Rotherfield United Walking Football Club

Newsletter Edition 9 - Winter 2025

Editorial by Steve Cannan

This edition brings the curtain down on another remarkable year for our Club, with many great activities and achievements on and off the pitch; and as always there are many highlights to report on! Many of us will recall the excitement on Christmas morning of finding that Santa had delivered the annual edition of our favourite action comic! We recreate that feeling with our Player Profile, which features our very own action man, guitar god and babe magnet: Wing Commander Gareth Evans MBE! There's enough material in Gareth's back story to serialise over the next 6 editions so this is very much the highlights! Our charity activities over the year have been amazing and the total raised has exceeded our wildest expectations! Read on to see the final total. On the pitch our Over 70's had a truly remarkable run in the Oxfordshire FA League, firmly establishing the Club as a force to be reckoned with. Squad Manager, Ian Massey, reveals the secrets of our success! Thanks to all the contributors and I hope you enjoy the read!



Dates For The Diary;

8th January—09.30: Charity Cheque Presentation—Pre football session

8th January -11.30: Second Thursday Social—Loddon Brewery

14th January—19.00: Board Game Evening (Monopoly) hosted by Tim Embleton

5th February—19.00: Evening Social—Fox & Hounds, Caversham

12th February—11.30: Second Thursday Social—Loddon Brewery

20th February—13.00: Henley Ale Trail

12th March—11.30: Second Thursday Social—Loddon Brewery

20th March—11.30: X40 Beer Bus Trip—Various pubs between Reading & Oxford by bus

9th April—11.30: Second Thursday Social—Loddon Brewery

23rd April—18.30: Italian Evening—Quattro's, Caversham

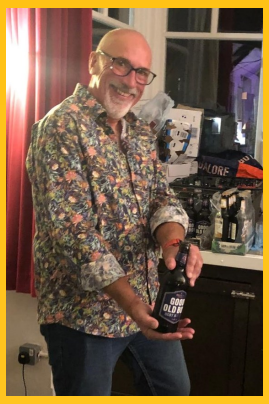
17th May—14.00: Dave Robinson Memorial Music Event—Flowing Spring, Sonning

27th June: 14.00: RUWFC 10 year Anniversary Celebration—TBC

Charity Music Night—25th October at Peppard Memorial Hall

Our third Annual Charity Music Night was held at Peppard Memorial Hall on 25th October, with 70 members, partners and guests attending. With Phil Buckley in charge the organisation was in good hands! Barry Stevenson along with Son In Law, Ben provided outstanding DJ sets which had the dance floor bouncing! Live music was provided by The Bottleneck Brothers and The Bootboys Band. A feature of their set included backing Drew Mann on his band, When In Rome's 1987 hit single, 'The Promise'.





Nathan's Nibbles provided excellent catering and the bar was overseen by Steve Cannan.

Highlights of the evening were the raffle and auction. A team including Mark Keogh, Steve Knott, Ian Massey, Phil Buckley and Barry Stevenson worked hard in the months leading up to the event to source an amazing array of prizes from members, local businesses and contacts.



With many lessons learned from the two previous events the night was a resounding success and, most importantly, raised a staggering **£4200** towards our nominated charities, Prostate Cancer UK and FISH in Sonning Common. This is a fantastic result and a great credit to everyone involved who supported the event in so many ways.

Suffice to say the bar has been set high for next year's event! If anyone is interested in leading, or being involved in the organisation of next year's event, please speak to one of the Committee.

Dickie's Supermarket Dash



One of the more intriguing prizes in the auction was a two minute supermarket dash around Iceland supermarket in Caversham. The prize was won by Dickie Quelch with a bid of £110. After overcoming his initial disappointment at not going to Reykjavik, Dickie set about planning his visit. The store opened at 7.30am to give him exclusive access, and several members were there to cheer him on. With the spirits aisle closed and various restrictions on numbers and value of products Dickie still managed to amass over £540 worth of goods!.... And he didn't fall over once!

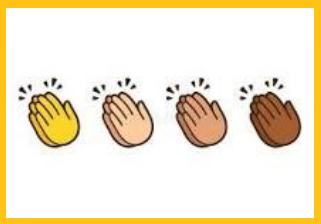
Charities 2025

Over the course of the year we have been raising money for our national charity, Prostate Cancer UK, and our local charity, FISH in Sonning Common.

With the year drawing to a close we can now announce that the total raised is a staggering



£7400!!



