

CHESHIRE CRICKET BOARD LIMITED
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT CHESHIRE FA OFFICES, MOSS FARM
ON FRIDAY 20 SEPT 2024 – 9.30am

Prior to the formal meeting, Gareth Moorhouse, Clubs and CPA Lead Officer, presented an overview of CPA2 and the associated Countywide Plan providing an opportunity for those present at the meeting to provide input which would help meet the CPA2 requirements and update our Countywide Plan.

1. Attendance: Nigel Muirhead (Chair), Di Totty (Vice Chair), Richard Newton (Director of Cricket), 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), Helen Nicholson (Independent Non-Executive Director), Joanna Seddon (Independent Non-Executive Director).

Apologies: Scott Elliott (Management Group Chair), Mike Guest (Treasurer),

2. Minutes of the meeting 10 May 2024. Agreed and then signed by the chair as a true record.

3. Matters arising from the meeting 10 May 2024

3.1 Use of facility at Hartford House Moss Farm (item 4.5 of 10 May meeting refers). A procedure agreed by the FA for booking cricket meetings at Hartford House was circulated to Board members on 22 May.

3.2 ECB Cricket Collective Awards (item 4.6 of 10 May meeting refers). Nominations closed on 14 July and Neeruj, Di, Ben Tomlinson and Gareth met on Teams on 19 July to choose the winners from the 77 nominations for the 15 categories. The awards were presented during a Metro Bank match at Old Trafford between Lancashire and Middlesex on 8 August. The winners are posted on the Board's website.

3.3 Safeguarding Policy updates and reviews (item 4.7 of 10 May meeting refers). Board members agreed the reviewed Whistleblowing, Safer Recruitment, and Anti-bullying policies. These have been added to the Board's website.

3.4 Cricket Regulator Recognition and Reward Scheme for Club or County Safeguarding Officer nominations. The Board via Nick nominated Julie before the closing date 1 August. As mentioned in this meeting's Safeguarding Report our winner is Charlotte Jennings at Macclesfield CC. Charlotte's name has been added to the website alongside our Cricket Collective award winners.

4. Management Group. Minutes of the MG meetings held on 8 Jul and 2 August 2024 were circulated to the Directors and Member representatives prior to the Board meeting. The following items include those raised by the Director of Cricket, Treasurer and Secretary.

4.1 ECB CPA. CPA2 commences Feb 2025 until Jan 2029. Details of the funding and ECB's expectations were discussed with them on 30 May. Our updated Countywide Plan to run in parallel with the CPA Standards will be required by April 2025.

4.2 Cash Flow and Management Accounts. The liquidity position remains satisfactory within the RBS and Nationwide accounts and is in line with the forecast. A three-year forecast has been circulated to Board members. The presentation of the forecast includes the reserves. The forecast shows a much-reduced deficit in 2024-25 and a small surplus in 2025-26, and is based on ECB funding from Feb 2025, above inflation increases in course fees, and costs rising at 2% per annum. The actual outcome for the accounts to 30 September 2024 will be available for the November Board meeting.

4.3 Women's county cricket. Along with other counties we were invited to submit an application to enter Tier 2. Having submitted our application we were informed that Tier 2 will only comprise 'first class' counties not included in Tier 1. National counties who wish to enter will play in Tier 3. Those National counties including ourselves who applied for Tier 2 expressed strong disapproval to ECB. Richard Gould ECB Chief Executive met with Nigel, Richard, Scott and Neeruj at Toft CC on 20 August to explain the situation.

4.4 Foundation/Charity status. During that same meeting held at Toft CC on 20 August (see 4.3 above) Richard Gould confirmed that at the present time, particularly as it was already generating a significant amount of its own income, there was no expectation that the Cheshire Cricket Board should seek Foundation/charity status. See also 7.4 below.

4.5 Board staff. Since the May Board meeting three employees have left (Atif Qureshi, Stewart Garnett and Charlie Scudder) and two new employees have started (Rohan Luthra and Luke McCoy – both part-time). The Board now employees 28 full and part-time staff.

We have made use of our arrangement with Croner in respect of the HR, employment law, and Health and Safety services they provide. See 7.1 below.

