

CHESHIRE CRICKET BOARD LIMITED
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT CHESHIRE FA OFFICES, MOSS FARM
ON FRIDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2023 – 9.30am

Meet our Staff – Jessica Lewis, Women & Girls Manager - Prior to the formal meeting, Jessica Lewis, CCB Women and Girls Manager addressed the Board members on W&G cricket in Cheshire. Jessica summarised current activities in W&G cricket in Cheshire and highlighted priorities for the future. A copy of Jessica's presentation was circulated to Board members after the meeting. Everyone was impressed with what Jessica had to say and particularly her enthusiasm and commitment to W&G cricket.

It was agreed to hold something similar at the start of future Board meetings as a regular feature and invite lead staff and prominent volunteers to address the Board on other aspects of our business and stimulate discussion.

1. Attendance: Nigel Muirhead (Chair), Di Totty (Vice Chair), Richard Newton (Director of Cricket), Mike Guest (Treasurer), David Sharp (Secretary), David Humpage (Clubs), Jim Law (County Club), Nick Brooks (Independent Non-Executive Director, Joanna Seddon (Independent Non-Executive Director), Neeruj Luthra (Independent Non-Executive Director), Helen Nicholson (Independent Non-Executive Director) **Apologies:** Scott Elliott (Management Group Chair), Karl Bamford (CYC).

2. Minutes of the meeting 5 May 2023. Agreed and then signed as a true record.

3. Matters arising from minutes of the meeting 5 May 2023

3.1 Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) Report (item 4.5 of 10 Feb meeting refers). The ICEC report was released on Tuesday 27 June. Cheshire posted a response on its website. ECB's response to the ICEC report will be released on Monday 25 September.

3.2 Away Day (item 3.1 of 10 Feb meeting refers). The away day for Board members planned for 10 March was postponed because of bad weather, and was re-arranged for Friday 26 May 10.30 at Moss Farm. The agreed outputs and actions from the 26 May meeting were circulated to Board members from the Course Facilitator on 1 June. A zoom meeting for Board members was held on 13 July to update the actions from the outputs, and an email was sent to all Board members on 16 July with a summary of the actions. Our priorities from these actions are yet to be agreed (see 15.1 below)

3.3 Safeguarding standard statement (item 3.3 of 5 May meeting refers).

A hard copy has now been signed by everyone and submitted to the County Safeguarding Officer.

3.4 Safeguarding E-learning for Board members. (item 9.3 of 5 May meeting refers)

3.4.1 Safeguarding for Committee for Committee Members. The Level 2 specialist course was still available via the Board's website <https://www.cheshirecricketboard.co.uk/cricket-courses/safeguarding-training/>

3.4.2 Safeguarding training from Lime Culture. Arrangements were being progressed to ensure all Board members have completed the online Safeguarding training provided by Lime Culture.

3.5 Meeting with Richard Gould at OT 11 May (item 14.2 of 5 May meeting refers). Board representatives met the ECB Chief Executive Richard Gould on 11 May at Old Trafford. This informal meeting initiated by Nigel provided a good opportunity to nurture Cheshire's reputation with ECB and gain some insights to help progress our actions from the outputs initiated at the Away Day.

4. Management Group. The minutes of the meeting held on 29 August 2023 had been circulated to the Directors and Member representatives prior to the Board meeting.

5. Director of Cricket. Richard referred to the potential threats to our business from the ICEC report recommendations, in particular the effect on our coaching courses for children. He listed the considerable benefits that these courses provide for Cheshire cricket and provided statistics for ethnicity and schooling in Cheshire (**see Appendix 1**). These statistics appear to be inconsistent with statements made in the ICEC report. Richard had made ECB aware of the situation in Cheshire as requested by ECB to help its response to the ICEC report.

6. Treasurer.

6.1 RBS Bank Account(s). The operation continues to perform in line with expectations, with adequate funding levels being maintained, and in line with the cash flow forecast.

6.2 2022/23 Accounts. The accounts for the year to 30th September should be available for circulation prior to the December meeting for approval at that meeting. The accounts are formally adopted at the AGM after which the filleted version is circulated and made available on the Board's

website. The approved accounts are submitted to Companies House by Murray Smith, our independent accounts examiner.

