

CHESHIRE CRICKET CLUBS COMMITTEE

Executive Committee Meeting – 12th June 2024 Moss Farm 7.30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Opened 7.30 p.m.

Present: David Humpage (Chairman), Brian Horrocks (Secretary), Barry Harwood (Treasurer), Derek Barnett (Officials), Brian Boys (Cheshire County League Representative), Gareth Moorhouse (Cheshire Cricket Board), Selwyn Stephenson (Cheshire Cricket League Representative), Andy Horsfield (Grounds Representative),

Apologies for Absence

Julie Rafferty (Safeguarding), David Gane (Cup and Shield), Caroline Sheridan (Women's Cricket Representative), John Petch (Cheshire County Cricket Club), Duncan Anderson (Facilities Representative), David Atkinson (Grants), Jess Lewis (Women's cricket)

Previous Minutes:

No matters arising

Safeguarding (Julie Rafferty)

No report available at the meeting. The Report was subsequently received and is distributed with these minutes. A recent email from CCB confirmed the acceptance of new policies for Safeguarding. These policies are also attached with the minutes.

Treasurer (Barry Harwood)

Two payments have been made to disability cricket and the grant funding workshops. Cheshire Cup expenses have not yet been made. We are about to start the process for club affiliation fee collection with a deadline date of 1st August.

Secretary (Brian Horrocks)

Correspondence which included

- AGM minutes circulation
- Detailed financial papers
- Cheshire cup draw
- Website policies (to be discussed at meeting)
- June meeting arrangements
- Safeguarding policies

Additionally, we discussed the proposed circulation for the 4Cs constitution, now approved, and available. It was determined that apart from the 4Cs representatives, we would ask David Sharp to publish the document on the 4Cs Governance part of the CCB web site.

Development Plan and Clubs & Participation (Gareth Moorhouse)

- The weather disruptions at the start of the season caused as much concern for activities in Gareth's workload as everywhere else. Consequently, we have not made as much progress on the Development Plan as expected. The intention is to aim for the next 4Cs meeting to

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have a something to look at.

Action – Set up next working session – Brian H, Gareth

- The ECB 4-year funding cycle is concluding with the next one in prospect. Development plans are being targeted for the autumn to capitalise on the funding cycle timing. Several discussions are planned before the next meeting.
- The new affiliations form has been agreed and used to commence the process of fee collection for 2024. The very good news is that 108 out of 109 clubs have signed the agreements. The one missing is a well-known peripheral club in Merseyside. The usual activities are taking place to solve this issue.
- A new associate level affiliation has been introduced at a reduced fee. We are interested to see how this process develops.
- ECB are refreshing the clubmark process. All of our clubs have undergone a health check. We have received a commendation from ECB congratulating us on our thorough approach and success as a county in achieving 100% against their measurement criteria. Holmes Chapel is the latest club to start the process involving new coaches and junior sections. We wish them well. The 2025 evolution of clubmark is underway at the ECB.

Action – Provide a rough-cut estimation of what this policy might mean to our clubs – Gareth

Facilities and Grants (delivered by Gareth Moorhouse for Dave Atkinson)

- The ECB county grants fund process has been completed with the allocation of £113 k. There is no likelihood of any 'top up' this year. 14 clubs took advantage of the scheme involving 13 projects across the spectrum of 'Welcoming Environment', 'Enhanced Facilities', 'Climate Change'. The next cycle will start as early as 1st February 2025.
- Three grants workshops (4Cs funded) were held facilitated by Steve Wright (ex Oulton Park CC). 50 people from 40 clubs took advantage of this. Several clubs indicated late in the day that they would have liked to attend, in which case, a further workshop is a possibility. We recorded our thanks to Steve for this valuable service.

Senior Leagues - Cheshire County League (Brian Boys)

- CCCL suffered the same weather-related poor start to the season as everyone else. Across all divisions there were many cancellations. The first week fixtures were re-allocated to the Sunday of week 22. Many clubs, including several of the larger clubs, have witnessed very difficult circumstances.
- The weather devastation has meant that much of the usual pitch assessment marking has not been undertaken in order to maintain a reasonable relationship with hard pressed groundsmen. Unanimously, everyone involved in Cricket has applauded the efforts of our groundsmen. Several clubs have been forced to identify significant drainage work to be done out of season. Ground switches to try and mitigate the effect have worked to a degree but in some cases caused knock-on consequences.
- Win/Lose cricket appears to be popular with very few negative reactions.

Senior Leagues - Cheshire Cricket League (Selwyn Stephenson)

- CCL – Selwyn identified the same issue as Brian B concerning weather. CCL decided to move the week 1 fixtures to effectively a week 23.
- We have two clubs facing closure. One has been served immediate notice by the landlords

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of the ground. The club has faced declining fortunes for a number of years, and has now decided to wind up. The league and CCB/4Cs have and will continue to try and find solutions which may include re-homing players, finding potential new facilities, funding short term resolutions but for this club the immediate future is bleak. A second club is also facing some difficult discussions with the landlord. For very different reasons this club may find itself homeless but wishing to continue playing cricket.

