

CLUB NEWSLETTER

THE LETCHWORTHIAN - SEPTEMBER 2026



PRESIDENT'S PRATTLE

WORDS FROM OUR CLUB PRESIDENT, BRIAN BURKE

WELCOME ONE AND ALL!

Be You a..... Player, Member, VP, Sponsor, Volunteer, Luncher, Spectator or mere well-wisher of North Herts Senior Club - a vibrant new 103rd Season awaits you!

Following the incessant heat waves of July and August, our drought-ridden pitches are now coming back to greenery, which made the decision of the RFU to postpone the season more than sensible. Our opening Home game will now be on Saturday, September 26th, against Old Northamptonians, who, ironically, we played in the last Home game of the league season in March.

Speaking of pitches, we would like to thank ex-groundsman Digger Gardiner for his work over the past seasons. The new team will be headed by Ian and Angus, who are familiar faces around the club, with the assistance of Facilities Manager Les Wilsher. By the time you read this, early remedial work will have already been carried out on several playing surfaces, and we intend to continue this throughout the season, as well as making long-term plans for future long, hot Summers. We have also invested in new posts, which will be going up in the next few weeks.

As ever, in any Rugby Club there is a degree of transience - that's people come and go, for you prop forwards!! But the central order of the Committee remains the same... for the moment. However, it is important that we have successors lined up, and that is another matter we shall be looking at this season.

From what I have seen over the Summer, all sections seem remarkably healthy, and you will hear from the section heads over the next few pages.

At the top of the Senior section, several players have retired, but there are quite a few new faces at training, and it is great to see so many colts coming through under the guidance of Adam Amos and his fellow coaches. Head coach Baz Basra and Skipper Josh Sharp are both confident of a tough but rewarding campaign, with some really exciting attacking rugby being played.

Of course, there will be the famous League Lunches before all First Team home games, and also several before the 1924s Matches, so don't forget to book in for these great social events (separate article later). And also, may I ask all of you to make sure you PAY YOUR SUBS and fill in the gift aid form... This is the life blood of the club and are necessary for our survival. Despite the modest rise, they still make incredible value for money - or Bang for Buck, as Nigel would say! About half a pint of premium lager a week for the drinkers among you!!

You will need to be a fully paid-up member to qualify for the Pre-Xmas Nations Cup and Six Nations tickets, which will be balloted to the membership.

Well, that's enough from your aged but not yet demented Prez... Have a great season, one and all, and Let's Make Memories.

LUNCH, LUNCH, LUNCH!

The Letchworth League Lunches are renowned throughout our division and we have plenty coming up before the Christmas break (dates on page 10).

Despite the increasing costs of EVERYTHING we have managed to hold the cost to £30 for three courses, wine and raffle - an absolute bargain!

To book in simply call Teresa our Steward and she will do the rest. If you have any funny dietary requests like Vegetarian etc please let her know at the time otherwise it is meat and spuds lol! As all the regulars know you cannot beat the atmosphere and fun which for a few hours removes the gloom of our darkening world and its legions of fun police.

Get a table together with your pals or girl friends and come and have the craic before some great rugby.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

YOUR SUPPORT HELPS OUR WHOLE CLUB THRIVE

In these uncertain times, we cannot stress enough how important our sponsors are to our little club. We appreciate their belief in us and their generosity in equal measure, whether they contribute £50 a year or provide significant financial support. Every contribution makes a difference and is so important to the club, particularly in these challenging times.

We thank you all, but would especially like to highlight the following sponsors, who make a real difference to us. Some have supported the club for many years and have helped us reach heights we could only have dreamed of a decade ago...



Goldstar Promotions - goldstarpromotions.co.uk

Headed by ex-first-team prop **Spencer Brown**, Goldstar is one of the largest sports merchandising and entertaining companies on the planet. **Spencer**, who has a fine stable of Boxers under his care, including Tyson Fury, is now considered one of the leading Boxing influencers in the world. He is also introducing a new line of giftware, House of Spencer, which we hope to stock in the shop later this year. Not bad for a home-grown Letchworth boy!



Ashe Roofing - ashegroup.co.uk

Supply all roofing needs for Schools, large commercial buildings and, indeed, the Rugby Club. **Robbie Fone** also played for the club a few years back and has been a very generous sponsor over the years.



Lawsons - lawsons.co.uk

Have been one of the club's largest sponsors for over a decade, having taken over from Herts Timber Supplies several years ago. Lawsons supply all building products for all scale of builders or DIYers, and Manager **James Barnard** will happily talk to you about all your needs.