6.3 Financial support for other bodies. Approved payments for the 2023 season have been made to: Men's Over 50s £1000; Men's Over 60s £500; Cheshire CCC £1200. These payments are financed by the Board independently from monies received from ECB under the CPA.

7. Secretary.

7.1 ECB Grassroots Cricket Collective Awards 2023. Di and David alongside Gareth Moorhouse and Ben Tomlinson selected our 13 winners (listed on the Board's website) from over 100 nominations for this year's Grassroots Awards. The winners and nominees were invited to attend the event held at Old Trafford on 11 August during a Metro Bank One Day Cup match at which the winners received their awards. The event held jointly with Lancashire was funded from the CPA as part of recognising and rewarding volunteers.

7.2 New Directors welcome event. Scott was representing our newly appointed Directors at this event held at Trent Bridge on 16 September.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

8.1 EDI staff and Board members survey. All staff and Board members have been encouraged to complete the 10-minute survey, live until 11 October. This is the third year the ECB has run this survey with data collected by the ECB's insights partner, Two Circles, to ensure confidentiality.

8.2 Cheshire Cricket Community Indoor League. An initiative by CCB to arrange a community indoor league to attract those players who do not play regular club cricket, with matches played at Life Leisure Bramhall over the winter, has so far attracted 12 teams.

8.3 ECB Focus Group. Joanna has been invited to join an ECB Focus Group formed to gather insights on where the ECB should prioritise its EDI campaigning work.

9. Safeguarding. Nick referred to Julie Rafferty's County Safeguarding Officer's report (see **Appendix 2**) which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Nick commented on the increase in the number of incidents of aggression and bad behaviour prevalent across the game and the detrimental effect on clubs caused by their members' transgressions. Alongside player welfare and safeguarding concerns, there was a risk that increases in the number of cases could impact negatively on initiatives to promote engagement and participation. The report illustrates the extent and current situation of our safeguarding activities.

9.1 CPA Actions. Julie's CPA action matrix (Safeguarding Audit update) will ensure that all recommended actions and tasks are reviewed and completed.

9.2 Board members safeguarding requirements. These requirements and current situation are listed in the appendix.

9.3 Policy development. The Development Plan is under review, and an Adults Safeguarding Policy is nearing completion.

9.4 Safe Hands courses. Courses will start in November.

9.5 Club Safeguarding Officer network meetings. Held mid-season and end-season are well attended and provide valuable opportunities to exchange good practice and share challenges.

9.6 Safe Hands Management System (SHMS). 108/109 clubs are live on SHMS.

9.7 Discipline. Julie's report (items 7 and 8) illustrates the extent of bad behaviour.

10. Governance. As agreed at the May meeting, governance is now a regular item on the agenda.

10.1 Data Protection/Privacy Policy. It was agreed to review our Privacy Policy and Privacy Notice for our junior participants & parents dated 2018. Helen offered to set the review on its way.

10.2 Board Members Rules/Constitution. Cheshire Cricket Clubs Committee and Cheshire Youth Cricket were both finalising their revised rules/constitution. Cheshire County Cricket Club revised/updated its rules/constitution in 2022.

10.3 Cheshire Women's Cricket. It was agreed to review the position of Women's Cricket within the Board structure. At present, constitutionally, the Women's game is represented on the Board by the Clubs Committee.

10.4 Board AGM 2024 elections. An early reminder that in accordance with the two-year cycle for Directors defined in our rules Neeruj (non-executive independent director) completes his first two-year term of office and is eligible for re-election for a further two years if he should wish to stand.

11. Women & Girls. The Women's League update prepared by Joanna was circulated prior to the meeting (see **Appendix 3**). The broader women and girls update was presented by Jessica Lewis prior to the start of the formal meeting *and a copy of Jessica's presentation was circulated to Board members after the meeting*. A slow start in view of the poor weather but all four divisions and cup competitions are underway.

