

Cottesmore Amateurs Football Club

Cottesmore AFC was formed in 1941, with the current year being 2026, a period of 85 years.

The formation date was confirmed by original members who are no longer with us. Unfortunately, there are no records available for the period 1941 to early 1950s.

It appears that the Club was a member of the Rutland League from 1941 to 1955. A 2-year break then ensued before being reformed in 1957. The team played friendly games prior to re-entering the Rutland League in 1958.

One of the people most associated with the re-forming of the Club was John Walker, a Cottesmore resident who served as Club Secretary for many years and was also a member of both the Rutland League and Melton & Rutland League Committee before embarking on a lengthy spell of service with the Leicestershire & Rutland County FA.

On the playing side, the team finished as Runners-Up in their inaugural season before becoming Rutland League Champions in the following 1959/60 season, adding both the Benevolent Cup and the Ketton Charity Cup, to complete a memorable treble success.

The Club remained members of the Rutland League until season 1972/73, a period of 15 years, only broken by a season in each of the Bourne League and the Melton League in the mid-1960s.

The Rutland League years saw a time when virtually every player lived in the village of Cottesmore and the Rutland League itself had membership of some 16 Clubs, almost every village in the County fielding a team. It was possible, if fancied, to cycle to some of the away games, unlike today's pilgrimage of some 50 miles round trip!!

During the period from 1941 to 1984 games were played on farm fields, thanks to the generosity of the local farmers. During this 43 year period, the venue changed on a number of occasions. Beginning in Burley, the playing facility then moved on to Cottesmore Central School, Greetham Road, Rogues Lane and finally to Rogues Park, all 4 facilities being located in the village. With such rural venues, changing facilities were pretty well non-existent. A 24ft x 24ft wooden shed (ex building site) with no heating or electricity and the only water supply being a nearby trough, had to suffice.

The 1969/70 season saw the Club again successful, being crowned Rutland League champions, 10 years on from their initial triumph.

The Club entered the Melton League in season 1972/73, by this time their home base being Rogues Lane, Cottesmore. With the demise of the Rutland League in 1977, the Melton & Rutland League was born, starting in season 1979/80.

Cottesmore AFC were to enjoy an 11-year stint with the Melton & Rutland League through to the 1983/84 season. Whilst the lack of adequate facilities remained, the Club's prowess on the playing field progressed. During their 11 years spell in the League, the Championship was won on 4 occasions, in seasons 1977/78, 1979/80, 1980/81 and 1982/83. In addition, there were 3 KO Cup wins in 1976/77, 1977/78 and 1979/80. With the win in the Benevolent Cup Final in 1979/80, the Treble for that season was achieved. For the superstitious, it is worth noting that the "noughties" years, namely 1960, 1970 and 1980, saw 2 treble triumphs and included 3 League titles.

The 1984/85 season saw the Club become members of the Leicester & District League, generally accepted to be a step up in playing levels and certainly a more challenging level as regards the travel requirements. At this point, a second team was formed and would compete in the Melton & Rutland League.

The upgrade in playing standards also involved the same requirement in facilities. At this point developments were ongoing in relation to the new ground and changing rooms in Cottesmore village. The current facility at Rogues Lane was not to the level required for District League membership. The situation was resolved through an agreement being reached with the local RAF base at Cottesmore, enabling the Club to hire the facility until the groundwork in the village was completed. And so began a 3-year rental with the Military. The eventual move to the new ground in Cottesmore took place in the 1987/88 season and carried the title of Rogues Park. The Club would remain as District League members until season 1991/92, a 7 year stay. Entry to the District League was into Division 2 and proved to be very successful as CAFC emerged as Division 2 Champions in their first test at this level. The 1984/85 season's top spot finish led to promotion to Division One in the District League in season 1985/86.

Steady progress continued for the following 6 years. The 1991/92 season saw the team finish as Champions of the District League Premier Division, thereby gaining promotion to the Leicestershire Senior League Division One. At this point, the second team moved up from Melton & Rutland League level to Leicestershire & District League Reserves Section, an A Team being formed to play in the Melton & Rutland League.

One of the requirements for Leicestershire Senior League membership was having floodlights (Premier Division) and through a major sponsor and Government Grant Aid this was achieved and the lights were switched on in 1993. In their second season in Senior League Division One, 1993/94, a 3rd league position was enough to secure promotion to the Premier Division. Apart from a 2-season spell in 2006/07 and 2007/08, relegation to Division One, the Premier Division level has been maintained – a span of some 33 years – 1993 to 2026.

Season 2019/2020 saw a first time appearance for the Club in the FA Vase Competition, progressing through 2 preliminary rounds to the 1st round proper - all 3 games against higher level opposition and all 3 games away from home. Victories against Radford FC 3-1 and Harrowby United 2-1 before going down to Derbyshire side Clay Cross 1-3.

