



Phoenix Lacrosse Club

Impact Report

2021–22 Season

15 Aug 2022





Welcome from the Chair

Phoenix Lacrosse Club has enjoyed an amazing first half season. From the first training session, to our first match and official Club launch, the players, parents and Committee have enjoyed every moment.

We have been successful in launching and building a Club which has started to carry lacrosse beyond the foundation of St. Bart's School and it is our hope in the longer term that local primary and secondary Schools will teach and play Lacrosse as part of their curriculum. In any event we are fostering a club for youth from all of Newbury and the surrounding areas.

The first half season has been a big learning curve for the Committee, most of whom have never played lacrosse and had little understanding of how England Lacrosse operates with its various leagues. We have been inspired by our members to enable them to play in many matches and tournaments against other schools, and we are now in a good position to plan our next season.

Also a huge success has been our Outreach Programme, supported by The Lacrosse Foundation. In combination with its general support for our club, The Foundation's support for our Outreach will, we hope, be instrumental in securing our club's future and start to grow lacrosse in other local schools.

Our thoughts are turning to sustainability of the Club and we know involving more parents is important. We have embraced a micro-volunteering strategy to enable parents to provide first aid for a year group or manage catering for a match. In addition, we hope to start a Women's team next season to increase the revenues of the club and create an additional pool of coaches for the younger Seniors and Juniors. We will also start to think about extending the club to invite more boys. Lastly, we have worked to identify and secure a secondary training location and we will trial the new location in October 2022.

We enter our first full season with a team of 3 coaches, a solid Committee and a cohort of parents, some of whom are also undertaking First Aid training in support of the Club.

Alan Moon
Chair
Phoenix Lacrosse Club



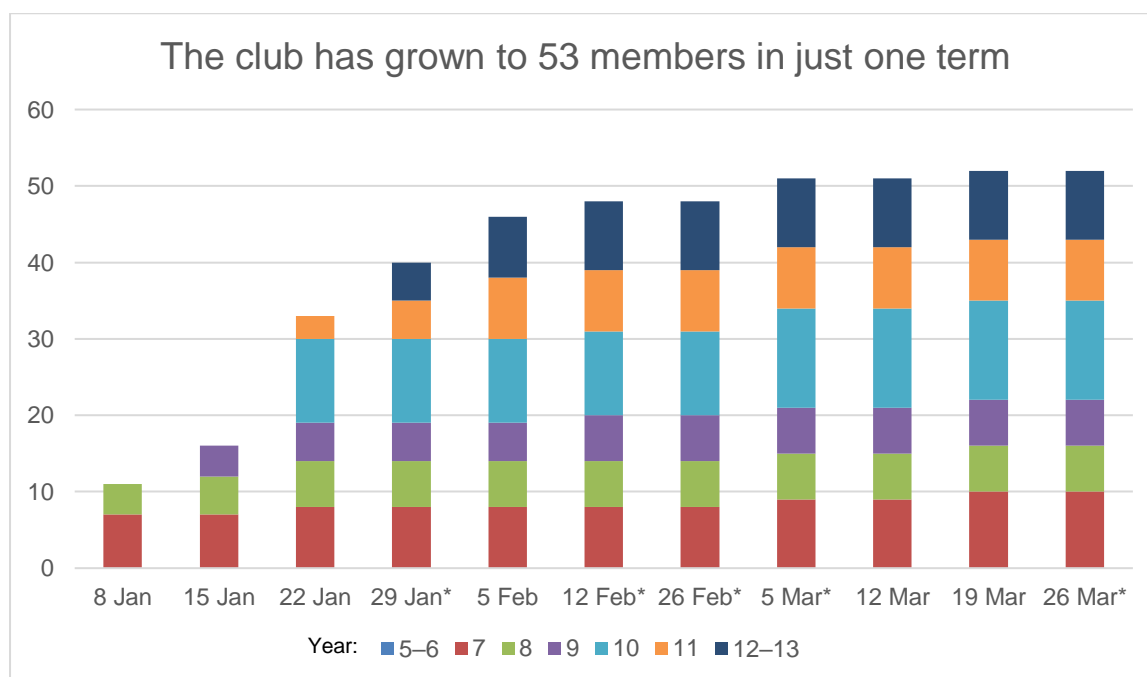
Phoenix Lacrosse Club in numbers

- 53 members played 450 hours of sport
- Over 40 matches against other schools
- 19 outreach sessions with 123 children at 7 State primary schools

