

DEVON RFU

DEVON RUGBY REVIEW

Newsletter 1 UPDATES November 25



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Devon RFU to Host Sponsorship Workshop at Cullompton RFC

Devon RFU is pleased to announce a dedicated Sponsorship Workshop taking place on Tuesday, 9th December at Cullompton RFC. The event is designed to help rugby clubs across the county strengthen their approach to sponsorship — a vital area for sustaining and growing the community game.

Delivered in partnership with the Orchard team and supported by the RFU, the session will explore the evolving landscape of sponsorship and provide practical guidance tailored to each club’s needs and ambitions.

- The workshop aims to help clubs:**
- Understand the current state of play in the world of sponsorship
 - Build strong foundations to create and deliver a sponsorship strategy
 - Learn key sales tips and hints to help attract and secure sponsors
 - Develop the ability to value their own sponsorship rights and assets
 - Understand how to maintain long-term, positive relationships with sponsors

The evening will be interactive, offering opportunities for learning, discussion, and networking with both peers and industry experts.

Time	Item
6:15 pm	Orchard team/RFU staff to arrive and set up
6:45 pm	Club arrivals and light supper served
7:05 pm	Introductions
7:10 pm	Orchard – Sponsorship Session Part 1
7:50 pm	Break
8:00 pm	Orchard – Sponsorship Session Part 2
8:45 pm	Wrap up
9:00 pm	Drinks and informal chats / depart at leisure

This workshop forms part of Devon RFU’s ongoing commitment to supporting clubs both on and off the pitch, ensuring they are equipped with the tools and knowledge to thrive in a challenging sporting environment.

Please confirm attendance as soon as possible.

For further information or to book your place, please contact Tim Warren via email: secretary@devonrfu.com

Devon Clubs Invited to RFU Local Club Surgery – Thursday 29 January at Topsham RFC

Devon RFU is pleased to share details of an upcoming **RFU Local Club Surgery**, taking place at **Topsham RFC on Thursday 29 January 2026**.

These sessions are part of the RFU’s new national initiative to bring **face-to-face support, guidance, and discussion** directly to community clubs. The event will run as a **drop-in session between 14:00 and 20:00** (times to be confirmed), allowing volunteers and club representatives to attend at a time that suits them.

What to Expect

This new-look format will provide a welcoming, flexible space for clubs to:

- Listen to key updates from RFU and local area staff
- Discuss ongoing projects and share feedback
- Access tailored advice on club development, facilities, volunteers, player pathways, and more
- Engage with RFU staff at themed “market stall” areas, each focusing on different aspects of the community game
- The aim is to create an informal, informative opportunity for clubs to connect with RFU representatives, ask questions, and explore the support available across all areas of club activity.

Why Attend?

The Local Club Surgeries are designed to ensure that:

- Every club, regardless of size or level, can access the guidance they need
- Local volunteers have direct conversations with RFU staff
- The RFU’s future plans and resources align closely with club needs

While the detailed agenda will be shaped by the outcomes of the recent **Club Needs Survey** and the **RFU Strategic Plan**, topics will cover a wide range of current priorities within the community game.

Looking Ahead

This is the **first round of Local Club Surgery events** for the South West region, with further sessions planned later in 2026. Clubs are also welcome to attend events outside the South West area if more convenient.

Further details, including the confirmed agenda and timings, will be shared closer to the date.

We strongly encourage **all Devon clubs** to attend — whether you’re looking to discuss specific projects, explore development opportunities, or simply connect with the RFU and neighbouring clubs, this is a great chance to get involved and have your voice heard.

Devon RFU Launches ‘Club Voice’ Meetings to Strengthen Grassroots Involvement

Devon RFU has launched a new initiative this season aimed at giving clubs across the county a stronger say in the future of the game — the Club Voice meetings.

These meetings are designed to ensure every club in Devon has the opportunity to shape discussions and decisions that affect community rugby. Whether the topic is the age-grade game, male or female rugby, governance issues such as discipline and RugbySafe, or broader themes like diversity, representative rugby, and areas for development — Club Voice provides a direct forum for feedback, ideas, and collaboration.

The first Club Voice meeting took place recently with **South Devon clubs**, hosted by **Teignmouth RFC**. The evening provided an open and constructive environment for clubs to share their experiences and raise topics that matter most to their players, volunteers, and communities.

