

CHESHIRE CRICKET BOARD LIMITED
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT CHESHIRE FA OFFICES, MOSS FARM
ON FRIDAY 8 DECEMBER 2023 – 9.30am

A period of silence was held in memory of David Batty former Director and Member Representative for CYC who had sadly died in November. A tribute to David has been posted on the Board's website.

Meet our Staff – Prior to the formal meeting, **Owen Williamson & Chris Edwards – Disabilities, and Gareth Moorhouse – Facilities**, addressed the Board members on their current involvement with Disabilities, and Facilities in cricket in Cheshire and highlighted priorities for the future. The session was informative and motivating with evidence of some really impressive work taking place.

Copies of their slide presentations were circulated to Board members after the meeting.

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

Apology: Joanna Seddon (Independent Non-Executive Director),

It was confirmed that on 22 Sept Karl Bamford formally resigned from his roles as CYC Member representative to the Board, CYC (Chair), the Cheshire Cricket Trust (Trustee) and CYC age group cricket (Coach/Manager). Karl had been thanked for his contributions to the Board in his role as Director and CYC representative. A formal representative to the Board from CYC has yet to be appointed by CYC (see item 14.2).

2. Minutes of the meeting 15 Sept 2023. Agreed and then signed by the Chair as a true record.

3. Matters arising from minutes of the meeting 15 Sept 2023

3.1 Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) Report (item 3.1 of 15 Sept meeting refers).

ECB's response to the ICEC report (released on 27 June) was released on 25 September.

3.2 Away Day (item 3.2 of 15 Sept meeting refers). Our priorities from outputs and actions discussed earlier in the year are yet to be agreed (see 3.3 below)

3.3 Investment Cases (item 15.1 of 15 Sept meeting refers). Any investment case/wish list requested by Nigel at the last meeting for discussion at this meeting were not raised at the meeting and have yet to be tabled for discussion. Such items to be based on the priorities that we had been discussing over the past months, and consistent with the ICEC Report and our Countywide Plan.

4. Management Group & Director of Cricket. The minutes of the MG meeting held on 28 Nov 2023 had been circulated to the Directors and Member representatives prior to the Board meeting. On behalf of the MG and combined with his own report Richard highlighted the following activity since the September Board meeting:

4.1 Coaching Courses. 1160 children attended the Autumn courses, and 1223 are attending the Advanced courses, at 43 centres across the county. The Bursary scheme is available for the Coach Development courses.

4.2 Grassroots Awards. We continue to recognise our volunteers with regular items on our website and social media.

4.3 Countywide Plan. Our Countywide Plan is being updated in time for our annual review with ECB. The Plan will be circulated after the review.

4.4 EDI Support. Continuing our commitment to delivering EDI in recreational cricket in the county:

4.4.1 A contribution of £6000 to the Women's Cricket League (see item 11).

4.4.2 Employment of one female Coaching Officer.

4.4.3 Employment of a Coaching Officer from the West Indies.

4.4.4 A midweek outdoor South Asian Community League and contribution towards expanding the indoor league including offering coaching bursaries for candidates from that league.

4.4.5 Support for the newly formed (2024) County disabilities hardball 2nd team.

6. Treasurer.

6.1 2022/23 Accounts. The draft accounts for the year to 30 September 2023 had been circulated prior to the meeting. The accounts show a £72088 deficit which was in line with expectations following decisions taken last year, principally:

- not to increase course fees when families were struggling with double digit inflation, soaring energy cost and pressure on discretionary spending budgets;
- salary rises to ensure staff are retained and able to cope with inflationary pressures;
- an increase in staff numbers/hours to support EDI, safeguarding, and facilities.

Overhead costs such as sports centre hire and motor costs also increased this year, and contributed to the deficit.

Following discussion the accounts were formally approved. Proposed by David Humpage. Seconded by Di Totty. The approved accounts are submitted to Companies House by Murray Smith, our independent

accounts examiner. The accounts are formally adopted at the AGM after which the filled version is circulated and made available on the Board's website.

Mike advised that the outlook for 2023/4 is for a similar performance to the 2022/23 result.

Whilst we have increased course fees this Autumn, we do not anticipate any increase in ECB income for the year, and the increased course fees will be matched by salary increases and rising costs as inflation remains at a high level.

Those present considered the viability of a three-year financial plan to help monitor our performance.