Growing membership

Since the founding of Phoenix Lacrosse Club in November 2021 and our first practice on 8 January 2022, we have attracted 63 students to one of our taster sessions: 53 have returned for multiple sessions (“Members”), while 7 came for a taster session in the final two weeks of term and so it is too soon to say whether they will return. Only 3 of 56 students who attended a taster session before the end of term have not returned for a second session (1 in Year 10 and 2 in Years 12–13) – a conversion rate of 95%. Our famous half-time hot chocolate may have had a role to play in this success. Overall, our members participated in 309 ninety-minute sessions, totalling over 450 hours of purposeful sporting activity in just 3 months. Furthermore 8 members of the club are training with the England Lacrosse Talent Pathway, and 11 girls took part in the Regional Academy Assessments in July 2022.

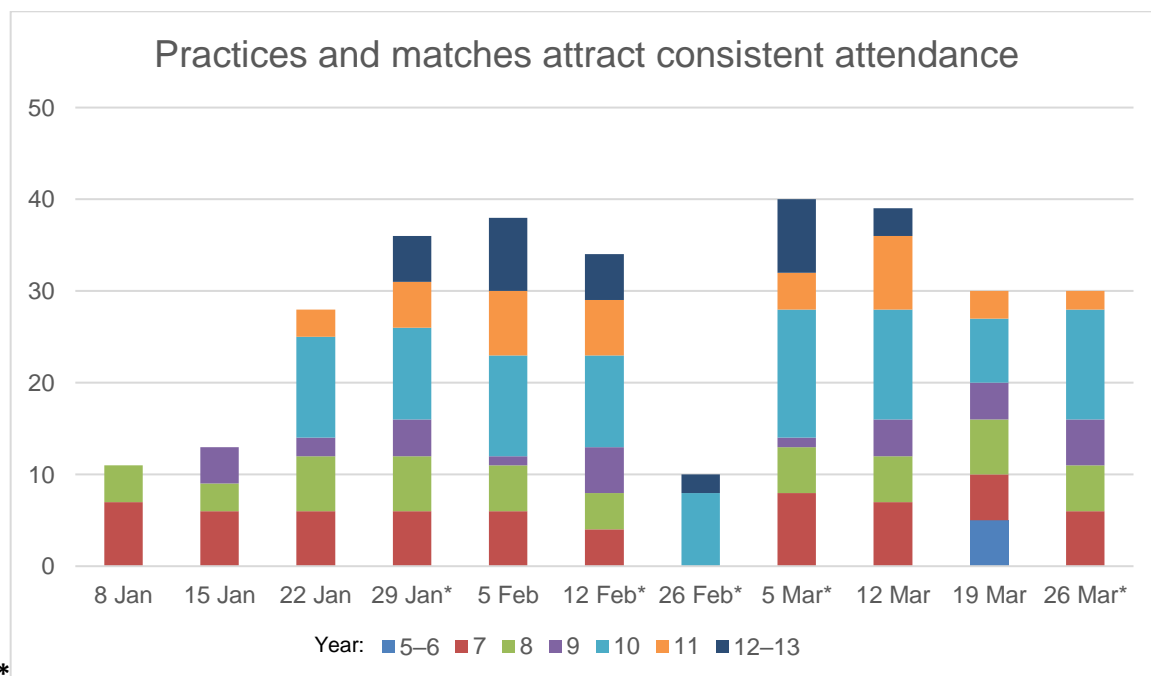
Our players are aged 11–18 years and are drawn predominantly from St Bart’s and other state schools in West Berkshire, with some coming from as far away as Winchester and Amesbury. Many have older siblings, parents or grandparents who played lacrosse at St Bart’s. As well as attracting numerous members and affiliating with England Lacrosse, we have trained 4 coaches, an umpire and numerous first aiders. During the half-season, our members have played in over 40 matches against other schools in the region, including in two tournaments.





