

# PRESS RELEASE

29<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Lottery and Town Council commit to Youth Rugby in Calne.

Two very generous contributions, received this month, of £612 and £540, from Sport England and Calne Town Council, respectively, has ensured Calne Rugby Club's fledgling youth development project will be able to spread its wings and reach even more young people.

As part of an ongoing, long-term action plan Calne Rugby Club identified the sustainable provision of youth rugby as a crucial contribution to the long-term viability of the club's senior section. Moreover, the club recognised the potential benefit to the community by creating another much needed activity for the town's young people.

Tag Coaches Matt Snell and John Hope-Smith, along with their team of volunteers have been visiting local primary schools and teaching a non-contact version of Rugby. So far, Saint Dunstan, Saint Edmunds, Heddington and Hilmarton primary schools have welcomed Matt and his team. The team is also scheduled to pay visits to Fynamore and Derry Hill. Priestly and Holy Trinity have also expressed interests in accommodating Calne Rugby Club's Tag-Rugby team in the near future.

The feedback from the schools has been overwhelming and extremely encouraging. Hilmarton's Physical Education Coordinator, Claire Sowter, said, "At Hilmarton School we recognise that children today need to participate in as much physical exercise as possible to maintain healthy bodies and develop a positive attitude towards exercise which will last them into adulthood. The children have gained a positive introduction to rugby from the opportunity of having expert coaches visiting. For some of the children this was their first experience of this sport and many of them are now very keen to continue. We are very pleased to have been able to run these sessions as we greatly value giving children the chance to experience as wide a range of opportunities as possible, to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum. We really hope that these sessions will be able to continue in the future and are grateful to have been offered the opportunity."

It came as a welcome surprise that schools were so keen to rebook the Tag Coaches again. However, it became clear that external support was needed to fund the equipment and coach education required for further activity. Snell, a senior section committee member, said, "The Club itself has limited funding. Despite being willing and able to get the ball rolling, it was clear that the capital required to make the project sustainable would have to be sourced externally. This is where our own Council and Sport England, who are the sporting arm of the lottery, stepped in. We are obviously delighted and very grateful. It's great to see that the development of young people is taken so seriously at both the national and local level."

Sport England's contribution will be used to facilitate the purchase of all the equipment required. Tag-Rugby requires the use of a belt with two 'tag' attached by Velcro at either side. A tackle is made by removing a 'tag', making the game very inclusive and regularly enjoyed by teams of both girls and boys. As well as the belts, balls, bags, shirts and coaching clothing can now also be purchased thanks to the funding.

The donation from Calne Town Council will be used to educate the coaches. The English Rugby Football Union run regional courses to educate coaches to the required and recognised standard. As well as the Tag-Rugby qualification, the council have also contributed to the education of a number of Calne Rugby Club members as RFU Level 1 coaches. Currently, Level 1 coaches run contact rugby sessions through the club's recently formed youth section, which trains at Springfield School on Sunday mornings and caters for eleven year olds and upwards. The club is fortunate to have the services of Dave Lucas as the sections coach, however, as the section continues to expand Dave will require more and more assistance. Thanks to Calne's Council the club now has the funding to ensure this continuity.

Snell praised the Club's volunteers, "Despite creating provision for Calne's youth to play rugby being a very obvious step to take, it has been one of the hardest, most daunting, intimidating and time consuming tasks some of us have ever undertaken. Credit and praise must, therefore, be heaped upon our outstanding volunteers for the good start despite all the demanding work. We are all very aware that there is still a lot of work to be done. But I am absolutely sure that with the support of people like Dave Lucas, John Hope-Smith, Sean Lambourne, Nick Norgrove, Andy Horman, Jason Dolman, Andrew Donegan and Richard Kearney, along with the backing of bodies such as Sport England

and the Town Council, that the section will become very strong indeed and well as an outstanding success.”

Snell added, “New volunteers are always welcome. We have a number of vacancies to fill and are always on the look out for new talent. Any one interested should visit our website, [www.calnerfc.co.uk](http://www.calnerfc.co.uk), or call or email me on 07816 686764 or [play4calne@btopenworld.com](mailto:play4calne@btopenworld.com).”

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Other comments available from:

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Claire Sowter (Hilmarton Primary School) – 01249 760602  
Ann Kingdom (Calne Town Council) – 01249 814000

Photo Opportunities:

Matt Snell & Tag Rugby Team with Cheque from Council and certificate from Sport England, tag belts, balls etc. most Thursday evenings at 7.30pm at the Recreation Ground on Anchor Road. (This could be arranged sooner if required.)

Or

In action during a Tag Rugby Session at Fynamore school – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> April 3.45pm.