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Issue 13

Editor's letter

Soon we hope to bid farewell to the frost of winter, and as we look forward to welcoming the beauty of spring, we're thrilled to present the first issue of Otium for 2025 - issue 13 and we dare say, our best one yet! With the Men's Six Nations Championship roaring back to life in the rugby world, it's time to indulge in the energy, passion and camaraderie that make rugby such an exhilarating sport. This tournament isn't just a highlight on the rugby calendar; it signals that spring is on its way. And let's not forget the Men's British & Irish Lions Tour on the horizon, where we proudly support as front-of-shirt sponsor and Principal Partner. To celebrate, we've featured Howden Ambassador and Lions legend, Jamie Roberts, in this edition.

But it's not all about rugby! With cricket, horse racing, tennis and golf also gearing up for major events this year, we've a spring/summer to look forward to! Regardless of your sport, there's something for everyone. Soon, we'll gather at local sports clubs in the sunshine, playing, spectating, or volunteering. This brings us to our theme for the quarter; the incredible volunteers who make sport happen at every level.

Sport thrives on dedication and selflessness. Volunteers are the backbone, ensuring clubs, competitions, and training sessions run smoothly. Their commitment fuels the entire sporting community.

In this issue, we proudly feature a series of Q&As with volunteers from across the sports sector. These incredible individuals embody the spirit of giving back. Their insights offer a fascinating glimpse into the triumphs and challenges they face, reminding us of the vital role of volunteers in shaping the future of sport.

Another crucial topic we address is the changing landscape of safety and risk management in sport. With Martyn's Law expected to be enacted into law in the coming months, aimed at enhancing security measures in public spaces, there are significant implications for sports clubs and event organisers. We provide an overview of what this means for volunteers and governing bodies, ensuring those who dedicate their time to supporting sport have the knowledge they need to keep their communities safe.

We also highlight our Howden Grassroots Heroes winners for 2024. These outstanding individuals have shown extraordinary commitment to their sports, and we are thrilled to share their stories. Recognising their efforts is one way to show our appreciation for the tireless work that often goes unnoticed but is essential to the success of grassroots sport. This edition of Otium shines a spotlight on the remarkable work done by the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) in the equestrian world. They provide life-changing experiences for individuals with disabilities and our special feature explores the impact of their programmes and the volunteers who make them possible.

We understand that volunteering isn't always easy. Balancing commitments can be challenging. It is crucial that volunteers receive support in order to maintain their own personal well-being. In our article 'Bridging the Gap,' with help from Praxis42, we offer practical advice for volunteers on establishing healthy boundaries, delegating responsibilities and how to make a difference without feeling overwhelmed.

As a specialist sports insurance broker, we know the importance of having the right protections in place. The risks in sport are ever-changing and it's our mission to support the sporting community by providing expert advice and tailored insurance solutions. Whether it's liability coverage, safeguarding considerations, or adapting to new legislative changes, we're here to help ensure that sport remains a safe and enjoyable environment for all.

To volunteers across the country; this issue is dedicated to you! Thank you for helping to build a community in your sport. To governing bodies, we are proud to help you continue to provide a space where volunteering is valued and encouraged, keeping the sporting community thriving.

Enjoy getting back outside, embrace the season's energy, and most importantly, take a moment to appreciate sport volunteers at every level.

Warm regards,

Emma Tildesley
Head of Sport & Entertainment, Regions



Andy Goulbourne
Head of Client Service



From the pitch



An interview
with Jamie Roberts

to the people



SINCE 1888

HENDEN

As the rugby world gets ready for another thrilling season, all eyes are on the start of the Guinness Six Nations – a competition steeped in tradition and fierce rivalries. This annual showdown between the best teams in Europe never fails to capture the imagination of fans. With the countdown to The Qatar Airways British & Irish Lions Tour to Australia 2025 also underway, anticipation is reaching fever pitch. A British & Irish Lions Tour represents the pinnacle of rugby union, uniting the home nations in a quest for glory against the Southern Hemisphere's finest, and we are proud to be a Principal Partner of this year's tour.

Following on from our interview with Gavin Hastings in our last edition of Otium, we're excited to interview Lions legend and Welsh rugby star Jamie Roberts, continuing our commitment our commitment to the Lions ahead of this year's tour. Jamie delves into his passion for rugby – from the impact of being a teenager watching the 'Living with Lions' documentary, to being mentored by Brian O'Driscoll, Jamie reflects on his experiences as a Welsh rugby union player and a British & Irish Lion and how the values of unity resonate not only at the elite level, but also through grassroots rugby.



Q

Jamie, you've had a memorable rugby career. What did it mean to you to represent The British & Irish Lions?

A

There's no doubt about it, the Lions changed my life.

On my first tour in 2009, I was very well aware that being a part of The British & Irish Lions is the pinnacle of what you can achieve as a rugby player. There are of course your own individual goals as well as team goals in professional rugby, and whilst you strive to be the best player possible personally, you want to win things for your team first and foremost.

Being selected for Wales, my country, was incredible and I'm forever grateful for that, but getting chosen for the Lions means being selected as the best of the best of the four teams across the U.K. and Ireland. It's a fantastic accolade for any player, and to win on a Lions Tour is the goal and the greatest achievement, which I was lucky enough to experience in 2013. The tour is like nothing else – you have a few weeks to prepare to play against the greatest teams in the world! I really do mean it when I say it changed my life and it was one of the best times of my life too.

Q

The Lions are a unique concept in rugby, bringing together players from four nations. How do you think this mirrors in grassroots sports?

A

I think there are parallels – there's nothing like the Lions in world sports that I can think of other than perhaps the Ryder Cup, but even that's on an individual basis. You've got to remember that a few months before a Lions Tour that these guys who become a team for The British & Irish Lions are giving each other everything they've got in the Six Nations. The ability to do that pushes you both as a player and a person. The same can be said for fans as well, one month Scotland and Wales might have been going at each other in the stands and then later that year you're cheering for the same team, together, with your previous rivals.

It's similar in grassroots – teams might have local derbies but if there's a player short on your opposition, you could end up playing for them on the day. You might also have friends or siblings who don't play for the same club as you, and you might even end up playing against them at some point! What's so great about rugby is the values engrained within the sport, and the local community is really where the game belongs. I started out in a community club just like everyone else and professional players have very fond memories of their roots and the clubs they grew up in. They are happy memories when you think back to when you were playing rugby with your mates to enjoy it and have fun! You reflect very fondly on those times when you retire.

Whether you're a fan or a player, you have to adjust your expectations and come together.

Q Thinking back, what were some of the things you did to prepare for your first Tour? How did this differ from your second in Australia?

A I was lucky to experience two tours and had contrasting emotions on both. 2009 was the best tour of my life – South Africa is an incredible country culturally and one I have always loved on a personal level, but it’s also an amazing country for a rugby tour.

Losing the second test in Loftus (Versfeld Stadium) was brutal. I’ve never known a changing room like it in my career. It was pretty heartbreaking to put your all into something and come out with a loss. Then in 2013, it was the polar opposite.

The tour to Australia ended in us shaking hands with James Bond (Daniel Craig) in Sydney, popping champagne! You go through a whole spectrum of emotions. The contrast of those two tours – and there were seven or eight of the boys who were also on both tours so know this feeling too – was immense, and that distinction between the changing room atmosphere of both tours and the emotions that came from this really stand out to me.

Q What were your standout moments during your time with the Lions?

A I just remember being at Pennyhill Park in our first week training before flying to Johannesburg in 2009 and being completely blown away by how simple everything was.

I had this vision of the Lions being complicated and this big playbook and everything being so intricate and intense – I couldn’t have been more wrong. We turned up, and in the best way possible, I felt like I was back in U12s. All the drills were quite simple and straightforward; reason being that the coaching group had concluded we needed to nail the basics to beat South Africa.

I came with all these ideas and expectations of how gruelling it was going to be, and I was transported back to my childhood days! The only difference was that I was now doing these drills with world-class adult players, the best that the UK & Ireland had to offer. Everything was simplified to nail the basics, and that was a real moment for me. Sometimes we dress up the game to be more complex than it needs to be, and those drills really proved that to me.

Q

Injuries are an inevitable part of rugby. How did you overcome injuries as an athlete, both physically and mentally?

A

Injuries will always be a challenging time in any player's career. I reckon I spent about three years out of the game overall recovering from surgery due to injury, and it's a tough position for any athlete.

As a rugby player, you have to know that injury is an occupational hazard. Rugby can be an intense sport and even more so at the top end!

Once you come to terms with the idea mentally that injuries are part and parcel of the job, you can start to accept it and become more understanding of it when it's your time. Inevitably, you're going to miss games and test matches due to injury.

Because of that injury, someone might play better than you in training or in a test, but it's just a minor blip in your career.



I missed the first two tests in Australia due to a hamstring injury. I was desperate to play – icing my hamstring three times a day for weeks, and just following all of the advice and stretches that were recommended, often getting up in the middle of the night to complete exercises because I was so eager to get back on the field! I rested, I stuck to my programme, and I was selected in the end for the third test of that tour which was pivotal in the end.

You have to respect your medics and rehab and listen to them. Some players have more injuries than others in their career, that's just the way it is. It's a question of when in rugby, not if, you're going to get injured. There's a lot of talk about prehabilitation now on strengthening your joints and getting some injury prevention techniques into your routine which is great and definitely something to look into – but you have to remember that sometimes no matter how much prep you do, you might get on the field, and suffer an injury regardless, and you have to mentally get onboard with that.



Q

Grassroots rugby depends on a strong sense of community. Did you see echoes of this camaraderie within the Lions camp?

A

Rugby has strong values, and those values permeate from the community game to the top levels. You work hard for your teammates, you respect your teammates, and you want to achieve for everyone.

