely to remain at elevated levels. His intention is to trade off volatility towards better inflation-linked returns.

The 2024-25 annual accounts of the KCRFU were approved by consensus. (*Proposer – Executive Committee; Seconded – Graham Withers (Tonbridge Wells RFC)*).

Kent County RFU Annual Report 2024-25

The **Hon. Secretary** noted that there is an error in Appendix 2 of the Annual Report: The Kent Shield winner was, in fact, Beccehamian II who beat Thanet Wanderers II (51-46). He apologised to the clubs concerned.

The Annual Report was adopted by consensus and without comment.

Valedictory Address of Kent County RFU President, Doug Hursey

Doug Hursey said that, in his fourth and final year as Kent President, it was again a pleasure to visit as many clubs as possible and enjoy their hospitality, listening to their hopes and worries for the future, and renewing many old friendships from the days of playing against them in club games and as teammates in the Kent Clubs side. It had been an honour and privilege to represent the county that gave me so much in my playing days.

It is impossible not to see the real hardship many clubs are facing with the falling numbers of players; he hoped that the RFU has listened to the views expressed its roadshows, especially the one he attended in February at Dartford Valley, and that action is forthcoming rather than words. He observed that Rugby needs to find its place in an everchanging world with players not prepared to play every Saturday come what may for 9 months of the year as we all did.

The County's representative teams' performances, for both men and women, were of the highest order. The Women's team showed they had stepped up another level and were only 15 mins away from Finals Day at Twickenham. The organisation now in place and the experience gained at that level only bodes well for next year. The U20 team performed well in winning their group but were beaten in the quarter-finals by a gifted Essex side. The Senior men's final at Twickenham was a great occasion, with Kent having won the Bill Beaumont Cup for the third year in succession, the feat having been achieved only once before by Cornwall. The coaching staff led by Taff Gwillam and the players deserve every praise for a great team effort through three tight matches.

He felt that it is not too far-fetched to see Kent with all three teams at the Finals Day at Twickenham. The only caveat to that is the future of County Rugby, as the financial support from the RFU dries up for county sides, and some CB's question whether it is worth being in the competition given the cost to their small budgets.

He ended his remarks, saying that he believes the future of Kent Rugby is in safe hands with an Executive committee of the highest standard and would ask that you all clubs and members support their sterling work.

He congratulated all the County teams that won promotion last season: Tonbridge Juddians, Medway, Bromley, Canterbury 2, Old Elthamians, Gillingham Anchorians, TJ 2's, Beckenham 2, Canterbury 3, O. Williamsonians, Sevenoaks 3 and East Peckham and Paddock Wood.

Finally, he announced that **Dave Phillips** (Dartfordians RFC) was the winner of this season's President's Award.

Questions to The Executive Committee

Shaun Neaves (Maidstone RFC) asked if the CB will agree to further consult with Clubs on limiting the impact that the increasing level of clubs holding National League status entering their Lower sides into the RFU pyramid, is having on junior clubs whose opportunities to gain promotion and retain their better players often developed through club youth structures? Without such action there remains a real prospect of clubs dropping out of the pyramid or ceasing to exist.

Jarrold Lawrence (Chair, Game Development Committee), responding on behalf of the Executive Committee, said that it and the Competitions Committee continue closely to monitor the situation, in consultation with the ROC, noting each week's results to seek to identify those clubs that might be fielding teams with too great a proportion of higher level players above the standard expected at any given league. There is no panacea; however, the CB aims to ensure that matches take place on as fair a basis as possible.

Shaun Neaves noted that Maidstone plays in Counties Kent 2 and that other clubs in that league have also voiced their concerns, in particular, the risk of contracted players of clubs playing at that level.

Keith Silvester (Bexley RFC) asked if the CB still awards grants towards clubs' facilities projects.

The **Hon. Secretary** said that the CB had run its Small Grants Programme this past season, as well as redirecting underspend in the Youth budget for grants towards the cost of Age Grade kit. Both had been publicised to clubs. Key criteria to receive a facilities grant are that applicant clubs must have completed a Facilities Needs Audit and submitted their Regulation 5 (financial monitoring and reporting) returns.

Proposed amendment to Section 14 (Composition of Executive Committee) of the County Rules

The **Hon. Secretary**, presenting the proposal, said that it is borne from the increasing number of clubs from outside of Kent that play in the RFU and CB-run leagues which the CB administers. The Executive Committee is of the opinion that such non-Kent clubs should contribute generally to the overall running costs of the CB to which they have sought and acquired associate membership. In that respect, the Executive does not see why non-Kent clubs should be treated any differently from our own clubs.