The breakdown is as follows;

- Charity Music Night: £4200
- Contribution from 'subs': £2115
- Awards Night Raffle: £305
- London History Walk: £206
- Golf Day: £133
- Henley Ale Trail: £75
- Cycle Rides: £72
- Reading Real Ale Trail: £70
- Quattro's Italian Night: £51
- Newbury Races: £36
- Chelsea Hospital Visit £26
- Already Paid To FISH (£23)
- **Total: £7400**

Note: This total does not include the £2500 sponsorship donated by Widmore Park.

Charity Cheque Presentation

We will be presenting cheques to representatives from Prostate Cancer UK and FISH at **9.30am on Thursday 8th January** before the start of the normal football session. The Henley Standard and Widmore Park will also be in attendance. We would like as many playing and non-playing members as possible to attend to celebrate this remarkable achievement! Please wear Club tracksuit tops.

Player Profile: Wing Commander Gareth Evans, MBE





Extremely flattered to be asked to do this! Born in Newport S Wales in 1955 and spent early years in Malaysia, returning to S Wales in mid 60s. Went to school at Brecon (lots of Rugby and time in the mountains) and was sponsored by RAF through A levels. Learnt to fly when I was 17 through an RAF flying scholarship and eventually ended up at York University. After finishing Uni and training spent next years serving on combat squadrons, one of which I commanded, completing operational tours in Northern Ireland, Belize, Falklands. During that time, I married Sue and had 2 beautiful daughters, and we spent many happy years living in Germany and UK (not so much Lossiemouth in North of Scotland. Became fanatical about hang-gliding and spent next 20 years throwing myself off big mountains

1990s were very different. Worked in MoD on missile development, was Studies Director at Services staff college, led MoD and Foreign Office missions in former Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries (totally fascinating), and commanded a Wing of 3 Squadrons during Bosnia operations. Did an MBA and an MA from Kings College London and was awarded an MBE by HM Queen after First Gulf War.



In 1999 decided to start working for a living and stop being a hooligan, and we moved to Shiplake when I was recruited by a big US Management Consultancy to lead their European Aerospace and Defence practice working on Corporate strategy and M&A deals. Was elected a Fellow of Royal Aeronautical Society and later joined a major US tech company as Vice President for sales. Latterly ran my own advisory and consulting business whilst also getting into music, travelling, playing WF (thanks guys!) and trying to keep up with the grandkids

Quick Fire Q&A

Fave sport(s): Rugby (played for Newport RFC in 70s), Hang Gliding, Skiing
Biggest thrill: launching my hang glider off 3500-foot vertical drops in the Alps (getting to fly the Harrier and F4 Phantom was pretty cool also!)
Most fun: Gigging with Tudor and our band The Bottleneck Brothers
Fave country: Wales (of course), but Japan a close second
Best part of my life: Absolutely Sue and my kids and grandkids
Most satisfaction: still skiing black moguls (though much more slowly)
Strengths: my modesty. **Weaknesses**: my goal keeping skills
Happy place: on a beach in the sun drinking a cocktail and smoking a cigar
Thanks to: Rotherfield WF club. A privilege being part of such a close supportive community!

Annual Awards Dinner: The Lebanese Village, Caversham

We returned to The Lebanese Village restaurant on 28th November for our Annual Awards Dinner. 35 members attended and enjoyed fine food and copious amounts of drink!



Mike Bowker had again managed the nominations and voting process and was on hand to make the presentations. Congratulations to the following;

Most Improved Player

Drew Mann



Special Recognition Award

Steve Cannan



Most Frequent Player

Phil Beech



Dave Robinson Clubman Of The Year Award

Phil Buckley



Players' Player Of The Year Award

Glenn George



Phil Buckley and Glenn were not at the Awards Dinner so were presented with their trophies at Loddon Brewery during the Second Thursday Social on 9th December.

Thanks to Mike Bowker for managing the voting process and sourcing the trophies!

Dave Robinson Fund Raising Musical Event in aid of Blood Cancer UK

Paul Hancock is organizing a fund raising music event in memory of Dave Robinson with proceeds going to Blood Cancer UK. Details are as follows;

DATE: Sunday 17th May 2026 (which also happens to be Isobel Robinson's birthday!)

VENUE: The Flowing Spring, Henley Road, Playhatch, RG4 9RB

TIME: Music starts at 3.00pm



All acts include friends of Dave and Isobel Robinson

The audience will be in the garden with bands playing on the Rose Stage (i.e. the patio under the marquee. There are tables and chairs available but some people might like to bring their own foldable seats.