Regardless of what level you play, strong values of camaraderie and respect are there, which is one of the wonderful things about rugby.

What I love about rugby is that you can travel to the other side of the world, meet rugby people, and just get on, because you share values of integrity. It's a sport that shapes you and how you go about life as well as sport, and it really is the common thread through everyone that plays rugby from grassroots teams to the Lions. Players love the game and embody the values of the game in the clubhouse and on the pitch.

Q

On those values and your journey from grassroots to pro, could you share any lessons or values you learnt over your career?

A

Be the honest rugby player.

There was a documentary, around 1997 (Living with Lions) that really brought it home for me. There's a speech from Jim Telfer and it was a massive catalyst of love for the Lions for me. I was a teenager at the time, and I remember watching it so well and hearing all about what Jim called the 'honest player.' What an honest rugby player should do is really self-appraise and self-critique after a game. You should ask yourself, how hard are you training, how hard are you working? To anyone aspiring to play for the Lions, a huge lesson that I've learnt is to be the person that looks in the mirror and know you're giving it your all – the Lions jersey demands nothing less than that!

When you get to be a Lion, the realisation really sets in on exactly who you're representing. I was incredibly proud when I got there; I'd worked smarter, I'd worked harder, and I'd performed. If you want it, nothing's stopping you from going out there and getting it. Granted some of it will depend on other factors like ability, selection, injury, and form, but for any young aspiring players, I would ask them, are you emptying the tank every time you train and play? Are you giving it everything you've got? Getting to become a Lion is not an easy feat, and if you want it, you really have to go out there and grab the bull by the horns.

Q

Wise words! And on that, what about mentorship in rugby? How did this impact you, and were there individuals who guided you during your Lions journey?

A

There's no doubt about it, Brian O'Driscoll was my mentor. I was 22 on the first tour, the second youngest, and I quickly formed a nice partnership with Brian in midfield. He was a little further down the line in his rugby career and was an unbelievable player, but not far off retirement either, so had the experience as well as the ability.

I was still learning my trade as a 12 and I didn't realise it at the time, but when I reflected back on that '09 tour I remember realising how much rugby intellect I'd gained from this guy. Having brilliant players around you only helps you build on your own game, and Brian really took me under his wing and helped me be the best I could be.



Q

Finally, what legacy do you hope your time as a British & Irish Lion has left for rugby?

A

I guess an important thing for me was playing a part in redefining the role of what a 12 does in the modern game. The game can change, and modern history will tell us that modern successful 12s are often big ball-carrying, gain line players who help put their team on the front foot.

It's true that The British & Irish Lions only have five test series victories in history, since 1888, so I'm proud to be part of a winning squad. I'd like to think I've made an impact on number 12s and their part to play. I'm proud that my legacy is part of a squad that won – to be a part of a British & Irish Lions squad that was victorious. I missed the first two tests due to injury, but that determination to work hard to come back in for the deciding test match and deliver when it mattered is something I'm really proud of. To play a part in one of the five series wins in almost 40 tours, and the only win this century, will hopefully inspire generations to come.

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Volun



in action

Making a difference in clubs and governing bodies





nteers



We're thrilled to shine a spotlight on the incredible work of volunteers who make a difference in so many ways in this pivotal feature piece and to run the theme of volunteers throughout this edition of Otium. As part of this feature, we've got Q&A sessions with the British Mountaineering Council and Swim England, exploring how volunteers help their sports develop. We also hear from the Rugby Football Union on how they're recognising volunteer contributions and take a closer look

at British Orienteering's efforts to engage their community, as well as highlighting outstanding volunteers from Archery GB who go above and beyond for their sport. We're proud to support such a wide-reaching array of sports from a variety of different backgrounds, and sports clubs who are happy to share their volunteers' dedication, passion, and resilience so that grassroots sport can continue to flourish.



Scaling heights together



The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) plays a pivotal role in supporting mountaineering enthusiasts across the UK, particularly through its work with volunteers at the club level. Jane, the BMC's Club Development Manager, leads efforts to develop and sustain the network of almost 300 BMC-affiliated clubs, helping them grow, establish new initiatives, and manage mountain huts and facilities that are integral to the sport. We spoke to Jane about her role and the importance of volunteers in clubs.

Jane, can you tell us about your role at the British Mountaineering Council (BMC)?

Absolutely! As the Club Development Manager, I lead the efforts to develop and support our club network. This involves working closely with BMC-affiliated clubs to support their growth and development, helping new clubs to establish, and collaborating with the volunteers on the BMC Clubs' Committee and the BMC Huts Group.

That's impressive! What roles within mountaineering clubs tend to be volunteer-led, and how do they impact on mountaineering activities?

Most of the workforce in the BMC-affiliated club network are volunteers. You can probably count on one hand the number of paid administrators across all c300 clubs. There are a few coaches and instructors who are paid, but that's about it. The facilities that clubs have are predominantly mountain huts (think "bunkhouses"

rather than "rickety wooden shacks"!) that are maintained by club volunteers, offering low-cost options for members to stay in with easy access to hills, mountains and crags. Volunteers are integral to all the activities that take place in clubs so without them, we wouldn't have a club network. Without that network many people wouldn't be introduced to climbing, hillwalking and mountaineering or the support system that clubs provide for members to become competent, confident and life-long participants.

It sounds like volunteers play a crucial role. How would you describe their role in the development and success of mountaineering clubs in the UK?



Clubs foster volunteering because that's how they run; it's how they've always been run. This is true for clubs that are over 100 years old as well as brand-new clubs – volunteering is part of their DNA.

Many of these volunteers then support the BMC's wider activities on committees, running events, helping at competitions, and with our vital access and conservation work.

What specific skills or qualities do volunteers bring that are essential for the smooth running of mountaineering clubs?

Within mountaineering, people don't tend to join clubs to be a volunteer. They join to get out onto the hills more, climb more, or learn new skills. Although people join for those reasons, you'll find very few club members who haven't done something to

help out in a club activity like organising a meet or a social event, helping with new members or doing some maintenance on the club hut. Their passion for climbing and hillwalking expands to become a passion for the club and the community within it. Some of the longer-standing club members particularly enjoy this sense of community and enjoy giving back to the club even after their adventurous walking and climbing days are over.

It sounds like a great sport to be a part of! And how does the British Mountaineering Council recruit and retain volunteers from existing club members?

As mentioned, mountaineering clubs tend to recruit volunteers internally from their membership, identifying people who are willing to deliver a particular activity or hold a particular role because of the skills, experience and enthusiasm they've got. Many members join a club as a student or in their 20s and 30s and remain active in their 70s, 80s and beyond, taking on volunteering roles at various times of

life. It means there are long-standing members who have volunteered before and can help younger members in volunteer posts that they've just taken on. This mentor support helps retain valuable knowledge within the club, passed on by long-standing members, while supporting younger members in their roles. The BMC supports club volunteers with training and support through webinars, training courses, support networks and more. Retaining volunteers is all about keeping that passion for mountaineering alive whilst providing the support they need when they need it.

“ Whether it's an hour a day, a week, a month, or a year – without people giving up their time, the clubs wouldn't exist.

What would you say is the biggest challenge for volunteers?

Succession planning and clarity of roles are big challenges for clubs. Many clubs are fortunate to have long-standing, dedicated and experienced volunteers in key roles, but when that volunteer steps down there isn't always another volunteer ready to take on the role. When the volunteer has been in post for a long-time there often isn't a clear role description either, and volunteers regularly take on more responsibility resulting in an even large hole to fill! The challenge then becomes recruiting for two (or more) people as the role is too big for one volunteer!



Finally, what would you say to encourage more people to volunteer within mountaineering clubs?

There are many reasons why it's great to volunteer. That's how mountaineering clubs work – the main reason we've got our club network is because of the fantastic volunteers within it. Whether it's an hour a day, a week, a month, or a year

– without people giving up their time, the clubs wouldn't exist. Volunteering in a mountaineering club offers so much, from organising events to gaining skills to becoming an instructor, to working on mountaineering huts and to developing committee skills. There is also a great social vibe, you'll visit some beautiful parts of the UK and you'll be part of the club community where you are sharing your love and passion for mountaineering with other members.

Aiming high

The volunteers
making a difference
in archery

Volunteers are the heart of archery, driving the sport forward at every level. In this Q&A, we celebrate the dedication of those who coach and inspire. From creating inclusive environments for deaf archers to bringing archery to new audiences, to balancing several roles as a volunteer – discover their stories, motivations, and the impact they have on growing the sport they love.



Kathy and Pascal Johnson

How did you get involved in archery?

K | Pascal last picked up a bow during his teenage years at school but didn't touch one again until a 'Have a Go' session at an archery club in 2019 after retiring! I, as a newcomer to the sport, tagged along. We were instantly hooked and decided to volunteer to gain more knowledge.

What inspired you to make archery more inclusive for hard of hearing individuals?

P | Archery, like any sport, has barriers for deaf or hard of hearing archers. People assume there wouldn't be any, but there are many barriers such as not hearing safety whistles, not hearing your name for a medal, or understanding if your bow is tuned properly or not, leading to poor shots.



Could you tell us a bit about the Deaf Archery Working Group UK?

K | The barriers we noticed inspired us to establish the Deaf Archery Working Group UK in partnership with Archery GB. We saw the need for a structured approach to fully cater to deaf and hard of hearing archers' needs and requirements.

How do you see the use of sign language impacting the future of archery?

P | We observed a lack of British Sign Language (BSL) resources for archery terminology; how can you learn without resources? We've created videos and leaflets in BSL to help with this, allowing for better communication among deaf and hard of hearing archers.

How do you balance your passion for archery with advocating for inclusivity?