Mulmar - mulmar.com

Headed by ex-player and now life member **Agostino Luggeri**, they are leading coffee machine and coffee suppliers in the UK. Should your business want to invest in a really classy coffee machine, then do have a word with Ago.



LP Display - lpdisplay.co.uk

Headed by another ex-player, **Mark Ellis**, they are leading exhibition stand builders, retail display and signage specialists who work with their clients to achieve stunning results, as well as supplying a range of printing services.



Stapletons Tyre Services - stapletons-tyres.co.uk

Are very well known all over the county as leading Tyre, Battery and Exhaust suppliers and fitters, with their HQ in the Garden City. Mention of being a member of the club will secure you a discount.



DB Sharp and Sons - dbsharpandsons.co.uk

Headed by ex-chairman **Dave Sharp** and now son Jack, they are well-respected local builders who have been great supporters of the club for the past two decades. New Build, Developments to refurb and extensions... No Job is too big or small for these guys!



Conamar - conamar.co.uk

Headed by the **Dower Family**, Conamar is a specialist main contractor with over forty years' expertise involving new build, design and build, refurbishments and fit-outs to the highest standards. They have been one of our longest sponsors.



ANGLIAN COUNTRY INNS

Anglian Country Inns - www.acinns.co.uk

The **Nye Family** have proved themselves to be fantastic hosts in the hospitality industry over the past thirty years. They have a great variety of pubs, restaurants or hotels in the area, so if you want a great event at Redcoats Farmhouse, a superb meal at the Herm in Hitchin or the Fox at Willian, a pizza and pint at the Cricketers at Weston, great real ale at the Lytton Arms in Old Knebworth, not forgetting the excellent White Horse and Jolly Sailors at Brancaster Norfolk... you will not be disappointed.



N&P Windows - nandpwindows.co.uk

Another part of the Nye businesses, who supply the latest in windows, doors and bi-folds, as provided for our new clubhouse extension. MD **Mark Whittaker** will be happy to speak to you.



Jack Nicholas Group - jacknicholasgroup.co.uk

Based just outside Baldock and headed by ex-first-team second row **Martin "Muzza" Kirby**, they specialise in architectural metalwork, structural steelwork and precision fabrication. From design and manufacture through to installation, they create high-quality bespoke solutions for commercial and sports facilities, including stands, turnstiles, barriers and handrails.



Menzies - menzies.co.uk

A nationwide firm of Accountants and Auditors based in Stevenage Old Town, formerly Wagstaffs, who have supported the club for over thirty years... **James Fox** will be happy to talk to you about any financial needs.



Medmatch Dental - medmatch.co.uk

Are a Dental recruitment agency based in the area who have been supporters of the club for the past three seasons. Anyone looking for positions in the Dental Profession should give them a call (see website link above). We wish **Gary** and his team all the best over the coming year and hope to see them all again on Ladies Day in 2027.



LPC Plating Services - lpcplating.co.uk

Headed by long-term supporter **Shaun Bullen**, the company deals in all aspects of metal work and finishing and are long-time sponsors of the club. See website link above.



Ashleys Chartered Certified Accountants - ashleys.co.uk

This great local accounts and tax company was once fronted by El prez, when he could add up. Now under managing director **Martin Van Beek**, they are still firm supporters of the club after thirty years. Martin or Alistair (Tax) will be happy to help in all your financial needs.

MORE WORDS FROM BRIAN

MAKING A DIFFERENCE, ON AND OFF THE PITCH

The newsletter may have been about receiving so far, but our little club is great at giving too... Especially to various charities over the past few years.

Our Legendary Fireworks Night has raised nearly £60,000 for the Hospice over the years since Covid. Indeed, we have been made "Founders" of that worthy institution, and another big display is planned for Friday 6th November this year. Please put it in your diaries, and all volunteers to help will be most welcome.

Also this year, for our Ladies Day in March, when our first team wore "pretty pink", we raised over £2,500 for Breast Cancer, and everyone had a stonking time... Watch this space for the next Ladies Day.

In the Summer, our second Folk Festival raised over £2,600 for Herts MND and saw a great influx of Belgian Guinness Drinkers over a great weekend, where over forty acts performed at the club and entry was totally FREE... Put July 22-25th in your Diaries for next year... You can even camp, saving 000s on the family holiday, lol!