- Issues discussed included:
- Future structure of Devon Cup Competitions
 - Trends in discipline
 - New Team Managers within our Representative sides
 - New Tamar Shield competition at levels 8/9 against Cornwall RFU (see news article below).

Devon RFU Chair Simon Fuller said:

“The aim of Club Voice is to make sure that clubs aren’t just being spoken to — they’re being listened to. Every club has valuable insight into what works and what needs attention, and these meetings are about making sure those voices shape the direction of rugby in Devon.”

Further Club Voice sessions will be held across the county in the coming months, giving all clubs the opportunity to engage directly with the Devon RFU leadership team and contribute to ongoing development of the game at all levels.

For more information on upcoming meetings, or to share topics your club would like to see discussed, **please contact Tim Warren**, secretary@devonrfu.com

Have your say on the future of Age-Grade Rugby!

We’re writing to ask all our clubs and their members – players, parents, coaches, volunteers and supporters – to take part in an important survey that will shape the future of youth rugby under Regulation 15.

What is Regulation 15?

Regulation 15 covers all age-grade rugby (up to U18) in clubs, schools and colleges. It sets out how players train, play, combine across age grades, play up or down, registration and welfare processes.

Why is the RFU reviewing it now?

The RFU is committed to ensuring that age-grade rugby remains safe, enjoyable, development-led and fit for purpose. The review of Regulation 15 is a key opportunity to reflect on how the game works for young players, what’s going well and where improvements are needed. By contributing your views, you help ensure your experience counts, and that any changes reflect the real world of club rugby.

Why your input matters

- Every coach, parent and player has a unique perspective: what works at training, what matters on match days, what children value most.
- If you’ve experienced “playing up” or “playing down” or combining age-groups, or if you’ve had thoughts around welfare, registration or competition formats – now is the time to speak up.
- The stronger the voice of our club and community, the more likely the review will capture the full breadth of experience and lead to meaningful change.

How can take part?

[Click here to access the survey](#), alternatively here is the link to copy and paste into your browser: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/46aec965896f-4fa0922e28bd936a5851>

It takes only a few minutes, but the impact can be large. We’d encourage all coaches, players (and their parents) to fill it in. Please share widely within your age-group networks so we get as full a picture as possible.

What will happen next?

Once the survey closes, the RFU will analyse the responses, identify key themes and will share feedback on next steps. We will also keep you updated on the outcomes and how any changes may affect us locally. Your responses will help shape policy that impacts our coaches’ decisions, how games are structured, how age-group logistics work, and how players enjoy the game.

Shaping the Future of the Women’s Game in Devon – Get Involved!

Our Female Director, **Keish**, is kicking off an exciting new phase for the women’s game across Devon — and she wants to hear from you!

Have Your Say

The **RFU** are **currently seeking feedback** to help shape the future of the women’s game. This is a great opportunity for players, coaches, parents, and volunteers to have their voices heard.

[Complete the survey here](#), alternatively here is the link to copy and paste into your browser: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/923N8ZG> Your input will help influence how the women’s game develops nationally and locally, so please share your thoughts and encourage others to take part.

Drop-In Sessions with Keish

Keish is also introducing **weekly virtual drop-in sessions** via Microsoft Teams — open to anyone involved or interested in the women’s game in Devon.

These informal sessions are a chance to:

- Ask questions
- Offer suggestions
- Share information or ideas
- Discuss challenges and opportunities

To make them accessible to everyone, the time will rotate weekly:

- Week 1: 08:00 · Week 2: 13:00
- Week 3: 18:00
- Week 4: 12:30

The first sessions will start **week commencing 17 November**, rotating **monthly between Tuesdays and Thursdays**.

If you think these would be useful, please get in touch — the more engagement, the better!

Club Visits

Keish is keen to get out and meet clubs face-to-face. If your club would like a visit **before the New Year**, please reach out and she’ll do her best to arrange it.

Contact: femalegame@devonrfu.com

“I’m currently in listening mode and really want to hear from everyone involved in the women’s game across Devon. Whether you play, coach, volunteer, or support — your views matter.” — **Keish**

Looking Ahead – Volunteers Needed

In **early 2026**, Keish will be looking for **volunteers** to help **create a framework and roadmap** for developing the women’s and girls’ game across Devon.

This group will help shape priorities and work alongside her to bring the plan to life. If you’re passionate about growing the game, please keep an eye out for updates early in the new year!

