

The future of RAshop.co.uk

Within the next couple of weeks we are physically moving the Supplies operation from Coventry to Nuneaton. This proposed change was first mentioned in last year's Treasurer's Report, which was approved at the AGM. The planning has taken several months and is now coming to fruition having finalised all the necessary legal and financial agreements.

The point in the exercise was to continue this important service to members but in a commercially viable manner. In short, our operational costs have increased yet our sales volume has declined. We now operate at little more than 'break-even' and that is unsatisfactory. If the decline were to continue, we would be making a loss.

Outsourcing the business makes good sense both to us and to our new partner, Sporting Touch. They run a successful football kit business supplying teams and individuals mostly by mail order and principally web-based. They have marketing, selling and delivery skills we could never match. It is through them that we source our Nike referees' kit.

They have formed a new division in their company to supply referees and that will be under our own banner – *RAshop*. We will directly benefit from the growth they will achieve. We were particularly impressed by their marketing set-up and this will be backing the promotion of our brand.

They will be managing our existing business and using their skills to increase sales through promotions to ourselves as well as the wider refereeing fraternity. They are our current partners in the Nike brand offer we have very successfully launched. ST has other useful branded connections that we can also benefit from in extending our ranges.

There are no guarantees in the smoothness of such a change; our planning has been very detailed and the disruption to the business during the change-over should be minimal. Andy Stickley has been running our business for the past three years and we do thank him for the work he has done for us. We are delighted he has found a new job locally starting soon after he leaves the RA. Further details of the change-over process and how it will affect your ordering process will be given soon. In the meantime, things proceed as normal.

Head Office staff

We can confirm that Karen Vince has left her employment with the RA. We would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the members of the RA, to wish her all the best for the future. We are in the process of reviewing our staffing requirements, to determine how/when a replacement should be recruited. In the meantime, her job will be covered by Board Members on a part-time basis and as full a service as possible will be provided. It might not always be Monday to Friday for the coming weeks but we will ensure messages from members – phone, letter and email – will be dealt with expeditiously.

QUEST goes from strength to strength

More and more Societies are gaining accreditation; recent additions are: West Somerset, Mid Sussex, High Wycombe and Grimsby [all Bronze awards], Barkston Ash and Portsmouth [Silver awards].

A couple of familiar faces making QUEST presentations of certificates at Society meetings. On the right at Portsmouth and far right at Grimsby.

We have a growing number of applications for this mark of distinction being processed and further awards will be announced soon.



Is your Society participating? Any queries on how to get involved should be addressed to Laura Ritchie, the Board Member who is now overseeing QUEST implementation. Contact her via: ra@footballreferee.org.

Sad news of the passing of two members

Stan Lover, a staunch member of the RA and a FIFA Instructor and Football League Assessor, passed away on December 5. Stan was a writer of many publications on refereeing and was a good friend of Sepp Blatter. The funeral took place on 16 December in Paris and Peter Allen, who had been in close contact with Stan in his final days, was NMRA representative at the funeral and gave the eulogy.

Bill Dawson was Doncaster's longest-serving member with over 60 years' service. He died on 7 January, 4 days short of his 94th birthday.

Closing date approaches for nominations for the 2014 Board election

A reminder to all that nomination papers must be with us by 1 February. Applications are open to all who have been in membership for three years or more. We particularly welcome those from people who have valuable business management experience and the time to devote to helping to manage the Association. Three seats are to be contested this year.

Liaison with County RAs

Following the resignation of Roy Cheshire, we have had to re-allocate some responsibilities to other members of the Board. The primary contacts for Roy's old areas will be:

Armed Services' RAs and Essex	Ian Campbell
Sussex, Jersey and Guernsey	Albert Astbury
Kent and Surrey	Len Randall

These 'buddies' will be the main point of contact for queries of a general nature. Detailed enquiries such as on membership matters should still be directed, best by email, to ra@footballreferee.org.

Joining the RAFA Incentive Scheme

When new referees complete their 6 match form for their County FA, there is a box at the bottom asking them to tick if they would like to join the incentive scheme. Referees who tick the box are registered by the FA who then sends the list of names to First Media who then send out the log books to the referees. First Media manages the scheme for the FA.

Referees who decide to join the scheme sometime after their first 6 matches can either email the FA (Holly.Papps@thefa.com) or Farai (Farai.Hallam@thefa.com). Any other question relating to the incentive scheme or referees' orders need to contact First Media at ra-fa@firstmedia.co.uk.

Is membership worth it? The answer is YES.

The question is repeatedly asked: Why join the RA? What do we get for our £6 or £12 subscription?

All RA members have access to a number of benefits and it is possible to assign a monetary value to some of the products and services available.

RA-FA Incentive Scheme – available to RA members only, other referees don't get the benefit.

Any member in the scheme who officiates throughout the season as well as attending society meetings, training sessions and RA-FA events should accumulate sufficient points to claim a reward under the scheme.

A new Nike referee kit including shirt, shorts and socks can be got for free. He/she simply redeems the necessary points in exchange for a brand new kit. The current cost to purchase such a kit without a badge from the RA would be £55.50.

The member is now in profit by £43.50 (adult) and £49.50 (Youth) over the subscription paid just on this one reward for refereeing games and going to meetings and is only available to RA members.

RA Conference

All members are able to attend the RA Conference each July. The cost to a member is NIL. Any non-member was required to pay £25.00 to attend Conference in July 2013. Therefore, a member has achieved an additional £25 benefit compared to a non-member.

RA Benevolent Fund

Access to the Benevolent Fund is available to members and their dependants when it can be shown that there is financial hardship. All applications to the Fund are means tested. Applications should be submitted where there is a significant change in the financial circumstances of a member or family. Such circumstances could include a period of unemployment or inability to work through injury/ill-health.