15:00 Moonshine (Southern Rock band) featuring some members of MoonAge and a father & son combination on twin lead guitars.

15:45 Belinda Trubee (solo vocals and guitar)

16:15 Incredible String Band (featuring Nick the landlord on keyboards)

17:00 Rotherfield Walking Football Club musicians

17:45 Ding Dong Daddios (featuring an ex-colleague of Isobel Robinson)

18:45 MoonAge (David Bowie Tribute Band)

Finish at 19:30

Note: Final timings may be subject to change.

Admission will cost £10, payable to the Flowing Spring, either in cash on the day, or by card or online at https://theflowingspring.sumupstore.com/product/charity-fundraiser-for-blood-cancer-uk-sunday-17-may

A few volunteers from RUWFC to assist with car parking, taking money on the gate and rattling charity buckets would be helpful. If you are able to help please let Paul know.

Please spread the word and hopefully as many as possible will be able to attend what is sure to be a great afternoon in aid of a very good cause and the memory of a truly great man!

RUWFC New Video!





Over the last few months, and at the Charity Music Night, you may have noticed a man wandering around looking slightly shifty carrying some very expensive looking camera equipment. This man is Howard Greenhalgh. Howard is a Grammy nominated music video producer who has produced videos for the likes of Elton John, George Michael, Pet Shop Boys and the Spice Girls to name but a few! He's a good friend of Drew Mann and was intrigued to hear about this Walking Football Club who also had a band; and the project grew from there.



After a lot of hard work including around a week's editing, the final product was finished and the 'World Premiere' was held at Loddon Brewery on 9th December. Some 30 members attended and were in awe at the quality of the video which captures very effectively the ethos and values of our Club. The video is now available to share among members, and the Committee will be looking at how we can best use it in promoting the Club and attracting new members. Our thanks and gratitude go to Howard for an amazing piece of work! As well as the famous names listed above he can now add The Bootboys to his CV!

Club Tracksuit Tops

If anyone would like to purchase one of our high quality, stylish tracksuit tops (as modelled by our 'King Of The Catwalk', Ian Beale) please place your order with kit supremo, Martin 'Non-Doc' Smith. Cost is in the region of £30 dependent on numbers ordered.



Player Age Analysis & Recruitment

Within his role as Vice Chairman, Ian Beale does a great job in leading our recruitment for new players. He recently produced some analysis of player age profiles 2024 and 2025;

Player age analysis	**Sept 2024**		**Sept 2025**	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total
Under 60	8	14	5	8
60 – 65	15	26	12	18
65 – 70	19	32	27	42
Over 70	16	28	21	32
Totals	58 players	100	65 players	100

The analysis shows that we have aged as a group. Last year we had 32% over 65 and a further 28% over 70 or a total of 60% in the 65+ bracket. This year's numbers were 42% and 32% respectively (74% in total). Whilst this is good news for the size of the pool of players for our next year's Over 70's League squad, it does show that we need to recruit more new younger members.

How you can help!

1) When new members join we ask them how they heard about us and 'word of mouth' is the most frequent response!..... So spread the word among your friends, neighbours, colleagues etc

2) We do regularly submit short articles to a number of free local parish magazines including Peppard, Kidmore End, Sonning Common and Goring. If you know of any other suitable media please let Ian Beale know

3) On a similar theme if you know of any community local community web based groups eg on Facebook, where we could post flyers please let Ian know

4) We also have laminated flyers that we are siting on community noticeboards, bus stops, doctor's surgeries etc. Ian has a supply of these if you know of a location where we could place one.



New Members

A very warm welcome to the following new members of the Club and we look forward to seeing them on the pitch and at social events;

Andy Roeton



Andy heard about us when he met Ian Beale placing a recruitment flyer at Gillott's Gym

John Jacklin



John became aware of us from coaching his sons

Paul Mullin



Paul has been aware of the Club for some time, having coached his sons at RUFC

Ed Cooper



Ed was playing golf with Mark Keogh and the conversation turned to Walking Football so he thought her would give it a go

Richard Hatcher



Richard heard about us through a local paper in Woodcote

Oxfordshire FA Over 70's League by Ian Massey

The League runs once a month between April and October and it has been a successful season for the RUWFC 70+ team which finished 3rd in the League this year.

