



Subject: Youth Services Grant Report
Organisation: West Oxfordshire Levellers RL
Event funded: Girls Rugby League Skills Day, 8th March 2026
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Introduction

This report defines the reasons for our grant request, our aims for the project, how the skills day proceeded; and how the funding has benefitted female uptake and participation following the event.

The Club

We are a community focused, not for profit, Rugby League club providing different forms of the sport to Primary and Secondary aged children, along with Adult opportunities.

Core Values & Vision: Inclusion • Support • Growth • Respect • Resilience • Togetherness • Fun

We promote staying healthy by having fun. We use sport as a tool to develop players, and young people especially. We teach the skills needed to work as a successful team. We support player confidence to use individual inspiration when opportunities arise, within and outside the club. We aim to work with partners to facilitate young player opportunities to gain insights into the business world as they prepare for life after school. Work with partners to get adult workers into sport and improve fitness whilst making new friends.

The health and wellbeing of players is the highest priority. We have at least one first aider for every coaching session or match. All senior coaches are fully qualified with valid DBS checks. We align with national standards and seek new approaches to meet Physical and Mental Health needs. We don't alienate. We encourage players with additional needs to join us. For those who wish to play in matches, we assist players and their families in RFL registration.

We are dedicated in facilitating Primary and Secondary children in trying something different, making new friends, keeping active, building confidence and having fun. As the club grows, we aim to enhance support of female players; and those from ethnic, cultural or religious minorities to ensure we thrive as an all-inclusive club.

Background to initiative

Female team sport is growing like never before. However, taking that first step by joining a club can be much harder for females, especially if they don't know anyone at a club. Some teams are afraid of asking the question or afraid of hearing the answer:

"How can we make our club more attractive and accessible for women and girls?"

The Levellers fully embrace movements such as "This Girl Can" and "I Will if You Will", by encouraging any interested female player to come to a free taster session with a friend (who doesn't necessarily have to join in themselves). Our coaches include 1 woman and 1 girl who focus on primary development. 3 of our 6 sponsors are female owned companies; and providing opportunities for women and girls is high on their agendas.

As a club, we want to be led by our players and parents. Through engagement with our existing female members and interested parties, we will provide answers to these questions:

- What do female athletes want from a team?
- How do they want it to work?
- What barriers need breaking?
- What facilities do they need?
- What don't they need or don't want to hear?
- What does their sense of achievement look like?
- What will make them look forward to their next session or match?
- How much do they want to get involved with the club?
- Have they been disappointed by a club before? (any type of club)
- Are they worried what people at school will think? (friends and teachers)
- Are they concerned about not fitting in or not knowing anything about the sport?

The Plan

Building on the successful enrolment of girls to our Madley Brook Primary School after-school sessions, West Oxfordshire Levellers RL intended to hold a Girls Rugby League Activity Day for school years 2 to 11 on International Women's Day 2026. The information and activities were to be specifically designed for girls; and be appropriate for those currently partaking in sports and those who do not. See schedule in the appendix.

Each activity was to be themed around Rugby League to include skill development, problem solving, team-working/building and learning leadership qualities. The skills learned and advice provided can be adapted to other activities to help develop girls as the individuals they are. Success would not be measured by strength, stamina or ability to play; but involvement and enjoyment.

Promotion

Our promotion for the event took many forms, from a local online TV interview, use of our social media (including Facebook), creating flyers and posters, linking with school sports leads; and taking full advantage of the kind offer to use Witney Town Council's window display. The latter received positive feedback from those visiting the council offices, people waiting for buses and passersby who thought it was a worthwhile initiative.

We capitalised on our Girls Skills Day taking place on International Women's Day with many female specific sports groups sharing our event on their social media platforms too,

We also thank Henry Box School for the kind loan of the mannequins (now named Bev the Lev and Nev the Lev).



How the funding was allocated

The grant was spent in accordance with our detailed application and subsequent approval to proceed, except where noted below. See table for specific cost details.



Each participant was given a goodie bag with chocolate and a water bottle which were purchased using allocated funding from the grant. Each supplier offered a discounted price which enabled us to purchase spare items if required.

We initially set-aside some of the funds for pitch rental on the day. However, we benefitted from the Council offering this free of charge, allowing us to re-allocate that budget to supporting another part of the plan.

We used a local printing company who provide an agreed discount to the club to produce flyers and posters which were placed on lampposts and fences around the town (and were dutifully removed afterwards).

The coaches (or experts) provided their support for free which again allowed us to re-allocate funding.

It was important for us as a club to celebrate opportunities for females and we were overjoyed to have a local catering company run by a young female entrepreneur join us for the day. Part of the funding included the hire of the catering van and using tokens the girls were able to get a free drink and pastries. The doughnuts were especially popular.

The table shows approximate values rounded up or down by a few pence. The additional cost of £28 was paid for using the club's contingency budget.

Requirement	Allocated Budget	Actual Cost
Facility Hire (pitch rental)	£100	£0
Promotion (flyers and posters)	£150	£63
Experts	£200	£0
Refreshments	£300	£280
Development Packs and Prizes	£250	£685
Total	£1000	£1028

Review of the day

Rugby League benefits from players of all shapes and sizes. By encouraging young players (especially girls) to be who they are and how they are; we can increase the number of female players enjoying more regular team activities.

The Girls Rugby League Activity Day was also to serve as a recruitment event for the club. However, the club acknowledged some participants may not wish to join the team; and ensured all were treated with equal respect and provided with the same support, regardless of their choices. However, the club has welcomed many female players as a direct result of the event.