7. Secretary.

7.1 ECB Grassroots Cricket Collective Awards 2023. Our winners and nominees attended the event held at Old Trafford (for the third year) on 11 August during a Metro Bank One Day Cup where the winners received their awards. Our Unsung Hero winner Tirumala Dayama (Westminster Park CC) received a national award in that category and our Connecting Communities winner Macclesfield CC (Radan Ramachandran & Tandy Palmes) received a 'highly commended' national award.

7.2 Over 50s 2nd XI. The Board gave formal recognition to the creation of a men's Over 50s 2nd XI. The team will compete in the 50+ 2nd XI County Championship.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). Neeruj highlighted the following recent activities:

8.1 EDI staff and Board members survey. The results of the annual ECB EDI Gamewide Census based on data collected by the ECB's insights partner, Two Circles, had been circulated.

8.2 LGBTQ+ Training – Stonewall. An enlightening and enjoyable diversity training session for staff and Board members presented by Stonewall was held on 23 October 2023 at Northwich CC. Stonewall provides information, guidance and support on LGBTQ+ inclusion. A post about the event was added to social media and shared on Neville Southall X (Twitter) - see May meeting minutes 8.2

8.3 Islamophobia workshop. Staff and Board members were invited to an Islamophobia workshop organised by Cheshire FA on 22 November.

8.4 Our EDI plan. Our plan was updated in September. We continue to develop our key objectives: empowering people; building a diverse team; developing Inclusive environments; and leading with accountability.

8.5 EDI as a meeting agenda item. Neeruj mentioned that EDI is an item across our Board meeting agenda with relevance across all our activities.

9. Safeguarding. Nick highlighted the following from Julie Rafferty's County Safeguarding Officer's report (see Appendix 1) which had been circulated prior to the meeting:

9.1 CPA Actions. Julie's Safeguarding CPA update matrix ensures all recommended actions and tasks are reviewed and completed.

9.2 Board member's Code of Conduct. The board members' Code of Conduct which is renewed annually has been circulated to members for each to sign at the next meeting.

9.3 Safe Hands courses. Four pre-season Safe Hands training courses have been arranged. Due to the number of Club SOs already trained, fewer courses are required this year (usually seven).

9.4 Club Safeguarding Officer network meetings. These online meetings continue to be well attended and provide valuable opportunities to exchange good practice and share challenges.

9.5 Scorers – Change to DBS Requirements. Taking into consideration the role definition and the legal definition of regulated activity ECB has concluded that the role of Scorer does not meet the legal requirements for an Enhanced DBS.

Since the Board meeting the latest ECB Safeguarding Newsletter has been circulated to members and posted on the Board's website.

10. Governance.

10.1 CPA Actions.

10.1.1 County Governance Framework. Even though County Boards are only required to meet bronze and silver standards we have previously recorded on the portal that our Rules/Constitution are in line with all the bronze, silver and GOLD standards. To assist our CPA representatives when they meet with ECB to review all sections of our CPA we have provided some examples of evidence where we comply with those rules where we have met the GOLD standards (see 10.2).

10.1.2 Board Composition Form. Separate from the CPA Governance section on the portal but associated with it we have updated the Board Composition Form.

10.2 Rules Review. Even though our Rules were written to conform with all the ECB Governance Standards there are several (Gold standard) clauses with which we do not comply or fully comply. We need to identify and develop these areas.

10.3 Data Protection/Privacy Policy. It was agreed to form a sub-group to review our Privacy Policy and Privacy Notice dated 2018 (available via the footer on the website home page) or our junior participants & parents dated 2018.

10.4 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.

10.5 Cheshire Women's Cricket. It was agreed that at the present time the Women's game has sufficient representation on the Board.

10.6 Board AGM 2024 elections. 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. Neeruj confirmed that he is willing to stand for re-election at the 2024 AGM. For clarity ALL the other elected Directors Nigel, Di (Oct 2020), Scott, Nick, Joanna and Helen may seek re-election at the 2025 AGM if they wish to continue. The three Member reps are appointed by their Member organisations in accordance with their own rules.

11. Women & Girls. The Women & Girls Report (**see Appendix 2**) was circulated prior to the meeting.

Board contribution towards the Cheshire Women's Cricket League - see 4.4.1 above. Via these minutes the CWCL to invoice the Cheshire Cricket Board Ltd for the attention of the Board Treasurer (michael.guest@cheshirecricketboard.co.uk) for £6000 as 'a contribution towards the activities of the CWCL'.