11.1 National T20 KO. Success for Cheshire. After winning the North Final, Lindow progressed to the National semi-final where they were beaten by a strong Dorridge CC side (Midlands winner). Nantwich won the Plate final.

11.2 League Structure. As the Women's game continues to expand the League Committee will be reviewing the structure ready for 2024 season

11.3 Awards Evening 2023. Following a successful event in 2022 the League Presentation night will again be held at the Halton Stadium on Saturday 21st October.

11.4 Women's Softball in west Cheshire. This has progressed well in 2023 and provides a good foundation on which to build hardball growth. Financial support was discussed and will be input to item 14.1 below.

11.5 Female coach to accompany male coach at primary schools. The viability of providing and funding a female coach alongside a male coach for C2S visits to primary schools will be considered at the December Board meeting (see 14.1 below).

12. Cheshire County Cricket Club. Jim highlighted the following from his report of the recent activities of Cheshire CCC prior to the meeting (**Appendix 4**).

12.1 2nd XI. The 2nd XI progressed well but there's work to be done in cementing the pathway from age-group to NCCA level and balancing the side. This was the first year of a joint venture between the County club and U18s with coaching from Stewart Macleod, Gavin Colebourn and Stuart Garnett.

12.2 Sponsorship. Additional sponsorship is required to sustain ever-increasing costs and further support from the wider county club board and NCCA will be actively explored.

12.3 Men's Seniors.

Over 50s: P9 W6 L3 - Regional winner, National quarter finalist.

Over 60s 1st XI: P10 W3 L7.

Over 60s 2nd XI: P9 W5 L4.

Over 70s: P14 W12 L2 - National Finalist.

13. Clubs Committee (4Cs). David highlighted the following from his report circulated prior to the meeting (**Appendix 5**).

13.1 Vitality U13 Club T20 Competition. Congratulations to Didsbury U13s (Lancashire qualifier) on reaching the National Final at Lord's. This was the first year that all four junior competition finals (Boys and Girls U13 and U15) were held at Lord's.

13.2 Women's League. There is an agreement in principle to appoint a sponsor for the League.

13.3 Officials Association. The leaders of the three umpiring bodies in Cheshire (ACO, CCCL Umpires Association, and CCL Umpires Association) have agreed in principle to merge into one body. This proposal needs the approval of the members of the three bodies.

13.4 Breast Cancer Research. The CCCL held a charity weekend during June. The event was coordinated by Emma Slater, an Ambassador for Breast Cancer Research and raised c £8,000.

14. Youth Cricket (CYC). It was agreed that the minutes of the forthcoming CYC meeting to be held on 21 Sept would be added as an appendix to the Board meeting minutes to reflect the recent activities of CYC (**Appendix 6**)

14.1 Rules/Constitution. The revised and update rules/constitution is nearing completion.

14.2 Festivals and Age Groups. Future attendance at Festivals, and the age group match programme would be discussed at the CYC meeting.

15. AOB

15.1 Investment Cases. For discussion at the next meeting Nigel asked the Board members to consider investment cases which we could support and agree a wish list at that meeting. These investment cases/wish list to be based on the priorities that we had been discussing over past few months, and consistent with the ICEC Report and our Countywide Plan.

16. Next Meeting. The remaining 2023 Meeting will be held on Friday 8 December 10.30am at Hartford House, Moss Farm.

Signed

Appendix 1

Boys and Girls Representative Cheshire Youth Cricket: 2023

Total Boys & Girls	
Boys: County	125
Boys: District	179
Total Boys	*291
Girls: County	54
Girls District	94
Total Girls	148
Total Boys & Girls	439
*Some players played both District and County but only included in Totals data once.	

