# Rotherfield United Walking Football Club

# Newsletter Edition 12 - Autumn 2026

## *Editorial by Steve Cannan*

Welcome to our 12th edition of the Club Newsletter! The extreme weather over the Summer brought many challenges with events having to be cancelled or rescheduled. With Bishopswood unplayable Martin 'Non Doc' Smith and John Curley did a brilliant job securing alternative venues to ensure we could continue with regular playing sessions.

Our Over 60s and Over 70s league teams continue to excel and it is great to see many newer members in our competition squads adding strength and depth. Ian Massey and Les Upton have provided updates on our current status and our league standings are very pleasing on the eye. Our Over 65s team are finding life much tougher in this extremely competitive age group but performances continue to improve.

Our 'Player Profile' features John Rusby who's heroics in goal have been well documented in WhatsApp chats. The highlight of our social calendar—The Annual Charity Music Night, will soon be upon us and we also unveil initial plans for our Annual Awards Dinner. We held our AGM on 6th October which resulted in some significant developments. There's much to read about….so enjoy! Thanks as always to the many contributors who make this publication possible, particularly the 'Bard Of Tokers Green, Phil Buckley

## *Annual Charity Music Night—Saturday 7th November - The Barn At The Bottle & Glass, Binfield Heath*

The highlight of our social calendar and the focal point of out charity fundraising for the year is nearly upon us! Tickets are still available at a cost of £30 per head and are open to friends and family as well as members and their partners. With a larger venue, better catering, full pay bar, large dancefloor with great live music and disco this promises to be a true night to remember!



A small team headed by Barry Stevenson with Steve Knott and Mark Keogh have been working hard to procure some outstanding auction and raffle prizes. The list of prizes will be published and the silent auction will go live on 26th October when bidding can commence. Raffle tickets will also go on sale on that date. Non attendees will be able to purchase tickets with funds collectable via subs. Attendees can purchase either up front via subs or purchase on the night.

***If you haven't already done so get your tickets now!!!***

## *Annual Awards Dinner*




With our Charity Music Night being 2 weeks later than previous years we have taken the decision to push our Annual Awards Dinner back to **Friday 15th January** in order to put some distance between the two events, and avoid December when we would be competing with other festive commitments. This year we have a change of venue and will be hosted by Spitiko Greek restaurant on Prospect Street in Caversham.

Numbers will be capped so, at this point please 'save the date'! Further information will follow and sign up will be via Spond. Mike Bowker will shortly be sending out details of the Award Categories and the voting process. In the meantime keep an eye out for who's impressed you, both on and off the pitch!

## *The Referee Answers Back - Professor Whistleworth aka Phil Buckley*



### *Penalties*

There are actually very few occasions when a penalty is awarded – unlike 'proper' football. Only goalkeepers are allowed in the penalty area, so none of the 'usual' sanctions applies. According to Law 14, a penalty kick is awarded for the following offences:

- a defending player *deliberately* entering their own penalty area;
- the goalkeeper committing any of the seven sending-off offences within their penalty area (serious foul play; violent conduct; spitting or biting; using offensive, insulting or abusive language; a 2nd blue/yellow card);
- goalkeeper *deliberately* exiting their own penalty area;
- the denial of a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence;
- the denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick (such as not walking or physical contact);
- a fourth team 'not walking' offence.




Denying goals or goal-scoring opportunities will result in a blue or red card (depending on 'persistent offending' or severity of offence).

## *OWFL Over 70s League Update by Ian Massey*

The Over 70's squad continued their good form in the September series of games.

One team, Bicester, had to withdraw so that meant that we had to play 4 games rather than 5.



The team started more hesitantly than usual, allowing Oxford to push us back into our own half and create several chances, most of which John saved. We managed only a few breakaways but held on for a draw.

From the second game onwards we recovered our tempo and were finding Tudor and Jed on a regular basis, even though Tudor was often tightly marked. A 3-0 win over Witney, was followed by 1-0 win against Abingdon and finally 3-0 against Charlbury. Tudor and Mark being our goal scorers.

