

**CHESHIRE CRICKET BOARD LIMITED**  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT CHESHIRE FA OFFICES, MOSS FARM**  
**ON FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2025 – 10am**

- 1. Attendance:** Di Totty (Vice Chair, Chaired meeting), Scott Elliott (Management Group Chair), Richard Newton (Director of Cricket), Mike Guest (Treasurer), David Sharp (Secretary, by video link), David Humpage (Clubs), 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:** Nigel Muirhead (Chair), Jim Law (County Club).
- 2. Minutes of the meeting 29 November 2024.** Agreed and then signed by the chair as a true record.
- 3. Matters arising from the meeting 29 November 2024**
  - 3.1 Public policy support (item 12.1 of 29 November 2024 minutes refers).** No progress had been possible. It was agreed to support the ECB's wish that Boards engage with local politicians to demonstrate the positive changes taking place across the network and encourage support for the future of cricket. It was agreed that this matter would remain subject to continuing review by the Board.
  - 3.2 Financial support for other bodies (item 4.4 of 29 November 2024 meeting refers).** Accounting support for the county disability and women teams had been reviewed by the Management Group and will be accounted for under the Board annual accounts, under a separate heading.
  - 3.3 Representation of the women's and disability county teams on the Board (item 8.2 of 29 November 2024 meeting refers).** Representation of the women and disability teams on the Board remained under review and discussion. The Board's Governance Group had reviewed this issue, and a number of governance and constitutional issues remained subject to active consideration. Additionally, a report had been prepared by Jess Lewis for the Women's team.  
**The Board agreed that it was right in principle that representation of the women's and disability county teams should sit within the Cheshire County Cricket Club.** It was noted that changes to the Club's constitution would be required to include all Cheshire County representative teams, and that representation on the County Club management committee and insurance provision (Club or Board) required further consideration. Relevant issues remained under active consideration and would be reviewed further by the County Club Committee at its next meeting scheduled for the end of February.
- 4. Management Group.** Minutes of the MG meetings held on 30 January 2025 were circulated to the Directors and Member representatives prior to the Board meeting. This item includes contributions from each member of the Management Group (Scott, Mike, Richard and David S).
  - 4.1 ECB CPA.** CPA 2.0 formally commences in February 2025 until January 2029. Completion of the associated Countywide Plan is expected by April 2025, and this document would be formally presented at Emirates Old Trafford in June 2025. This represented a key document, and professional input would be obtained to enhance presentation.
  - 4.2 ECB/Chance to Shine/self-generated income.** Chance to Shine funding remained comparable to last year. The County women's team had been allocated £30k by the ECB. This was not believed sufficient as budgeting costings had identified a requirement of £42k. EDI funding was available from various pots. £30K had been allocated under the Early Engagement Programme for 10 to 12-year-olds and to assist participation in pathway cricket. Further initiatives were being progressed to mitigate associated financial costs and support inclusivity, including kit and clothing recycling. £1.5k had also been allocated for EDI Staff training and links had been established with Lancashire to share costs. EDI funding for 2024 included an allocation of £27k. A plan for 2025 would be submitted by the end of the month with an associated bidding process. It was intended to bid for double this amount and a storyteller would be engaged to support the bidding process. It was noted that support to clubs needed to be reflected in funding and resourcing decisions. The focus for EDI funding continued to be aimed at ingraining and embedding EDI across all business. A bid for funding for the disability EPP was also being actioned with the aim of including disability players in the EPP set-up.
  - 4.3 Board staff.** The Board employs 28 full and part-time staff.
    - 4.3.1 Julie Rafferty County Safeguarding Officer.** The hours devoted to the County Safeguarding Officer role are to be increased with effect from a date in 2025 to be agreed.
    - 4.3.2 Croner HR.** Our on-going arrangement with Croner as our HR consultant continues to be excellent with regular guidance and advice on HR issues provided, including a recent disciplinary matter.
    - 4.3.3 Legal provision.** Provision of Legal Support remained under review, including an option of a potential appointment of a member to the Board with legal background or engagement of a legal service similar to the Croner HR model.
    - 4.3.4 Staff time sheets.** Richard advised that the time sheets for staff provided helpful management information including breakdowns of time spent on admin. The timesheets had also positively impacted on progression of a recent disciplinary case, ensuring that the response was evidence based and supported by management information.
  - 4.4 Finance.** Mike confirmed that the balance of the NatWest (RBS) bank account remained satisfactory to maintain operations at the current level. The Accounts for 2023/2024 were formally adopted at the AGM on 7

February 2025. Forecasts detailed in the Management Group Meeting minutes were developing and based on core funding assumptions. These forecasts would be firmed up when the outcome of bids was known. With regard to financial support for Women's and Girls cricket, a model similar to CYC funding provision was being considered with funds actioned via the Board account. Forecasts relating to income and expenditure projected a balance and move toward a surplus.