K | Our volunteer roles involve us in many archery events, from beginners' courses to competitions. This helps us develop our archery skills while promoting BSL and deaf awareness among other archers.

What advice would you give to other sports organisations looking to improve inclusivity for hard of hearing participants?

P | When interacting with a deaf or hard of hearing participant, look at them when speaking. Use visual explanations or gestures where possible and ask them what would help make their sport more inclusive.

Neil Hickman

How did you first get involved in archery, and what inspired you to volunteer? How long have you been a volunteer?

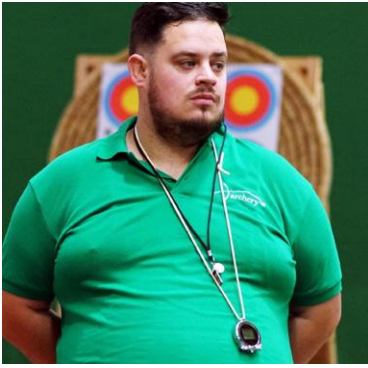
I first became involved in archery after doing a have-a-go on holiday. The bug bit hard, but I had to sit through COVID lockdown before I could actually start fully. At the end of lockdown, I was itching to start and get outdoors with the sport.

How do you balance your roles as Ambassador, Club Secretary, Tournament Officer, Coach, and Judge?

It's a tricky one but it's mostly about delegation. Whilst Club Secretary takes up most of my time, a lot of the work can be passed to the fantastic committee members we have at our club, giving me plenty of time to do everything else.

“ You have to be enthusiastic about what you do – this drives the club forwards. You have to be able to motivate others and most importantly have good delegation skills.





What are some key challenges you face in your roles?

Communication can be a big challenge in our sport. As a Tournament Officer, you are the crucial point of communication for athletes, venue liaison, judge liaison as well as your own field party and caterers. I have a nice long checklist that runs for months in advance of any competition or event, allowing me to stay on schedule and not have any surprises come event day.

What qualities do you believe are essential for someone taking on leadership roles in an archery club?

You have to be enthusiastic about what you do – this drives the club forwards. You have to be able to motivate others and most importantly have good delegation skills. It's not a case of just asking someone if they can do X, Y or Z, you have to know people's skills that you can use to get the job done right and in good time.

How do you feel volunteers contribute to the growth and development of archery at both the grassroots and competitive levels?

This sport wouldn't exist without our amazing community of volunteers. Coaches, judges, ambassadors, event staff, field party volunteers... they're all at the heart and soul of archery.

What advice would you give to someone considering volunteering in archery, especially in roles that require both leadership and technical expertise?

Make sure that you only take on roles that you're capable of fulfilling. You need to know the ins and outs of what will be expected of you. Definitely don't be afraid to ask for help if you get stuck! In archery, even if you don't have someone in your own club that can help, there are many helpful people in other clubs that if you reach out would be more than willing to help.

Marjan Abdelfattah

What first inspired you to get involved and subsequently volunteer in archery, and how did you become involved with the Northern Ireland Archery Schools Project?

I have always loved the idea of archery ever since I was really young. When I first got to try it, I fell in love with the sport! I first started to volunteer as an Archery GB junior ambassador, to show kids what archery is and instruct them on their first time shooting a bow. That led to me getting my Level 1 Coaching course and gave me more opportunities to show the people why I chose archery and why it is such an amazing sport.

“
Just be yourself and go with your gut. Always ask for help if you need it and communicate with the people around you and have fun!

Can you share the story behind connecting the City of Belfast Archery Club with the Northern Ireland Islam Society and the creation of Project Rimaya?

When I first moved to Belfast, I joined City of Belfast Archery Club. It was the closest one to home and was very welcoming. I thought it would be the best place to join for two reasons. The first, the club is very welcoming and the coaches there are always happy to help out. And the second being of its location. It is the easiest club to access for our members as the majority of them live in Belfast.



How has Project Rimaya impacted the archery community and Muslim community in Northern Ireland?

It has allowed more Muslims to get involved in archery and try it out. People have been able to see how great archery is and consider it as a hobby or even professionally.

You recently ran a successful beginners' course. What did you learn from that experience?

I learned to relax more and trust my instincts. I was extremely nervous at the beginning but once I relaxed, I started to enjoy it more and the members started to have more fun too! It was immensely helpful to have two coaches from City of Belfast Archery Club there to encourage me and instruct me for extra support.

How has your multilingual ability and translation work helped to bridge cultural gaps within archery?

I speak both Arabic and English fluently which has helped me to communicate with people who struggle with English. It meant that everyone was able to enjoy the archery course and have fun!

What advice would you give to other volunteers to promote inclusivity and diversity in their sport?

Just be yourself and go with your gut. Ask for help if you need it, communicate with your support network and enjoy every moment!

To find out more about the different volunteering roles in archery, visit [archerygb.org/get-involved/volunteering-with-archery-gb](https://www.archerygb.org/get-involved/volunteering-with-archery-gb)



Rugby's real MVPs

Volunteers in rugby union help the sport thrive at every level. Volunteer Manager at the RFU, Stephanie Allmark, spoke to us about how they make a difference.



Volunteers: the backbone of rugby union

Rugby is a game built on teamwork, resilience and passion, but beyond the players on the pitch, a dedicated network of volunteers are the true heroes of the sport. From grassroots community rugby clubs to major events, volunteers form the backbone of rugby, driving its growth, fostering community spirit, and ensuring the sport continues to thrive.

Volunteers are indispensable, both on and off the field with one volunteer for every four players¹. Without their contributions, clubs simply couldn't function.

One standout example is Moira Bowden, Chair of Hartlepool Rovers RFC, and recipient of the Unsung Hero award at last year's Honda² Volunteer of the Year awards. This initiative, part of a collaboration between the RFU and Honda, celebrates the extraordinary contributions of volunteers. Over 2,000 individuals were nominated last season across four categories: Unsung Hero, Connecting the Community, Game for All, and Game Changer.

Moira's journey with Hartlepool Rovers began in childhood, attending matches at just two years old. In her twenties, she became involved in fundraising and events before taking over as Chair just before the pandemic – a challenging time for clubs nationwide. Under her leadership, the club rebuilt its committee, established three junior teams, and became a hub for the local community.

¹ englandrugby.com/follow/news-media/what-rugby-union-worth-nation

² Honda are the Official Performance and Vehicle Partner of England Rugby. As part of the multi-year partnership Honda also provide support for volunteering in the grassroots game through the Honda Volunteer Recognition Programme.

Moira used community surveys, even leafleting local housing estates, to understand what people wanted from their rugby club. Today, the club hosts band rehearsals, children's holiday activities, Andy's Man Club meetings, and educational seminars, such as healthy eating workshops for kids.

"Part of the work I've done is getting other people on board, and that's been crucial to taking the club forward," she explains. "Covid was a challenge, as players and volunteers drifted away, so we had to rebuild – not just on the pitch but off it too. Our motto is, 'we're more than just a rugby club.' It's about getting the place used."

Moira's story reflects the broader national picture. Volunteers are also vital to major events, such as this year's Women's Rugby World Cup in England, with volunteers helping to deliver a world-class experience for players and fans alike.

However, recruiting volunteers remains a challenge. As lifestyles grow busier, finding time to give back becomes harder for many. But rugby clubs are showing how these challenges can become opportunities by offering flexible roles, reaching new audiences, and highlighting the personal benefits of volunteering – like skill development, social connections, and being part of a passionate community.

Take Alton RFC in Hampshire, for example. Recognising the need for more support, President Malcolm and Treasurer Steve organised a volunteer open evening. The event aimed to show members what it takes to put on a game of rugby, opening their eyes to the behind-the-scenes effort.

The club created a volunteer workforce map to identify gaps and broke down roles into manageable tasks. They then developed a presentation highlighting these roles and ran the evening alongside their summer non-contact rugby sessions. The result?



Twenty-five attendees, with several stepping forward to take on roles such as Social Events Manager, Clubhouse Bookings, and Junior Chair.

Grassroots rugby's success is a testament to the dedication of the army of volunteers. Their efforts continue to make the sport accessible, inclusive, and vibrant. Whether it's coaching or refereeing the next generation, marking pitches on a winter morning, or managing club finances, rugby volunteers exemplify the values of the game. With their passion and commitment, they inspire others to get involved, ensuring the sport thrives for generations to come.

Opportunities for new volunteers

If you've been inspired to get involved, rugby offers a wide range of volunteering opportunities. From coaching and refereeing to social media management and event organisation, there's a role for everyone, regardless of experience or background. Find your local club here.

Q&A:
the vital role of volunteers in swimming



Keeping aquatics afloat



We spoke to Claire Coleman, Head of Development at Swim England, to find out how volunteers make a splash in swimming.

What roles within swimming tend to be volunteer led, and how do they impact the success of the sport?

Approximately 40,000 Swim England members are also volunteers, with many clubs being entirely volunteer led. Governance roles on club committees, some coaching positions, and competition support roles – such as team managers and technical officials in artistic swimming and water polo – are predominantly volunteer-driven. Beyond clubs, counties, regions, and even national levels rely heavily on volunteers, particularly for events and activity delivery. Without these volunteers, the development and success of swimming simply wouldn't be possible.

How would you describe the role of volunteers in the development and success of swimming in the UK?

From club-level events to elite competitions like the Aqua GB Championships and Olympic qualifiers, volunteers play key roles – especially as technical officials. Without their contributions, there would be no pathway for developing athletes or hosting successful competitions.

Can you share examples of how volunteers have positively impacted local swimming clubs or major swimming events in recent years?

The 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham is a standout example. Every technical official at the swimming and diving events volunteered their time. On a weekly basis, clubs and galas happen across the country, with volunteers ensuring smooth operations. With only two quiet months in the year (July and August), volunteers are running events almost every weekend, benefitting the sport and its participants immensely.



