



BELVEDERE AND CALDER VALE SPORTS CLUB THE QUEEN'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE



Belvedere and Calder Vale Sports Club are to receive The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service after being nominated for the award by Pendle MP, Andrew Stephenson.

Belvedere & Calder Vale Sports Club, situated at Holden Road, Reedley on the border of Burnley and Pendle, is a community based sports organisation. It was formed 63 years ago by the amalgamation of Calder Vale RUFC, (now Burnley RUFC); Burnley Belvedere Football Club and Burnley Belvedere Cricket Club.

In 1957 a small committee of businessmen who were sportsmen involved in the three sports raised funds to buy a 6-acre plot of land to build a clubhouse with changing rooms and pitches to provide amateur sport for the local community. A further purchase of land to accommodate an additional football pitch and rugby pitch, with extensions to the original building, was made in later years to enable it to become the Club as we know it today. It provides facilities for the three sports across many age groups, genders and ethnic groups in the boroughs of Burnley and Pendle. It also supports the local community by making available its clubhouse facilities and sports grounds for a variety of uses. These include the meeting venue for Pendleside Rotary Club and Burnley Soroptomists Club, a Polling Station and the site for various local health initiatives. An Annual Christmas Carol Concert is held when funds are raised for Pendleside Hospice & Pendle Youth Orchestra.

Its 12 acres of open space, with four sports pitches and a cricket square, are criss-crossed with public footpaths and a stretch of spring water-fed wetland which supports a wildlife environment. All this activity is provided by an army of volunteers who administer the running of the Club and the maintenance of its grounds and clubhouse.

Calder Vale RUFC was formed in 1926 when they played their early fixtures at Fenny Fold in nearby Padiham. In order to align with other sports clubs in the area, it became Burnley RUFC in 2002.

Burnley RUFC has two Senior Men's teams. Last season the first team was promoted as Champions to the ADM Premier Lancashire League. It was just a shame that the season was interrupted by the lockdown, thus preventing the team going through a full season with an unbeaten record. Burnley RUFC has an excellent record of organising tours abroad and has sent teams all over the world, including USA, China and numerous countries in Europe. Over the years, touring sides have been received from France, Poland and the Caribbean. The Annual Dinner raised funds for the Doddy Weir Foundation.

Burnley RUFC has a thriving Junior section with teams at 5 age groups. There are also 6 teams playing Mini Rugby. All of these are supported by Volunteer Managers and Coaches, the majority of whom have RFU coaching qualifications. The Junior section is underpinned by the work of the Community Rugby Coach who promotes rugby union in local schools and educational establishments.

Burnley RUFC has an enthusiastic Ladies section. The team finished sixth in the National Challenge North West 1 League, having won the lower league the previous season when they reached the final of the National Plate Cup when they played Bath Ladies. There are also 3 girls' teams covering age groups U13, U15 and U18.

Although Burnley RUFC has still to produce a full international, several members have represented England age group teams. Last season Danny Rowlands played for England Deaf and Anya Richmond played for England Women's U 20s. Captain Ben Healy played for Lancashire Royals – the county team for players at level 5 and below.

The current Chairman of Burnley RUFC and former Captain, Paddy Murphy wrote: "Burnley RUFC would like to thank all our volunteers and parents, not only for the hard work that has gone into the preparation for this special award, but for the time and effort they donate every week as coaches, managers, caterers and general supporters for their children and other players. Every one of them has contributed to the achievement of this highly prestigious award.

We have further opportunities for anyone in the Community to get involved in playing and supporting this vibrant club as we expand to include a Men's Third team, a Veterans' team and a Colts' team. Whatever your age or ability, there is a place for you in our friendly Rugby Family."

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK and is the equivalent to a single person receiving the MBE. It aims to recognise outstanding work by volunteer groups to benefit their local communities and was created in 2002 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Recipients are announced each year on 2nd June, the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation.

Belvedere & Calder Vale Sports Club is one of 230 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year. The list is diverse and includes volunteer groups from across the UK. Amongst the number are a community shop in Cornwall, an environmental group in Swansea, a group working with refugees and vulnerable people in Stirling and a community arts centre in County Down.

Representatives of Belvedere and Calder Vale Sports Club will receive the award from The Right Honorable, the Lord Shuttleworth KG KCVO, Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire later this summer at County Hall, Preston. Furthermore two volunteers from the Sports Club will attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace in May 2021, along with other recipients of this year's Award.

In a letter to all members of the Sports Club, the Chairman Ian Wilkinson, (a former Burnley RUFC Captain), wrote inter alia:

“This award to Belvedere and Calder Vale Sports Club is a magnificent achievement that would not have been possible without the generous support shown by you. It is for the hundreds of members who have selflessly given many thousands of hours of voluntary service throughout the Club’s history.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of Belvedere and Calder Vale Sports Club, I write to share this wonderful news and extend a massive THANK YOU to our membership and volunteers, down the decades.

Obviously, the coronavirus crisis is still with us, but please be assured that your Club is gearing up for an even better and brighter future. The Club is open to the public, so whatever your sport come and use our great facilities, watch a game and enjoy refreshments afterwards in our refurbished clubhouse”

Peter Hughes June 2020