

The Richard Huish Lodge 8518 was founded in 1973 by staff and former pupils of what was then the Huish Grammar School. We are now an open Lodge, though about half of our members can still claim a connection to the School / college. We are delighted that one of our newer Brethren, Bro Dave Roberts, is The Employer and Business Development Coordinator for Apprenticeships at the College.

Reinvigorating that connection, before all this Covid craziness started, the Lodge donated the proceeds of two festive board raffles for the Huish Tigers Youth Programme. With support from Province as well, £445 was raised. We were planning on presenting this to the Tigers just after our April meeting, but lockdowns, suspensions, school closures and social distancing put the kibosh on that. We have however been able to get the donation under way at last.

The Huish Tigers franchise formed basketball as the first element in 1992, and now includes football and rugby. All 3 clubs have the same ethos – to provide a sporting environment where young people can feel safe and can learn and excel.

Young people can attend from the age of 6 in the beginners sessions, and as they become more experienced they can progress to the intermediate sessions. These sessions are open to all and the Lodge's support will help Huish Tigers run these sessions at a discounted low cost, as well as investing in volunteers who can go through coaching qualifications. The core youth programme provides coaching for young people aged 10 to 18, with a men's team also operating. Teams compete across the South and South West in Basketball England's National League, and the Men's home games regularly host crowds of 150 supporters.

The basketball team in particular is very successful. Recent successes include winning the u16 and u18 (back to back winners) National League last season. The men's team finished 3rd - pretty impressive, as the team fielded five players from the u18 squad! The u16s and u18s were able to travel - before all the restrictions – to Madrid for their first international experience, focusing on basketball but also taking the opportunity to immerse themselves in a different culture. The College is highly regarded in the sporting world, with players graduating on to well established universities, and coaches working with national and regional teams.

The Lodge was delighted to support the College in its community outreach work. Here's the socially-distanced cheque presentation – Gary Carter (coach) receiving the cheque from Bro Dave Roberts and Bro Richard Wilson, our Charity Steward.