12. Cheshire County Cricket Club. Jim's address to the Cheshire CCC AGM was circulated prior to the meeting as his report to the Board (**see Appendix 3**). Jim highlighted the following:

12.1 2nd XI. There are plans in place to continue the progress of joint venture begun in 2023 between the County club and the Board U18s.

12.2 Showcase Match. The 2024 Showcase Match is against Derbyshire CCC at Nantwich CC on 21 July.

12.3 Men's Seniors. With the introduction of a 50s 2nd XI this season we now field five men's senior sides: Over 50s 1st & 2nd XIs, Over 60s 1st & 2nd XI, and Over 70s

12.4 2024 1st XI Captains: Harry Dearden (3 day & 50 over); Sam Perry (T20).

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

13.1 Win/Lose proposal for County League. A proposal to move to win/lose will be considered at the CCCL AGM.

13.2 Applications to join the pyramid. The Clubs Committee and the Leagues are considering applications from three Clubs which wish to join the pyramid.

13.3 Officials Association. A probable merger of the three umpiring bodies in Cheshire (ACO, CCCL Umpires Association, and CCL Umpires Association) is progressing. The proposal needs the approval of the members of the three bodies. To date the CCCL Umpires Association has agreed its support.

14. Youth Cricket (CYC). It was agreed that the minutes of the forthcoming CYC meeting to be held on 14 Dec would be added as an appendix to the Board meeting minutes to reflect the recent activities of CYC (**Appendix 5**)

14.1 Rules/Constitution. The revised and update rules/constitution will be formally adopted at the CYC AGM in February.

14.2 Appointments. At the CYC AGM Tim Mullins will be formally appointed as Chair, and Paul Brown (Secretary) will be appointed the CYC representative to the Board.

15. AOB - none

16. 2024 meetings. Fridays 16 February (inc AGM) 9.30am, 10 May time tba, 20 September time tba, 13 December time tba. All meetings at Hartford House, Moss Farm.

Signed

Appendix 1. Safeguarding Report (Julie Rafferty)

1. **Safeguarding CPA update**

The new ECB County Safeguarding Advisor Fiona Holden is meeting Richard Newton and Julie Rafferty on Wednesday 13 December to discuss the progress of the CPA actions and general safeguarding. The CPA actions progress is detailed below:

Action	Detail	Update
1.	Develop an Adults at Risk (AAR) policy to support AAR statement	The ECB Safeguarding Team have recently stated that County Boards don't need a separate Safeguarding Adults policy. They are recommending that County Boards have a safeguarding adults policy statement which outlines a commitment to the ECB Safeguarding Adults Policy. A Safeguarding Adults Policy statement is already on the CCB website and in date, although this is being reviewed to ensure that all relevant information is captured. ONGOING
2.	Relevant staff to complete Adult Safeguarding training (delivered by Ann Craft Trust)	The ECB Safeguarding Team have now increased the availability of the Ann Craft Trust Safeguarding Adults Training Modules. Once dates and availability have been clarified, key people from the CCB staff and board will be able to attend courses in early 2024 ONGOING
3.	Staff handbook to include a safeguarding section with reference to policies, expectation that staff sign a code of conduct, induction and expectations	The additional information is in draft and needs to be discussed at next meeting with HR advisor ONGOING
4.	CSO to carry out "drop in" visits to coaching sessions	The County Safeguarding Officer is planning visits with the Pathway coaches and Leads for courses in early 2024 ONGOING

2. **Board Safeguarding Requirements**

All board members have now attended the Lime Culture Board Safeguarding training, but some still need to complete the Safeguarding Induction e-Learning and/ or the Level 2 Specialist Safeguarding e-Learning at the earliest opportunity. The training can be accessed via your individual ECB e-Learning account or via the links on the CCB website:

[safeguarding-training](#)

The board members' Code of Conduct is renewed on an annual basis and will be circulated amongst board members during the meeting to read and sign.

3. **Policy development**

Work is ongoing in relation to the following:

The CCB Safeguarding Development Plan is currently being reviewed and subject to further work. After discussions with Richard Newton and Nick Brooks, it was felt that the development plan needs to reflect key operational objectives and priorities for the CCB, identified in the County Partnership Arrangement. This will be available for discussion by the board in March/ April 2024.

