



A message from the Chairman of Touchliners, Ian Graney

Dear parent or guardian, on behalf of the Touchliners committee I would like to welcome you to what promises to be a very exciting season of rugby at Abingdon.

Whether you are a new parent or already have some experience of Abingdon life, I'm sure part of your decision to choose this school was due to the wide range of other half activities offered. Rugby is only one of many team sports available to our sons, but is a core focus for the school - Abingdon continues to play at a highly competitive level and remains proud to be able to get every boy that wants to, playing.

As you may know, Touchliners is a parent run social group that supports our sons from the side of the pitch and raises funds to provide those little extras that help ensure that rugby is enjoyed at every level throughout the school.

Social events in 2013 included the Leaver's Dinner, the Lower School Awards Evening, the annual Old Abingdonian's match against the 1st XV and the annual Touchliners Dinner as well as the occasional pub visit before the games! Funds generated from these events, sales of Touchliners merchandise and our membership subscriptions allowed us to purchase outright or contribute to the costs of scoreboards, shirts & shorts, 7's squad kit, senior and junior tours to Dorset, Scotland, Ipswich, Norwich, Scotland and South Africa and substitute suits for all teams.

Social events planned for 2014/15 include welcome BBQ for 1st and 3rd years, the Touchliners Dinner Dance on October 11th (black tie with a Middle Eastern theme and entertainment including our guest speaker, ex-England coach Geoff Cook), the School Leavers dinner, a quiz night and pre- or post-match drinks at local hostelries during the season.

This coming season will see various opportunities for Lower and Middle year groups to tour with the school and preparations are under way for the Senior tour to New Zealand in 2015. We are aware that these tours cost money and that these times of austerity make touring a difficult choice for some families. Our pledge to the boys is that we will not stop any player from playing or touring due to the cost. We will keep a bursary fund available for the Director of Rugby to allocate as the school sees fit. You will also see a new and very sleek set of posts on the Waste Court field. These posts have both elegance and purpose and the Touchliners are proud to have made a major contribution to this acquisition. The Waste court is the schools 'flagship' ground and normally the

preserve of the Senior 1st team; this coming season will see an opportunity for all age groups to play on this fantastic newly leveled and turfed pitch.

Other benefits of joining Touchliners include a membership booklet with key information about rugby at Abingdon, which this year takes the form of a calendar with images from Abingdon rugby games, weekly match reports, priority Touchliner events booking and access to match day photographs, exclusive merchandise and international tickets (via ballot if oversubscribed).

I hope that you can see that our vision for rugby at Abingdon is backed by a strategy and that our commitment is to give the boys the opportunity to play rugby at whatever level they see fit. Whether 2014/15 is your first or last year at Abingdon, I invite you to join Touchliners ([click here](#)) and help us support this vision. I can promise a year of great rugby, great company and great fun!

To quote a world famous Kiwi, "Rugby does not build character; it reveals it." - enjoy the season and I look forward to meeting you on the Touchline!

Ian Graney