What specific skills or qualities do volunteers bring that are essential for the smooth running of swimming programmes and competitions?

Volunteers bring a diverse range of life and professional experiences that enhance the quality of the sport. For example, a CEO who chairs a local club might contribute leadership and strategic planning skills. This breadth of experience ensures clubs and competitions run efficiently, benefiting members and athletes alike. The variety of skills volunteers bring means there's a role for everyone, regardless of background or expertise.

How does Swim England support and recognise volunteers for their contributions to the swimming community?

Swim England stages the annual National Awards, with categories such as Club of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Technical Official of the Year, and Coach of the Year. Regional awards feed into these national recognitions, ensuring volunteers at all levels are celebrated. At national events, volunteers receive branded kits, including polo shirts and water bottles. Beyond recognition, Swim England provides extensive support through national chair forums, welfare forums, and free training so that volunteers can feel confident and valued in their roles.

How does Swim England recruit and retain volunteers whilst maintaining training?

Recruitment primarily happens at the local level, with clubs encouraging parents, former swimmers, and community members to get involved. Swim England makes volunteering accessible by offering free training courses. Retention is a priority, supported by tailored guidance, digital resources, and in-person training. Clubs also receive one-to-one assistance from development teams and regional offices to address challenges and keep volunteers engaged.



“ Volunteers bring a diverse range of life and professional experiences that enhance the quality of the sport.

What would you say to encourage more people to volunteer within swimming, especially at the grassroots level?

A background in aquatics isn't essential. Most volunteers get involved to contribute to their community, stay active, or enjoy the social side of club life. Around 80% of volunteers don't come from an aquatics background, proving that anyone can make a difference. For those interested, Swim England encourages talking to coaches or committee members to learn more. The organisation works hard to keep volunteering simple and accessible, ensuring that more people feel welcome to join and support the sport.

The heartbeat of British Orienteering

Volunteers are the lifeblood of British Orienteering, which has 9,000 highly engaged members – and they could be the key to its future, too.

The sport, which hosts everything from local events to major competitions, is going from strength to strength. In 2024, they proudly hosted the World Orienteering Championships in Edinburgh where the Great Britain orienteering squad joined other nations in the battle for a podium place.



Every year, more people wake up to the mental and physical benefits that orienteering provides – it's a fun, social and adventurous sport that creates a sense of belonging. But as it grows, the need for competent and well-trained volunteers rises with it.

The challenge is how to meet that demand.

According to Peter Brooke, CEO of British Orienteering, the sports' appeal lies "not only in the physical and mental health benefits but also in the joy of connecting with nature and creating that all-important sense of community."

The backbone of the sport

He recognises that the dedication of volunteers is key to the sports success – those committed individuals who rise early, come rain or shine, to ensure every participant enjoys their orienteering adventure. From managing parking and course setup to cheering on participants and prioritising their safety, volunteers are at the very heart of the sport.

Their role extends way beyond logistics. They are first responders in the event of slips, trips or falls, for instance. Those marshals you see smiling and waving participants on from the sidelines are keeping everything on course and ensuring people's health and safety.

"Pretty much everything is run by volunteers," said Peter. "Every member volunteers at least once a year and we have 1,500 competitions. We try to inspire our volunteers and there's no doubt we need them."

Orienteering does carry inherent risks. So, volunteers, alongside clubs and event organisers, need to be well versed in mitigating these risks with meticulous planning, ensuring the community can focus on what matters most – exploring and enjoying the great outdoors.

"Orienteering often takes place in unpredictable environments, from rugged terrains to busy urban areas, exposing participants to hazards like weather extremes, uneven ground, lakes and rivers or urban traffic," said Peter.

This is why insurance plays such a vital role for – providing essential legal and financial protection against claims related to injuries or property damage for volunteers, participants and organisations.



Building the future

The community-driven nature of orienteering is what really sets it apart, with volunteers playing a central role in creating a wonderful feel-good spirit. But the sport faces a significant challenge – its aging volunteer base. Many long-serving volunteers began their journeys in orienteering when they were in their 20s and have remained loyal for decades, but younger generations have been harder to engage in time-intensive roles like mapping and event planning.



“All is not lost, though,” said Peter. “We’re starting to see younger volunteers really make an impact. For instance, Oxford University Orienteering Club recently organised a city race with nearly 500 participants – a remarkable achievement that showcases the energy and innovation younger contributors bring.”

Alex Welch, Communications & Marketing Lead at British Orienteering is grasping the challenge to recruit new and younger volunteers.

She said: “We’re tackling these challenges by introducing comprehensive and engaging volunteer training programmes that combine in-person workshops with eLearning opportunities. New digital tools, such as streamlined incident reporting systems, are being implemented to make risk management more efficient and accessible, too.

“But it’s also about growing the profile of the sport with younger people and helping them realise what volunteering can add.

They are already orienteers at 16 but why not add planning experience or event organising to that as well? It’s fantastic for their CV and their profile.

We have free “teach orienteering events’ in schools, too, so we’re working hard inspire a younger audience.”



Celebrating helpers

Recognising the invaluable contributions of volunteers is another top priority. An annual awards ceremony includes awards for volunteers and coaches, highlighting individual stories – which are then amplified on social media.

Peter concluded: "Volunteering in orienteering is more than just giving back – it's an opportunity for personal growth, skill development and building lifelong connections. Whether managing registration desks, mapping routes or coordinating large national events, volunteers are shaping the future of the sport and ensuring its continued success."

“ Volunteering in orienteering is more than just giving back – it's an opportunity for personal growth, skill development and building lifelong connections.

To find out more about insuring outdoor sporting events, contact Howden's sports specialists at sportsenquiry@howdengroup.com.

Implementing

Martyn's

Law

With Martyn's Law due to be passed this spring, it is vital that sports clubs are making plans for implementing it within their organisations. Helen Devery, a consultant at insurance law firm Clyde & Co, explains what governing bodies and clubs should be aware of to mitigate risk.



The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, more widely known as Martyn's Law, will introduce a new legal duty requiring those responsible for most UK venues with a capacity of more than 200 people to take steps to reduce the risk of harm to members of the public from a terrorist attack at the venue. The law is named after Martyn Hett, one of the twenty-two victims of the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing and whose mother has campaigned tirelessly to ensure that this becomes part of the fabric of UK events.

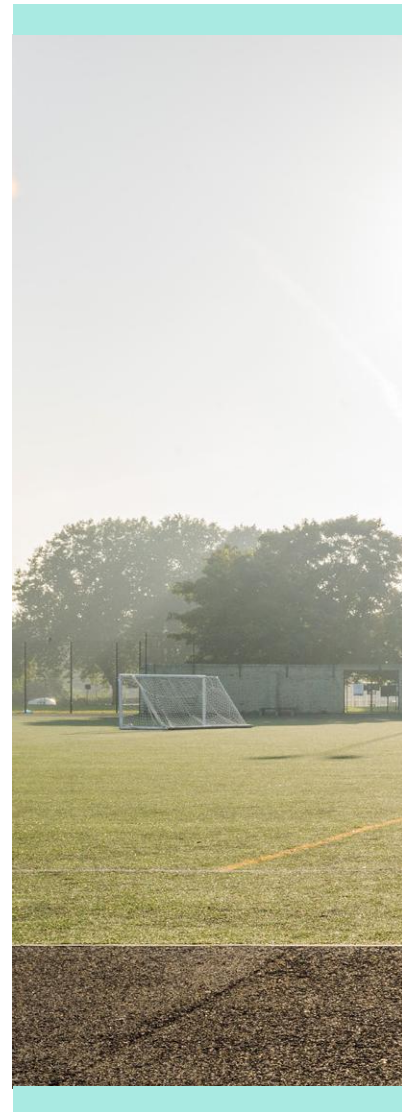
For sports organisations in the UK, Martyn's Law presents both a challenge and an opportunity to enhance safety, protect fans, and demonstrate a proactive approach to security. This article explores the issues that UK sports organisations will need to address when considering how to comply effectively and responsibly with Martyn's Law.

In December 2024, the Bill was approved by the House of Commons and it is currently being reviewed by the House of Lords. It is likely to be passed by Parliament shortly before or after Easter 2025.

An outline of the Bill

First, and among the most important factor, is that the objective of the new statutory duty is now clearly defined. It is that those responsible for publicly accessible premises and events within scope "must, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that appropriate public protection procedures are in place to... reduce the risk of physical harm being caused to individuals if an act of terrorism were to occur on the premises, at the event or in the immediate vicinity".

Second, it introduces a tiered system of responsibility for venues and events. In doing so, it emphasises the principles of control of those premises include those responsible for the operation of venues as well as event organisers, and it mandates a coordination of efforts so that there is clarity where responsibility is shared.





Qualifying premises are defined by their capacity and by type of use. The new legal duty is divided into tiers based on the expected attendance: more than 200 for the standard tier of the duty and more than 800 for the enhanced tier. In the draft version of the Bill proposed by the last government the standard duty threshold was only 100, but the present government has increased it to 200 to address concerns about proportionality and the impacts on small businesses and community organisations in particular.

The Bill designates the Security Industry Authority (SIA) designated as the relevant regulator. It will be given statutory powers of inspection, enforcement and be able to provide compliance advice. The Bill also introduces criminal penalties for non-compliance and any obstructive behaviours.

The legislation will apply across all parts of the UK as national security is reserved to Westminster under devolution arrangements.

What does this mean for the sports sector?



Martyn's Law represents the UK's commitment to improving national security whilst balancing operational impact on businesses and organisations. Its aim is to create a safer future for the public in the face of terrorism threats.