4.6 Financial support for other bodies i.e. Men's Seniors, Women's League, Disabilities, Cheshire CCC. Following a recent request to the Treasurer from the Over 60s it was agreed to make a payment of £500 towards the costs of extensive travel around the country to compete in the play-off matches.

4.7 Cheshire Cricket Trust. The Trustees agreed funding support for a 16-year-old aspiring umpire from Stockport CC under its Young Umpire Bursary arrangement with the Cheshire Officials Association.

5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

5.1 EDI working group. The ECB continues to release regular updates and bulletins, arrange meetings for EDI leads and local working groups, and conduct reviews of the game-wide EDI Action Plan. In reviewing our own EDI Action Plan our newly formed working group (Neeruj, Julie, Richard, Gareth, Chris Edwards, Reehan Rather, and Marianne Lea) bears in mind the overriding need of welcoming everyone to the game and removing any barriers for them to develop.

5.2 EDI leads day. We were unable to be represented at an ECB EDI leads day at the Oval on 17 June. Instead Neeruj and Richard made a personal visit to meet the ECB EDI lead at Lord's on 22 May.

5.3 Game-wide EDI census 2024. Members were urged to complete the census before the deadline on 11 Oct.

6. Safeguarding. Nick highlighted items from Julie Rafferty's County Safeguarding Officer's report which had been circulated prior to the meeting (see **Appendix 1**). In addition, the following were mentioned;

6.1 County Safeguarding Officer. It was agreed to invite Julie to the next Board meeting.

6.2 Unknown players. See 11.1 below.

7. Governance/Risk.

7.1 Additional independent Non-Executive Director. To help our business operation as well as meeting the requirements of CPA2 it was agreed to search for an additional iNED ideally with a legal background perhaps in employment law.

7.2 CCB Rules review. Following the amendments to the Rules agreed at the May Board meeting the Rules have been updated – two clauses in Section 10 have been deleted, and the Directors' term of office is now one, two or three years.

7.3 Data Protection/Privacy Policy. Following the proposals and quotation from Assured Privacy and a request for advice and help from ECB the guidance to County Boards available on the ECB GDPR webpage on which our own GDPR documents are based, remains unchanged from 2018. It was therefore agreed that we need take no further action at present. Helen and David are to consider a suitable reply to Assured Privacy (Steve Kenny).

7.4 Foundation status for County Boards. Some Board members had attended two (virtual) workshops arranged by ECB during March to enable County Boards to consider Charity/Foundation status. Additionally, ECB has arranged a series of Fundraising webinars during September and October to provide further help for those Boards considering Foundation status. We agreed at the May Board meeting that Foundation status is not for us at the present time. See also 4.4 above.

7.5 Risk Register. A Cheshire CB Risk Register document prepared by a working group (Richard, Helen, Mike and Nick) was agreed at the May 2023 Board meeting. The working group will arrange a review.

7.6 CPA2 Governance. The Governance working group (Helen, David and Richard) will arrange to meet with Gareth in good time before the Board's annual review meeting with ECB at Toft CC November 13th to measure our performance against the Governance section of the CPA.

8. Women & Girls. Joanna referred members to the Women & Girls Report circulated prior to the meeting (see **Appendix 2**). In addition the following were mentioned:

8.1 ECB Premier and Div 1 Leagues. In 2026 there will be a requirement for clubs in the top two divisions of the men's County League to have at least one girls' team and for matches played to be entered on play-cricket.

8.2 A women's north west premier league. There is a proposal to involve clubs from Lancashire, Cheshire and Cumbria in a 50 over competition on Sundays.

8.3 Women's county team. With the probability that a county team will be re-established the Board will need to give consideration to the representation of a Cheshire Women's County Club on the Board.

9. Youth Cricket (CYC). Paul referred members to the CYC report circulated prior to the meeting (see **Appendix 3**).

10. Cheshire County Cricket Club. Jim referred members to his County Club report circulated prior to the meeting (see **Appendix 4**).