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

The delivery of the 2024 Safe Hands training courses will start in February 2024. Due to the number of Club Safeguarding officers already trained, fewer courses are required (usually 7). As a minimum, courses will be delivered on the following dates and in areas where there is a greater demand:

- Monday 12 February 2024 @ Woodley CC – 6.30-9.30pm
- Monday 4 March 2024 @ Toft CC – 6.30-9.30pm
- Tuesday 19 March 2024 @ Sale CC – 6.30-9.30pm
- Thursday 18 April 2024 @ Cheshire FA/ Cheshire Cricket Board Office (Northwich) – 6.30-9.30pm

5. Club Safeguarding Officer network meetings

As well as the mid-season network meeting in July and August, end of season network meetings also took place in September and October; attendance was good with over 70% of clubs represented over the 5 dates. The following issues were raised by the Club Safeguarding Officers:

- 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 for the club
- CSO's wanted a system to check which people had completed the Level 2 Specialist eLearning
- 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 and queries about overseas players
- Questions about livestreaming and the use of GoPro's
- All club safeguarding officers who had attended a Safe Hands course in 2023 had to complete the L2 Specialist eLearning to be compliant on the SHMS.
- Felt that the safeguarding e-Learning was too clunky & general frustration with ECB systems
- Ratios – adults to children
- Reiteration of Codes of Conduct, linking to behaviour
- More adult concerns & cases than previous years

Most of the issues identified above are discussed in the Safe Hands courses, but in addition, information will be sent out to all CSO's before the start of the 2024 season to address the concerns highlighted.

6. Low Level Concerns recording

The ECB Safeguarding Team introduced a Low-Level Concerns Interim Reporting System on Smartsheet at the end of October 2023. All county boards have now been asked to add all the low-level concerns reported for in 2022 and 2023 onto the system. Examples of low-level concerns are:

- Breach of club code of conduct
- Inadequate supervision or care for young people
- Inaccessible emergency medication such as epi-pens and inhalers
- Social Media contact with under 18's
- Speaking in a rude, insulting, belittling or other inappropriate way
- Driving children home after training or matches

An accumulation of low-level concerns relating to the same person can then be quickly identified and addressed, this then may be escalated as a safeguarding concern dependent on the circumstances. Cheshire currently have 2 ongoing cases which were reported to the ECB Safeguarding Team, where low level concerns were reported during the season relating to people in positions of trust.

Appendix 2 – Women & Girls (Di Totty)

Schools

This year we will deliver in a record number of secondary schools with partnership funding. Across our 4 funding partners (C2S, GMCA, Westminster & PoC (Proof of Concept) we will deliver in 31 secondary schools. These will be split across the county, as funding allows. We will deliver 10 indoor soft ball competitions and 10 outdoor soft ball festivals to provide playing opportunities for girls. In addition to this we will run a league for schools for the first time ever. This will help to bridge the gap between school and club cricket.

Girls' cricket

Planning for 2024 girls' cricket has started. We will send out an EOI in December. We will host planning and rules meetings in January and February. We have a plan in place to increase the playing offer across the whole county but with a specific focus in the West & South. We will run a comprehensive festival offer in year one and build this into a league in year 2 (2025).

Women's cricket

The indoor leagues are taking place and are very well attended. We have 5 soft ball events and 2 hard ball events across the county. We are running women's coaching courses at the Grange. Both the soft ball and the new hard ball events have been sold out and we will hopefully expand this offer in the future. To date we have 65 clubs with a women's and or girls' section, however only 25 have both. Moving forward this is the figure we aim to increase.

Courses and Pathway

Course numbers are expanding steadily year on year. We would like to be able to offer more courses in different areas of the county but need to balance this with income as it is likely the girls only courses could not fill in some areas initially.

Theme	Activity	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
CCB Girls Participation	Summer Camps	56 girls	COVID	COVID	59 girls	89 girls
	Autumn Courses	51 girls	COVID	COVID	111 girls	107 girls
	Advanced Courses	153 girls	COVID	COVID	162 girls	190 girls

14 players have been selected in the 2023/24 cohort of the Thunder EPP. 3 players in the Thunder Academy and 2 players have moved to the main Thunder senior team.