For sports venues this involves addressing potential security threats that could affect the safety of spectators, athletes, and staff.

What should you consider?

Understand which tier your premises or event falls into:

Standard duty premises are premises where it would be reasonable to expect that, from time to time, 200 or more people may be present. The premises can be primarily used for one of the reasons listed in the Bill – which cover nearly all public sector, commercial, hospitality and sport/leisure purposes, including “use as a sports ground”. A person responsible for standard duty premises will be required to put in place public protection measures to reduce the risk of physical harm to individuals in the event of an act of terrorism on or near the premises. These would include evacuation procedures and the provision of information.

Enhanced duty premises are those where it be reasonable to expect 800 or more people to be present from time to time.

Qualifying events would be ticketed, or otherwise restricted events, attended by 800 or more people.

Additional requirements would be placed on persons responsible for enhanced duty premises and qualifying events to reduce their vulnerability to acts of terrorism. These could include monitoring the premises or events and surrounding area, identifying public protection measures and documenting compliance with requirements that have been identified.

As mentioned above, those responsible for sporting venues and events should be aware that the threshold for standard duty premises has been increased from 100 to 200. This is defined by reference to the number of people it might be reasonable to expect to attend rather than solely by potential capacity. Sports organisers will need to consider increased attendance at certain time such as major games, play offs etc. Responsible persons are only expected to take measures that are “reasonably practicable” and there is no longer an expectation that venues undertake standardised training.



Then what next?

Standard Tier venues must:

- Register your venue with the SIA
- Put in place appropriate and reasonably practicable public protection procedures i.e. evacuation plans and invacuation plans, lock down and communication, and
- Ensure anyone working (including volunteers) is familiar with these procedures.

The measures in this tier are intended to be low-cost and straightforward and the focus should be on training everyone to be informed, prepared and to be able to respond effectively in an emergency. This includes weekend/seasonal or part time staff and volunteers as well as full time employees.

Enhanced Tier venues must:

- Satisfy the standard tier requirements and, in addition
- Nominate a person responsible for compliance
- Put in place appropriate and reasonably practicable public protection procedures to protect and communicate with people in the event of a security incident
- Document all procedures and measures

Larger venues or organisations have a responsibility to go further with security measures and proposed actions could include installation or enhancement of CCTV to include the venue and surrounding area as well as enhanced physical security measures.





Although framing the duty as being required to take “reasonably practicable” measures to protect the public is to be welcomed, it should nevertheless be recognised that within the enhanced tier (i.e. for larger sports venues, premises and events) meeting the “reasonably practicable” test is likely to involve a much more bespoke approach to understanding and assessing risks, and to documenting plans and steps to be taken in mitigation, than would be the case in the standard tier of the duty.

That said, most responsible sports organisations will already be addressing aspects of the new duty in existing disciplines such as building / fire safety, disaster planning, event management & licensing, and under general health and safety laws. The regime to be implemented under ‘Martyn’s law’ is likely to require a holistic approach to assessing risks of harm from terrorist attacks, bringing that and those other disciplines together to ensure not only compliance with the new duty but also to evidence the steps taken to that end by those responsible for enhanced tier premises and qualifying events.

Once the Bill has been passed, the government has indicated it may allow up to two years for refining the detail of the new duty and the rights and responsibilities of the SIA as lead regulator. This proposed implementation period should be regarded by prospective dutyholders in the sports sector - or any other - as providing time to review thoroughly the risks of harm on their premises or at their events and to take steps to prepare for Martyn’s law taking full effect. The UK terrorism threat level remains “substantial” and, as the chairman of the inquiry into the Manchester Arena bombing said in its report, “Doing nothing is not an option”.

About Helen Devery

Helen Devery is a consultant at Clyde & Co. She is a highly experienced trainer in liability risk management and pioneered the benchmarking group that analyses best practices across sectors. Helen’s legal reputation precedes her. She was ranked as a leading individual in the Legal 500 since 2019 and was a finalist in the 2019 Women in Insurance awards.

Howden



Grassroots Heroes

In 2024, Howden, in partnership with Hiscox, proudly ran the Howden Grassroots Heroes competition four times, bringing invaluable support to the grassroots sport community. Designed to honour the

unsung heroes – volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to local clubs – the competition has provided much-needed funds to enhance facilities, purchase equipment, and upskill coaches. With its resounding success this year, we're thrilled to announce that the Howden Grassroots Heroes competition will return in 2025 to continue recognising these invaluable contributors!



Giving back to sport's volunteering community

Our Sport team know that grassroots sports clubs are the lifeblood of local communities, and without volunteers, they wouldn't be able to run. From groundskeepers to treasurers, coaches to social secretaries, these individuals go above and beyond to keep clubs thriving. The Howden Grassroots Heroes competition has shone a spotlight on their incredible efforts, and we are pleased to have provided £500 to each winner and £250 to 2nd and 3rd place to support their clubs' growth. Let's take a look at our winners and runners-up for 2024!

1st

Lottie Martin

Worcester Crocodiles,
Coach

Lottie was nominated for her unwavering support and dedication to helping players reach their potential. Her tireless coaching and encouragement have been transformative for the Worcester Crocodiles, a club that punches above its weight despite limited resources. Thanks to the prize money, the club was able to purchase much-needed water polo swim hats in home and away colours. This small yet crucial investment allowed the club to redirect funds to other essential areas, ensuring their continued participation in junior leagues.

Volunteers like Lottie play a critical role in maintaining the spirit of grassroots sports. The Worcester Crocodiles have also embraced initiatives like "Inspire to Try," encouraging new members to experience water polo, all while grappling with logistical challenges of being away from their usual pool.

2nd

Carol Shephard

Adwick ASC,
Secretary and Coach

Carol's commitment to grassroots swimming in Doncaster is nothing short of inspirational. She organises and runs entry-level galas, giving young swimmers their first taste of competitive swimming. Beyond her administrative role, Carol officiates at events and supports swimmers as a J2S official. Her dedication has created opportunities for countless young athletes to thrive, laying the foundation for a lifelong love of sport.

3rd

Mike Philliskirk

Wells City Archers Club,
Committee Chair and Coach

Mike has transformed Wells City Archers into a welcoming and supportive environment for archers of all levels. His efforts extend beyond coaching – he's been a mentor, guide, and advocate for club members, ensuring that everyone feels valued. His leadership embodies the power of volunteering to create inclusive and thriving communities.



1st

James B

Tunbridge Wells Mountaineering Club,
Club Secretary and Membership Manager



James has been a linchpin for the Tunbridge Wells Mountaineering Club. His behind-the-scenes work ensures the club runs smoothly and safely, fostering a sense of belonging among members. The £500 prize money will be used to support a training subsidy scheme, allowing members to upskill and share their knowledge with the wider club. This investment in people reflects the ethos of grassroots sports: building stronger communities through shared growth and support.

2nd

John C

Valley Croquet Club,
Coach

John's dedication to coaching has helped players improve their skills and confidence in croquet. His patient and encouraging approach exemplify the best of grassroots sports, where volunteers like John help individuals achieve personal milestones while strengthening the club as a whole.

3rd

Stephen Simpkins

Bedford Mountaineering Club,
Social Secretary

Stephen's efforts go far beyond his title as Social Secretary. From organising events to promoting the club on social media, Stephen likes to make every member feels included and valued. His commitment to supporting beginners and creating a welcoming atmosphere embodies the true spirit of volunteerism.

September

1st

Lianne Bruce

Basically Cheer,
Club Dance/Cheer Teacher

Lianne's impact extends beyond the dance floor. In addition to coaching cheer and dance classes for over 200 participants, she has spearheaded the development of a new health and wellbeing centre for the local community. Winning the £500 prize will help the club purchase a tumble track and music system, further enhancing the experience for members of all ages.



2nd

Roger Smith

Verulam Angling,
Head Coach

Roger's tireless efforts have introduced countless individuals to the joys of angling. Through free coaching sessions for all age groups, outreach to schools and scout groups, and events for disadvantaged communities, Roger exemplifies the profound impact of volunteerism on fostering inclusion and connection.

3rd

Dave Reeves

Cirencester RFC,
Outgoing Chair

Dave's leadership has been instrumental in improving the club's facilities, from navigating complex planning applications to securing funding for new floodlights. His relentless commitment makes Cirencester RFC continue to be a hub for community engagement and rugby development.

1st

Raj Sudat

Sheldon Marlborough Cricket Club,
Head Coach

Raj's full commitment to coaching has been pivotal in developing young cricketers' skills and confidence. His dedication inspires the next generation of players, ensuring the club's legacy continues to grow. As our most recent winner, we are looking forward to visiting the club soon to present them with their giant cheque!

2nd

Andrew Newton

Highgate Cricket & Lawn Tennis Club,
Club Treasurer

Andrew's volunteer work as treasurer has kept the club financially sound through years of growth. Balancing the books for an expanding club is no small feat, and his efforts extend to umpiring and other volunteer roles, making him an indispensable part of the team.

3rd

John Graham

Walbrook Rowing Club,
Coach

For nearly two decades, John has coached crews, written training programmes, and supported members through every aspect of their rowing journey. His selfless contributions have created a culture of camaraderie and excellence at Walbrook Rowing Club.

Looking





ahead

As we celebrate the incredible impact of volunteers in 2024, we're excited to continue this journey in 2025. The Howden Grassroots Heroes competition returned this February to recognise and reward the unsung heroes who make grassroots sports possible. With our first competition of 2025 complete, and another three to come, we're just getting started.

to 2025

Whether it's a coach inspiring the next generation, a treasurer managing finances, or a groundskeeper maintaining facilities, volunteers are at the core of every club's success.