11. Clubs Committee (4Cs). David H referred members to his Clubs Committee report circulated prior to the meeting (see **Appendix 5**). In addition, David H. mentioned the following:

11.1 Unknown Players. There have been recorded instances of unknown players playing in League matches. This presents potential safeguarding issues. The Leagues will contact the Club Safeguarding Officers in these instances.

12. AOB

12.1 Infographic. The infographic shown on the website home page depicting current year stats for all the Board's activities will be renewed when the 2024 stats have been collated.

13. Next meeting. Remaining 2024 meeting: Friday 29 Nov at Hartford House, Moss Farm time tba.

Signed

Appendix 1. Safeguarding Report (Julie Rafferty)

1. Safeguarding CPA update

Richard Newton, Nick Brooks and Julie Rafferty met with the ECB County Safeguarding Advisor, Fiona Holden on Wednesday 31 July 2024 to discuss the progress of the CPA standards and other safeguarding matters. The Cheshire Cricket Board continues to make good progress in all areas of the safeguarding standards within the CPA, in preparation for the transition to CPA 2. The next meeting is planned for 14 November 2024.

The main actions from the meeting were:

CPA Review			
No	Standard	Actions, progress, comments	Tracking
			  
4.1	Safe Hands Policy	A new Safeguarding Policy Statement was agreed in Feb and Policies were agreed by the Board in May.	
4.2	Safeguarding policy and procedure	All new/updated policies and policy statements are on the CCB website	
4.3	County Safeguarding Officer (CoSO)	The ECB has stated that having a full-time safeguarding capability is desirable, which the CCB doesn't have as the CoSO currently works 21hrs, although she is supported by Sarah Hallas (Volunteer) and there is also a general safeguarding email address. CCB is considering options to increase the safeguarding role.	
4.4	Board Safeguarding Lead	Explained that the CCB are keen to invest time in Safeguarding which includes having the right people on the Board. NB is in post and ensures that safeguarding matters are prioritized in meetings.	
4.5	Staff training	Highlighted that the Staff handbook now has a Safeguarding section. It was confirmed that codes of conduct are discussed and signed at staff inductions and annual staff codes of conduct are currently being completed.	
4.6	Safer recruitment	The CCB have trained staff in safely recruiting paid and volunteer staff and have a structured process of recruitment. 2 members of staff are due to attend training in October 2024	
4.7	Listening to children	Player Ambassadors have been identified from boys and girls CAG, who have a clear role description. Safeguarding inputs were delivered to the girls' and boys' parents and players. Posters have been created to encourage young players to provide feedback and any concerns they may have.	
4.8	Safeguarding reporting	Low Level Concerns (LLC) and Referrals are recorded by the County Safeguarding Officer, although the ECB system for recording LLC's is "clunky", frustrating and not easy to use, as a result some of the CCB LLCs are not currently on the system. The system will be up to date by October 2024. The CoSO was praised for her excellent work with the Case Management team on many threshold cases that have arisen during the season.	
4.9	Safeguarding at events & hired facilities	All risk assessments are in place for venues, but a review is going to take place and discussions with coaches. Support will be provided to clubs to ensure similar standards are met.	
4.10	Safeguarding in the Talent Pathway	Safeguarding inputs have been delivered to CAG and Disability cricket. "Safeguarding in the Talent Pathway" training was delivered on 3 Sept and was well attended.	
4.11	Safeguarding Adults	Several staff are attending the level 3 ECB Safeguarding Adults training in September and October 2024. In addition, paid and volunteer staff have completed the Ann Craft Trust adults safeguarding e-Learning.	

2. Safeguarding training

Level 2 "Safeguarding in Specialist Roles" (SSR) eLearning



The promotion of the ECB Level 2 SSR eLearning for coaches, managers, captains, scorers, umpires, committee members and club safeguarding officers (CSO) continues, with more people completing the training. Although this training is not mandatory for most roles (except for CSOs and coaches), the CCB are recommending that people complete the training so there is a greater understanding of safeguarding.

Level 3 Safe Hands course (Face to face)

From CCB records there are currently 80/197 CSOs who will require Safe Hands training before the start of next season; factoring in resignations of some CSOs, it is anticipated that 5-6 Safe Hands course will have to be delivered to

cope with the demand. The delivery of the courses will take place in February, March and April 2025 in the areas where there is the greater demand: Macclesfield, Mid Cheshire, South Cheshire, Stockport, Trafford & Tameside and Wirral.