This squad has been together now for a couple of years and players like Steve Knott, Dickie and Mark provide a solid defence and support Jed and Tudor well. Ray provides solid back up when needed in defence. But most of all we benefit from John R being the best keeper in the League. Its not only his saves but also his vocal instructions and warnings that are crucial to our success.

## Over 70s

| POS | | P | W | D | L | GD | PTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rotherfield United | 10 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 13 | 24 |
| 2 | Oxford United | 10 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 16 |
| 3 | Witney Warriors | 10 | 3 | 5 | 2 | -1 | 14 |
| 4 | Abingdon | 10 | 3 | 4 | 3 | -1 | 13 |
| 5 | Charlbury Town | 10 | 2 | 3 | 5 | -10 | 9 |
| 6 | Bicester Fossils | 10 | 0 | 3 | 7 | -3 | 3 |

League | Table

With one more round of games in October the league table looks very healthy indeed! There will then be a winter break until March 2027

## *Over 60s and Over 65s Leagues by Les Upton*

We are half way through the season, each age group having played fixtures in August September and October of 2026. The remaining fixtures are scheduled for March April and May 2027.From a league standing perspective it looks to be chalk and cheese with the



over 60s top of the league and the over 65s bottom but this is somewhat misleading. Our squads for both these age groups have been drawn from the same pool of players with a lot of over 65 players playing in both over 60 and over 65 fixtures.

The over 60's would not be doing so well without the support of the over 65 players, especially in the early rounds when we were waiting for players to become of age and injuries to be resolved.

Both age groups have found the matches highly competitive with strong opposition in both ages groups and I think the difference between the over 60s and over 65s is largely a matter of balance and availability of some players in key positions.

Hopefully starting in March we can improve the over 65 results and push on to try and win the over 60 league.

### Over 60s

| POS | | P | W | D | L | GD | PTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rotherfield United WF Over 60s | 12 | 10 | 0 | 2 | 10 | 30 |
| 2 | Charlbury Town | 12 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 20 |
| 3 | Oxford United B | 12 | 4 | 4 | 4 | -6 | 16 |
| 4 | Banbury Matureitans | 12 | 3 | 4 | 5 | -8 | 13 |
| 5 | Bicester Fossils Stripes | 12 | 2 | 0 | 10 | 1 | 6 |

League | Table

### Over 65s

| POS | | P | W | D | L | GD | PTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Abingdon Thames | 15 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 14 | 37 |
| 2 | Brackley Town | 15 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 11 | 29 |
| 3 | Oxford United | 15 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 22 |
| 4 | Charlbury Town | 15 | 3 | 4 | 8 | -10 | 13 |
| 5 | Abingdon Isis | 15 | 1 | 8 | 6 | -7 | 11 |
| 6 | Rotherfield United | 15 | 2 | 3 | 10 | -11 | 9 |

The OWFL have done a great job with organisation and have improved various things over the course of the season , especially the refereeing which has definitely become more consistent.

I think all our players have enjoyed the experience even on bad days and I hope they will continue to sign up for fixtures next year. The club really appreciates the time and commitment players make to being part of the squad on match days. Its a full half day once a month, and great when you are winning, and very hard when you are losing especially by fine margins. It is a squad game and players have to be rotated as you play 5 intense 15 minute games in a short space of time. Standing on the touchline, being moved into positions you don't favour are all part of the challenges. Win or lose the banter and camaraderie is great and at the end of the day it is about playing the game we love with people we enjoy being with. My thanks go to all the players who have taken part.

## *Player Profile—John Rusby*



I was born in Middleton, Manchester in 1954. My love of football and my passion and loyalty to Manchester City came from my father. We had many happy years in the 60s and 70s as season ticket holders and we were there at St James Park in 1969 when City beat Newcastle to win the First Division!



Supporting City will always have its ups and downs! (Ed: That's the understatement of the year!!). My father lost his leg in a crash in a Lancaster bomber in WW2 and the other survivor was England international, Stanley Mortenson! Despite this, he always wanted to play football and cricket with me in our garden. My early years of football started with pub teams and Middleton Amateurs. My early claim to fame was in signing for Prestwich Heys, a semi-pro team. I only played one match and was then loaned out to Maine Road FC, City's social club! Being a goalkeeper had its benefits. I was often asked to play for other teams including the BBC, Piccadilly Radio, Reading FC Old Boys and various companies. The BBC team included Stuart Hall!