Keep your eyes peeled on our Facebook page, [Howden Grassroots Sport Insurance](#), to nominate your club's volunteer hero in our next competition and join us in celebrating the transformative power of giving back to the community!





perfect stride

Howden Equine's
commitment to
the RDA

Riding for the Disabled Association × Howden: a partnership for empowerment

For over a decade, Howden has been proud to partner with Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) as their expert insurance broker and advisor.

This long-standing relationship has provided our teams with valuable insight into the diverse needs of RDA's groups, coaches, volunteers, and participants, building our reputation as a trusted leader in equestrian risk management. We are thrilled to continue our partnership into 2025, empowering RDA equestrians nationwide, and equipping their coaches and groups with the support, tools and confidence they need to prioritise safety and thrive.





The heart of the RDA: volunteers and coaches



For over 50 years, RDA has been a champion of inclusion, creating opportunities for people with physical and learning disabilities, sensory impairments, neurodiversity, or long-term health conditions, to experience the multiple health and wellbeing benefits of bringing people and horses together.

At the heart of this mission are the volunteers – dedicated individuals whose passion and commitment make these life-changing experiences possible. Coaches, in particular, play a vital role, ensuring that every participant has the opportunity to achieve their personal goals, and experience these transformative benefits through therapeutic riding or carriage driving, equine assisted services, or competitive sport. These volunteers are the lifeblood of RDA's success.

Howden's Equine team share this commitment to inclusion, safety, and excellence. With years of experience in creating bespoke insurance solutions for equestrian organisations, we understand the complexities of equestrian activities and the unique needs of RDA volunteers and participants alike. Moreover, the Howden Equine team have been pleased to support RDA in their spare time too. With Howden giving their employees two volunteering days a year to go out there and make a difference to the community however they see fit, the Equine team have been pleased to get involved with corporate volunteering days at RDA.

“ At the heart of this mission are the volunteers – dedicated individuals whose passion and commitment make these life-changing experiences possible.





Catherine Morgan, Head of Equine at Howden, commented: "At Howden, we deal with many different equestrian associations. Whilst our clients have different specialisms and deal with different areas of the equestrian world, one thing they have in common is that they are all deeply dependent on their volunteer networks. Volunteers are an integral and vital part of RDA and so are so many other organisations that quite simply would not be able to operate without the support of many thousands of volunteers across the UK."

The cornerstone of our partnership support in 2025 will be our health and safety workshops. These nationwide training events will be designed to deliver impactful, hands-on support to coaches and volunteers, creating a ripple effect across the entire RDA network.

The workshops promise to deliver a vibrant, interactive program upskilling RDA's coaching network with practical advice and new tools to continue to offer an outstanding service to participants and fellow volunteers. Covering topics such as safer coaching practices and risk management, the events will empower attendees with the expertise they need to elevate their work. Beyond knowledge, the workshops will aim to foster connection, to share best practices, collaborate, and build a supportive community.

This initiative perfectly aligns with Howden's commitment to local engagement. With over 200 branch offices nationwide, Howden's regional network complements RDA's 400+ groups, creating a powerful combined effect to serve communities and give back to RDA volunteers with something that will benefit them greatly. Watch this space – more details to come for 2025!



“ Volunteers are an integral and vital part of RDA and so many other organisations that quite simply would not be able to operate without the support of many thousands of volunteers across the UK.



Inclusive support beyond the workshops



Beyond our workshops, we're also looking to enhance access to important insurance resources through webinars, newsletters, and a dedicated RDA insurance microsite. These tools help volunteers and groups access the support they need quickly and easily, allowing them to focus on what matters most – empowering their participants. We are also offering exclusive discounts on select insurance products and creating opportunities for local engagement, strengthening the RDA community as a whole.

At the core of this collaboration is a shared commitment to people. It's about the participants whose lives are enriched through equestrian activities, the volunteers who make these experiences possible, and the supporters who bring the RDA's inclusive vision to life. Through our partnership, Howden is offering not just insurance, but a dedicated ally that provides expert advice, innovative solutions, and ongoing support to help RDA flourish.

“ We are delighted to continue our excellent relationship with Howden. RDA's work is so important and to help us to meet unmet demand and to unlock future potential it is crucial that we work with forward thinking partners. Howden inject a wealth of experience and knowledge that is invaluable to the work of RDA UK and its Groups, and we look forward to exposing the potential of our relationship.

Lee Heard
Chief Operating Officer

United by shared purpose

This partnership is more than just business – it's a mission close to the team's hearts. As specialists in both insurance and equestrianism, our team understand the highs and lows of owning horses, competing, and the bond between a rider and their horse. It's a chance to give back to a sector they deeply value while strengthening their presence in equestrianism.

In fact, our Head of Equine is not just a horse enthusiast and insurance expert, she also volunteers for RDA herself. Find out more about Catherine's involvement with RDA, alongside three other fantastic RDA volunteers, on the next page.

Stories of transformation

Jenny

Jenny's experience as an RDA volunteer is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. Having experienced



several challenging periods of mental health issues, Jenny found purpose through horses and the support of the RDA community. As a volunteer, she helps others in their healing journeys.

"RDA has been vital in my mental health recovery. Penniwells RDA gave me purpose when I needed it most, supporting me as I started over in a new area. The comfort from animals is unmatched – they allow you to be your authentic self without expectations. Volunteering to help with yard duties and preparing for riders makes me proud. I also get to work with ponies like Snowy and share special moments, like deep breathing with Jack Daniels, our snuggly new recruit."

Sam

Sam's journey with RDA highlights the power of equine therapy. After undergoing a brain operation to treat epilepsy, Sam found strength through riding, developing greater coordination and confidence.

"I used to have low muscle tone and because of that my balance wasn't too good. My coordination was awful and I had epilepsy. When I was growing up it was really hard work. I had to go to physio a lot. The physio said 'Have you tried riding?' and we thought we would just give it a go. Now years later I'm still doing it. I love it.'

Starting as a participant, Sam's passion grew, and he now gives back as a volunteer, helping others navigate their own challenges.

"All of RDA is fun – the talking, helping out people, riding the horse, going to competitions, looking after someone if they need any help. It is a family away from my family."



Catherine

Head of Equine, Howden

I have been an RDA volunteer for the past three years. I have ridden and owned horses for most of my life, but due to work and children, I had taken a break and found that I really missed just being around horses. I approached my local RDA Group, Twinstead and Braintree, and have been volunteering ever since. I get a huge amount of satisfaction from those two hours a week. Being around horses is a wonderful privilege and I experience first-hand the effect that it has on our riders.



Our riders gain numerous benefits from their sessions. One of my favourite moments is seeing children trotting and squealing

with excitement, which is truly heartwarming. Older riders also benefit greatly, whether by strengthening weaker areas of their body, getting all-around exercise, or experiencing a sense of achievement when trying something new.

Not only do the riders benefit, but the volunteers themselves. We get great personal satisfaction that we are enabling riders to know and experience the joy of horses, but away from the stables we are a tight knit team and provide support to each other in difficult times. I know this has been invaluable for some of our volunteers and I feel incredibly lucky that I am able to play a small part in such a generous community.

To learn more about the RDA and the insurance that Howden offers, visit howdengroup.com/uk-en/riding-for-the-disabled

We are proud to support RDA through our Equine team. To donate to this fantastic charity, please visit rda.org.uk/donate

Lizzie



Lizzie is driven by her love of vaulting and coaching others. She broke her back aged 13 doing gymnastics, and was later diagnosed with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome affecting the nerves and feeling in her feet and legs. Lizzie says, "I think it's about learning to do what you can with what you have." She has pushed past any limitations, and as the National Lead for Vaulting within RDA her leadership inspires others to break boundaries and achieve their own potential.

"As a participant, RDA has been life-changing. It has led me to a career with horses, which in turn led to improved health, a real sense of purpose and even meeting my fiancé! Volunteering gives me a chance to help bring those benefits to others. In my current role as National Lead for Vaulting I have been well-supported by RDAUK and other Advanced Coaches to achieve our aims for the discipline: to raise participation, expand competition opportunities and enhance equine welfare. The hardest things are definitely pleasing everyone and knowing what to prioritise – so I'm very grateful to RDA UK for their guidance. The best thing is providing the one thing that changed my life: opportunity."

Bridging the





gap

Contributing to
a safer environment
for grassroots sport

The biggest issue for volunteers is knowing their exact responsibilities in a club, and the biggest issue for national governing bodies is how to tell them.

That one statement sums up the biggest challenges that both parties face in the modern world of amateur sport.

There's barely a club in the country which could survive without the volunteers who give up time to support their operation in multiple ways, whether that's in administration, event management or coaching.

But the list of what's required from volunteers for a club to remain compliant, safe and prepared for every possible risk is growing – making smooth communication and robust training more important than ever.

Not everybody gets it right – with volunteers often reporting they are unsure of what is required of them when it comes to risk management and safeguarding.

Colin Mico, Head of Recreational Clubs at Howden, said: "One of the biggest challenges for National Governing Bodies (NGBs) is how to communicate to volunteers what's needed from them and give everyone the tools to make volunteering as smooth as possible.

Volunteers often feel overwhelmed and from my own experience, they try and get on with their role with as little interference as possible from the NGB.

That's ridiculous, because unless volunteers have guidance for how things should be done, they never know if it's being done the right way or not!



“ For most volunteers, what they are most interested in is getting people playing and enjoying sport, from the youngest to the oldest. But there’s also a lot of admin and a need for instruction.

For most volunteers, what they are most interested in is getting people playing and enjoying sport, from the youngest to the oldest. But there’s also a lot of admin and a need for instruction.”

Amanda Wynne-Jones, Associate Director, Howden Sport & Entertainment added: “The feedback from clubs is that volunteers can be reluctant to take on extra administration – and even when the governing bodies do guide them, they feel like it’s extra work.

