

CHESHIRE CRICKET BOARD LIMITED
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT CHESHIRE FA OFFICES, MOSS FARM
ON FRIDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2024 – 10.00am following the AGM held earlier that day.

Meet our Staff – Prior to the formal meeting, **Rehaan Rather, Community Development and Coaching Manager** addressed the Board members on his current involvement with communities cricket in Cheshire. The session was informative and motivating with evidence of some impressive work taking place.

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

Nigel welcomed Paul Brown to his first meeting as the CYC Member Representative following his appointment at the recent CYC AGM.

- 2. Minutes of the meeting 8 Dec 2023.** Agreed and then signed by the Chair as a true record.

3. Matters arising from the meeting 8 Dec 2023

3.1 Chris Edwards BEM story. Impressed with Chris at our Dec meeting Scott has shared Chris's story with Richard Gould and Kate Miller at ECB - how a talented child with a learning disability and supported by his school caretaker became a coach for Cheshire Cricket Board, Captain of England Learning Disabilities team, and awarded a BEM. ECB is considering using this strong story from Cheshire as a highlight case study of people with disabilities working within cricket. Richard is meeting an ECB representative on 1 March.

3.2 Code of Conduct. The board members' Code of Conduct is renewed annually. A hard copy of the revision prepared by Julie was approved and signed by each member present at the meeting.

- 4. Management Group.** Members of the MG highlighted the following activity from the minutes of the MG meeting held on 9 Feb 2024 and circulated to the Directors and Member representatives prior to the Board meeting:

4.1 ECB CPA. CPA 2 commences Feb 2025 until Jan 2029. ECB has recently announced the provision of additional funding as a result of increased ICC distributions, overseas television rights and commercial partnerships. This additional funding amounts to £7m a year for the recreational game and hopefully will be reflected in the overall ECB funding allocations to County Boards.

4.2 CCB/ECB Annual CPA performance review. Nigel, Richard, Jim and Gareth Moorhouse met with ECB representatives at Moss Farm on 16 Jan for our annual CPA review. Feedback confirmed that we are a leading County in many aspects.

4.3 Staff

4.3.1 Amy Jones. Amy will rejoin the Board from 1 July as Women and Girls Club Development Officer.

4.3.2 Joanne Herbertson Women and Girls Club Development Officer. Joanne will be part time from 1 Sept and redesignated Schools Coaching Officer.

4.3.3 Annualised contracts. Annualised contracts for all staff have been introduced from 1 Feb 2024.

4.4 Finance

4.4.1 Annual Accounts 2022/23. The accounts approved at the Dec meeting were formally adopted at the AGM. A filleted version is posted on the website, and available via Companies House.

4.4.2 RBS and Nationwide accounts. Liquidity remains satisfactory within the RBS and Nationwide accounts and is in line with the forecast. The balance at 31 January 2024 represents 8 months of our annual costs.

4.4.3 Financial forecast. The forecast for 2023-24 shows a deficit for the year and reflects the full year effect of the changes that were highlighted in the December Board report. The MG is implementing changes to reduce the deficit for this year and next year with the expectation of nearing a breakeven position for the year to September 2026.

When we receive the ECB funding figures for 2025-2029 (expected in April) we will be able to assess the forecasts more accurately for the years to 30th September 2025 and 2026 and assess what scale of changes will need to be implemented to achieve a near breakeven situation.

4.5 Charity/Foundation status. ECB has arranged two (virtual) workshops during March to enable County Boards to consider Charity/Foundation status.

4.6 Cheshire Cricket Trust. The Trust is supporting the fund-raising event taking place during the Excellence and District courses as part of the 2024 Development Programme.

5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). Neeruj reiterated his comment at previous meetings that inclusion is a topic across all the Board's activities. Those present confirmed the Board's commitment to delivering inclusivity and recorded the following recent examples:

5.1 A contribution of £6000 to the Women's Cricket League.

5.2 Employment of an additional female member of staff.

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

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

5. 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:

5.1 CPA actions. Julie's Safeguarding CPA update matrix continues to ensure all recommended actions and tasks are reviewed and completed. Those Board members present at the meeting each signed the Code of Conduct which is renewed annually (see 3.2 above).