After I retired from 11 a-side football, I continued to play 5 a-side and my highlight was playing with my son for over 10 years. He scored at one end and I saved at the other! I stopped playing football in 2014 after dislocating and breaking a finger in a game. I did continue in the match and we won 1 nil. I saved a penalty and my son scored! After being pressed by my brother-in-law (also a WF goalie) and Hilary, who had already researched and found Rotherfield WFC, I was eventually persuaded to a watch a session. I had no intention of playing in goal due to my arthritic hands, but I couldn't resist.

I worked in the insurance industry and spent 26 years with Provincial Insurance. My career took me around the country ending up in Reading in 1995. My latter years were spent in various roles within the general insurance world before I retired in 2019 to become captain of Reading Golf Club. Hilary and I have been married for 21 years and have two wonderful children each. We both share a passion for football and golf. We have season tickets at Reading FC and play golf 3 times a week. Any spare time we have is spent looking after our 6 (soon to be 7) grandchildren. Our holidays usually involve playing golf in various parts of the world but we have introduced a few cultural trips and last Christmas spent six weeks on a trip spending time in Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii and Canada.

## *Climate change – taking action by Ian Beale*



A small working group (Mike Bowker, Gavin Brookes & me) got together earlier in the year to discuss how we could make a difference as a club, to take action and to prompt a conversation. As context in 2025 we only played 17 sessions at Bishopswood either because the ground was too wet or it was too hard & dry. This continued into 2026 for the same reasons and recently the whole ground was reseeded as the grass on all the pitches had completely died during the drought. Playing at our home ground is enjoyable but also benefits us financially as the costs are much lower compared to hiring Rivermead or Highdown pitches.

Action we have taken during the year include;

- Encouraging car sharing to tournaments & leagues and also to our regular sessions. Car sharing now routinely takes place to leagues & tournaments and also for regular sessions among members in Kidmore End, Tokers Green, Sonning Common and Shiplake – but not yet routinely among our many Caversham members – please get involved !!
- Buying our new goalposts from a source that manufactured them in the UK
- Buying our new tournament shirts from a supplier that makes them using recycled plastic bottles
- Donating our old tournament kit to a charity that will find a deserving football club in need of kit
- Working with Eco-SoCo and BW ground staff to agree “no mow” areas around the perimeter at BW to increase bio-diversity and also by agreeing other areas where we can plant bulbs. We have successfully applied to ToE for a grant to fund the bulbs and are recruiting volunteers from our WF members and the Women’s section to plant them in November (details on Spond)
- We shared our activity with Oxfordshire FA and our willingness / enthusiasm to share with and learn from other WF clubs

## *Marketing The Club by Ian Beale*

During the year I continued to market the club widely within our catchment area including;

- Printed media – regular pieces have been printed in the Henley Standard, Sonning Common Newsletter, Peppard News, Kidmore End Parish Newsletter, Caversham Bridge Newsletter and Round & About (both Sonning Common / Caversham and Henley editions)
- Posting flyers – we have a simple A5 flyer and I have posted this in loads of places including on numerous village noticeboards, on the notice board in Caversham arcade & Emmer Green arcade, in Henley Over 60s club and in several bus shelters. I also provided copies for Four Bears bookshop to display and with Reflex Physio in Caversham to recommend us to clients
- WFA – we are registered with the WFA and so our club details are visible if anyone searches on that site for a WF club near me
- Website – we have a home page on the RUFC website that hosts our videos, photos, Newsletters, social calendar and other material including when we play and how to get in touch
- Online – we have had updates posted on Caversham Show & Tell and in Inspired Villages blog.
- Video – I shared the fantastic video created by Howard with the FA and OFA which generated some great online reactions / likes

Other marketing activities included:

Several members manned a stand at the Sonning Common village day

Any other ideas for how we can get the word out please let me know

## *Kit Aid by Ian Massey*




Kit Aid is an organisation supplying donated, unwanted kit to teams and clubs in developing countries.