So that’s a big challenge for NGBs.

Then the feedback from NGBs is they want volunteers to know what their role is and what is expected of them, and what their limitations should be.

They tell us they actually are sharing information – but it isn’t always picked up.”

Tom Paxman, Managing Director, Praxis42, a leading provider of health and safety consultancy and e-learning tools, sees a disconnect – but also an opportunity for clubs and NGBs to work together.

He said: “It’s clear that in many cases there’s a gap in the conversation. Volunteers don’t feel they have enough guidance, NGBs are frustrated that their resources are not always picked up or acted on.

There are also big differences between large NGBs which offer clubs and volunteers access to informative online portals – and smaller ones that don't have the resources to take that route.

What's important is that we make it easier for clubs to access templates and advice so that volunteers have clarity about what their role entails and what is expected of them."

Praxis42 does exactly that, offering clubs, access to the Hiscox Risk Academy (HRA), as a free added benefit to a Hiscox Insurance policy arranged by Howden.

Sophie Earland, Partnership Manager, Praxis42, said: "This is a comprehensive training tool. It offers NGBs and individual clubs a training platform where they direct their volunteers and employees to find training tools, templates and guidance.

This includes aspects such as food safety, working at height and lone working – as well as Ask the Expert advice service. This is a competent health and safety helpline, only available to Hiscox policy holders.

This is especially helpful for clubs that don't have a responsible person in a specific area because they simply don't have the resources available."

What training should volunteers be given?

“ As a club, you also have a responsibility to understand your club, your constitution, rules and your roles, and manage some of this yourself.

Tom highlights a number of areas that are the biggest issues to consider. Clubs should be asking:

- Are our safeguarding systems robust?
- Have we got all the insurances in place to proceed with confidence as a club?
- Has a full risk assessment been undertaken in every aspect of the club environment?
- Do volunteers and coaches have the right qualifications? You shouldn't be running a session without a coach who has the right level of qualifications to lead or at least supervise it.

How can NGBs help volunteers – and what does best practice look like?

There are exemplars to look at in the sporting world, including the English Cricket Board's (ECB) Safe Hands Portal.

This requires clubs to register every volunteer who is likely to have any contact with children.

It includes a central check on whether a DBS is in place – and an ECB coaching qualification is also required.

Clubs can register all their volunteers on the system and, providing they have the right documentation in place, they are then covered to coach children.

Colin said: "It's an example that other NGBs should look at. In addition, the ECB provides a series of template documents for clubs to use so they can get their volunteer packs completed. You go in, you get the template, you put your club logo and name on there. Then, once you have a constitution, you have access to codes of conduct to send to parents, players and volunteers."

Not all the focus here is on NGBs, clubs need to take responsibility, too.

Many NGBs advise they are giving guidance to clubs – but the clubs are not finding that guidance, not looking for it – or not engaging in the process.

Amanda said: "There are many reasons for this. There's a lot of changes when it comes to committee roles for sports clubs. People may move on regularly, and there's not always an adequate handover.

As a result, people don't know that guidance is there or available, especially in sports with smaller governing bodies that don't have an online portal.

But the information is there somewhere on the website or through a phone line. Clubs can be pointed in the right direction.

But as a club, you also have a responsibility to understand your club, your constitution, rules and your roles, and manage some of this yourself.



You can't rely entirely on someone else tell you exactly what to do."

Many of the issues that arise are around events rather than core club activity.

For instance, coaching is well prescribed, in terms of the level of qualification required and the ratio of adults to children – and, on the field, there are rules to be followed to prevent serious injury.

That is different off it, however.

Colin said: "The risk of injury off the field is as relevant as on the pitch. We handled a claim recently where someone fell off a ladder, because the club equipment was stored high up. He hadn't been given any training, so it was a difficult claim to defend.

The same risk might occur if volunteers, perhaps mums and dads, are putting away heavy equipment. Have they been trained in how to lift it safely?

The other main risk area comes from an event that is different from the main sport – a firework display, a fete, a barbecue.

Many insurers won't insure a bouncy castle, for instance. Barbecues can put people at risk of food poisoning. Fireworks require a proper site plan as there must be a certain distance between spectators and the fireworks. Did you think about where best to locate the drop-off zone?

All these events require volunteers to be trained and aware of their responsibilities; and that's down to clubs.

NGBs will rarely provide guidance on non-sporting activities. Their role is to govern the sport, not social events. So, this is where clubs must take the lead. Clubs also need to understand however what activities are included in their insurances and where they may need to arrange additional insurances."

Volunteers are crucial to the future of amateur sport, but they need help and guidance to deal with the increasing demands placed on them.

Clubs, NGBs and volunteers need to work closely together so that clubs remain compliant – enabling their members to feel safe and supported.



Key takeaways for clubs and NGBs to consider

NGBs and clubs need to work together so that volunteers are properly trained and understand what is expected of them – no matter how big or small their role.



Key risks come in three categories:

- Regulatory requirements
- Operational risks
- General compliance, in particular health and safety

NGBs should look at the ECB's Safe Hands portal for an example of good practice.

E-learning tools, online advice and templates can help NGBs, clubs and volunteers communicate better.

Clubs should take responsibility for ensuring volunteers have access to guidance issued by NGBs – and NGBs should explore ways of making that guidance easier to find and access.

Ensuring that club officials provide an adequate handover when leaving the role, including access to NGB advice, could improve compliance.

Some risk areas, particularly around events staged on club premises, are outside of the guidance offered by NGBs. Clubs require a robust risk assessment for these activities.

Clubs working with Howden and insured by Hiscox can access templates and guidance through Praxis42 and the Hiscox Risk Academy.

We are offering free access to four essential resource documents.

They have been designed to support these risks and assist your documentation.

Click below to download these valuable resources from Praxis42:

- Staff/volunteer induction template
- Lone working guidance
- Risk assessment form
- Working at height guidance

Meet

Amy Mitchell

Broker

Byron Ewart

Broker

Ellie Doubleday

Account Executive

the



The team members featured in this edition are just a handful of our sport insurance experts.

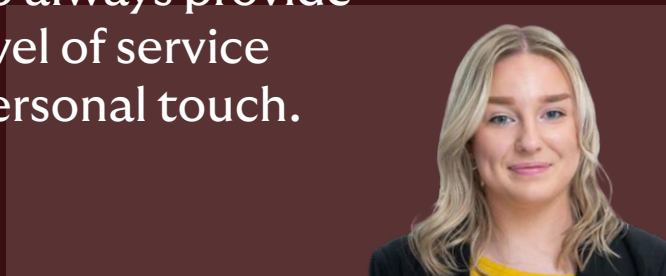
→ [Visit our website](#) to discover the areas of insurance we can offer.



team

Amy Mitchell

My favourite part of my job is building great relationships with my clients and getting to know them personally. I strive to always provide a high level of service with a personal touch.



What is your job at Howden?

My job title is Sport & Entertainment Broker. I look after the New Business Commercial Sports Clubs across the UK. My role is to provide customers with quotations for all their insurance needs.

How long have you worked for Howden?

I have worked for Howden for 3 years now, I was originally with Brunel Professions in Perth, Scotland, before Howden acquired the business. I joined the Sports & Entertainment team back in May 2023 with my colleague Rory. I'm part of the furniture now, I'd say!

What's your favourite part of your job and why?

My favourite part of my job is building great relationships with my clients and getting to know them personally. I strive to always provide a high level of service with a personal touch

What's your favourite sport and why?

My favourite sport is definitely golf! I have played golf myself since the age of 10 (13 years now!). Throughout the years I have played for the Scottish Golf Academy and received a scholarship at Gleneagles for four years in a row. I made so many friends and got to play some amazing courses across Scotland. If you haven't played at Gleneagles, get it on the bucket list.

Tell us a bit about yourself

I bought my own house at the age of 18 which is something I am very proud of. I live with my cat Missy, and she is the boss of the house! A fun fact about me is that I am also a qualified football referee, which most people do not expect.

Byron Ewart

What is your job at Howden?

I'm a Broker within the recreational clubs' side of the Sports and Entertainment team. My day to day is dealing with the renewals that come up as well as networking with insurers to build those relationships to get the most from those bridges.

How long have you worked for Howden?

I have been a part of Howden for a year now, but I have been in insurance for coming on eight years. I came from Aston Lark when they were brought under the Howden wing. My previous roles have allowed me to learn many different parts of the industry working in motor, travel and home.

What's your favourite part of your job and why?

Unfortunately, I am going to give a cliché answer of the networking, I am a people person! I enjoy being a character and meeting people, building relationships and overall helping people. Both internally and externally, I get a thrill from having new conversations.

I am a people person! I enjoy being a character and meeting people, building relationships and overall helping people.

What's your favourite sport and why?

If you count the gym, then weightlifting would be my sport of choice! I have been training for the last few years now five times a week and I love the discipline and mentality I gain from my time in the gym. To add to this, I am unfortunately a Crystal Palace fan so on the weekend I'm typically found crying about the latest loss.

Tell us a bit about yourself

I am a nerd at heart, I love movies and video games! I go to the cinema at least twice a month with my friends and we have a giant spreadsheet ranking them out of ten for the last five years. At one stage I was a semi decent inline skater but the risk of breaking my leg made me second guess this, so now I stick to the less dangerous sports. I am also a theatre lover, 'Wicked' being up there as one of my favourites just pipped this year by 'For Black Boys' which blew me away!



What is your job at Howden?

My role is an Account Executive within the Howden Sport & Entertainment team supporting our clients across the sports industry with their insurance programmes both in the UK and worldwide and develop new client relationships. My primary focus is National Governing Bodies of sport.

How long have you worked for Howden?