5.2 Safe Hands training courses. The courses have been updated and our existing tutors inc Sarah Hallas our Deputy CSO have attended training. Due to the number of Club SOs already trained, fewer courses (four) are required this year (usually seven) to accommodate training for the 40 Club SOs needing training.

5.3 Policy updates and reviews. The Safe Hands Policy was updated by ECB late 2023 and ECB is slowly updating all the additional resources and templates. This includes the CCB Safeguarding Policy Statement which is now updated and ready for review. This statement will be circulated to Board members following the Board meeting for comments and approval by the end of February at which time DWS will notify Julie. Other policies due for review annually are whistleblowing, safer recruitment, and anti-bullying.

5.4 CCB website. The Safeguarding section has been reviewed, and amendments and additions have been made to reflect the changes in policy and procedure.

5.5 Regional Meetings – safeguarding in the Talent Pathway. The annual ECB Safeguarding conference has been postponed to Spring 2025 whilst the Cricket Regulator (formerly ECB Safeguarding Team) prioritises the launch of the "Safeguarding Considerations in the Talent Pathway" training course. This training is a key element of the ECB Safeguarding Strategy and will be an important addition to CPA standards 2.0. The Cricket Regulator is hosting four Talent Pathway Regional Meetings in February and March 2024 to provide boards with the necessary support. Nick and Julie will be attending one of the meetings.

6. Governance.

6.1 ECB CPA review. To assist our CPA representatives when they met with ECB to review all sections of our CPA we had provided examples of evidence where we comply with some of our clauses written to meet the GOLD standards (see 6.2).

6.2 CCB 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 either develop these areas or consider them unrealistic and remove them.

6.3 Data Protection/Privacy Policy. Our Data Protection/Privacy Policy (dated 2018) needs reviewing and updating. A sub-group had met with Steve Kenny of Assured Privacy and in view of the complexity and importance of this area of activity it was agreed to engage Steve as our nominated Data Protection Officer and to review our Data Protection/Privacy Policy documents.

6.4 Board AGM elections. It was noted that six of our seven elected Directors are eligible for re-election on our two-year cycle at the same time (2025 AGM). It was suggested that we consider amending the Rules so that potentially we do not lose the experience of several Directors at the same time.

6.5 Board Members Rules/constitution. Cheshire Cricket Clubs Committee and Cheshire Youth Cricket have finalised their revised rules/constitution. Cheshire County Cricket Club revised/updated its rules/constitution in 2022.

6.6 Code of Conduct (see 3.2 above)

7. Women & Girls. Joanna referred to the Women & Girls Report (see **Appendix 2**) circulated prior to the meeting.

7.1 Cheshire Women's Cricket League. With the addition of seven new hardball teams the League now comprises 43 teams. Efforts continue to support clubs in the west particularly with softball to hardball transitions. The increasing number of teams at or beyond the county border presents challenges to manage. The impact on travel times and weekend commitments needs to be carefully balanced with supporting the growth of the game.

7.2 League sponsor. A two-year sponsorship agreement has been made.

7.3 Board contribution to CWCL. The payment of £6000 agreed at the Board's December 2023 meeting as 'a contribution towards the activities of the CWCL' will be paid on receipt of an invoice from CWCL.

8. Youth Cricket (CYC). A report from Paul presented at the meeting was circulated after the meeting **(Appendix 3)**

8.1 AGM. The revised and updated rules/constitution has been formally adopted. Tim Mullins has been appointed Chair, and Paul Brown, Secretary and Board Member representative.

8.2 Awards event. The event was held at Hartford House on Saturday evening 6 January.

8.3 Safeguarding in the talent pathway (see 5.5 above) CYC is developing a youth engagement plan involving its player ambassador role.

8.4 Age group representative teams. This year the boys' County sides start from U12s with an extended district programme for U10s and U11s. The girls' age group sides are unchanged from 2023.

8.5 Festivals. No teams will be attending residential festivals this year.

8.6 Junior Leagues. CYC continues to offer support when needed for the junior leagues. A CYC representative chairs meetings of the league representatives.