Our official launch on 12 March 2022 attracted over 100 guests, including local councillors, local and national funders, national and regional sport, and local media: the Cllr Billy Drummond (Mayor of Newbury), Cllr Dominic Boeck (the holder of the Executive Portfolio for Children, Young People and Education at West Berkshire Council), David Seward (CEO of Berkshire Youth), Amit Biswas and Rob Collinge (Trustees of The Lacrosse Foundation), Richard May and Matt Bowsher (Legacy Leisure) and Garry Poulson (Volunteer Centre West Berkshire). Other guests included Sarah Bosley and Phil Cannings from the *Newbury Weekly News*, Dr Richard Sellwood from the Old Newburians' Association, Julian Starkey from England Athletics, Nik Roberts from England Lacrosse, and Victoria Westwood from South West Women's Lacrosse. Victoria Westwood of South West Women's Lacrosse Association commented that "Saturday morning was joyous - a real celebration of what playing lacrosse is all about at grassroots level!" and Garry Poulson of Volunteer Centre West Berkshire added that it was "A really super launch...a credit to you and your colleagues. What a great buzz you created!"

Our launch event attracted front page coverage in the *Newbury Weekly News* (plus a full page inside), an interview on Kennet Radio, and coverage in local media outlets such as *Spectrum* and *Penny Post*. Our social media posts on Twitter and Instagram were shared by local, national and international organisations, and our Facebook posts reached over 2000 people. Further details of the event, including of the Mayor's speech, can be found [here](#).



* Matches and tournaments.

NB A slight decline in participation in the final two weeks of the term is explained by members from St Bart's in Years 11, 12 and 13 were at the National Schools competition on 19 March, and by Rendcomb not fielding Years 11-13 on 26 March.

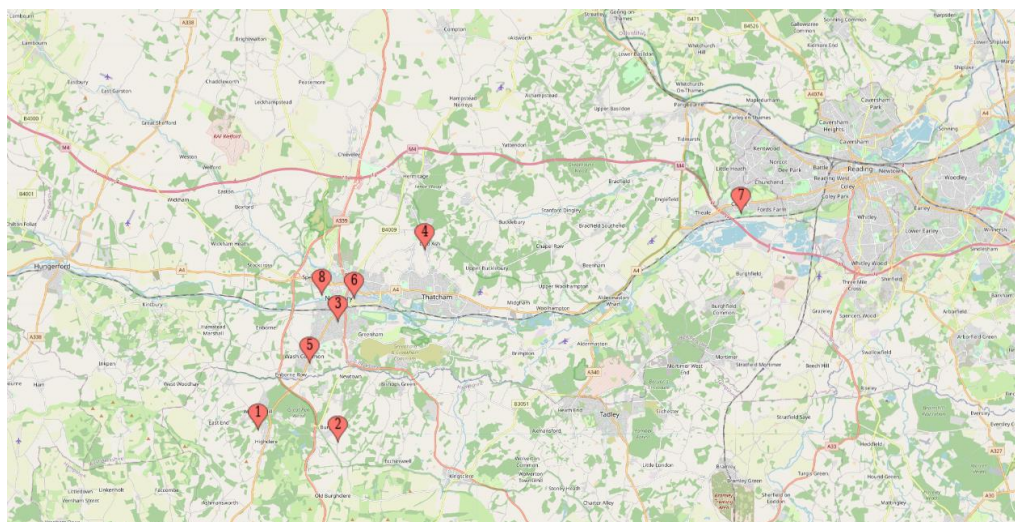
As we enter the 2022-23 season, we anticipate losing all 3 students who were in Year 13 during the year. To continue our growth, we aim to attract new members, with a particular focus on recruiting at least 10 members from the new Year 7. Accordingly, we have prioritized outreach work to primary schools during the year, and will continue to promote our club to new Year 7 students at St Bart's, including via social media. In addition, we aim to create a senior team for the over 18s (see below).