Whilst silverware at this level has been hard to come by (a Beacon Bitter Cup Final success), the Club has been able to sustain a competitive standard at Senior League level. Indeed, at one point in season 2020/21, a very promising position in the Premier Division had been reached, and then along came Covid and the League schedules were terminated. The Club's 2nd XI had followed the first team to the Leicestershire Senior League, competing in the Leicestershire Football Combination, City Goldsmiths Division 2. The A team had been disbanded by this point.

The 1999/2000 season saw the advent of the Cottesmore Cotts Under 18 team, managed by Club Vice Chairman, Steve Bent. The team gained entry to the Leicestershire Midweek Floodlit Youth League, games covering adjoining areas of the East Midlands. The first 4 seasons at this level proved to be of little trouble to the youngsters with league place finishes of 2nd, 2nd, 2nd and 3rd and in 2002/03 as League winners - the only Rutland football Club to win a League Championship at Leicestershire County level. The Under 18 squad went on at the same level for a period of 12 seasons until July 2011 when a disastrous fire at Rogues Park destroyed almost all equipment, including the electrical supplies to the floodlights. Replacement costs proving to be beyond the Club's reach, this sadly brought to an end the Under 18's journey.

A major part of the Under 18's success story was provided by 3 individual players achieving Golden Boot awards for most goals scored by them in a season, the players being Mike Hallam, who won the prestigious award twice, Andy Sayers and Richard Thompson.

Cottesmore AFC have operated with Veterans teams over the years, having spells housing their own Cottesmore Veterans in addition to Rutland Veterans, using the Cottesmore facilities

The Club currently runs the following teams:

- Men's Senior 1st XI
- Junior teams – under 7's, under 9's, under 11's, under 12's and under 16's.

Points of interest

The Club has enjoyed "European tours":

- Easter 1970 – Belgium – Winners of International Tournament
- 1971 – Jersey
- 1980 – Holland
- 1981 - France

1994 - Royal visit to Cottesmore and Cottesmore AFC by Royal Navy Ship, HMS Cottesmore, Captained by the then, Prince Andrew. The crew of the ship played a friendly game v CAFC.

June 1996 – the Croatia national team were in the UK for EURO '96 European Championship. The team used Rogues Park as their training facility, being based locally at Barnsdale.

Friendly games v professional Clubs held at Rogues Park:

- CAFC v West Bromwich Albion – 1994
- CAFC v Lincoln City – 1995
- CAFC v Leicester City – 1997 (Westerby Challenge Cup Quarter Final Tie)

Ground name change:

- The home ground name of Rogues Park was changed in 2016 to Westray Park, in recognition of Allan Westray's 60 years continuing service to Cottesmore AFC.

Ground maintenance squad – 1987 to 2026:

- M Kettle
- B Plant
- M Croson
- K Ash
- R Lewin
- A Westray

Laundry ladies – 1959 to 2026:

- Mrs A Taylor
- Mrs F Thorpe
- Mrs B Westray
- Mrs W Wakfield
- Mrs C Auton

Elected Officers (1963-2016)

President	Chairman	Secretary	Treasurer
K S Hopewell M Shaw G Dalby * A Matthews ***	F Barnes D Smith D Westray K Hallam T Coggan I Smith * G Kingston A Westray ** S Duffy *	R Glover A Westray ** K Hallam D Shewan K A Nimmons M Tolond *2 Liz Ash R Lewin	C Taylor G MNcNeill *** T Lovell M Tolond *2

*10 years plus

**20 years plus

*2 10 years plus between 2 Offices

***over 40 years

Most competitive games for Cottesmore AFC:

- Ken Hallam - 1958/59 season to 1981/82 season – 676 games

Most career goals for Cottesmore AFC:

- Alfie Hallam – 1958/59 season to 1972/73 season – 352 games – 375 goals

Most goals in a season for Cottesmore AFC:

- Kerry Nimmons – 1979/80 season – Melton & Rutland League – 43 games – 81 goals

Golden Boot Award, Leics Senior League Premier Division, Season 1996/1997:

- John Neal – 40 goals

Cup Competition successes over the years:

- Ketton Charity Cup
- Stamford Challenge Cup
- 3 Sons Trophy
- William Scarber Trophy
- Beacon Bitter Cup
- Melton Charity Cup
- Rutland Cup

1st Team Managers:

- Allan Westray / Mick Nimmons / Graham Measures / Chris Duggan / Simon Daws / Dave Beswick / Darren Munton / Mike Shaw / Geoff Green / Richie Morgan / Nick Buff / Lee Wood / Barry Suggett / Steve Duffy / Gary Drake / Neill Miller / John Rowden / Rich Giblin / Alex Brown

Serving Officers 2026:

- Chair – Steve Duffy
- Vice Chair – Rich Giblin
- Secretary – Hannah Bray
- Treasurer – Amber Kitchin.