Other charities to benefit over the past few years are Macmillan Nurses, Male Prostate Cancer... thanks, Les, the Lister Hospital, as well as several individual charity

campaigns for injuries and disabilities, including the charity of the Sudbury pres. Mike Beckett, whose press ups raised over £300 at one of our lunches... To say he was knocked out by the generosity would be an understatement!

It's great that our Legends Rugby Family continue to raise money for all these worthy causes, and we intend to carry on in 2026/27 and beyond. So give yourselves a pat on the back and gird your loins for more!!



FALLEN LEGENDS - REMEMBERING THOSE FOREVER PART OF OUR FAMILY

Every year, we lose people from our Rugby Family and mourn their loss, but the previous year has seen too many go to that celestial rugby club in the sky, and almost all of them well before their due time.

In October, we lost that giant of the first team for nearly three decades, Peter "Dabber" Taylor, where, on a dank day, the parking at the Crematorium stretched down to the main road!

In December, one of the stars of the 80s sides, Zahid Nazir or Naz as he was known to everyone, a talented fly half and

full back passed on only in his early 60s.

Ex-Committee Member Roger Harper... Dad to Franky... followed at the end of the year, and then star '70s winger Paul Freeman, only in his 60s. Two long-term VPs, Chris Bennett and Terry Masters, also died suddenly towards the end of the season.

The loss of Giles Cook, one of the classiest players ever to play for our club and unfortunate never to be captain, was hard to bear, as he was still a young man. Also, this summer, Neil Dower, who had played in his youth at Letchworth and founded Weston Rugby club, as well as sponsoring our club for many years as Conamar, was only forty-nine and had so many more years to live.

Finally, the loss of '80s Captain and total Legend Richie Davies, who was about to start off for a walk across Wales in aid of, all things... Cancer Research, was another severe blow, especially the speed he was taken. His funeral, the first to be held at the Club, was a deeply emotional affair, attended by several hundred.

We mourn and remember all of them, as others who have passed but may have slipped under the radar. We intend to set aside one home match as a Memorial Day for all of them. More details to follow.



SECTION UPDATES

JUNIORS

Letchworth junior section is thriving. We currently have players in teams from under 13s through to under 16s.

Our aim in the junior section is to develop the players skills in a fun and encouraging environment. We want the players to love their rugby at the club.

The junior section has a great bunch of coaches who dedicate their time and efforts to develop the players with fun midweek training sessions, and the teams play matches against other clubs in the leagues and friendly matches on Sundays.

The junior section also go on tour most years which is always great fun.

Our ethos is to encourage players to play to the best of our abilities, to improve individual and teamwork skills but most of all, to have fun!



COLTS



Letchworth Colts section is aimed at boys in year 12 and 13. The current crop of players have moved through the mini and junior section at the club and are now enjoying playing rugby at Colts level. We currently have 24 players but we are always looking for new talent.

The Colts section has experienced coaches who have seen the lads develop over the years.

We have training mid-week and play friendly and league matches on a Sunday. Throughout the season the players will have the opportunity to play for the Senior Letchworth team. Our main aim is to develop the players to transition into seniors at Letchworth, but we also encourage the boys to have fun whilst playing. The Colts section has great comradery. Come join us and play at a great club.



GIRLS - GROWING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Girls' rugby at Letchworth Rugby Club continues to go from strength to strength, with increased numbers across every age group. It has developed into a thriving, welcoming community, with more players joining and enjoying the game each year.

This growth shows the increasing local interest in girls' rugby and the strong foundations being built within the club.

A growing pathway

Each season has seen more girls taking up rugby, with numbers increasing from the youngest U8/9 age groups through to the older girls' U14. This provides a clear pathway for players to progress through the club, developing their confidence, teamwork and rugby skills along the way.

The increase in participation reflects the hard work of our coaches, volunteers and families, as well as the positive and inclusive environment created at Letchworth Rugby Club.

Growing player numbers mean more opportunities for girls to train and play alongside friends and teammates. As the girl section expands, the club can offer a strong rugby experience, allowing players of different abilities to develop at their own pace while enjoying being part of a team.

This growth is strengthening the future of girls' rugby at Letchworth, creating a sustainable pathway from a player's first introduction to rugby through to the senior game.



Looking ahead

The future of girls' rugby at Letchworth Rugby Club is incredibly positive. With participation continuing to rise across every age group, the club is building a strong foundation for the years ahead.