He noted that RFU Regulations restrict CBs to levy fees related to discipline only. Despite the restrictive scope, however, a CB is at liberty to include in its Rules (subject to approval by the CB's members at an AGM) a means to facilitate the levying of an associate membership fee to non-CB based clubs. The proposed amendment to the CB's Rule 14, therefore, seeks to codify this by using the 'legitimate' hook of the discipline process as the means to place formally into the CB's Rules to levy a £40 admin fee on such clubs, i.e., in effect, it's the Associate Member annual sub of £40 which all Associate Kent-based members incur. The £40 levy is separate from and seeks not to interfere with the fees that are levied by the Discipline Committee (£50 per case in admitted cases, and £125 in upheld but not admitted cases) on clubs which appear before the Panels.

The proposal was adopted by consensus and without comment. (*Proposer – Executive Committee / Seconder – Kevin Cope (Bexley RFC)*)

Honours

The **Hon. Secretary** noted, in accordance with the criteria agreed for the award of County Honours (as per the review that was presented at the 2022 AGM), there is one person who merits recognition for their achievements within the game and long service to it. The Executive proposes that the award of LVP be given to **Roger Clarke**.

The **Hon. Secretary** said that his service to the County, not least as Chair of the CB's Executive Committee for the past 18 years and his 7 years as the RFU Council Member for Kent, it is surprising that Roger's service to the CB had not already been recognised by him having been awarded this honour.

It is invidious to compare Roger's service to others who are currently LVPs, but his unstinting work as an advocate of Rugby in Kent must be almost without equal in terms of the breadth, depth and range of issues that he has contributed to in the furtherance of the Community Game at every level.

This honour is, the Executive believes, merited in its own right. However, it must also have an eye on succession planning. He noted that, subject to Alan Thompson being elected as President of the CB, in succession to Doug Hursey, the CB would then need a successor for Alan as the CB's Senior LVP, which, the Executive Committee envisages, Roger Clarke will fulfil, so that the Executive will continue to benefit from his experience and wise counsel for the foreseeable future, and pending, hopefully, his election in due course as President.

(Proposer – Executive Committee; Seconded – Jarrod Lawrence (Dartfordians RFC). Carried by consensus.

Election of officers of the County

President – Alan Thompson *(Proposer – Executive Committee; Seconded – Taff Gwilliam (Canterbury RFC). Elected by consensus.*

Hon. Secretary – Nigel Fray. *(Proposer – Jarrod Lawrence (Dartfordians RFC); Seconded – Roger Clarke (Tonbridge Wells RFC). Elected by consensus.*

Hon. Treasurer – Ben *(Proposer – Taff Gwilliam (Canterbury RFC); Seconded – Doug Hursey (Charlton Park RFC). Elected by consensus.*

Election of Executive Committee for season 2025-26

Roger Clarke, Alan Thompson, Ben Ashby, Nigel Fray, Jarrod Lawrence, Graham Withers. *(Proposer – Shaun Neaves (Maidstone RFC), Seconded – Kevin Cope (Bexley RFC). Elected by consensus.*

The **Hon. Secretary** noted that the Chair of the Executive Committee is elected by its members at the beginning of each season. The Executive may also at its discretion co-opt individuals onto the Committee as required to fulfil its remit, strategy and objectives. Hence, it is the Committee's intention to continue to co-opt the Chair of W&G (Amanda Johnston) and Will Disbrey (Chair of the National Youth Council and KCRFU Youth Council).

Appointment of Auditors

The **Hon. Secretary** noted that, as agreed at the 2023 AGM, the Executive proposes still to use the small company exemption and use Goldbond Associates.

This was noted without comment.

(Proposer – Executive Committee; Seconded – Doug Hursey (Charlton Park RFC). The proposal was carried by consensus

AOB

Kevin Cope asked the CB's position with regard to T1 Rugby; would the CB be willing to organise a T1/Walking Rugby festival?

Roger Clarke noted that T1 Rugby is mainly directed at schools. There exist 2 or 3 T1 Managers in Kent, who are working to establish better links between schools (those that actually play Rugby, in whichever format) and clubs for this format of the game. The CB sees T1 as a bridge, which if effective, will enable a better transition for individuals from the non-contact to full contact version of the game. As regards any possible T1 festival, he invited Kevin to make a formal proposal, which the Game Development Committee would consider.

There being no other business, the meeting finished at 8.20pm.