Level 3 Safeguarding in the Talent Pathway

Face to face training was delivered to staff and volunteers involved with the Cheshire player/ talent pathway on 3 September 2024. The training session was well attended, with great discussion and questions. A mop-up session is being planned for the people that couldn't attend and is likely to be online.

This training will need renewing at least every 3 years.

This will add to the evidence in the CPA 2.0 Safeguarding Standard 4:10 "Safeguarding in the Talent Pathway".

Level 3 Safeguarding Adults

Several members of staff are attending the level 3 Safeguarding Adults in September and October 2024, which is being delivered by the Cricket Regulator in conjunction with the Ann Craft Trust. In addition, paid and volunteer staff have completed the Ann Craft Trust adults safeguarding e-Learning was made available free of charge by the Cricket Regulator

3. Policy development update

All current policies and policy statements have been updated and are now published on the CCB website. With the increasing volume of Low-Level Concerns (LLC) being reported and the demand on the time of the County Safeguarding Officer, it's appropriate to have an LLC policy to ensure they are recorded and dealt with in the correct manner.

This policy is currently being developed and will be sent out for consultation, ready to be discussed at the next board meeting in November 2024

4. Cricket Regulator Recognition and Reward Award 2024

The CCB are pleased to announce that Charlotte Jennings from Macclesfield CC was the winner of the Cricket Regulator Safeguarding Reward & recognition Award. She was independently nominated by Helen Nicholson and Julie Rafferty. Charlotte was rewarded by having tickets to the IT20 England v Australia fixture on 15

September 2024 at Old Trafford (although match was abandoned due to the weather!) Charlotte said: *'It has been a pleasure being involved in safeguarding and the committee at Macclesfield Cricket Club over the last few years. We have worked hard to implement the systems, processes and training put in place by the ECB and Cheshire Cricket, which have been invaluable in supporting our young players to enjoy a safe, welcoming environment, as well as helping develop confident and able coaching teams. We have had excellent support from Cheshire and our County Safeguarding Officer, enabling us to react to and pre-empt safeguarding concerns. I'm very proud of what we have achieved to date and how many of our young players are enjoying their cricket and progressing through our senior sides.'*

5. Attendance at CAG player and parent/ carer meetings

The County Safeguarding Officer attended several player & parents/ carers meetings to discuss key safeguarding issues with them prior to the season starts, including:

- Disability sessions on 14 and 21 January 2024 @ Northwich CC
- Girls' session on 24 April 2024 @ Cheshire FA/CCB
- Boys U13's on 5 June 2024 @ Hawarden Park CC
- Boys U16's on 19 June 2024 @ Winnington Park CC

Many topics were discussed (flipchart attached although the emphasis was about **enjoying and feeling safe whilst playing cricket and being listened to**. Players & Parents/ carers were reminded that if any player feels uncomfortable about anything that they should report it to their coach or manager.

It would be recommended that group player & parent/ carer meetings take place before the start of next season, so most players and parents/ carers are captured, and they are aware of what safeguarding procedures are in place.

6. Player Ambassadors

Player Ambassadors were identified by the pathway leads for the 2024 season and are:

- Oliver Passant – 16yr old District player and fully qualified umpire
- Freddie Vaughan Hawkins – 16yr old County Player
- Holly Batey – 16yr old County player
- Emily Paige – 17yr old County player

Although their involvement with the CAG and clubs has been limited this season, we will be working with them out of season initially to start developing the CCB Youth Engagement Plan, with a view to getting something in place for the start of Season 2025. All have expressed the wish to remain in the role for the 2025 season. Its hoping that their role will be more proactive with the CAG and clubs, listening to other junior players, feeding back opinion with a view to influencing what we do. Posters have been created with an imbedded QR code. Any junior player can scan the QR code with their mobile phone and give feedback about how training sessions/ matches have been for them and highlight if they are concerned about anything or if something has made them feel uncomfortable.