Successful outreach

Between May and July 2022, Phoenix Lacrosse held 19 outreach sessions with 7 State primary schools in the local area, from Cold Ash in the North to Burghclere in Hampshire in the South, and from Calcot in the Reading suburbs to the East (which has a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils than the national average), to Woolton Hill in Hampshire to the West. In total, we reached 123 children through this outreach. These sessions were led by three coaches who were supported by 16 volunteers from among our members, including Luci Robertson (England U19 A lacrosse team), plus 3 other parents and supporters. We hope that some of these will go on to train as coaches and umpires. Our outreach was limited by equipment to 20 children per session, but several schools had more than 20 children interested in taking part. A further 3 schools (Robert Sandilands, Speen; St Finian's, Cold Ash; Chieveley) would have taken part if availability and weather had permitted. The support of James Mandy, Partnership Development Manager, School Sports Partnership at Get Berkshire Active for West Berkshire (West) was instrumental in gaining the involvement of the schools. Funded by The Lacrosse Foundation, the outreach elicited tremendous feedback from the players, including, "Why haven't we done this before?" and "This is much better than rounders!" As part of her contribution, our lead outreach coach developed a coaching plan that can be used in future outreach. A copy of this has been provided to The Lacrosse Foundation.

Next year, with ongoing support from the Lacrosse Foundation, we will continue the outreach programme to encompass additional primary schools and also local secondary schools not already offering lacrosse. To enable schools who participated this year the chance to play against each other, we will offer them a Pop Lacrosse package that will include equipment and coaching. We will also seek to work in partnership with St Bart's, some of whose students volunteer as Sports Leaders to teach lacrosse at local primary schools on Friday afternoons. To help co-ordinate the Outreach Programme next season, we will recruit an individual with a lacrosse background via Volunteer Centre West Berkshire or England Lacrosse, or dedicate one of the parents to the role. They will be responsible for finding coaches, liaising with the schools and ensuring sufficient equipment is available for the sessions, as well as analysing the results of our outreach activities so far.



(Source: <https://www.mapcustomizer.com/map/Lacrosse%20Outreach>)



	School	Free school meals (%)*	First language not English (%)	Special Educational Needs support (%)	Attendance at outreach session (capped at 20) (n)
1	Woolton Hill Junior School, Woolton Hill, Hampshire. RG20 9XE	15%	2%	8%	13+10+12+13+12
2	Burghclere Primary School, Church Lane, Burghclere, Hampshire. RG20 9HT	8%	1%	13%	6+6
3	St Nicolas C of E Junior School, Station Road, Newbury, Berkshire. RG14 7LU	8%	10%	11%	20+22
4	St Mark's C of E Primary School, Cold Ash, Berkshire. RG18 9PT	5%	3%	10%	8+10
5	Falkland Primary School, Andover Road, Newbury, Berkshire. RG14 6NU	5%	5%	10%	8+18+8
6	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Newport Road, Newbury, Berkshire. RG14 2AW	10%	49%	9%	5+4
7	Calcot Junior School, Curtis Road, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire. RG31 4XG	31%	12%	10%	18+18+13+13
	Robert Sandilands Primary School, Digby Road, Speen, Berkshire RG14 1TS	19%	17%	11%	Cancelled by school due to the heat
	St Finian's Catholic Primary School, The Ridge, Cold Ash, Berkshire. RG18 9HU	1%	10%	13%	–
	Chieveley Primary School, School Road, Chieveley, Berkshire. RG20 8TY	4%	2%	10%	–
	Total				123

*Average 13% for West Berkshire and 23% for England (source: compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk).