From our older now unused kit which we have had since 2017 we have donated,
10 shirt tops
1 GK top
10 shorts
1 Kit bag.
This will be sent through Kit Aids contacts to a club/team who would be able to benefit from such a donation.- probably in Africa.
I am hoping that eventually we may hear back from whoever is the recipient. I put a contact card for us in the bag.

## *Charity Contributions by Ian Beale*

Each year we collectively select two charities to support. Both charities are important to many of us personally and in addition, their purpose resonates with us. This year we are raising money for Blood Cancer UK and for Greenshoots.

We chose Blood Cancer as our national charity this year as one of founding players – Dave Robinson - died from this terrible disease last year. Greenshoots is our local charity this year and they do great work by providing training and employment for adults with recurring mental ill health issues or with a learning disability

We raise money throughput the year in a variety of ways and always with transparency in advance – we want everyone to understand what we are doing and why

In addition to our match fees that every player pays to play we levy £1 pp per session played for charity

We add a variable amount – often £5 pp - to the cost of most social events

Our main money raising activities are the raffle and auction that we run at our autumn social event – this year in November. Prizes are sourced by members from many generous local businesses and organisations

As other charities have done in previous years Blood Cancer gave us a batch of pin badges – enough for every member to have one to wear to show their support. We announced the availability of the pin badges to everyone a few weeks ago and that we would levy £2 pp within the call for subs to be paid at the end of September although members could opt-out if they chose by informing the club treasurer in advance

## *Annual Golf Day by Doc Martin*



Our 3rd annual golf tournament took place in glorious weather on 23rd September, having been postponed from 8th July due to scorching temperatures that day. 12 of us took part. The cup was won this year by our chairman Barry, who also won the longest drive competition. He was only a few inches away from a clean sweep when his tee shot on the last hole came up agonisingly short of the green. Once again no-one got on the green with their t shot on the last hole (same as last year), resulting in fines for everyone.
£80 was raised for charity
A very enjoyable day was had by everyone and we look forward to welcoming as many players possible next year

## *The Inaugural Walking Cricket Match by Phil Buckley*

What a breathless little slice of limited-overs walking cricket drama at Kidmore End Cricket Club on 22 July 2026 - because the Lions took 259 for 4 in their 10 overs, looked set for a win, and were then absolutely pipped at the final hurdle as the Eagles stormed home with 263 for 5 in a last-over finish that had everyone buzzing.



The Lions (skippered by Glenn George in his first-ever game of cricket) began like a side that meant business. Trev Perchard got them off to a quick start, and right away you could feel the momentum building as the innings ticked along. There was a sense of urgency, a bit of zip in the running walking, and the Lions were clearly playing with intent. But the real edge for the Lions came from an Eagles bowling attack that - at crucial moments - went a bit astray. Nick Russel had a rough time, and those wayward moments only seemed to give the Lions more room to press forward. And it wasn't just the bowling: Eagles skipper John Rusby - normally so dependable for goal with cat-like reflexes – failed to get down to a ball that rushed through him for four, the sort of small slip that can cost far more than it looks like in the scoreboard stakes.

By the time Lions had posted 259 for 4, the match was already starting to feel like it could go down to the wire - and the Eagles, of course, knew it.



The chase began slowly. For a while it looked as though the target might loom too large. Then – bang - Ross Byron-Scott stepped up and shifted the gears, smashing a cluster of quick-fire runs that changed the atmosphere instantly. Suddenly it wasn't a chase, it was a pursuit, and the Eagles were right back in it. With the innings gaining pace, the Lions had to stay sharp, adjust their aggressive fielding strategy and try to flip the game in the space of a few deliveries.

Then John Curley came into the picture, and for a spell he looked like a sad shadow of his younger self - struggling to complete his over, with the sort of mismatch between effort and execution that batsmen love to exploit. Unfortunately, he was bowling to Ian Beale, and Ian has that keen batsman's eye: once the ball was anywhere near his zone, the ball was smashed, unceremoniously to the boundary. Crucial runs that turned pressure into points and put the Eagles right back on top.