These are also going to be shared with clubs, as a mechanism to engage with and listen to young people.

7. ECB Safeguarding Strategy 2025-2028 update

This week the ECB have informed boards of the planned work they wish to deliver across the game in the next 3 years. They have given advance notification of the strategy headlines, to support the work boards are already doing as part of the County Partnership Arrangement and in preparation for CPA 2.

The Cricket Regulator Safeguarding Team particularly the County Safeguarding Advisors, will focus on:

- Leading the way in creating safer cultures across the game by working with you on your offer to the recreational clubs and leagues network.
- Support and provide a platform for the views of survivors to be heard and acted upon ensuring lessons continue to be learnt where possible.
- Focus on fostering positive behaviours across the game including consistently challenging behaviour which falls below expected standards.
- Develop cross sport safeguarding campaigns focussing on raising awareness and supporting safer cultures within sport.

8. Safeguarding Themes

The 2024 season has been another busy year for safeguarding concerns of varying levels, whether a blemished DBS, low-level concern (LLC) or a referral to the Cricket Regulator.

Since the last board meeting there have been many safeguarding issues and cases being reported.

Blemished disclosures - There has been an increase in blemished disclosures this season (DBS certificates with previous convictions and/or intelligence attached), resulting in captains and coaches being suspended from regulated activity whilst the information is being considered by the independent safeguarding panel.

LLC - Of the LLCs reported, the general theme relates to the poor proactive and behaviour of captains, coaches and parents towards children and other officials. Generally, they have been dealt with by way of league discipline, club discipline or board investigation.

Also, some reports of junior players struggling with their mental health, reporting self-harm to coaches and demanding a greater understanding of neuro diverse conditions.

Cricket Regulator referrals – There has been a significant increase in cases meeting the threshold to refer to the Cricket Regulator, they relate to:

- Cricket official – subject to stalking and harassment, prompting a police investigation and suspension of another cricket official from another area.

- Player - suspended following a tribunal finding them guilty of sexual misconduct.
- Domestic abuse incident at a club, reported to children's social care and the police.
- Spectator and sibling of junior county disability player being investigated for child abuse at a Special Educational Needs School
- Suspended player with previous convictions contacts club wanting to join, without the knowledge of Cricket Regulator.
- Player /coach makes sexually inappropriate comments to junior players – referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer.
- Several reports of discriminatory behaviour by senior and junior players, investigated by club and the County Safeguarding Officer.
- Captain suspended due to being investigated for allegations of child abuse.
- Spectator made comments to very young players. It was reported to the police and the male was spoken to.
- Player suspended when information was received that he was appearing at crown court having been charged with rape.

A full breakdown of the figures for each category will be reported in the November 2024 board report.

Appendix 2 Women and Girls

CWCL Report (Joanna Seddon)

With the season all but completed and just one Sunday of play remaining (weather permitting!), the majority of results across CWCL are now in and divisional winners decided. At the top of the league, perhaps the closest fought title race for a few years played out with a wash-out between Didsbury and Leigh, and Leigh running out the overall champions for the second time in 3 years. With many games across the top half of the division weather impacted or cancelled, the outcome may well have been different had we fared better with the weather this year. However, the competitiveness of the cricket at the top of CWCL shows we continue to be in very good shape at the highest standard of club cricket across the county.

Also encouraging are the number of 2nd XI teams gradually progressing through the divisions, with Nantwich, Didsbury, Oakmere and Stockport Georgians 2nd XI all showing strongly in the league results and Chester 2nd XI performing well in the T20 cup competition. In addition, clubs who entered a hardball team in 2024 for the first time have performed well and made strong contributions to Division 4 which continues to grow and prove a successful transition from Division 5 softball cricket.

The various cup and T20 competitions the CWCL runs were also impacted by the weather, but thankfully Finals Day, hosted by Hale Barns CC again, saw perhaps some of the best weather of the season and a long (if hot!) day of competitive T20 cricket with excellent support and atmosphere.

