

## **Mistley RUFC Annual Report 2024/5**

After last seasons' promotion for our 1st XV to London & SE Division Eastern Counties 2 ,we were somewhat apprehensive at the start of the new season in September 2024 as we faced new challenges and untested opposition. However, with new players who had joined us from other clubs and a much improved coaching team and having narrowly lost the first two games, our strive to win paid off. As the season comes to an end and with one match still to play we are third in the table having played 19 games. This has exceeded our expectations.

Our 2nd XV,The Marauders have had an outstanding season and are runaway leaders and again with one game left are due for promotion to Eastern Counties Division One South. In addition they are in the finals of the Suffolk RUFC Bronze Cup and we await the name of our opposition in the final and the date. Sadly the only negative is that a few clubs have struggled to put out a team and have forfeited matches. However Mistley have a strong squad and have been able to honour all their games.

We also played a Veterans game with our older players and those from other Clubs against Felixstowe back in Oct 2024 under floodlights and we retained The Thorn Cup on our annual Boxing Day game against Harwich.

Success for our Senior sides is only one half of the equation but what gives us the most pride is the number of our youth members which has increased to 141 children between the ages of 3-16 who enjoy all aspects of rugby every Sunday with a mixture of training, games and festivals. We have successfully hosted two Eastern Counties Festivals which has brought teams from across Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire to enjoy our facilities and our area. In addition our U14's won the Suffolk Plate competition which is a significant achievement as there was stronger competition from the bigger clubs including Colchester. Over 200 parents and spectators came to watch the game.

We, as our Club, have also demonstrated a commitment to inclusive participation and launched a Women's side who are known as The Swans. There are some 25 players who are playing competitively against local teams. They are looking to recruit and are a very welcome addition to the Club and our future prospects.

Our commitment to the local community is also paramount as we strive to improve our standing and wellbeing.We have been involved in supporting a number of local projects including the Tendring food bank, the Pram Race which we are holding again on 24th August,The Manningtree Regatta where we won the Men's Tug of War and Remembrance Day where we entertain our local Veterans after the Service .On the10th August in association with The Rotary Club of Manningtree we are hosting their Fun Day for all The Family event at Furze Hill and all profits go to local charities and International causes The Rotary Club support each year. We also provide coaches for sessions at The Mistley Kids club and our facilities are open to the Women's football team and Judo club.We also

coach at the local schools. We have also hosted Future Makers Rugby sessions to help people reach their potential through touch rugby.

Our next stage in the Club's future as per our original plans is to knock down the original wooden clubhouse and build showers and new facilities for our Ladies and youth teams. In addition we are finalising the lease details with the Parish Council on the land behind the Clubhouse re new playing field and additional car parking spaces. We will be seeking new funding from various sources and hopefully obtain some grant money. Due to hard work by many and prudence we are financially strong at present and this will assist us in seeking out these monies.

The above can only happen and, as I say each year, without the tireless work from all our committed volunteers. They strive in all aspects to improve the success of the club on and off the field. Regardless of what they do from the Coaches to those who work in the Kitchen is very much wholeheartedly appreciated by us all. Also to our generous sponsors who have helped in providing new kit and equipment. The goodwill and camaraderie within the club is at an all time high.

Thank you to everyone of you.

Finally our President Mark Towler would like to welcome you all for our President's Day held at the Club from 12pm onwards on the 3rd May.

Willy Meston

Past President