Newsletters

We have started producing a newsletter to update clubs on our activities. Lots of information on our activities can be found here: [Women & Girls Newsletter | Cheshire Cricket Board](#)

Cheshire Women's Cricket League (CWCL)

Season 2023 - Overview

The season finished successfully with 150 people attending the Annual Presentation Evening held for the second year at the DCBL Stadium at the end of October. MC for the evening was David Hurst from Neston CC, and trophies were presented by Hannah Jones (Thunder) and Tom Jones (Cricket Coach). The competitions' winners were as follows:

Division 1 – Didsbury 1st X1

Division 2 – Lindow 1st X1

Division 3 East – Buxton 1st X1

Division 3 West – Porthill/Northern Stars

Division 4 East – Langley

Division 4 West - Alvanley

Division 5 East (Softball) – Cheadle Hulme Ladybridge

Division 5 Mid (Softball) – Runcorn

Division 5 South (Softball) – Aston

Division 5 West (Softball) – Irby

T20 Divisional Cup – Didsbury Swordettes

Senior Knockout Cup – Nantwich Vipers

Development Knockout Cup – Chester BH 2nd X1

Softball Knockout Cup – Neston

Individual awards were presented across all Divisions (except Division 5) for batting, bowling, fielding and wicketkeeping. Georgians, Leigh, Lindow and Upton all fielded overseas players, who again dominated the batting and wicketkeeping in the top two divisions.

At a well-attended AGM held at Toft in November, all serving officers were re-elected, the position of Strategy & Development Lead remains vacant.

For the first time in a while, there were no new clubs applying to join the League. Also, for the first time in a number of years we lost a well-established team as Stockport Trinity folded due to lack of players/administrators.

Lindow 1st X1 were automatically promoted to Division 1, Buxton 1st X1 successfully applied for promotion to Division 2, and Alvanley in their first year of hardball cricket gained promotion to Division 3.

Grappenhall and Kingsley have started their hardball journey and were admitted to Division 4. Three clubs entered additional teams into Division 4, which will include Buxton 3rd X1, Georgians 3rd X1 and Lindow 4th X1. This takes the number of teams in Division 4 to 18, and it will require a geographical re-structure to minimise travel and maximise fixtures for those teams.

Upton were automatically relegated from Division 1 to 2.

The AGM also discussed two controversial issues in relation to overseas and inappropriate players – we are looking at the CCL regulations and will take recommendations for rule changes to the Rules meeting in January 2024.

Looking ahead to Season 2024

The total number of clubs playing hardball now stands at 27 with 43 teams in Divisions 1-4, the number of softball teams in Division 5 may change as two teams have joined Division 4 but may continue with softball too.

Division 1 – 8 teams; Division 2- 7 teams; Division 3 – 10 teams; Division 4 – 18 teams. The structure of Divisions 3/4 will be reviewed in January, with formal regionalisation agreed.

In the absence of a Lead Strategy Officer, the League Executive will revisit the development plan in the new year to look at any adjustments required to reflect the current position and create a blueprint for moving forward.

Most clubs have adopted coloured kit, and the League will continue to support clubs still transitioning from whites across all their teams. In addition, we wish to support clubs with the move from softball to hardball, by way of supplying a standard team kit bag. Financial support from the Board will be helpful in supporting those aims.

We are currently surveying clubs to see how well the Lords ball performed in Division 1 & 2 and the Tiflex (Oxbridge) ball in Division 3 & 4, we no longer use a red ball in any form of cricket.

The continuing challenge for the Committee is to grow the volunteer base to support the growth in the game and manage the impact more teams have on the demands for pitch time. Clubs are finding it increasingly difficult to find indoor training facilities for pre-season training.

As always, our thanks go to the Board and to Richard and his team for the support given to the League and our clubs, established, and developing.

Appendix 3

Cheshire County Cricket Club (Jim Law)

Cheshire CCC AGM: Chairman's address, 27 November 2023

Off the field...

Taking the Chair reigns from David Bailey was always going to be a challenge – and so it proved.

Big shoes to fill and an exciting time for the Club. A new era.

The introduction of a 'smaller' management committee to oversee the day-to-day business of the Club focusing around playing the game, administration, finance, governance and marketing worked well in the main with the group able to focus and move more quickly than with a bigger group. This makes us more in line with today's world and the need to be agile, utilise technology and have ownership of key areas. This needs to be further developed.