POS		P	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1	Abingdon Almost Athletic	36	15	18	3	17	63
2	Bicester Fossils A	36	15	17	4	17	62
3	Rotherfield United	36	11	17	8	6	50
4	Oxford United	36	10	17	9	2	47
5	Witney Warriors	36	5	18	13	-6	33
6	Charlbury Town	36	4	21	11	-9	33
7	Bicester Fossils B	36	4	16	16	-27	28

As you can see the team played 36 twelve minute games, losing only 8 games. It was a great achievement, especially as we had to overcome some difficulties. On the first day of the season in April, Dickie, our Team Captain, was in hospital having surgery on his shoulder. This led on to a series of additional medical problems for Dickie which meant he could only play a few games in October. He did, though, continue to offer useful advice. We also lost two influential players in John C and Ron S to severe injuries. At several of the events we had to play 3 games back to back which was where we benefited from having a squad of 8/9 players present which is what you need in these Leagues.

Aspects which helped our performance



1. Playing multi touch prior to League fixtures
2. Our Clubs Team selectors for our regular WF sessions who aimed to place as many of the 70+squad in the same team.
3. A 70 + training session for the squad.
4. Fielding a balanced 6 aside team + subs at the event -

This meant a good goalkeeper (Trevor), defenders, midfielders and sometimes two strikers - Tudor & Ron S with Jed on the left who played in every game. Paul H, Steve Knott and Ray performed their duties really well with Ray getting his first Blue Card for supposedly denying an opposing player a goal scoring opportunity. Andy H and Mark L made important contributions in both defence and attack. Thanks as well to Gareth who joined us for the first set of games to play in goal.

We are aware that there are aspects that we need to improve on and once we know details of the 2026 season we will begin work on developing the squad.

Thanks to everyone for their support

10 Year Anniversary Party

2026 marks the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Club and this landmark needs to be celebrated in appropriate fashion. To this end a small team including Ian Beale, Ian Massey and Steve Cannan have started looking at options for a Summer party. The proposed date is Saturday 27th June with The Bottle & Glass, Binfield Heath being the likely venue. There has recently been a poll on Spond to assess the potential interest. Thanks to all those who replied. The team will now be taking this forward and more information will follow in due course.

Climate change -Taking action as a grass roots club by Ian Beale



We have been affected by climate change; being unable to play at Bishopswood for weeks as the long, dry summer meant the ground was too hard and the grass too sparse. More recently we are seeing regular downpours render the pitches at Bishopswood too wet and slippery.

In response we have started a conversation on what we can, realistically and reasonably, do. Already we have made some positive steps:

- Car sharing – we already car share to tournaments and also players from Tokers Green have for some time car shared, as do those from Kidmore End and most recently Sonning Common too. Can we extend this action to include Caversham and other areas where we have several players?

- We are almost entirely digital in our communications in the club so rarely need to print anything on paper

- We have started to ask players who no longer play to return their coloured bibs which we can then issue to new joiners and buy a few less new bibs

- We have started to see if we can factor in sustainability into our buying decisions – of bibs, balls, gloves etc – for example can we buy from UK manufacturers and avoid unnecessary transport

We also are looking at how we can support RUFC and were lucky that we had 4 volunteers willing to join forces to plant 100 hedge plants along the edge of Bishopswood in December

These are our early actions and there are likely others we can take – please let me know if you have ideas and want to join in

The Referee Answers Back by Phil Buckley



In this edition we seek to clarify the contentious issues of walking and physical contact;

Definition of 'Walking'…..



Walking involves a progression of steps with at least one foot in contact with the ground - no jogging, skipping, hopping, or sprinting. Jumping to control the ball is ok, so long as no progression is made.
The referee will penalise "not walking" offences with an indirect free kick.
The law applies whether you have the ball or not. (And, technically, when the ball is out of play.)
It applies to goalkeepers, except in the act of stopping (saving) the ball.
If your team accumulates multiple "not walking" offences, you may gift the opposition a penalty.

Don't Get Physical!.....



Walking football is a non-contact game. Accidental contact from behind or alongside opponents, where their awareness is reduced, must be avoided.

Fouls and misconduct are penalised with an indirect free kick. Reckless or challenges using excessive force can result in an immediate blue or red card.
Deliberate physical challenges could be considered reckless or dangerous.

Physical contact includes stepping across or impeding an opponent to gain an advantage or deny that player access to the ball or to a position.