We look forward to welcoming more girls and their families, helping grow the game and providing a fantastic environment in which young players can learn, compete, make friends and, most importantly, enjoy their rugby.

Girls' rugby at Letchworth is growing every season, and the best is still to come!

A NEW CHAPTER FOR THE WOMEN'S TEAM

The Lionesses begin a new chapter as Nick Winwood and Danny Ryall stepped down from coaching the women's team at the end of last season. We thank them both for their hard work and years of dedication to starting, building and growing the team. With their strong ties to Letchworth Rugby Club, we will still see them around Legends Lane, so this is certainly not goodbye.

Stepping into the coaching roles are Adam Bassett and Oscar Robinson. Yes, that Oscar, our 1st XV prop! They will be joined by familiar face Lee Sample, who will assist with coaching. We are grateful to all three for stepping up and

helping the team continue developing.

Pre-season has been hugely positive, despite the rock-hard ground and hot weather. We have welcomed an influx of women completely new to rugby, and it has been a pleasure helping them learn the basics, build confidence and discover the game. Training has included everything from fitness work to a Gladiator-style gauntlet, with lots of hard work, team spirit and laughter along the way.

Plenty of familiar faces from previous seasons remain too. We are proudly a development team, welcoming complete beginners alongside more experienced players. We want to learn, improve, challenge ourselves and be competitive, but enjoying our rugby matters just as much. Friendship, support and plenty of laughter are central to the Lionesses, both on the pitch and socially.

We were also unbeaten in the post-match boat race last season whenever super-hooker Claire was available. There was one match she missed, but we have collectively agreed to forget that one!

With new coaches, new players and the same Lionesses spirit, we are excited to see where this next chapter takes us.



OUR CLUB, OUR PEOPLE, OUR SEASON

MEMBERSHIPS

Letchworth Rugby Club is a members club and your membership fees are what enables us to carry on providing such great rugby facilities and opportunities to the local community.

If you haven't already signed up, please visit our website using the link shown right and select the membership that's right for you. For non-playing members, there are two ways to join and support the club – as a Vice President or a Social Member.

Please also take a moment to complete a Gift Aid form using the link shown right. It's a simple way to make your membership contribution go even further, at no additional cost to you. Every membership makes a difference, so if you're part of the Letchworth Rugby community, we'd love you to make it official and join us.

HOW WE CAN ALL BE MARKETERS

When we talk about marketing Letchworth Rugby Club, it's easy to think that's the job of whoever runs the website, creates the social posts or designs the posters. But the most powerful marketing tool our club has isn't Facebook, a website or a clever advert. It's all of us.

The strongest brands aren't built by brand and marketing teams alone. They're built by people - through what they say, what they do and the experiences they create for others. Our rugby club is no different and small actions make a big difference.

Every time you tell someone about the club, bring a friend to a match or recommend us to another player or parent, you're helping to market Letchworth Rugby Club. And there are lots of simple ways we can all do more.

If you see one of our social media posts, like it, comment on it and share it. It takes seconds but helps us reach considerably more people.

For recruitment, think about who you know. A child looking for their first sport, a teenager ready for something new, someone who used to play or who has never touched a rugby ball. Sometimes a personal invitation is all it takes to get someone through the door.

When we ask for volunteers for a clean-up, event or jobs around the club, lend a hand if you can. And remember, volunteering doesn't have to mean digging holes or painting walls. Whatever you do at work or play, there's probably a

MEMBERSHIP LINKS

To select and buy your membership, visit:
letchworthrugby.rfu.club/products

And don't forget to complete the Gift Aid form!

Gift Aid Form: form.jotform.com/262003152315037

If you have any questions about memberships please direct these in the first instance to Mike Allen, our new membership secretary:

michaelhughallen@gmail.com

way your skills could help so get in touch if you'd like to help.

Our sponsors and commercial partners are also hugely important too. You might not be able to sponsor the club yourself, but perhaps your employer could. Maybe a customer, supplier, friend or professional contact would benefit from getting involved.

Perhaps the simplest thing we can all do is talk positively about Letchworth Rugby Club. There's a huge amount happening at Legends Lane. We develop young players, provide opportunities across men's, women's, girls' and mixed ability rugby, support charities, run community events and give people somewhere to make friends and belong.

Tell people about it. Invite them down. Bring someone to a match. Share what's happening.

And when someone new does walk through our doors, say hello. Help them find where they're going. Make visiting teams and supporters feel welcome. Those experiences are part of our club too.