Schools Boys and Girls					
Group	Players	State School	Fee Paying School	School Not Stated	% State Schools
Boys County	125	74	45	6	62.2
Boys District	179	107	41	31	72.3
Boys Total	291	179	81	31	68.8
Girls Total	148	118	30	0	74.5
Total	439	297	111	31	72.8

Ethnicity – County demographic 9%			
Group	Players	Players from Ethnically Diverse Groups	% Players from Ethnically Diverse Groups
Boys County	125	33	26.4
Boys District	179	52	29.1
Boys Total	291	81	27.8
Girls Total	148	24	16.2
Total	439	105	23.9

Appendix 2. Safeguarding Report (Julie Rafferty)

1. *Safeguarding Audit update*

Following the January audit and the April review meeting with the ECB, several actions were identified. The progress is detailed below:

Action	Detail	Update
1.	Consider the necessity for CSO to remain as Non-Executive Director now that a new Board Safeguarding Lead is in place. (Board Lead to have strategic oversight, CSO to lead on operational delivery.)	CSO stood down from board in May 2023 BSL now in place. COMPLETED
2.	Ensure safeguarding section contained within Board Risk Register	Safeguarding Section added to Board Risk Register in April 2023 COMPLETED
3.	Develop an Adults at Risk (AAR) policy to support AAR statement	Policy statement on the website Adult Safeguarding policy in draft for Board meeting ratification in December 2023* ONGOING *delayed due to operational priorities of County Safeguarding Officer (CSO)
4.	Relevant staff to complete Adult Safeguarding training (delivered by Ann Craft Trust)	Some CCB staff attended the ACT Modules, additional staff to be identified to attend further courses. ONGOING
5.	Staff handbook to include a safeguarding section with reference to policies, expectation that staff sign a code of conduct, induction and expectations	In draft and to be discussed at next meeting with HR advisor ONGOING
6.	CSO to carry out “drop in” visits to coaching sessions	CSO planning with Pathway coaches and Leads for autumn courses. ONGOING
7.	Consider generic email address for CSO and Deputy	Safeguarding@cheshirecricketboard.co.uk Email was created and managed by CSO and DCSO. COMPLETED
8.	Application form to contain safeguarding statement. Appropriate interviews to include a bespoke safeguarding question	Safeguarding statement is now in place and application form is live. COMPLETED

2. *Board Safeguarding Requirements*

Minimum requirements were mentioned at the last board meeting, the mandatory and

recommended safeguarding requirements for all board members are as follows:

Mandatory	Recommended	Other requirements
ECB Safeguarding Induction e-Learning	Level 2 Specialist e-Learning for Committee Members	Signed Code of Conduct
Lime Culture Board Safeguarding training	Prevent	

Most board members have attended the Lime Culture Board Safeguarding training, the remaining two will be given an opportunity to attend further training.

The link to the ECB Safeguarding Induction eLearning is attached and needs completing at the earliest opportunity [Safeguarding Induction \(ecb.co.uk\)](https://www.ecb.co.uk/safeguarding-induction)

The board members' Code of Conduct is renewed on an annual basis. An email will be sent to all board members following the board meeting for individual Code of Conduct to be signed.

Some board members have already chosen to complete the Level 2 Specialist Safeguarding training and Prevent training. Completion of this training is recommended and will enhance knowledge and understanding. This training is completed every 3years.

3. Policy development

Work is ongoing to draft some key policy and procedure documents:

- a) The CCB Safeguarding Development Plan is currently being reviewed and subject to further work. It is anticipated that the document now be sent out for consultation and discussed at the December board meeting.
- b) Work is ongoing to complete the CCB Adults Safeguarding Policy. This document will be discussed at the December board meeting.

4. Safe Hands Training Courses (Level 3 – Club Safeguarding officers)

It is hoped that the delivery of the Safe Hands training courses for the 2024 season will start in November 2023. Due to the numbers already trained, it is anticipated that fewer courses will be required (usually 7) although this would be dependent on Club Safeguarding Officers remaining in their roles. As a minimum, courses will be delivered in the following areas: Trafford & Tameside; Stockport; Wirral; Mid Cheshire

5. Club Safeguarding Officer network meetings

Mid-Season network meetings took place in July and attendance was good. As well as outlining relevant information from the ECB and CCB, the club safeguarding officers were asked about the challenges they faced and any good practice they wanted to share. The following was discussed:

- The ECB emails for DBS update service consent and clarification of role, has been missed by players and DBS checks have expired, impacting on the Safe Hands Management System (SHMS) compliance.
- Wanted a system to check which people had completed the Level 2 Specialist e-Learning.
- Some club safeguarding officers received no handovers from their predecessor.
- DBS verifier authorities being locked due to inactivity.
- Outlined that the multi role selection for the Level 2 Specialist training did not register as completed on the SHMS.
- Questions about overseas players.
- Questions about livestreaming.
- All club safeguarding officers who had attended a Safe Hands course in 2023 had to complete the L2 Specialist eLearning to be complaint on the SHMS.
- Problems with competitive parents and the anxiety that causes for the child (NSPCC – My Magic Sports kit)

End of season network meetings are scheduled for the following dates: 25 September; 27 September; 3 October; 4 October.

6. Safe Hands Management System (SHMS)

108/109 Cheshire Cricket clubs are now live on the SHMS, most of which are compliant or close to compliance. Four clubs have little information added. They are: Kerridge; Cholmondeley; The Groves; Heaton Mersey Village.

Work is still ongoing by the County Safeguarding officer and the Development & Coaching Officers to support the clubs to effectively use the system and load all the necessary up to date information.

7. Disciplinary update

Disciplinary action in the two main cricket leagues is detailed in the table below:

League	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Hearing
CCCL	12	7	1	0	5
CCL	2	7	0	0	0
TOTALS	14	14	1	0	5

Sanctions were made against clubs, players and captains for:

- Varying levels of dissent
- Aggressive behaviour
- Abusive language
- Physical contact with a player
- Inappropriate media posts
- Throwing the ball in a dangerous manner

The sanctions varied, but the maximum ban imposed was 10 weeks for a Level 4 offence in the Derbyshire and Cheshire league, involving a fixture with a Cheshire club (Woodley).

8. Safeguarding Themes

Since the last board meeting there have been a considerable increase in safeguarding issues and cases being reported (nearly 40), from low level concerns to cases being referred to other agencies. The general themes are as follows:

- Poor practice of captain/ coach, received verbal warning.
- Allegation of discrimination by player relating to club selection
- Aggressive behaviour and self-harm of player
- Inappropriate behaviour of male coach to female coach
- Inappropriate behaviour of CCB member of staff resulting in dismissal
- Open age cricket issues
- Aggressive language and behaviour of adults towards junior players*
- Several disciplinary hearings involving junior players*
- Temporary suspensions because of non-compliance with the DBS system
- Complaint of disregard for player safety (County age group)
- Allegation of racist comments
- Allegations of underage drinking at a cricket club
- Incidents relating to anxiety and mental health concerns for junior and senior players.
- Bereavement advice to club following the death of junior player.
- ECB safeguarding panel hearing relating to a player/ coach with previous convictions for stalking/ harassment
- Aggressive behaviour between players*
- Player entrapped by vigilante Paedophile group for online sexual activity.
- Allegation of an U18 male flashing at a 7-year-old girl on cricket club premises
- Complaint of discriminatory behaviour of a county age group whilst at festival, resulting in disciplinary action
- Challenging behaviour of player at county disability match
- Abusive behaviour of spectators towards junior players
- Allegation that junior cricketer hit by parent – escalated to the local authority.

**Denotes that there has been an increase in these types of incidents.*

Appendix 3

Women and Girls' update - Cheshire Women's Cricket League (Joanna Seddon)

The majority of games in the CWCL are now completed, with just a handful of remaining fixtures to be played over the next two weekends, and divisional winners now confirmed. In addition, league finals day was held very successfully at Hale Barns CC on Sunday 3rd September, with winners of the Regional T20 and T20 Knockout cups also confirmed.

Notably, Didsbury completed "the double", winning Division 1 to become league champions, in addition to the Regional T20 title. They were agonisingly close to a treble, losing narrowly to Nantwich in a closely fought final which went to the final over. Lindow move to the top flight for the first time, securing promotion through winning Division 2, and Divisions 3 and 4 winners are spread across a number of relatively new clubs to the league, with a mention for Alvanley, winning Division 4 West in their first year of competition in hardball cricket. Further evidence of the strength and breadth of the league and its continued growth.

