Communications, Marketing and Sponsorship.

Date Aug 2025

Update Report compiled by **Dean Gray (DG)**

Key events, issues, and achievements since the last report.

Website

The website is now bedded in and the increase in numbers accessing it for information and documents as evidenced in my Annual Report is impressive although there was some initial criticism about its functionality and lay out on mobile devices, those faults have been rectified. **(Ongoing).**

As previously stated, NRURS have opted for a separate website at this time, although it must be said that opinions are divided as to whether that is the right decision as the quality of the new NRU website is widely recognised. Conversations will continue with NRURS over the close season about giving them a dedicated section on the NRU website **(Ongoing)**

Sponsorship discussions

We have a small but growing number of sponsors who continue to support the growth of rugby in Northumberland but will continue to look to build upon this dependent upon what happens to County rugby moving forward.

Dave Penny is the main sponsor for Northumberland RFU for this season, and we also have a number of sponsors whose support is hugely valued and appreciated, including Cathryn Calrk Physiotherapy, Total Business Group, Aspire Digital Marketing Henry Cave and, of course, Gilbert.

A new Sponsorship Document has been produced and over the close season I intend to focus on growing the number of and revenue generated by Sponsors. **(Ongoing)**

Gilbert sponsorship

The Gilbert Shop is displayed on our Website in a prominent position. Gilbert have given the CB free tickets for Falcons matches on a monthly basis. Claire organises distribution to the Clubs to reward volunteers / as a thank you to our county volunteers.

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The revenue from sales has increased substantially over the last couple of years following renegotiation of the contract, but I want this to grow even more- especially at key times of the year- i.e. the start of the season, Christmas and during the County season with special offers including bundles of kit.

We renegotiated the contract two seasons ago, so we receive a Gift of Kit irrespective of sales made (previously it was targeted at £15,000 and below that figure we received nothing). The figures indicate that the GoK this season will be slightly in excess of £3,000- up from £1,800 two years ago. (a 67% increase) **(Ongoing)**

Marketing (ongoing)

Northumberland needs to be relevant to it stakeholders – namely its constituent clubs and all their members .

If we follow that logic, we should therefore not solely promote the CB, its events and matches on our social media but also share anything directly Rugby related posted by our clubs in order to increase our engagement with and promote them.

This we have done, and the results are below-
According to our latest figures (as at 13th June 2025) we have-
54,200 website sessions in the last 12 months (up 120% on previous year)
27,900 sessions came from the Google search engine results pages (Up 106%)
11,700 sessions came from social media (up 399%)
The website appeared as a listing on Google 713,000 times in the last 12 months with click through rate increasing from 1.7% to 3%.
1,290 website form workflows completed
4,270 documents downloaded from the website (123.5% increase on previous period)
The number of people looking at our Facebook pages as a result has also increased hugely and continues to grow- from 1,035 in Nov 21 to 2,300 (as of 13/6/2025)- an increase of 122%
X (Twitter) users have also rise from 1,416 three years ago to 2,748 – an increase of 194%.
Instagram figures are also up over twelve months – from 1817 to 2039 (up 12%)
The more traffic we get through our social media and especially our website, the greater the opportunity we have of marketing the CB, attracting sponsors and selling our goods and the better the relationships we can foster with our clubs.
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I am the Rugby Correspondent and main Radio commentator for BBC Newcastle- as such I will continue to try to increase the profile of community rugby in Northumberland wherever I can bt interviewing local figures in the Rugby Community at Half Time and carrying stories about the Community Game as well as fixtures and scores.
(Ongoing)

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Team of the Month
Ongoing with Newcastle Falcons with the Committee again voting on whom, amongst the entries should get 20 tickets to a Falcons match of choice. We are reviewing this as recent experience has been that it has been either a feast (lots of entries) or famine (we have had to run months together) **(Ongoing)**

County Membership Drive (ongoing)

I am working with the County Secretary on a range of proposals to increase County membership and the revenue from it- and thence potentially- sponsorship by making the offering more attractive. **(Ongoing)**

All CB Reps are encouraged to become County members **(Ongoing).**

New CB Rep Doc with role and responsibilities to be produced in the Summer **(Ongoing)**

All Whats App and F/book Groups for information for various County teams and groups are well established and have proper oversight. There have been one or two spark points between clubs and coaches but these have been successfully defused. **(Ongoing)**

Issues requiring Decision, Discussion or Dissemination
Former Players Lunch – date, venue, format. To link into with Presidential Team- **(Ongoing)**
Offering to County members- **(Ongoing).**

NB – This report must not include personal or identifiable data as it may be appended to the Board Minutes. If there is a need to report on a Confidential matter, please forward that communication separately, marked 'Confidential'.

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