Working with St Bart's

As one of the few state schools to offer lacrosse, St Bart's continued engagement with the sport is important regionally and nationally. Following their decision to discontinue competitive lacrosse with immediate effect, we were able to galvanize support (for example, a petition to reverse the school's decision attracted over 800 signatures at <https://www.change.org/p/st-bartholomew-s-school-st-bartholomew-s-cancellation-of-lacrosse-fixtures-for-the-foreseeable-future>) and persuade the school to take a phased approach, continuing competitive matches during a two-year transition period (2021–23). Furthermore, St Bart's entered the National Schools competition (which clubs such as Phoenix are not eligible to join). We took great pride in the St Bart's Under 19s team, which included many members of our club, winning the Division 3 title at the National Schools Lacrosse Championships. We wish to support the school to retain lacrosse within the curriculum and as a co-curricular after-school activity, even as they phase out competitive matches.

St Bart's is the only venue in the area to offer us lacrosse pitches. In our first half-season, they generously provided us with both a grass pitch and an AstroTurf pitch at a 50% discount. However, the AstroTurf pitch has now been let to another club (sadly without our being given first refusal) and so we are exploring alternative venues so that we are not purely dependent on the school. That said, we hope the school will continue to promote our club to new Year 7 students who are enjoying lacrosse.

Plans for the 2022–23 Season

The 2022–23 season will be the first full year for the Phoenix Lacrosse Club, and will start with:

- a pre-season play and picnic event in August
- our first representation at the Bath 8s in September
- a Taster Day in September, promoted via St Bart's and the local schools that took part in our Outreach

We are planning to increase our membership to include Women's Seniors and have targeted undergraduates by offering free membership to train and play. We will also develop our thinking in relation to boys. We continue to consolidate the club by securing the ongoing commitment of the volunteer coaching team and strengthening the Committee by attracting additional members and succession planning. We have developed a fully costed budget for the year and are currently seeking additional funding to supplement subscriptions and other membership fees.

Further information

Website: www.phoenixlax.co.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Phoenixlacrosseclub/>

Instagram: phoenix_lacrosse_

Twitter: @UKPhoenixLax

Sporting Gazette article and video about why the Club started:

<https://sportsgazette.co.uk/phoenix-lacrosse-save-our-sport/>



Thank you

The success of our club would not have been possible without the support of our members, parents, committee (of parents, former pupils of St. Bart's and a Professional Accountant who acts as Treasurer), coaches, umpires and first aiders. We are also grateful to St Bart's, for providing pitches at a 50% discount and an outside area for catering for home matches. We appreciate the opportunity to compete in the Marlborough College Invitational Tournament and the South West Schools' Lacrosse Rally at Sherborne School, and to play Rendcomb College and St Mary's Calne. We look forward to taking up outstanding invitations to play Stowe School, Clarendon School, and St Helen's and St Katharine's School Abingdon. We also thank St Helen's and St Katharine's School, Marlborough College and several parents for donating sticks. We are grateful to James Mandry, Partnership Development Manager, School Sports Partnership at Get Berkshire Active for West Berkshire (West) for promoting our Outreach Programme. Finally, we are incredibly grateful to Volunteer Centre West Berkshire, England Lacrosse, the South East Women's Lacrosse Association and Oxford City Lacrosse Club for their advice and to our generous funders, including The Lacrosse Foundation, Oxford PharmaGenesis, Legacy Leisure and our other donors and crowdfunders.

Press coverage





Phoenix Lacrosse Club



ST BARTHOLOMEW'S SCHOOL, Newbury, is one of the few state schools in the country to offer lacrosse. It has a long track record of success, competing against other schools and in competitions including the Nationals. Several students are on the Lacrosse England Talent Pathway, and some have gone on to compete nationally and internationally. Several now teach lacrosse at other schools.