Competition	Winners
CWCL Division 1	Didsbury
CWCL Division 2	Lindow
CWCL Division 3 West	Porthill Park Northern Stars
CWCL Division 3 East	Buxton
CWCL Division 4 West	Alvanley
CWCL Division 4 East	Langley
CWCL Division 5 Regional winners	Aston, Runcorn, CH Ladybridge, Old Parkonians
Cheshire Senior Knockout Cup (T20)	Nantwich
Cheshire Regional T20	Didsbury
Cheshire Development Knockout Cup (T20)	Chester Boughton Hall

National Competitions. Clubs playing in CWCL were well represented in the National T20 competitions, with Lindow becoming the first Cheshire club to progress to the National Cup semi-final stage (after winning the North final v Sessay Emeralds - Yorkshire League), but ultimately losing to a strong Dorridge (Midlands winners) side. Porthill Park Northern Stars progressed one stage further in the Plate competition, finishing as Plate champions, beating Blackpool in the semi-final and Moreton in the final. Porthill (U15 and U19 National Champions) and Leyland (U19 National semi-finalists) both doing well in the age group competitions.

The League Presentation night will again be held at the Halton Stadium this year, on Saturday 21st October, and following the success of the evening last year are anticipating an excellent turn-out.

The CWCL Exec Committee will continue to work a number of areas in the off-season, including reviewing the structure of the divisions given some of the challenges experienced this season. An increasing number of clubs are fielding 2nd (and even 3rd) teams in the league, warranting some discussion on player eligibility and guidance on 2nd (and 3rd) XIs. Overseas players continue to play a role across the League this year, with an increasing number of clubs exploring the role these players can fulfil as players, role models and coaches as the women's and girls' sections continue to grow across the county. Softball uptake continues to be good, and has continued to grow since the establishment of Division 5 as the softball division of CWCL – this is leading to some good growth in the west of the county (particularly onto the Wirral) and lays foundations for potential hardball growth in coming seasons with the right support. The uptake of coloured kit continues to progress well, with a further increase in adoption in 2023.

Appendix 4

Cheshire County Cricket Club (Jim Law)

Rain drastically affected Cheshire's progress across all competitions. Of a potential 22 days, the 1st XI managed c 13.5 day's cricket. This, together with the vagaries of a bizarre fixture list, poor timing, player availability, long-distance travel and the usual club clashes meant a challenging year for a strong squad.

An April T20 start didn't work, and the side were knocked out at group stage having played just three of eight games and won two!

Better weather for the KO Trophy saw progress to the quarter finals while the recently amended three-day programme (four rather than six, three-day games) produced an emotional roller-coaster with Cheshire finishing third (of five), staving off relegation on the final day.

Relegation would have been a travesty for a side that had their first game entirely washed out at Alderley Edge. A trip to 2022 champions, Berkshire saw Cheshire become real title contenders only for last day rain to thwart a potential outstanding victory.

A day two washout with Devon at Chester saw a loss in a contrived game but an outstanding win at Oxfordshire led to safety. This was no mean achievement, especially with three, three-day games scheduled across three consecutive weeks (Sunday to Tuesday) – an availability and stamina challenge. Commonsense must prevail in future!

The ECB Showcase match with Yorkshire was also spoilt by rain as Cheshire accumulated a potentially match winning 268-9 before the heavens opened. Nantwich made an excellent job of hosting the event which was well supported in the main but again proved a financial challenge. It's hoped the NCCA will review how (if) these games will operate in 2024.

The 2nd XI progressed well but there's work to be done in cementing the pathway from age-group to NCCA level and balancing the side. This was the first year of a joint venture between the County club and U18s with coaching from Stewart Macleod, Gavin Colebourn and Stuart Garnett.