The pictures show just some of the activities on the day.



Many of the girls hadn't even picked up a rugby ball before or considered playing a contact sport before.

With any event like this it is important to advise your governing body of your intentions. Part of this was to confirm our insurance would cover any eventualities (which it does) and to ask them to help promote the event. The Rugby Football League not only promoted it for us, but they also sent us free balls with girls branding.

It was lovely to see so many parents stay with us for the whole event, cheering on the players, asking questions about a sport they had not seen before; and having the occasional coffee and pastry (not free for grown-ups).

Further outcomes

Following our inaugural Girls Skills Day we joined the RFL (Rugby Football League) Southern Girls Futures Festival Programme. This gave our new players opportunities to play against other girls' teams who are at a similar or slightly more advanced level in their development. The fixtures included facing teams such as Elmbridge Eagles, Golden Ferns Bristol, South Wales Jets and Aber Valley Wolves; the latter two opponents providing the club's first ever international competitions.

As you can see from the collage, they enjoyed every minute of the day and were able to share/learn skills with girls from other teams. They received much praise from the other teams' coaches and parents and kept asking when the next match is.

Next steps

We're not stopping there....

We hope by signing up to the Southern Girls Futures Festival Programme we will be able to switch to the Southern Girls Futures League. This will allow for regular home and away matches with other teams in our area (in addition to those forementioned clubs). This should also provide additional funding which can be used for travel to games and to cover pitch rental for home matches.

Funding and support from local organisations such as councils, schools and all our amazing sponsors; are vital in underpinning our aims and values. Recognition of our efforts is invaluable for a club made up of volunteers giving support in their spare time.

We would once again like to thank Witney Town Council for their support in our endeavours and look forward to building on our relationship in the future.



Appendix:

West Oxfordshire Levellers RL Girls Rugby League Skills Day Schedule

Sunday 8th March 2026 10am – 1pm

1. Warm-Up Activities (25 mins) *A fun start to get everyone moving, laughing, and ready to learn/play.*

Pulse Raiser Station 1 (depending on numbers)

- Touch Chaos Grid – Practice evasion and awareness while avoiding taggers!

Pulse Raiser Station 2 (depending on numbers)

- Treasure Hunt – Flip cones and compete to score for your team!

Whole Group

- Dynamic Stretching – Prepare muscles safely with movement-based stretches.

2. Skill Stations (30 mins) *Players rotate through stations to learn the core skills of rugby league.*

- Passing Station – Learn to pass backwards accurately and catch safely.
- Footwork Agility – Improve balance and dodging with cones and ladders.
- Support Play – Understand how to help teammates and create space.
- Play the ball – Learn how to play the ball after a tackle is complete.

3. Touch Rugby Games (25 mins) *Fast, fun, non-contact Rugby League to learn movement, teamwork, and passing, including the skills they have worked on above.*

• End Zone Dash – Work together to get the ball safely into the scoring zone – passing in any direction. This game can be the differentiated game for those struggling with their passing backwards whilst moving.

• 3 Tackle Two Handed Touch – Move the ball quickly and try to score before defenders touch you with two hands. Only passing backwards allowed and 3 tackles to score before the ball is handed over. Small-sided games of 4 players per side to enable everyone to be involved.

4. Contact Skills (20 mins) *Safe / controlled drills teaching correct technique before contact games. Those that don't want to get involved in the contact games can go into touch games in section 5 of the plan.*

- Learn the technique – On knees slowly working through the technique of a tackle
- Pad Tackling – Learn how to tackle safely using correct body shape when standing.
- Slow-Speed 1v1 Tackles – Practice real technique in a safe way.
- X-League Tackle Technique – Practice touching the ball as a defender and holding for 2-3 seconds

5. Fun Games Zone (20 mins) *High-energy games that build fitness and decision-making.*

- Steal the Ball – In two's players sprint on the command 'go', they are aiming to grab the ball and escape back to their starting zone without being tackled. If they manage it, they score a point for their team, if the defender tackles them, they score a point for their team.

- Gladiators Gauntlet Run – Evasion challenge against defenders for those that want to have a go at full contact. Narrow channel and the runner has to get past 3 or 4 defenders stood in a line 5 meters behind one another.

6. Attack & Defence Skills (20 mins) *Introduce core gameplay skills used in Rugby League.*

- Straight Running – Learn to run forward and create space. Look at running through tackle shields and hitting the gaps rather than running at defenders. Running at speed to break the defensive line.
- Defensive Line – Move up together and stay connected as a team. Defensive fitness and communication drill, one player runs out 5 meters then back. They then link arms with the second person who goes up together and back before linking up with a third person. Once the whole team is in, moving up in a defensive line, they then drop out one by one. This can be done in teams as a race against each other.
- 3v2 Waves – Practice passing options and decision-making under pressure. Drawing out a defender to create space, dummy, face pass etc.

7. Festival Match (25 mins) *Mini matches full of teamwork and fun! (depending on numbers)*

- Small-Sided Games – Everyone gets more touches and more chances to score.
- Bonus Points – Earn points for teamwork, passing, and good spirit!

8. Cool Down & Celebration (10 mins) *End the camp with stretches and celebrations.*

- Gentle Jog to bring heart rate back down
- Relaxed Stretching – Help muscles recover and stay healthy.
- Celebration & Photos* – Promote club training every Wednesday at WGS

**Consent sought from parents/guardian prior to event. If consent is not provided, photography will be managed to not include those who declined.*