Following the school's decision to discontinue competitive lacrosse, a group of parents and current and past students persuaded it to continue competitive lacrosse during a two-year transition period, entering the Senior team for the Nationals and arranging matches against other schools during this period. A petition to reverse the school's decision attracted over 800 signatures. However, the school's position is that students will not be allowed to compete on behalf of the school after this transition period, and so we have proceeded with setting up our own club.

The Phoenix Lacrosse Club was born at the end of 2021. Our first practice took place in January and, since then, we have attracted 53 members, competed in the Marlborough College Invitational Tournament, in the South West Schools' Lacrosse Rally at Sherborne School and against Rendcomb College and St Mary's Caine. It also has outstanding invitations to play at Stowe School, Clarendon School, and St Helen's and St Katharine's School in Abingdon.

The Lacrosse Foundation is a charitable trust that exists to help fund the development of all forms of lacrosse in Great Britain. As a registered charity, its aim is to promote community participation, assist in the provision of facilities, and advance the education of young people in the sport of lacrosse. Their vision is for a sport which is accessible to all and played in every corner of Great Britain. To help achieve that, they offer various levels of grants (from small grants below £1000, to major grants in excess of £5,000) to fund activities and projects that develop the game of lacrosse.

Lacrosse will become an Olympic sport for the first time at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028. We believe that Olympic sports should be inclusive and open to all, whatever type of school pupils attend. To broaden inclusion in lacrosse further, Phoenix Lacrosse aims to conduct outreach to local primary and secondary schools.

For further information, please contact Chris Winchester, Schools Liaison Officer, 07803 196998, chris@double-bass.org



Charitable Incorporated Organisation number 1166002 est 1974

Voluntary Sector Newsletter



New Sports Charity for West Berkshire Supported by Volunteer Centre West Berkshire
Phoenix Lacrosse Club Rises from the Ashes

The club was formed by parents, after St Bart's took the difficult decision to discontinue competitive lacrosse. The school has a long tradition of competing successfully in lacrosse, and St Bart's players have gone on to play the sport nationally and internationally. The club aims to continue this tradition, and has competed in the Marlborough College Invitational Tournament, in the South West Schools' Lacrosse Rally at Sherborne School and against Rendcomb College and St Mary's Caine. It also has outstanding invitations to play at Stowe School, Clarendon School, and St Helen's and St Katharine's School Abingdon. Zeta John, Logistics Secretary, said "It has been wonderful to watch the girls playing lacrosse matches again after the pandemic robbed them of almost 2 years of match play. They have had the opportunity to compete against Marlborough College, St Mary's Caine and Rendcomb College, and they have done so well. They have won matches, lost matches but always played with enthusiasm, camaraderie and huge smiles. The club is so very proud of them all and is looking forward to next season and what we can achieve together."

Health and wellbeing The role of sport in children's health and wellbeing has never been important than at the end of pandemic that prevented young people from exercising and staying fit, and has left some feeling isolated and anxious.

Garry Poulson, Director of Volunteer Centre West Berkshire, says "The Volunteer Centre has enjoyed supporting and advising this group of dedicated volunteers to establish Phoenix Lacrosse for West Berkshire. Sport is a vital element of society for our physical health and mental wellbeing. Covid has taught us that leading healthy and active lives can help us to stave off the worst that the pandemic could throw at us."

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Lacrosse Club Rises from the Ashes

Phoenix Lacrosse Club Rises from the Ashes

Over a hundred students, parents, supporters and local dignitaries celebrated the launch of the Phoenix Lacrosse Club at St Bartholomew's School, Newbury, on Saturday 12 March 2022. The club was officially launched when Mayor of Newbury, Councillor Billy Drummond, whose daughters played lacrosse for St Bart's, expertly put a ball into the back of the net. There was then a demonstration match from the club's members followed by hot chocolate in specially commissioned mugs.