In brief:

- The 'slimmed down' management committee approach worked well in its first year, but resource is stretched, and further volunteer support is required, notably around fund-raising and marketing. Particular thanks to Pete Babbage, John Petch, Stuart Anderson, Andy Newton and Julie Rafferty.
- Winter work is planned to review overall requirements and upgrade our board's knowledge base.
- Considerable new administrative undertakings were dealt with effectively.
- Elise Scrimgeour stepped down from 'active duty' after some four decades across various county roles.
- As ever our home grounds provided first rate hospitality. Travelling around the country it is clear that Cheshire's facilities are second to none.
- Additional sponsorship is required to sustain ever-increasing costs and further support from the wider county club board and NCCA will be actively explored.

Appendix 5

Cheshire Clubs Cricket Committee (David Humpage)

One round of games to go and the season is over. A season of many parts – dry for first half, then a wet period followed by a short dry (and hot) period near the end.

In the CCCL we have reached the last week of the season with all four divisions unresolved. A nightmare for the Chairman who has to present four trophies on one afternoon! Alderley Edge look favourites for the Premiership but Didsbury are close on their heels. Bowdon, Timperley, and Sale are vying for the championship and the two promotion slots from Division 1. Marple and Davenham are neck and neck in Division 2, whilst Maritime need four points from their final game to be champions of Division 3.

In the CCL Over Peover and Runcorn are holding on to the promotion slots, although who is relegated from the CCCL to replace them remains to be seen. There are five teams still possible candidates for the drop so a tense final day awaits.

The Cheshire Cup was won by Hyde in a great game with New Brighton who looked likely winners for a large part of the game, only to come up just short.

Wallasey are the leading Cheshire club in the Liverpool Competition, with the aforementioned New Brighton still fighting off relegation.

In the North Staffs and S.Cheshire League Elworth look in grave danger of relegation from their Premier League.

Straying into junior territory I make no apology for mentioning the Didsbury Under 13 side that reached the National Final at Lords, losing by one wicket to a very strong Ealing side.

The emphasis on ground sharing has seen a large increase in the number of hired grounds this season. As I have previously reported there is great pressure on facilities, particularly in the East of the county, and this will only increase as more Women's Cricket is played. Lists are now available of clubs happy to rent out their ground, particularly on Sundays where the main problem occurs.

There is much growth and interest in the Women's League as the female side of the game continues to expand. I am pleased to say that I understand that we now have an agreement in principle for a sponsor for the Women's League. I understand that this will be finalized in time for the 2024 season, and more details will be released then. Details of the women's season can be found as usual in the Dazzler ably produced on a regular basis by Martin Saxon.

I must mention the achievement of Lindow in becoming North of England Women's champions, the first time one of our clubs has achieved this landmark.

Several new recruits to the league's umpiring panels have been sourced, and the agreement for Ian Greensmith to appoint the umpires in both the CCCL and the CCL has proved a great success. The leaders of the three umpiring bodies in Cheshire (ACO, CCCL Umpires Association, CCL Umpires Association) have agreed in principle to merge into one body. This has to be approved by all the members, but I believe that it will become a reality.

The Groundsmen's Association continues to lay on courses and is now active in many ways in assisting clubs with any problems. The new Pitch Advisors are now in place and doing a good job.

The CCCC Constitution remains with John Petch, and I am hoping to meet with him in the close season to review progress.

The County Grant Fund is continuing to provide funds for clubs with suitable projects. The budget has been fully spent on a number of worthwhile projects, and the committee now awaits the 2024 tranche of ECB money.

The CCCL held a charity weekend during June, the beneficiary being Breast Cancer Research. The event was coordinated by Emma Slater, an ambassador for the charity and raised in the region of £8K.

Sadly, Brian Birtles has tendered his resignation as CCCC Secretary. I would like to thank Brian for his efforts whilst in post and wish him well in his umpiring going forward. We have identified a potential successor, but his appointment has yet to be confirmed.

Finally, the now customary thanks to Gareth and Jess. Customary it may be but sincerely well deserved.

Appendix 6

Cheshire Youth Cricket

CYC Meeting Thursday 21st September 2023 at 10.00am at the FA building, Moss Farm Summary Notes of meeting

Chairman's welcome

Karl opened the meeting by thanking all volunteers and staff for their hard work through what had been a challenging summer.

Approval of minutes 25-01-2023. These were approved without amendment.