Some progress, but room for improvement. We don't have the resources and breadth of skills in our broader group that we ideally need. Hence the need to dig deep amongst ourselves and look to attract new blood. We need to add dynamism and flair whilst upholding the County's principles, and proactively addressing the NCCA and ECB's 21st century requirements.

I thank Stuart Anderson for making sense of the numbers for me, keeping us on the straight and narrow and ensuring none of us slept in hotel car parks during the summer.

John Petch as secretary not only worked well with David Bailey to help steer the ECB County Partnership Agreement but also juggled one or two health issues with the little matter of moving house to hold things together across the year.

I've enjoyed working with Julie Rafferty. These are 'different times' as they say. Julie as Safeguarding Officer, holds a light, quietly chastises as appropriate and ensures our governance and safety policies are (I hope) meticulously followed. The area of governance and safety is constantly evolving, very much in the spotlight and vital to our future. Di Babbage, quietly in the wings assists us with this too and I thank you.

We work arm in arm with the Cheshire Cricket Board on all aspects and were delighted with the ECB's commendation of Cheshire Cricket as a whole this year. January sees John and I in CPA discussions again as we strive to continually move forward.

I've known Andy Newton for a while and he's another great example of someone who just gets on with things and is a bedrock to this Club. Working with him gives you an idea of why Nantwich as a club has been run so professionally over the years. Andy's backing – in more ways than one – is vital. He's a great leveler too when the chairman is having one of his more 'frustrating' moments.

2023 saw the end of an era as Elise Scrimgeour stepped back from the frontline and passed on her match manager, 200 Club and all sorts of other responsibilities.

I've been lucky enough to have served with Elise and dear Sandy for a few years now and Elise will be missed. I'm sure we'll see her around and about, spritzer in hand ready to regale us with crown green bowling stories and chastising the odd twelfth man while she's at it! Elise, thank you.

And then there's Peter Babbage. Or Pete and Di – they come as a team. In my scoring days I knew how much work Pete put into getting teams together, working on ground organization, chasing players and so on. As Chairman, I see it even more. Judging by the number of phone calls we've had since the end of the season I think my wife thinks we're having an affair. Pete, you're a star.

I'd also like to highlight the 'find of the season.' Inge Bevers and I have been round many a scoreboard together and whilst I often have people asking if they can score for Cheshire, I point out that I don't need a scorer. I need 'an Inge.'

As well as being top of her game in the scoring world, Inge lugs cameras and tv kit around the country, manages a load of back-office data and heaven knows what else. An IT whizz too, she's kindly offered to help with some of our back-office work. In particular, helping bring our membership database up to date to drive our marketing. I hope Judy Bailey will continue to help us too and we can begin to up the ante with our members.

We currently have around a hundred or so members, are hugely indebted to them and don't recognise their value as much as we should. This will change.

The ongoing assistance and support of David Sharp and Derrick Hastings is invaluable. Both continue to add value behind the scenes and have offered to do so in 2024, helping with some of our communications.

On the field...

We're all familiar with our 2023 performances across the competitions so I don't intend to dwell too much on specifics.

To quote David's 2022 address though, "it is very pleasing to say that over the last decade or so it's become a habit to indicate the County Club has had a successful season."

Well, despite all the rain, we did. Technicalities hit us throughout and given better weather, there may well have been a trophy in the cabinet. As it was, we ended up staving off relegation! Bizarre but I tell you, we've a good side with great camaraderie. It was fun.

And we might even have beat Yorkshire if Newts had sorted out the Nantwich weather!

Our 2nd XI experiment with a lot of cricket and increased links to the Cheshire Cricket Board taught us a lot. Thank you to Stewart Macleod and for Gavin Colebourn's willingness to help develop the 'Cheshire pathway' from U18 level.

Thank you to Ian Brown and his work with the seniors. He must be doing something right as the over 50s will be adding a second side next year. That's two for them, two for the over 60s and an over 70s side. An over 80s perhaps next Ian?

2024

About 12 years ago or so, I chaired the Cheshire Cricket Board for a couple of years. It wasn't my most enjoyable experience and I owe it to John Pickup for keeping me going.

Fast forward to 2023 and what a contrast! We've a younger, vibrant, go-getting group all working together under Nigel Muirhead. It's a new broom with good people and I feel the County Club is very much part of the scene. Half of the NCCA counties may have merged with their boards - we agreed not to - and we're now so well placed and supported.