9. Cheshire County Cricket Club. Jim's report was circulated prior to the meeting **(see Appendix 4).**

9.1 ECB CPA review. At the January CPA review meeting held in January with ECB and alongside the Board representatives, Cheshire CCC was delighted with ECB's response.

9.2 2024 season. Planning is well underway with all fixtures and venues finalised. Players are attending indoor nets supervised by Stewart Macleod, Peter Babbage and Harry Dearden. The 2nd XI has a reduced programme under Stewart Macleod as Manager.

10. Clubs Committee (4Cs). David H's report was circulated prior to the meeting **(Appendix 5).**

10.1 Win/Lose proposal for County League. The proposal to move to win/lose was voted in at the CCCL AGM.

10.2 Increase in number of teams. 60 teams (from 57 in 2023) will play in the CCCL Sunday league and an extra side in the Over 40s League. The CCL has an increase in the number of 3rd and 4th XI teams.

10.3 Applications to join the pyramid. The Clubs Committee and the Leagues continue to consider approaches from Clubs wishing to join the pyramid.

10.4 Officials Association. The three umpiring bodies in Cheshire (ACO, CCCL Umpires Association, and CCL Umpires Association) have agreed to merge. This will take place in time for the 2025 season.

11. AOB

ECB Board meeting 20 March. Nigel and Richard have accepted an invitation from ECB to attend the full ECB Board meeting on 20 March. This provides an ideal opportunity for Nigel and Richard to convey key messages from our Board direct to the ECB Board.

12. Next meeting. Friday 10 May 9.30am. Remaining 2024 meetings: 20 September time tba, 13 December time tba. All meetings are at Hartford House, Moss Farm.

Signed

Appendix 1. Safeguarding Report (Julie Rafferty)

Safeguarding CPA update. Richard Newton and Julie Rafferty met with the ECB County Safeguarding Advisor on Fiona Holden on Wednesday 13 December to discuss the progress of the CPA and general safeguarding.

Pleasingly, the Cheshire Cricket Board are either on track or exceeding the safeguarding standards within the CPA.

CPA 2.0 was discussed and it was outlined that the 11 safeguarding standards are being streamlined to 7 safeguarding standards. It was also outlined that the ECB Safeguarding Team is now known as the Cricket Regulator Safeguarding Team.

The next meeting is planned for 18 April 2024.

The main Action areas	Detail	Update
1	Ensure that all new board members sign the commitment to safeguarding, together with the code of conduct	Currently being updated and to be signed following the board meeting
2	Working with CAG leads to advertise and appoint Youth Player Ambassadors	Currently being discussed with CAG leads to progress
3	Discuss and draft a youth engagement plan with identified key people and junior players	Meeting to be arranged
4	Add Low Level Concerns (LLC) for 2022 to date, on the ECB Smartsheet	All LLC added
5	Review risk assessments for CAG	Currently being reviewed with CAG leads

Safe Hands Training Courses (Level 3 – Club Safeguarding officers). The Safe Hands training has been updated and all the Safe Hands tutors have now attended appropriate training to be able to deliver the new course. Sarah Hallas, the Deputy County Safeguarding officer, is a new trainer and completed her 2-day course at the end of January 2024, giving greater resilience to deliver the training across the Cheshire Cricket area.

The delivery of the 2024 Safe Hands training courses started last week at Woodley CC and was enthusiastically received by the club safeguarding officers in attendance.

Approximately 40 Club Safeguarding officers need to complete the training, so the current planned courses should satisfy the demand, although there is some flexibility to deliver an additional course if required. The remaining courses are:

- 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

Policy development. The ECB updated the Safe Hands Policy in late 2023 and are slowly updating all the additional resources and templates, as a result the CCB Safeguarding Policy Statement, which was due for review has now been revised to reflect the changes and needs reviewing before its published on the CCB website.

The following policies are due to be reviewed annually, although the content has remained the same:

- Whistleblowing
- Safer Recruitment
- Anti-bullying

CCB website – Safeguarding Section. The CCB website Safeguarding section has been reviewed and appropriate amendments and additions are currently being made to reflect the changes in policy and procedure.