Some of the best marketing we can do costs absolutely nothing. So consider this your invitation to join the marketing team. No application form or meetings required - just keep talking, sharing, inviting, introducing and getting involved.

Because this is our club, and we all have a part to play in helping it thrive.

NOT ON OUR MAILING LIST?

If you didn't receive this newsletter by email, sign up to receive club news, match reports and updates straight to your inbox. Simply email your details to letchworthrugbyclub@outlook.com to join our mailing list.

PHOTOS FROM AROUND THE CLUB

Like Boxing Day Sales at the Club shop!



All set up and ready for lunch!



El Prez Brian Burke, with ex-1st XV skipper Darren Big Dog Spillane, Spencer Brown of Goldstar Promotions and Club Steward Teresa.



1st XV 2025/26 season

Night falls at Legends Lane at the end of the 2025/26 season



LEGENDS ANTHEM

Following on from our earlier article on the lost legends of the past year - two who are pictured here along with Dave Murray - El prez found himself in the "zone" and penned these lines before Richie's funeral in August. As it went down well it will be recorded this Autumn and hopefully the chant of "Legends" will ring out during the season to cheer on the lads and lasses!

Legends Song

From the lane they call Legends
You will hear the roar
We'll play with our hearts
Till we can play no more
With the touch line hooligans
Cheering us on
We'll give it our all
And sing this wee song

We'll go raring and tearing
And chasing the ball
We'll never give up
Till the last whistles call
O Legends O legends la la la la
O Legends O legends la la la la
For the black and amber
We do adore
That the club will last ever more

And back in the eighties
When we won the cup
With a proud band of brothers
Who'd never give up
In our finest hour
to the depths of despair
With Richie our leader
Our cheers rent the air

When my time it is over
I've scored my last try
I'll take my last look
At the Legends lane sky
Whether they burn me
Or throw me down in the dirt
Just send me away
In my old Letchworth shirt

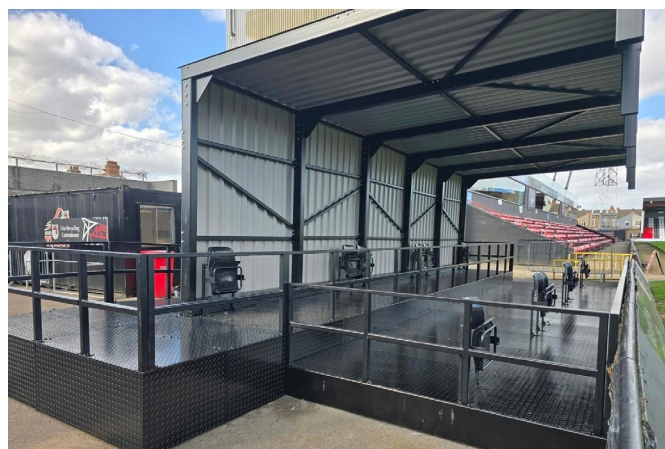
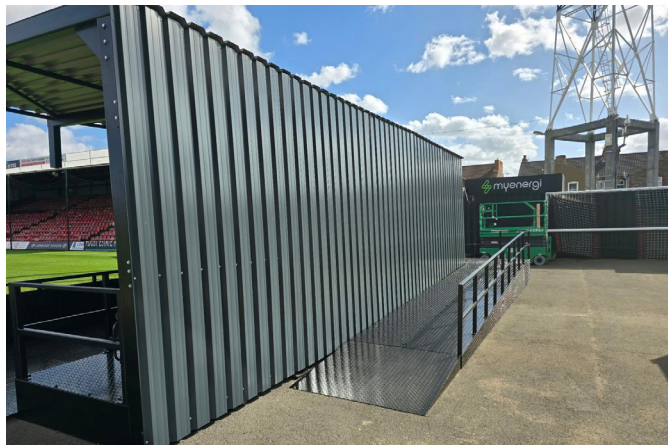
For the black and amber we do adore
That the Legends remain ever more

BB - 2026



COULD THIS BE OUR FUTURE AT LEGENDS LANE?

A big welcome and thank you to Jack Douglas Group, one of our latest club sponsors. Alongside their wider construction and development work, Jack Douglas Group also deliver sports stands and facilities - including the impressive examples pictured here.



It certainly got us thinking about what the future at Legends Lane could look like! We're delighted to have their support and look forward to building our relationship with them as part of the Letchworth Rugby family.