- The point above emphasises a concern Selwyn has voiced for some time, that grass roots clubs do face many difficulties and need help. He is undertaking an informal review of CCL clubs for their resilience and hoping to implement some proactive actions to stem the flow. This may mean larger clubs taking a more proactive involvement in helping out smaller clubs.
- CCB are helping CCL to locate any potential new/changed facilities. This may include some former grounds, currently out of use, that could be regenerated. CCB can also help by encouraging smaller clubs (and larger clubs) to have a development plan. CCB find that smaller clubs are less likely to interact with them, however, this is a situation we can rectify.
- Recently the CCL Secretary wrote to all member clubs to emphasise a standing rule that player payment is not allowed. The league exec try to 'hear' the under currents and rumours and step in where possible. Player payment is a perennial undercurrent and is gaining some currency at the moment. In practice, very little can be done without proof, and getting proof is next to impossible. The 4Cs are not in a position to offer any help with this. One concept is to declare (in all leagues) an open policy allowing clubs to pay players, and allow it to find its own level.
- There are some discussions underway with potential new club members in the Cheshire pyramid. In practice there needs to be a deadline for an application for 2025 admission.

Action – Make David H aware of a deadline for CCL – Selwyn

Senior Leagues – Women (Caroline Sheridan)

No report available

Officials (Derek Barnett)

- The amalgamation of the three Cheshire officiating associations is progressing well. Three separate workstreams have been identified looking at drawing up a new constitution, dealing with financial matters relating to three legacy accounts and addressing the future appointments procedures. We are on track for the two league associations to dissolve in the autumn followed immediately by the ACO AGM where the new amalgamated association will adopt a new constitution and elect new officers.
- The new umpire progression pathway creates two separate pathways for the men's and women's game. A number of colleagues have applied to progress to M4 and M3 and undertaking the observations and assessments. Where requested, mentors have been allocated. Two members have sought progression to W3, however part of the requirement is that they have experience at Premier League level, something that the CWCL is unable to provide. To be accepted on the women's pathway, our Cheshire members have to travel to the West Midlands to receive appointments in their Premier League. One member is currently on the pathway, the second has withdrawn.
- The ECB ACO funding model has changed this season resulting in a reduction in the annual rebate per member of 50%. County ACOs are required to make an annual bid for additional funding to cover umpire observations and training. This year Cheshire received an unchanged amount of funding but it is anticipated in future years there will be a reduction.
- Overall, there has been an encouragingly small number of discipline cases across both the Cheshire County and Cricket Leagues. All cases have been dealt with and disposed under the Level 1 and 2 provisions of the ECB GCR.

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- The CWCL requires clubs to make their own arrangements for umpire appointments. All umpires for 1st XI fixtures are expected to be qualified panel members. Whilst the system has worked well over the years, the perception arises that umpires are de facto 'club umpires' which has on occasions led to complaints that umpires are not neutral. The ACO will engage with the CWCL to consider both matters and report back to the next 4Cs meeting
- The Cheshire County Cricket Club have kindly agreed to let the ACO have a presence at the ECB Showcase fixture v Derbyshire at Nantwich on Sunday 21st July. We will use the opportunity to inform spectators about the role and work of the Association and hopefully plant the idea that umpiring and scoring provides an interesting and rewarding alternative to playing and becoming involved with the sport.

Action – Discuss how to get suitable representatives at 4Cs to resolve such issues now being identified in the Women's game. – Derek and David H

Cheshire Cup and Shield (David Gane)

No report available although the prevailing opinion was that the competition was going well this year

Grounds (Andy Horsfield)

- (From Gareth Moorhouse) - GPIF, an ECB scheme designed to improve the quality of squares and outfielders at club and community sites, with a view to enabling more cricket to be played and on better surfaces. In a nutshell ECB will pay for a number of visits each year by a County Pitch Advisor (Cheshire have been allocated 15 per year) at targeted sites – both club and community venues. The CPAs use the new Pitch Power App to generate a PQS report into the quality of the playing surfaces. The scheme will run for at least 3 years, so we have 45 ECB-funded visits which has the potential to cover more than one third of all Cheshire clubs. The even better news is that 4Cs and CAG have also agreed to contribute to the CPA visits, allowing us to get full coverage across Cheshire and not just the 45 visits allocated under the ECB scheme. The aim is for this to happen over the 3 year cycle but is obviously subject to the availability of our CPAs. However, we should be in a position in the near future where all clubs (who want to) can access the scheme and gain a better understanding of how to make the most of their facilities. In terms of a batting order, the Grounds' steering group (which includes reps from 2 leagues, CAG, CCB and the CPAs) have been working to identify those clubs that would benefit from early intervention. This is data driven (PPS gradings, umpire pitch marks, historical data) but also using local knowledge of those on the steering group as they are the experts. Under the GPIF scheme, for the first time ECB have set money aside for 'grass pitch improvements' where clubs can apply for a package of support delivered by approved contractors, with those clubs/sites supporting ECB priority groups – W&G, Diverse Communities, Disabilities and LSEG – more likely to be successful. But more than that, we want clubs to engage with the CPAs and to access the new reporting technology. Many of the Cheshire grounds are already very good – and won't need huge improvement projects – but small and subtle changes to maintenance regimes, with a little more targeted budgeting, may help them to play even better in future.
- We discussed the 'landscape' of groundsmen and flagged up the very real concern about fewer groundsmen trying to cover the same amount of grass, under increasingly difficult weather conditions.
- It was re-emphasised that our groundsmen have worked really hard in very difficult circumstances over recent weeks. Our thanks to them were recorded. We do need to work with CAG to develop strategies to increase the 'family' of groundsmen. Tools such as the WhatsApp circle are useful but fundamentally we need to get out to the cricket world and make groundsmanship a real attraction. This may include working with junior groups to get

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the message across early.

Cheshire County Cricket Club (John Petch)

No Report available

AOB

Gareth reminded us that there have been notices published concerning volunteer courses throughout the summer, and cricket collective initiative to recognize volunteer achievements. We are all asked to forward links if we feel our contacts are unaware of these things.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.35 pm