The challenges flagged earlier in the season have continued through the summer. Travel distances continue to pose problems for teams particularly in the second division and will be factored in as we move to the off season and approach determining league divisional structures for 2025. Second XI eligibility has also continued to raise numerous incidents of frustration through the season, and the CWCL committee will review the raised incidents over the winter and reconsider the possibility of implementing stronger guidance for next season and beyond. Several clubs continue to experience challenges with ground availability despite creative use of alternative locations by many. As the league continues to grow this challenge will continue to increase.

In addition to the regular league fixtures, the annual Cheshire League XI vs MCC fixture was hosted at Lindow CC on 6th August. MCC took the honours on the day, with Cheshire players featuring in performance on both sides on an excellent day of cricket.

In the National T20 Knockout Cup competition, Didsbury progressed to the North final against Sessay Emeralds, who then won and went on to face Dorridge in the National semi-final, who repeated their success against Lindow the previous year to make it to the final. Stockport Georgians progressed right through to the final of the plate competition, losing to Harrow St Marys CC. We continue to represent Cheshire well in this competition and each year have a higher number of clubs progressing to later rounds.

Plans are underway for the CWCL Awards Evening on Saturday 12th October to celebrate the club and individual successes across the league and recognise contributions made right across the region.

Women and Girls Update (Jess Lewis)

School Cricket

This summer we reached our target of delivering in 27 secondary schools across Cheshire. We only delivered 6 out of 10 outdoor school competitions due to wet weather. Due to a change in funding, we will only have 18 secondary schools to deliver in for the 24/25 academic year.

Girls League Cricket

Out of the 59 teams that entered the CGCL this summer, 57 played games. In addition to the league, 4 girls festivals ran this summer which presented playing opportunities for 5 new girls' teams. We still have 6 weeks to finalise our girls' teams and club numbers for the 2024 season.

Women's Softball Cricket

The soft ball league and KO Cup ran again this summer. Winners are still pending as clubs need to upload results and the KO Cup final is taking place on Sunday 22nd September 2024.

Metro bank

We have selected 8 clubs to work with as part of the Metro Bank pilot, but a number of factors have prevented much progress with this. We will aim to work with these clubs over the winter.

Girls CYC Report

U11 Girls

Played 12 games, won 4, lost 4, tied 1 and has 2 games with no result. These games were played with holistic player development in mind and provided crucial playing opportunities for the young girls.

U13 Girls

Played 11 games, won 5 and lost 6. As the U11s, these games were played with the players development across different formats and disciplines in mind.

U15 Girls

Played 10 games, won 5, lost 3 and had 2 games with no result. The U15 girls' season was heavily impacted by rain, only getting 5 full days of cricket played. There were some strong performances, but their playing schedule will need to be looked at for next year.

U18 Girls

Played 24 games, won 17, lost 4 and had 3 games with no result. As strong season for the U18 girls, making the QF in the one day and T20 competition and the semi-finals in the KO Cup. It was the most successful girls' season ever at this age group.

Girls District

This summer was our most successful girls district season ever. Despite whitewash week being rained off, we got fantastic engagement over the summer and each team (6 teams) played 6 games of cricket that provided excellent development opportunities.

Thunder Academy and EPP

This year we had 4 players involved in the Thunder Academy and 12 players in the Thunder EPP. Both Tilly and Bethan played some senior cricket and Thunder see them having more involvement moving forward. During the season Skye Thomas played at the regional academy festival. Charlotte Neal is also training with Central Sparks. We've created greater links with Thunder. Moving forward EPP with run centrally from Old Trafford and Cheshire will be at the 24/25 cohort selection meeting.

Appendix 3 Cheshire Youth Cricket (Paul Brown)

The latest CYC Committee meeting was held on 18 September. The key matters discussed are as below:

General

- Discussions are ongoing with Rob Jones to act in some capacity as an ambassador for CYC for players on the CYC pathway but also more generally. Gavin will discuss with Rob what he feels comfortable doing and the role will be designed around this. Tim is to speak to Liv Bell (Scotland international) about a similar role.
- Julie continues to work on a programme of player engagement with both those involved in the pathway and at club level – likely to include a survey to clubs to be distributed via the clubs' safeguarding leads as well as involvement from the player youth ambassadors.