But even as Lions tried to claw things back with 2 wickets in 2 balls, the Eagles were hunting the target with growing confidence. In the end, it wasn't just "close" - it was right there at the end with the Eagles finishing on 263 for 5, just enough to steal it in the last over. The Lions' 259 for 4 felt like a score that deserved more, but that's walking cricket for you - every small moment matters, and today the Eagles seized theirs.

And when the dust settled? There was no sourness - because the bar was open and the match ended in high spirits on a beautifully sunny afternoon, with everyone taking the kind of grin-home memory that only a nail-biting limited-overs finish can deliver.

## *Buzzards vs Kites — S. Common MUGA, 7th August by Phil Buckley*

The Sonning Common MUGA on 7th August didn't just host walking cricket - it hosted a full-blooded, over-the-top showdown with the volume turned up on every moment that mattered. Buzzards met Kites with the kind of confidence you feel when the ground is hot, the crowd is buzzing, and everyone knows this is the match that'll be retold in five different versions.Buzzards batted first, and the innings began like a cannon being loaded.



Alan Davies and Gavin Brooks opened the batting a cracking pace, driving the ball with purpose and leaving Kites scrambling for control. Every stride felt urgent, every shot looked calculated for maximum damage—this wasn't "getting set," it was *arriving*.

Then the comedy-crash happened in spectacular fashion. Dickie Quelch - bowling his first ball - managed to fall over. Not just a stumble: a full dramatic dismount from the normal laws of physics. The momentum might have wobbled, but it didn't stop. As the Buzzards innings pressed forward, four wickets fell regularly, with the batters keeping the scoreboard moving even as the bowling tightened its grip.

Fielding moments started to arrive like punctuation. Two catches were taken by wicket keeper John Jacklin, twice stopping Kites from soaking up the innings and turning it into a chaseable story. Dickie then chipped in again: he caught another - and yes, fell over again, ensuring the afternoon stayed properly chaotic.

And when Buzzards needed bowling to be properly confronted, Michael Jan-Janin used his height to destructive effect. His deliveries didn't just challenge timing; they threatened rhythm itself, forcing awkward contact and building pressure ball after ball.

By the time the innings closed, Buzzards had reached 311 for 4 wickets - a total that didn't merely look big, it looked intimidating enough to make a run chase feel like an uphill sprint through custard.

Kites' run chase was steady, but never quite reached the required run rate. They were always in the hunt - always "in it" - but without enough boundaries to spike the chase, the arithmetic kept edging away. The chase lacked that boundary-powered surge that turns steady into unstoppable, and while Kites kept trying to manufacture runs, Buzzards' fielding refused to close the door when it counted.

Buzzards' bowling, meanwhile, was a true variety show. There were spells of tight, gripping control - but mixed in were deliveries likened to the Dambuster's bouncing bombs, plus high-level lobs that floated over like they were arriving by appointment rather than instruction. Extras did particularly well, quietly keeping Kites alive and the required score within reach more often than it should have been.

Then came the final act: only 22 runs were needed off the last over. In that pressure moment, Ross Byron-Scott, batting left-handed, nearly made it single-handedly - pushing the chase forward with fearless momentum. There was even a cameo bowling appearance by Dom Scott, but it wasn't enough. Buzzards couldn't quite finish the job in time.

In the end, the match swung on the thinnest possible margin: Buzzards fell one run short and ended on 310 for 0 - the closest of near-misses.

Behind all of it, the umpiring and coaching were of the highest standard seen on the walking cricket circuit, and the organisers were spared embarrassment when a small army of willing ball boys kept the game's physical side under control, saving the MUGA from becoming a knockabout battlefield.

Even so, the day belonged to the fallen too. Dickie wasn't the only one to fall over: Graham Hards had to retire before the start after falling over, grazing his knee, and wrenching his shoulder. With that, the match delivered everything it promised—intensity, theatre, chaos, and a finish that will be argued about for ages.