Regional meetings – Safeguarding in the Talent Pathway. The annual ECB Safeguarding conference has been postponed to Spring 2025 whilst the Cricket Regulator concentrate and prioritise the launch and roll out of the new “Safeguarding Considerations in the Talent Pathway” course across the whole cricket network. This training is a key element of the ECB Safeguarding Strategy and will be an important addition to CPA standards 2.0. The Cricket Regulator is hosting four Talent Pathway Regional Meetings in

February and March 2024 to provide boards with the dedicated support, resources, instruction, and delivery of this new training package. Nick Brooks and Julie Rafferty are scheduled to attend one of the meetings.

Safeguarding Themes. With it being pre-season and a short period of time since the last board meeting, very few new safeguarding issues have been raised. The main issue of concern is a coach/ captain has received an interim suspension following a referral to the Cricket Regulator about an accumulation of low-level concerns being reported. This is currently being investigated by the Cricket Regulator Safeguarding team.

Appendix 2. Women & Girls (Joanna Seddon and Jessica Lewis)

Cheshire Women's Cricket League. Following the CWCL AGM in November, plans are now well underway for the 2024 season. 7 new hardball teams were admitted to the CWCL and have now increased the size of the league to 43 teams, including some transitioning from softball to hardball for the first time. This is a great reflection of the effort put into the softball league development over the previous few years, and reinforces previous discussion on continuing to support the softball-hardball transition through both funding and specific intervention, particularly in the west of the county. Fixtures commence 21st April, with several teams also beginning their National Knockout campaign the same weekend.

Key topics which will continue to be a focus for the CWCL Exec Committee through 2024 include:

- Division 2 cricket – ensuring the right stretch and opportunities are available to bridge from 'development' divisions 3 and 4 up to the top division standard.
- Clubs outside of the Cheshire border – whilst all clubs currently participating in the CWCL have been voted in by the membership, the increasing number of teams at or beyond the county border presents an increasing challenge to manage. Impact on travel times and weekend commitments needs to be carefully balanced with supporting the growth of the game and participation. This is particularly felt in Division 2 where teams from Lancs, Derbyshire, NWales and the Wirral all compete and face travel times of up to 90 minutes.
- Focus on West Cheshire – efforts continue to support clubs in the West of the county, particularly with their softball to hardball transitions, building on the successes of division 5.
- Overseas players – overseas players continue to play a role across (mostly division 1) teams in CWCL. At the recent January rules meeting, CWCL agreed to adopt the men's rules and guidance on overseas player eligibility, bringing clarity on approach and consistency with the CCCL.
- Future strategy for CWCL – discussions underway on managing the ever-growing league, regionalisation, roles and support required will continue through 2024.

Finally, CWCL are very grateful for the financial support agreed in the December meeting as 'a contribution towards the activities of the CWCL'. Impact and usage of the funding will be reported at a future meeting.

Leagues (girls). This year 73 teams have expressed an interest in playing cricket in the CGCL. I don't envisage this many teams officially entering but it is a strong showcase of the aspirations of clubs in Cheshire. Things are looking positive for the west/ south league with 13 teams looking to play league cricket in 2024. None of these teams would have played in 2023.

30 teams have completed the EOI for 2024. This would be a 3 team increase on 2023. 25 of these teams would also like to play in the soft ball knock out cup. I think we will need to look at changes to this league in 2025 to help with transition to hard ball cricket and other playing offers.

Project Darwin. Conversations are taking place with Northwest counties as to the future of women's county cricket in the area. In 2024 Cheshire have created a joint team with Cumbria and Lancashire (North Rep Team). We have had meetings with the ECB to discuss and it has been approved. Currently 6 Cheshire players are lined up to play in that competition. Fixtures will be played against Notts, Lancashire, Yorkshire, North East Warriors, Staffordshire. Cheshire might look to apply for a tier 3 team but currently conversations are taking place about having a north rep in tier 2 and tier 3 which could mean Lancs own Tier 1, Cheshire own Tier 2 and Cumbria own Tier 3.

Courses. Our pathway courses have been well attended and the competition for county squads is continuing to increase. We have changed the structure of our district cricket offer to continue to support the standard increase and development of the girls' game.

Coach Education. Last month 17 female candidates passed their Foundation course, and several other females also completed the core coach. It's great to see more women starting their coaching journey.