- The “hub club” proposal is progressing (the plan being to sign agreements with a number of clubs to host at least 10 CYC matches over the course of a season). We are finalising financial arrangements and identifying clubs – the view is that although there is a financial cost to the programme this will be far outweighed by the saving of staff time arranging games and dealing with late changes. The desire is to continue to ask other clubs to host smaller number of games where they are keen to do so.
- There is to be an increased awareness around the cost of the CAG and district programme in the coming year in order to make our contribution to moving the Board towards a break-even point. In particular Richard is working on ways to free up staff time to allow them to focus in delivering in schools which has the dual benefit of increasing participation and generating further revenue. More work will be undertaken over the winter to ensure that the fixture programme for non-competition years is delivering the appropriate level of cricket as efficiently as possible.

County Age Group

- This has been probably the most successful season for both boys’ and girls’ sides ever. All of the boys’ sides made it out of their groups in the various competitive age groups with the boys under 16s winning the national 50 over competition. The girls under 18 side reached the quarter finals of the one day and T20 competitions and the semi-final of the knockout cup.
- We continue to see progression from the boys’ and girls’ pathways into the highest levels of the game, with two more CYC graduates signing professional contracts (Archie Vaughan and Charlie Barnard), and 16 girls involved in either the Thunder Academy and EPP in addition to Liv Bell gaining international honours
- The focus for CAG continues to be to develop the skills of players in non-ECB competition years while having more of a focus on success in the competitive age groups in order to ensure that our junior sides are exposed to the highest level of cricket possible.

Clubs

- Fixture congestion has been a challenge at a club level due to the poor weather but aside from that no major issues have arisen. Dave Atkinson continues to liaise with the leagues on a regular basis and the end of season meetings are planned for 25th September (Zoom) and 16th October (in person). Dave will produce a fuller report following these meetings.
- Lindow and Oxtun won the county sections of the U13 and U15 national competitions respectively, both then losing to Didsbury in their respective North round 2. Both sides suffered from clashes with holidays as these rounds were to be played after the end of school term.
- Pleasingly we saw an increase in entries in both competitions this year as opposed to last – anecdotally many counties have seen the opposite – Jane (Williams) is going to look into this to understand the national picture.

Schools

- Coaches have delivered sessions over the course of the year in 118 schools with around 12,000 children participating, evenly split between boys and girls.
- In addition, a further 6,000 children have attended engagement days, again evenly split between boys and girls.
- Discussions continue with the independent school sector but at the moment their general view is that no additional support is needed.

Appendix 4 - Cheshire County Cricket Club (Jim Law)

Summary (excluding Seniors cricket)

While the weather was kinder to us (honestly!), we had mixed fortunes in 2024.

1st XI relegation in the Championship was hard to take but realistically, there's little difference in standard between Western Divisions 1 and 2. This pill was made slightly easier to swallow by reaching the KO Trophy Final albeit we were outfoxed by Norfolk – a shame as our white ball team was as good as anyone, beating Berkshire in a semi-final and trouncing a strong Derbyshire side in our ECB Showcase game.

Seeking 'quality' over quantity, our 2nd XI played less games but higher intensity fixtures. The weather caused some cancellations, but several players tasted first team experience. Gavin worked with Stewart and Pete, better aligning our selection process between the senior side and age group cricket. Good too to play a couple of home games at Northwich.

Our challenges continue to mount, in particular:

- Significant selection issues, particularly for three-day Championship matches – work commitments, club commitments (clashes with National, Cheshire Cup, League T20) etc. 34 players featured across 15 1st XI matches.
- Our Showcase game clashed with the host club (Nantwich) appearing at League T20 Final's Day and with other cup games
- Volunteer support – our committee is limited and overstretched, crying out, like all for an injection of resourceful youth
- Ever-increasing administrative burdens
- Costs: success breeds more travel and cost (although 'successful sides' will potentially be rewarded in future)

2025 will bring further challenges but helped by no major travel for Championship games.

We're indebted as ever to a small number of sponsors and other financial support and pleasingly, our accounts just about broke even for 2023.

Board support was again much appreciated as was the goodwill of our host clubs who, after so many early-season challenges, proved outstanding. Alderley Edge, Chester, Didsbury, Hyde, Nantwich, Northwich, Oxtan and Toft all hosted.