## *Kidmore End Showdown: Guns v Roses by Phil Buckley*

At Kidmore End CC, the Guns won the toss and chose to field, with a welcome rain shower passing through but never troubling the game. The Roses made a slow but steady start,

finding boundaries hard to come by, before the middleorder surge from Roger, Gavin, Gar eth and Steve gave their innings some much-needed momentum.

John Rusby stood up well to Dickie's pace behind the stumps, and Dickie later made up for an early drop in JC's innings with an outstanding caught-and-bowled. Pete held a great catch in the deep, while Tony and John were involved in a sharp run out. The Roses were restricted to 77 for 4.

In reply, the Guns flew out of the blocks with seven boundaries in the first three overs. Dr ew, standing up to the stumps, put down a sharp chance, and Steve Cannan bowled an ex plosive over in the middle of the innings. Doc took a regulation catch at mid-off, but by then the result was beyond doubt.

A flurry of late wickets followed from skipper Gavin's bowling, with Gareth adding a useful caught-and-bowled, but the Guns got home with four overs to spare.

## *The Social Scene*

### *The Quest of the Four Knights of the Walking Football Round Table—by Phil Buckley*

And so it came to pass that four brave companions of the Walking Football Club set forth upon a noble quest through the ancient city of Winchester. Their mission was to seek history, culture and, if fortune favoured them, a reasonably priced lunch.



At the helm of their trusty chariot was Sir Dominic, the appointed driver and master of the road. With the other three knights safely aboard, he guided his steed through the highways and byways, displaying courage, patience and a remarkable ability not to become irritated by back-seat navigation.

Our first destination was Winchester's Great Hall, an imposing fortress of flint and stone, built in the days of Henry III between 1222 and 1235. The hall was designed as a "double cube", measuring 110 feet by 55 feet—although none of the party attempted to check this with a tape measure, having left such heroic deeds to the archaeologists.

Within hung the legendary Round Table, originally fashioned in the thirteenth century and later repainted for Henry VIII. Once bearing the names of King Arthur's knights, it now served as a powerful reminder that medieval monarchs enjoyed redecorating almost as much as modern homeowners. The Winchester Panels showed the twenty-five knights facing the great Wheel of Life, while the four visitors contemplated whether a Wheel of Life might also include a comfortable chair and a cup of tea.

The Great Hall had witnessed royal drama, rebellion and even the trial of six Provisional IRA members in 1973. Yet none of these events could compare with the perilous challenge faced by our heroes: locating the exit without accidentally joining a Spanish Tourist tour.

From there, the company advanced to the Westgate, one of only two surviving fortified gateways in Winchester. Rebuilt and altered over the centuries, it boasted a portcullis and two early gunports designed for hand-held cannons. The knights agreed that these were impressive defensive features, though they would have been of limited use against a determined footballer armed with a misplaced knee support.

After such exertions, the party repaired to the Royal Oak, reputed to be England's oldest bar, with an ancient cellar dating back to 1002. It was once associated with Queen Emma and had been operating as a brewhouse by 1637. Here, the quest entered its most important phase: the replenishment of the warriors. Food was consumed, tales were embellished, and Sir Dominic was honourably excused from excessive ale, as he still had to drive the chariot.

Strength restored, the knights ventured forth once more. They surveyed God Begot House, once a privileged medieval manor with its own laws, taxes and sanctuary and the original Guildhall on the corner of St Thomas Street. The Buttercross is under refurbishment - a reminder that Winchester's people have always been prepared to defend their heritage, especially when it stands in the way of progress.

The company then passed the Guildhall, with its Gothic Revival splendour and curfew bell, before continuing to the City Mill, whose history reaches back to the Domesday Book. nearby.

They glimpsed Chesil Theatre, a former medieval church reborn as a 75-seat playhouse, and gazed upon the ruins of Wolvesey Castle, once the palace of Winchester's powerful bishops.