Appendix 3 Cheshire Youth Cricket (Paul Brown)

- The new CYC constitution is to be formally adopted at the AGM to be held on Tuesday 20 February.
- Tim Mullins has stepped up to be CYC Chairman following Karl Bamford stepping down. A CYC Sub-committee of Tim, Gavin and Jess are seeking to identify candidates to take on the role of Vice Chair.
- The awards event held on 6 January was a very successful evening and credit should go to Jess for her hard work and commitment in organising the event.
- As referenced in the safeguarding report CYC are working to develop a youth engagement plan to build on the current player ambassador roles and seek to involve those ambassadors as part of the programme for obtaining feedback on the pathway programme and driving greater engagement.
- Boys age group cricket will start for CYC this year from under 12s, with an extended district programme for U10s and U11s. It may be there will be some "best of" fixtures for those age groups at the end of the season. The approach from Counties is quite varied post ICEC with some still running U10s/U11s and others starting their age group cricket at U13s.
- Girl's age group sides will be unchanged from last year. There is some disappointment that the U18 girls have been moved to the less competitive Midland group this year from the North group, this despite some very strong performances in the 2023 season.
- No CYC sides will be attending residential festivals this year and we are looking to extend the non-festival programme to provide more cricket for the players. This though is likely to create more costs (umpires, scorers etc) from the additional games as against the festivals which typically would be cost neutral following parental contributions.

Appendix 4 - Cheshire County Cricket Club (Jim Law)

Planning is well underway for the 2024 season with all fixtures and venues now in place and our nets programme up and running.

The Club was delighted with the ECB's response to the County's CPA submission in January and we are looking forward to an extremely active 2024.

In brief:

- 2024 nets underway spearheaded by Stewart Macleod, Pete Babbage and Harry Dearden
- 2nd XI streamlined process to see quality over quantity; less cricket, enhanced selection and coaching process working with the CCB
- Over 50s 2nd XI confirmed
- Database upgrade underway to enhance member communication (including 200 Club)
- 200 Club 'overhaul' imminent
- Additional sponsors sought – 'Partnership' brochure produced.
- Governance training to be rolled out for committee members
- Initial CPA II discussions have commenced
- ECB Showcase game: Cheshire v Derbyshire at Nantwich CC, 21 July
- NCCA have selected Chester Boughton Hall for T20 National Final's Day (26 May)

Appendix 5

Cheshire Clubs Cricket Committee (David Humpage)

Both main leagues have now had their AGMs with the main change being that the CCCL have adopted a win/lose format based on the model currently in use in the Birmingham League. The Premier Division will play a hybrid format with the middle season games being 110 over games with the draw. All other divisions will play 100 over win/lose. I suspect the change will make little difference to the quality of cricket played or indeed the games themselves – the points system being the main change.

We continue to see an increase in the number of teams participating in the competitions. We now have 60 teams playing in the Sunday League, up from 57 in 2023 and an extra side in the Over 40 leagues. There are also more teams in the CCL with the addition of further 3rd and 4th XIs.

I referred last time to enquiries from clubs looking at the possibility of joining the pyramid in the future. I have visited two clubs at their request to explain what Cheshire has to offer - we will see if this initiative turns into action. Much internal discussion I suspect. The enquiry from outside Cheshire has not been taken any further by the club concerned.

The possible sponsorship of the Women's League has now been completed and a sum of £2K has been agreed with a two-year agreement.

The search for new umpires goes on unabated, and hopefully we will see a number of new recruits in time for the 2024 season. The three umpiring bodies in Cheshire (ACO, CCCL Umpires Association, CCL Umpires Association) have now agreed in principle to merge into one body, and this will take place in time for the 2025 season.

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 revised CCCC Constitution has now been agreed and will be put to the forthcoming meeting for approval. Many thanks to John Petch who has produced the new version despite his recent health problems which have now abated.

The County Grant Fund is currently closed and we now await the 2024 tranche of money from ECB. First Zoom call of the committee to be held on 15th of February. We already have plenty of interest from potential applicants.

The CCCC has not met since the last Board Meeting, but we are scheduled to meet on 29th February. Much to discuss.

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

END