On the field, we've exciting times ahead. With a fair wind and a decent summer, I think the plans Peter, Stewart and Gavin are putting in place – with Andy's help - will continue to move us forward.

But while all looks rosy on the 'dancefloor' behind the scenes we're stretched and tired. The idea of the management group was to drive the key issues, supported by others.

We're not getting enough of that at the moment. I'd ask the committee and supporters to think about what they can bring to the party. We don't need a bigger committee, but we need more help to ensure a few of us aren't burnt out very soon. And succession planning is vital.

Financing the Club remains a huge challenge. We do have some private support but need more public support. As I always say, we all know somebody who may be able to help us.

Please, think on. And enjoy 2024.

In brief (taken from our September 2023 update):

- 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's 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 4

Cheshire Clubs Cricket Committee (David Humpage)

It seems a long time since the end of season, but for the record Alderley Edge won the Premiership by one point from Didsbury on a day when I managed to visit four different clubs to present the trophies. Bowdon and Timperley gained the two promotion slots to the Premiership, changing places with Cheadle and Brooklands. Marple and Davenham achieved promotion from Division 2 to 1 and Maritime and Ashley move from 3 to 2. Warrington and Northwich were relegated to the Cheshire League with Over Peover and Runcorn being promoted to replace them.

In the Liverpool Competition Premier Division Wallasey finished 6th. and New Brighton 10th.

In the North Staffs and S. Cheshire League Elworth were relegated from the Premiership after a disappointing season.

We are now into rules territory in the leagues with the main proposal on the table to move the CCCL to win/lose cricket, albeit with hybrid version in the Premier Division. The League undertook the task of carrying out a survey of players to seek their views, and this resulted in a 30% return. Whether this was good or bad is a matter of some difference of opinion, but amongst those players that did complete the survey there was a noticeable interest in win/lose. A proposal will be put to the clubs at the AGM early in 2024 – outcome uncertain!

There have been three enquiries from clubs asking about moving from their current league into the pyramid, one of which I have already had a meeting with. I hope to have discussions with the other two early in 2024.

I had pleasure in attending the AGM of the Women's League and it is good to see the enthusiasm in the female side of the game as it continues to expand. No firm news on the proposed sponsor but hopefully this will come to pass in time for the 2024 season.

The search for new umpires goes on unabated, and hopefully we will see a number of new recruits in time for the 2024 season. As I said previously 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. The CCCL Association has approved the move and I believe that it is only a matter of time before it becomes reality.

The Groundsmen's Association continues to lay on courses and is now active in many ways in assisting clubs with any problems. There are several vacancies for groundsmen at clubs and the training and recruitment of groundsmen is becoming a serious and urgent matter.

The CCCC Constitution is still with John Petch but I remain hopeful of progress early in 2024. John has recently moved house so has been somewhat distracted from the subject of our Constitution!

The County Grant Fund is currently closed, and we now await the 2024 tranche of money from ECB.

I am pleased to say that Brian Horrocks has accepted the position of Secretary to the CCCC and indeed has attended his first meeting in the role. Brian doubles as Secretary of the CCL so is experienced in the work involved. I am sure that he will prove to be a great asset going forward.

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

Appendix 5

Cheshire Youth Cricket

CYC meeting minutes Thursday 14 December 2023 at 10.00am at the FA building, Moss Farm

Apologies: Jane Williams, Neeruj Luthra

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

David Batty. It was noted that David had sadly passed away, and it was agreed that recognition of David's work and his significant contribution to Cheshire Cricket as a whole and to CYC in particular should be formally minuted.

Committee changes. Tim (Mullins) was voted as the new chair of CYC following Karl Bamford's retirement. The role of vice chair was discussed and it was agreed that it would make sense that this post be filled by a parent of a son or daughter either previously or currently on the CYC pathway. A sub committee consisting of Tim, Gavin and Jess would be formed to identify a suitable candidate.

Paul (Brown), as secretary, would in future attend the main CCB board meetings as representative of CYC.

Constitution. This was discussed. Gareth and Tim suggested some amendments to align the document with best practice regarding safeguarding/anti-discrimination and also to include a mission statement to describe the purpose of CYC. Following the meeting Gareth circulated an updated draft which included suitable wording. Following this the plan is to formally adopt the constitution at a virtual AGM in February, at which time a formal election would be held for those posts on the CYC committee which required it.