I rejoined the Howden Sport team earlier this year, having previously worked within the team eight years ago. My lifelong passion for sport has been the driving force behind my nine years of experience within the sports sector.

“
My next challenge will be training for the London Marathon on behalf of Maggie’s.”

Ellie Doubleday

What's your favourite part of your job and why?

My favourite part of my job is the opportunity to connect with incredible people who share a passion for sport. I particularly enjoy building relationships with clients, understanding their unique needs and providing solutions to support their growth and knowledge of insurance and risk management. We have a talented team of people who share the same enthusiasm which creates a great working environment.

What's your favourite sport and why?

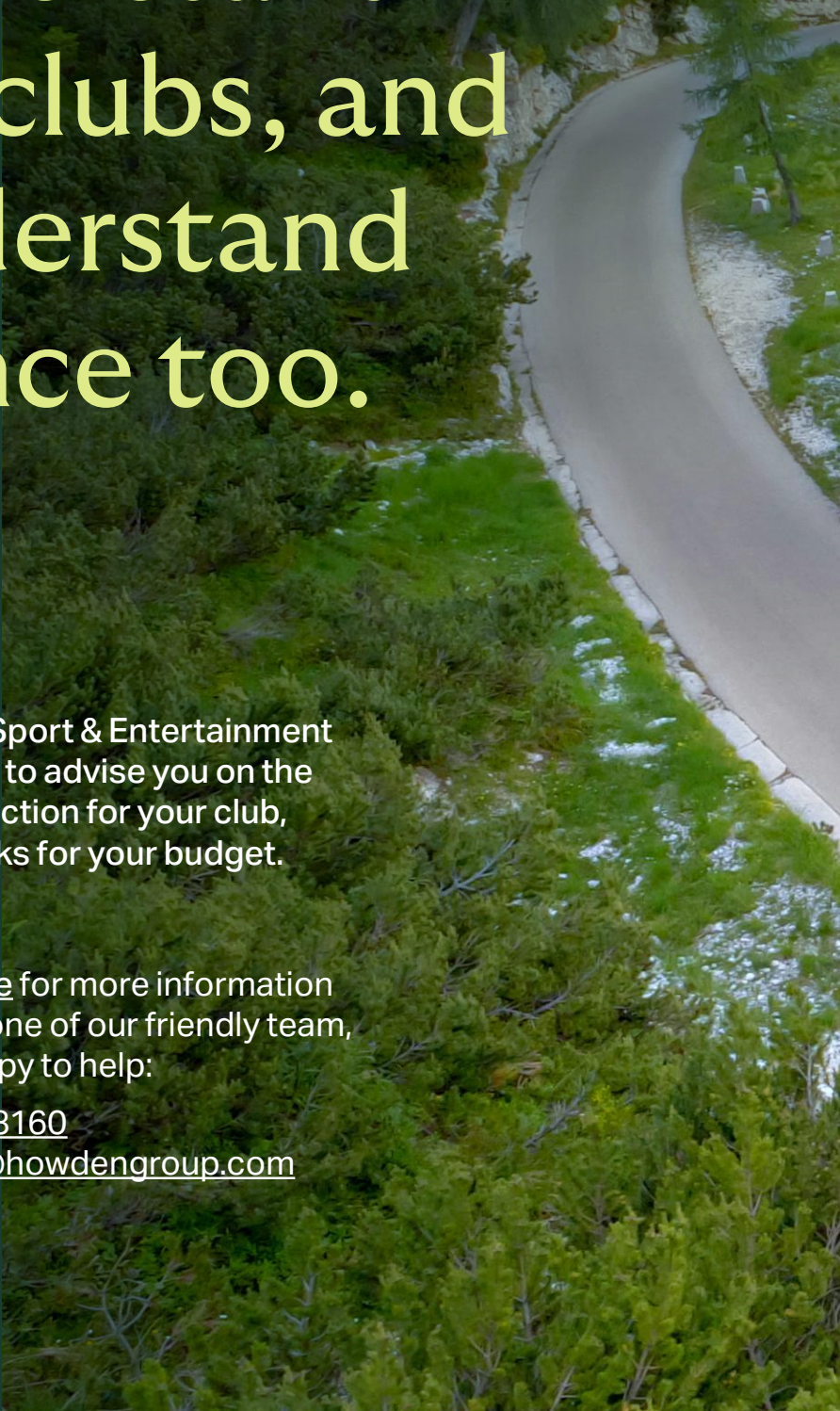
Hockey is my favourite sport because it combines my love for teamwork and competition! I'm fortunate to play in a team alongside an excellent group of girls who make every game enjoyable (I'm not sure they would say the same about me!).

Tell us a bit about yourself

I've always loved playing sport! I've grown up with five brothers which sparked my love for adventure and the outdoors. I used to love waterskiing and horse riding when I was younger, and I've had my fair share of wipeouts and falls! My next challenge will be training for the London Marathon on behalf of Maggie's. I began my training earlier this year when I travelled to Berlin to take part in the half marathon with my friends. When I'm not playing sport, I'm exploring new cities with friends and kept company by my mischievous cat, Dora the Explorer!



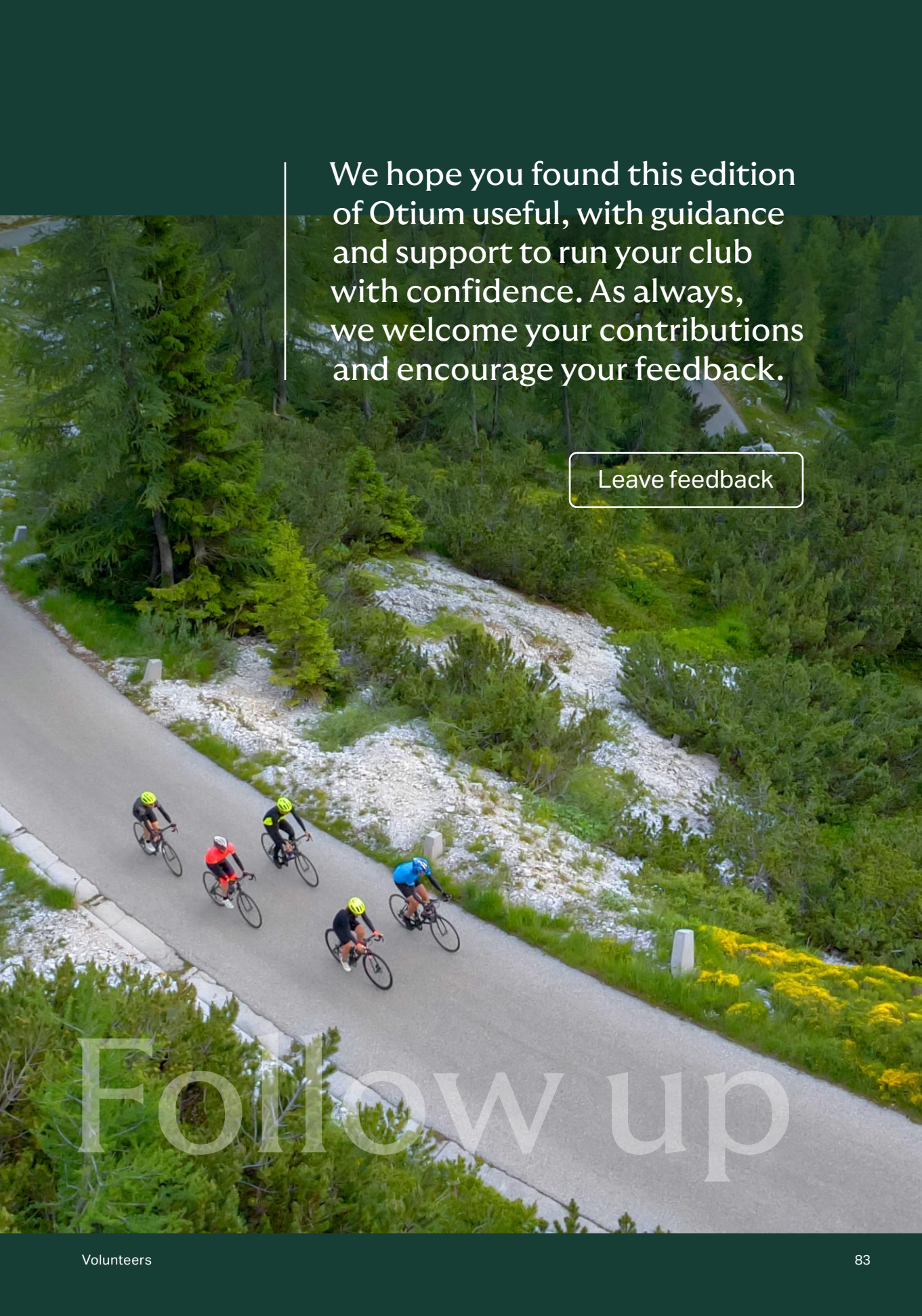
At Howden, we understand sports clubs, and we understand insurance too.



Our experienced Sport & Entertainment team are available to advise you on the right level of protection for your club, at a price that works for your budget.

→ Visit our website for more information or reach out to one of our friendly team, and we'd be happy to help:

+44 (0)121 698 8160
sportsenquiry@howdengroup.com

An aerial photograph of a paved road winding through a lush green landscape. Five cyclists are riding on the road, spaced out. The surrounding area is filled with tall evergreen trees and dense green shrubs. A rocky, light-colored path or stream bed runs parallel to the road on the right side. The overall scene is bright and scenic.

We hope you found this edition of Otium useful, with guidance and support to run your club with confidence. As always, we welcome your contributions and encourage your feedback.

[Leave feedback](#)

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One Creechurch Place, London, EC3A 5AF

+44 (0)20 7623 3806
info@howdengroup.com

howdenbroking.co.uk

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