And of course, the continued efforts of our management committee were more than appreciated: Pete Babbage, John Petch, Julie Rafferty, Andy Newton and Stuart Anderson. David Bailey, David Sharp and Derrick Hastings remain stalwarts too.

In brief:

On the field

- Performance: 1st X
 - T20: knocked out in group stages on NRR
 - KO Trophy (50 overs): Lost final to Norfolk by six wickets
 - Western Division: Relegated in fifth place (drew two, lost two)
 - Showcase: Beat Derbyshire by four wickets
- Performance: 2nd XI
 - Won one, lost two, two cancelled
- Captain Harry Dearden proved a major asset (capped in 2024)
- Rob Lord (Bowdon and Cheshire) awarded a short-term contract with Nottinghamshire
- Charlie Barnard (Lancashire & England u19s) and Mike Finan (Northamptonshire) represented us
- White ball team excelled but little recognition in the NCCA Challengers' side to date
- National Counties T20 Final at Chester rained off in May (two days) and September
- Gavin Colebourn, David Wainwright and Andy Dufty combined to coach 1st XI
- Stewart McCleod and Gavin Colebourn coached/managed 2nd XI
- Five players made 1st XI debuts progressing via Cheshire age-group cricket / 2nd XI

Off the field

- Finances: broke-even for 2023
- 200 Club relaunched
- Ongoing work on database
- Management Committee excelled in difficult circumstances
- Improved match streaming
- Participation in NCCA CPA II discussions

Appendix 5

Cheshire Clubs Cricket Committee (David Humpage)

Well, the season started wet and finished on the same note with the final day all but totally washed out. Crucially Nantwich managed to stage a shortened game in late afternoon which they won and so snatched the Premiership title from Hyde whose game at Grappenhall although started was unable to be completed. Such is the influence of weather on our game. Elsewhere Brooklands and Lindow achieved promotion to the Premiership for 2025 at the

expense of Grappenhall and Toft. At the other end of the CCCL Runcorn were relegated to the Cheshire League. Congleton have decided to join the North Staffs League in 2025 so only one team will be relegated from the CCCL and two promoted. At the time of writing this looks likely to be Warrington and Middlewich, but we await outcome of the final day's fixtures.

It seems that the win/lose format has been a success, but we are looking at a number of tweaks to address some minor problems that have arisen. No major changes are anticipated for 2025.

Elsewhere in the Liverpool Competition Wallasey are currently 5th, whilst Birkenhead Park and New Brighton are in the lower part of the table, the latter looking at inevitable relegation.

In the North Staffs League Alsager are the leading Cheshire based club currently being 3rd. in Premier B.

The Cheshire Cup Final will be replayed on 21st. between Hyde and Didsbury after the first attempt to stage the game was spoilt by the weather. The Cheshire Shield was won by Parkfield Liscard in a close game against Maritime CC. Many thanks to David Gane for his organization of both the County Cup competitions as well as all those in the CCCL as well.

As previously reported, I am in touch with some clubs that have shown interest in looking at the possibility of joining the County Pyramid from outside. These matters are slow burners, but the interest is certainly there in places. We shall see if anything develops.

I will leave Di and Jo to report in detail on the Women's League season, but that side of the game continues to grow. We have arranged a joint meeting with the Executives of the men's league and women's leagues to discuss the structure going forward. Questions such as regionalization and the position of clubs from outside the county will be on the agenda.

Facilities is still high on the agenda. We are currently looking at the possibility of expanding the use of artificial surfaces for junior and lower standard cricket, particularly in the urban areas where pressure on grounds is the most intense. There are such surfaces in local schools for example which are used spasmodically but their availability and suitability for the wider market needs to be explored.

The search for new umpires goes on unabated, and there were quite a few new faces in the umpiring lists for the season. Ian Greensmith has done a great job in allocating the pool across the two leagues in the structure. Just as some new faces join the pool others leave for various reasons. A real problem for all leagues going forward.

As previously reported 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.

Our next formal meeting is scheduled for mid-November. Much to discuss.

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

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