At Kingsgate, beneath the little church of St Swithun, the quest drew towards its conclusion. A few showers descended from the heavens but could not dampen the enthusiasm of the four knights. Cloaks were adjusted, spirits remained high, and the party returned triumphant - tired in limb, enriched in knowledge, and thoroughly convinced that history is best explored with good companions, sturdy footwear and a pub somewhere

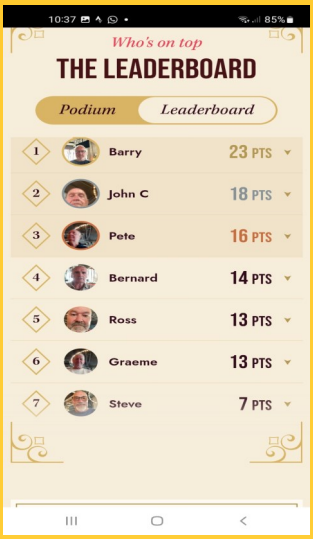


## *Sweeney & Todd's Pie & Ale Night*

On 10th September 10 'gourmands' of the Club descended on the legendary Sweeney & Todd's Pie Shop for an evening of carbo-loading! For the uninitiated this small shop come restaurant is an historic Reading institution and one of the town's best kept secrets. Despite this the room was packed on a Thursday night. The atmosphere can best be described as a throwback to the 1970s but with good old fashioned service. The choice of pies was extensive. Unable to make his mind up Nick Russell just ordered two! The food was accompanied by a selection of excellent cask ales and for those with room at the end of the meal there was the opportunity for a nightcap at the neighbouring pub. It was great to welcome Duncan Jackson to his first social and also to catch up with Bernard Deasy who is no longer able to play football.

## *Flight Darts Club*

On 11th August a group of 7 members visited the newly opened Flight Darts Club in central Reading. This is essentially a pub themed around high tech darts. Rather than conventional darts there are a range of games with automatic scoring and video replays. It was a real fun night made all the better as Barry had managed to secure a 50% discount voucher following a previous visit. His past experience also shone through as he emerged as the overall winner on the night. It was also great to welcome Ross Byron-Scott to his first social. All agreed it was an excellent evening and definitely one for the calendar next year!



## *Club AGM—6th October 2026—Sonning Common Village Hall*




Some 27 members attended the AGM. There was some robust and in-depth debates and many good suggestions put forward. The key points were;

**1) Club Officials;**

- Martin 'Doc' Smith volunteered to replace Andrew Harland as Welfare Officer

- Steve Johnson volunteered to take on the new role as Membership Secretary taking on some of the duties currently undertaken by Chris Guy

**2) Birthday Notifications;**

It was proposed that with 90 members the current WhatsApp birthday notifications had become too unwieldy to manage. It was agreed that a Happy Birthday message from the Club would be posted at the start of each month for relevant members.

**3) Session Numbers;**

It was agreed that a cap of 28 players per session would be trialled on Spond in order to ensure that team sizes would be manageable. There would be a waiting list for players above this limit. There was no enthusiasm for the use of substitutes.

**4) Bishopswood**

As the playing surface at Bishopswood is still in poor condition it was agreed that we would continue to hold Thursday sessions at Rivermead for the time being.

**5) Charities**

It was agreed that we would continue to raise money for charity via subs and levies on social events. However next year we would focus on just one local charity. Suggestions for an appropriate charity are invited.

**6) Club Size and Recruitment**

It was agreed that we would continue our current marketing activities but not pursue new avenues such as social media, and if was felt there was no need to look to cap membership. In the event of playing numbers becoming consistently too high we would aim to offer additional weekly sessions.

## *New Members*

We welcome the following new  members to the Club and look forward to seeing them on the pitch and at social events;



**Andy Linden**



**George Cassells**



**Graham Davey**



**Gary Oatham**

## *Club Calendar*




21st October: OWFL Over 70s League

7th November: Annual Charity Music Night—Bottle & Glass, Binfield Heath

12th November: Bulb Planting at Bishopswood

12th November: Second Thursday Social—Loddon Brewery

15th November: Bulb Planting at Bishopswood

10th December: Second Thursday Social—Loddon Brewery

14th January: Second Thursday Social—Loddon Brewery

15th January: Annual Awards Dinner—Spitiko, Caversham

22nd January: Brakspear's Henley Ale Trail