Matters arising not covered below

CYC Constitution update

Karl updated on this. He had been liaising with Brabners (the key contact there had been away from work for a while), and this was close to be finalised so it could be adopted. (Now finalised)

CYC awards event

An awards event is to take place at Northwich CC in early January.

ICEC report

In terms of county age group cricket the response to the report would differ slightly between boys and girls, although the key overriding need was to protect the CYC pathway.

Boys

County representative cricket would begin at under 12s from the 2024 season onwards.

There would be an enhanced district offering for those in under 10s and under 11s.

Residential festivals to stop for the 2024 season onwards. Position to be reviewed post 2024 season.

Girls

The girls' structure would remain the same as currently at least for the 2024 season. Again, no residential festivals to be attended.

Mike noted it seems likely that ECB funding for age group cricket would be reduced in view of the reduced number of age groups. It was discussed that it may be possible to replace attendance at festivals with age-group camps before the start of the county season, to allow both skills-based training but also to allow the teams selected to bond into a unit. This may be a reason to try to select sides earlier.

It was also noted that it was an increasing struggle to get sides out at the older age groups both for boys and girls. Jess felt that this would resolve itself for the girls given the development of sides at younger age groups while the issue with boys was at least in part because of the quality of cricket on offer.

It was agreed that consistent and early communication would be key around CYC's response.

Safe Hands

Julie's report had been circulated beforehand. It was noted that all must be conscious and take responsibilities seriously, something that it was felt all at CYC were entirely supportive of. It was also generally felt that standards of behaviour had not necessarily declined, it was just that there were clearer reporting lines now and reports were made more frequently.

It was felt that the player ambassador role had a crucial part to play in communicating the standards expected and that this role should be driven forward.

ECB national Club competitions

From Jane's report it was noted that numbers were up this year in the Under 15s competition but down in under 13s. Gareth suggested the reduction at under 13 level was a hangover from Covid with fewer players at clubs. Staff were discussing this with clubs – it was felt that some clubs did not realise that they were able to enter multiple sides - Jane said if this happened steps were taken to ensure they did not have two sides in the same group.

Jane also noted that historically the national competitions took priority over all other cricket (including county). However, the league handbook now indicated this was the case only in the later stages of the competition, a slightly disappointing change.

Boys County Age Groups/District cricket

Again, Gavin had circulated a report previously. In summary it had been a very successful season across the county age groups.

One point that was discussed was the Bobby Spencer fund. It was discussed whether this might provide a bursary to cover the costs of courses etc for less well-off children. It was also suggested more of the funds from the sponsored YoYo tests could go to the fund. This was something to discuss with the family.

The under 18s had been invited to re-join the national three-day competition. Richard and Gavin were to meet with Jim Law at the county club to share thoughts, but the feeling was that we re-join in 2024 and reassess after that.

Girls' cricket

As per her report Jess noted that the girls were looking stronger at a team level across all the age groups. It was especially pleasing that the under 15s, which were the first group to have a side at under 11s, were exceptionally strong and some very good players had been left out as a result. It was all the more disappointing therefore that the side had missed so many fixtures due to weather.

Club junior leagues

Gareth had sent his report previously. Numbers had been stable and there had been a real focus on internal communications to share successes and best practice.

Coach Association

The only point Gavin wanted to draw out after his report was that there was a plan to run a new CPD session around structuring winter nets.

Schools cricket

Following up from his report Gavin said that he felt schools' cricket was in a good place with the input from the staff who continued to work exceptionally hard. Conversations were ongoing with various private schools to see how it might be possible to access their facilities to develop cricket in state schools.

Treasurers/ Secretary update

As per his report Mike noted that some expenses remained outstanding. He also noted that although overall expenses were more or less stable scorers' expenses had increased significantly. It was felt it would be a useful exercise to compare current levels with those pre-Covid to identify any trends, once all expenses were in for the season.

AOB

As above, the sponsored YoYo test returns this year. There was some discussion on choosing charities to support and the link to the Bobby Spencer fund.

Date of next meeting. Next meeting – Thursday 14 December at 10.00am in Northwich