Let’s continue to build momentum and ensure Devon remains a leading county for women’s and girls’ rugby. Please complete the survey, drop into a session, or reach out directly — your voice will help shape the future.

Contact Keish: femalegame@devonrfu.com

Introducing the Tamar Shield – A New Devon vs Cornwall Clash!

Devon RFU is delighted to announce the launch of a brand-new cross-county competition with our close neighbours, **Cornwall RFU** — the **Tamar Shield**. This exciting new fixture will see **players from Counties Divisions 2 and 3 (RFU Levels 8 and 9)** go head-to-head later this season, adding another fantastic chapter to the long-standing rugby rivalry between the two counties.

The **Tamar Shield** will sit proudly alongside the **Tamar Cup** — the well-established senior representative fixture between Devon and Cornwall — and last season’s hugely successful **Women’s Tamar Cup**, which showcased the growing strength and depth of the women’s game across both counties.

Building Opportunity and Connection

Both Unions share a passion for providing meaningful playing opportunities and continuing to develop the game at every level. The Shield fixture will bring together some of the best players from the heart of community rugby — a true showcase of skill, pride, and local rivalry.

The introduction of the Tamar Shield provides an additional representative opportunity for talented players from across Devon’s community clubs. It’s a chance to:

- Recognise and reward performance at grassroots level
- Strengthen ties between local clubs and the county pathway
- Celebrate the competitive spirit that defines Devon rugby

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Details to Follow
Match dates, venues, and squad selection details will be confirmed and shared in due course — so keep an eye on the **Devon RFU website** and **social media channels** for updates.

We’re looking forward to seeing players from across the county pull on the green, black, and white to represent Devon and compete for the inaugural **Tamar Shield!**

“This new competition is a great step in recognising and celebrating the depth of talent we have within our local clubs. The Tamar Shield will provide a valuable pathway and another chance for players to experience county rugby while strengthening the friendly rivalry with our Cornish neighbours.” — *Simon Fuller, Chair Devon RFU*

New Hardship Fund to Support Young Players in Our Rugby Family

The Devon rugby community has always prided itself on being inclusive — a place where every young person can enjoy the game, make friends, and build life-long skills both on and off the pitch. To help ensure that no player misses out due to financial pressures, we’re proud to launch the **Age-Grade Rugby Hardship Fund**.

The Hardship Fund will provide tp to £75 of **targeted financial support** to help young players stay involved in rugby when costs might otherwise become a barrier. Whether it’s help with **kit, equipment, festival, tour fees, or club membership costs**, the fund is there to make sure that every child who wants to

Clubs, coaches, and parents can apply for support on behalf of a player where genuine need exists. Each application will be treated confidentially and assessed on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that help reaches those who need it most.

Devon RFU Director of Age-Grade Rugby said:

“Rugby should be open to everyone, no matter their background. This fund is about removing barriers so that every young person can experience the joy, friendship, and growth that come from being part of a team.”

We’re encouraging all clubs across the county to share details of the Hardship Fund with their members and help spread the word. Together, we can keep more young people in the game — and make sure rugby continues to be a sport for all.

For more information, or to find out how to apply for support, please **contact Sas** agegradechair@devonrfu.com

Devon Cup Competitions 2025/2026

A big thank you to all clubs, that have participated in this year’s competitions. We have now progressed to the finals.

These will take place in the New Year, and whilst we have provisional dates in the diary, and now that we know who and where they will take place I will be working and communicating with each club to agree and finalise these in the next couple of weeks. The purpose is to support each club to maximise the individual opportunity, whilst looking at all other games that are going on and keeping eyes on weather and potential league impacts. If any of the finalists wish to talk with me directly, please feel free to call me on 07831287530

- Senior Cup Final:** Brixham V Exmouth
- Senior Shield Final:** Tiverton V Topsham
- Intermediate Cup Final:** Barnstaple Seconds V Okehampton
- Intermediate Plate Final:** Newton Abbot V Cullompton
- Devon Junior Cup Final:** Exeter Saracens V Withycombe
- Devon Junior Bowl Final:** New Cross V Totnes / Plymouth Argumn / OPM’s
- Second Team Cup Final:** Devonport Services V Topsham
- Second Team Shield Final:** Exmouth V Paignton.

We were disappointed at a number of clubs, who have withdrawn from the cup, after entering each competition and we will be looking at how we can tighten this up for next season.

Chris Forster,
Devon Cup’s Administrator
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