The Fund should not be considered as available where a death has resulted. The average payment is in the region of £1,000. A member who makes a successful application to the Fund would be unlikely to pay subscriptions greater than the benefit from the Fund over their entire lifetime!

RA Full Accident Management Service

We have made an agreement with Spencer Hayes Insurance Accident Assist. They will assist a member should he/she be involved in an accident or need to report any incident, including theft or damage to their vehicle. It may include reporting the incident to a member's insurance company and, where necessary, liaising with all parties involved including third parties' insurance companies, engineers, repairers etc.

Additional assistance may include replacement vehicle service, vehicle repair service, litigation service and key return service (may be subject to non-fault and other conditions). All this is free to members. Bought with your household or car insurance as an add-on, which is the way it is normally sold, typically costs £30 a year. So, don't renew yours if you have it; get ours free!

Legal Helpline

Constant's Legal Helpline is now available to the RA Members in partnership with Spencer Hayes Insurance. A member can pick up the phone and receive FREE initial help with any legal matter and such advice is available 24/7. A wide range of legal topics are covered including consumer rights, house purchase / sale, criminal offences, neighbour dispute, family / child care, debt / welfare issues and medical problems to name a few.

Conditions do apply and include the maximum number of calls and duration of calls (any call limited to 45 minutes). The advice may simply be to refer a member to an appropriate body. *Constant* is also available to a member's immediate family including spouse, children, parents and grandparents.

Members gain this benefit at NIL cost. A non-member could expect to pay between £45-100 per hour for such advice.

Paris Smith – Partnership Scheme

Paris Smith LLP is a firm of solicitors in Southampton who work for the RA. We have entered a partnership agreement with them to provide our members with legal advice at preferential rates. Advice is available on a wide range of matters such as: purchase / sale of a property, making a will, planning tax affairs, relationship breakdown and legal implications of living with a partner. Paris Smith has solicitors with specialist knowledge.

Conveyancing benefits - include a 10% discount on basic legal fees, waiver of £60.00 plus VAT fees for stamp duty transactions (Purchase only), assistance with appointment of estate agent or surveyor and no compromise on service.

Wills and Estate Planning benefits – include fixed fee rates for single (£190 + VAT) and joint wills (£290 + VAT), 10% discount to hourly rate on complex estate planning for both lifetime and post-death, assistance with estate administration, advice on legal and tax issues and support from specialist lawyers.

Relationships benefits – include a free ½ hour consultation to all clients, 10% discount on any further fees, advice on financial and children issues, advice on pre-nuptial agreements, access to mediation service and access to specialist lawyers. To access these range of services a member will need to produce their membership card or proof of RA membership.

RAshop

Large purchases attract discounts claimable both by individual members and Societies.

Summary of cash value of RA membership

We often hear of complaints: what does the RA do for me? Why do I pay £12?

For an annual RA subscription of £12 for an adult, the potential gains are:

RAFA Incentive Scheme potential profit to member:	£55.50
RA Conference non-member cost:	£25.00
Accident Management non-member cost:	£30.00 (minimum)
Constant legal helpline non-member cost:	£45.00 (minimum)
Total member benefit / profit:	could be £155.50

And don't forget the added bonuses that are there:

Benevolent Fund membership *RAshop* discounts Paris Smith legal fees discounts

NOT A BAD DEAL FOR A £12 MEMBERSHIP FEE!!

Chiltern District Member honoured with 50-year membership award

The most recent presentation by Ray Mallery on behalf of the Board was on 5 December to John Oxley of Chiltern District RA. John [on the right in our picture] started out in Ealing, Middlesex and moved with his work as a teacher to Buckinghamshire.

His 50 years' membership has included over 40 years' meritorious service, typifying the supportive work so many of our members put in. He remains Treasurer of both his County RA and his Society. He has been a regular attender at Conferences and AGMs. Well done John!



Medway Fitness Training Celebrate 1st Year With Grant From Kent RA

Medway Referees are celebrating the first anniversary of starting their Fitness Training at Medway Park, with a grant from the Kent Referees Association. "The money has enabled us to purchase some training equipment, which will help to vary the weekly training sessions" said Andy Shepherd, who set up the training nights with John Garvey.

Andy contacted the KRA Secretary asking about the possibility of a grant to help purchase some training equipment. Once the KRA had ensured that the money would be put back into refereeing, they donated £200.00 towards the purchase of the equipment. "We would like to place on record our thanks to the KRA Officers for their generous grant" said Andy Shepherd.

John and Andy knew that there was a referees training night at Ashford, but from Medway / Gravesend or Dartford that is a long journey. They therefore decided to try and secure somewhere local and the result is that Medway Park is now their home, each Wednesday night between 8pm and 9pm.

Upon securing Medway Park they contacted Nick Dunn, the RDO for the Kent FA, with their proposal to see if they would help to promote and fund the sessions. Nick saw the benefit from such training for all referees and agreed to help with partly funding each session.

Is fitness training something your Society could put on?

Our commercial!

Rachel wants to sell her personal number plate.

She is offering **REF 334** with an asking price of £1000.

It can be transferred to your vehicle or put onto retention for the future and this cost is included in the sale price.

Call Rachel: 07976247735 or e-mail Fricker1@supanet.com

RA News is produced by the Internal Communications Committee and distributed to all County RAs and ABSs as well as to our Life Members. It is intended that every member should see it and get to know what is happening. Most ABSs have an email circulation system to their individual members.

Please forward this to them.

The Referees' Association, Unit 12 Ensign Business Centre, Westwood Business Park, COVENTRY CV4 8JA

02476 420360

ra@footballreferee.org

www.refereesassociation.co.uk