CYC awards event. Jess (Lewis) gave an update on arrangements for the event on Saturday 6 January. Jess had put in a considerable amount of work and the majority of the necessary arrangements were already in place.

Safe Hands. Richard and Julie had met with Fiona Holden, the Board's new safeguarding adviser. Work is ongoing to ensure that all of the safeguarding arrangements in place were in line with SACPA standards.

Player Ambassadors. The role of player ambassadors was also discussed and their role in the wider development of the youth engagement plan. The suggestion is that the number of player ambassadors be increased to four and that they could potentially be drawn from a wider age range – say from 14s to 18s as opposed to the current 16s/17s.

It was agreed it would make sense to identify the new ambassadors early in the New Year so that they could be actively involved in gathering player feedback. Neeruj, Jess and Julie were asked to work to develop the approach to the process of gathering feedback and the ambassadors' roles in that process.

First Aid. It was noted that a first aid course in February was to be opened up more widely rather than just being for CCB staff.

Code of Conduct. It was also noted that the code of conduct would this year be distributed at the point of enrolment for the courses beginning in late January.

ECB national Club competitions. Jane's (Williams) report was noted in her absence with no further discussion.

County Age Groups/District cricket. Gavin (Colebourn) noted that the plans for a broader U11s district programme this year had been communicated. Other counties were still running Under 11 teams and there was some thought about a potential "best of" team to be picked for some representative programme at the end of the season. It was noted that the requirement for district kit was to be reduced for the coming season in order to keep costs for parents down.

Assessments would again be run over the Easter holidays mainly aimed at children selected for Excellence course but not exclusively so.

Richard noted that within the CYC pathway the degree to which those attending who were from diverse backgrounds (both ethnic and educational) was very positive and he felt this should be shared more widely. Gavin noted Gareth was drafting a "good news" message to be distributed in the New Year and this message could be included within that, along with recognition of the number of reduced fee courses offered and also the fact two Afghan refugee children had been offered free places. It was felt that CYC's record on diversity was very positive and this should be recognised and publicised more widely.

Gavin also explained that the Bobby Spencer award would be introduced in the current season. The award would go to the player on CYC programme who best represents Bobby's values and his contribution to CYC. The award would be a free place on a course. A memorial match would also be held v Lancashire at Bobby's home club of Widnes. The YoYo test would also be run this year and the proceeds would go to the Bobby Spencer Trust and to a brain tumour charity.

Girls' cricket. Jess (Lewis) presented her report and noted that the girls' group of players continued to go from strength to strength.

One disappointing development was that the under 18 girls had been moved from the North group (to be replaced by Scotland and Staffordshire) and into the Midland group which was not as strong. Given the strength of the girl's performances in the North group in the recent season this was a disappointing outcome. Jess had been given assurances the girls would still have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills to Lancashire and the question was asked about whether the girls might also have the opportunity to be considered by the Midlands elite sides.

More positively Jess noted that there was more funding now available for the under 18s girls and this would result in a wider programme including more white ball cricket – so it would be worth purchasing some white balls for the girls to practice with.

Club junior leagues. Gareth (Moorhouse) noted that, following some of the league AGMs there was a move towards increased levels of cricket in the summer holidays. The Cheshire High Peak league for example was introducing an under 17s 100 ball comp and the volume of u17s/u19s cricket was increasing – a positive development.

Coach Association/Schools Cricket. There was nothing to add to the matters included in Gavin's reports.

Treasurers/ Secretary update. Mike (Guest) ran through the CYC 2023 accounts. Revenue was broadly similar to last year as were costs although the split of these was different. Mike also noted that festivals broke even last year – the absence of festivals in 2024 and an increased number of games could mean that there would be an overall increase in costs.

Mike also explained that the surplus from CYC activities was passed to the CCB as a contribution towards the costs of CCB staff involved in CYC activities.

The question of scorers was discussed at some length. In competition age groups the rules indicated that the 12th man should score and not the manager. Julie noted that if an adult was scoring with a junior this could raise safeguarding concerns as scorers were now no longer required to have a DBS from next season.

It was generally agreed that scorers should be provided for home games. For away games managers should ask the opposition if they would be providing a scorer. If not and CYC was then required to provide a scorer the costs of that provision should be recouped from the opposition county.

Date of next meeting. The next full committee meeting was proposed as Wednesday 24th April – Paul would confirm once a room was booked.

As noted above a virtual AGM would be held in February - date to be confirmed.