**4.5 Overview.** Scott noted that the move toward budgetary surplus reflected the proactive management and leadership of Richard, Mike and David across core Board business areas. Scott added the business looked to secure funding and operated effectively, offering excellent programmes and coaching offers. The Board's appreciation for this proactive work and leadership was formally noted. The Board reviewed the key connection between Chance to Shine funding and continuing work in schools and the importance of the connection to local clubs and signposting. It was clear that National Programmes and Chance to Shine initiatives were positive, however some further ECB input in respect of maintaining participation and ensuring pipelines to clubs may be worthwhile. Some key challenges were noted, including access to indoor facilities, integration of different abilities or different levels of cricket experience and recruitment and retention of volunteers, including coaches.

**5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).** Neeruj confirmed that it remained the key objective and aim to ensure that EDI was embedded across all Board activities. Work continued to drive this forward and build on progress made, ensuring that EDI remains a constant across all the Board's activities.

**5.1 ECB EDI lead day.** A member of staff attended the ECB leads training day on 4 February 2025 at Edgbaston.

**5.2 EDI working group.** The EDI working group (Neeruj, Julie, Richard, Gareth, Chris Edwards, Reehan Rather, and Marianne Lea) continues to bear in mind the overriding need of welcoming everyone to the game and removing any barriers for them to develop. The group had met two weeks ago. Issues discussed included strategic and core funding requirements and provision. Following a recommendation of the working group the Board reaffirmed its adoption of the ECB Core Values.

**5.3 EDI training.** Staff had attended EDI training on 23 December regarding EDI plans and the 4 Core Values. Additionally, Chris Edwards had delivered a presentation to the disability squad regarding core values.

**6. Safeguarding.** Nick referred members to the Safeguarding report completed by Julie Rafferty and circulated to Board members prior to the meeting (see **Appendix 1**).

**6.1 CPA 2.** Nick updated that CPA2 is progressing with a self-assessment due for completion by 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025. A meeting with the County Safeguarding Advisor was planned being scheduled to review CPA2 requirements and detailed Aspirational Guidance, which had been circulated previously by the Cricket Regulator. This guidance provide detail against each of the CPA2 requirements and a move from Compliance to Culture, and evidential requirements were subject to continuing review.

**6.2 Safeguarding external reviews.** Nick highlighted a recent Report which had been circulated by the Cricket Regulator further to an independent review commissioned in respect of significant safeguarding cases from cricket. The Report set out the recommendations of the independent review and responses from the Cricket Regulator. This document had been circulated to Board members given the content, which was considered significant and impactful. Nick updated the Board that he had contacted the County Safeguarding Advisor regarding one recommendation stating that the County Safeguarding Officer should be a full-time role, querying whether any consideration had been given to funding support or ring-fenced funding similar to that made available for other key initiatives including EDI. A response has been received from the Cricket Regulator indicating that ring-fenced funding was not under consideration at this stage, and that the uplift in core funding combined with work to influence and stress the importance of safeguarding had been implemented. The planned increase in the working hours of the Cheshire CSO was also identified as an excellent response, setting a foundation for leading organisation status.

**6.3 Low levels concern policy (LLC).** A draft LLC policy prepared by Julie Rafferty had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Nick outlined the importance of this document given the significance of LLCs in terms of proactive safeguarding. The draft policy set out some key information and guidance regarding the nature, reporting and response to LLCs. **At Nick's request, the Board approved and adopted the LLC policy.**

**6.4 Safeguarding support and steering Group.** Nick highlighted a number of core requirements over the coming months, including CPA2 progression, reactive and proactive safeguarding responsibilities. In view of these developments and suggestions from the Cricket Regulator, it was felt that there would be value in forming a Safeguarding Support/Steering Group to support the County Safeguarding Officer and contribute to strengthening safeguarding provision for the Board. **At Nick's request, the Board approved the formation of a Safeguarding Support and Steering Group and action would be taken forward to review terms of reference and membership.**

**6.5 Additional points.** Nick advised that DBS update requirements had recently been clarified, and that updated guidance had been added to the CCB website regarding the actions required. The transition to Safeguarding 2 Online training was also progressing and likely to go live at the end of February. Further guidance would be shared as required moving forward. Nick and Julie were attending the annual Cricket Regulator Conference in early March. Nick also mentioned the updated guidance regarding Juniors Playing in Open Age Cricket. It was noted that this point would be discussed further later in the meeting, however it was noted that there were clearly safeguarding considerations associated to this change.

**7. Governance/Risk.** David and Helen updated Board members in respect of a Governance Group circulation which had been shared prior to the meeting.

**7.1 CPA Gold items.** The Governance Group (David, Helen, Richard, Nick) continued to work with Gareth Moorhouse measuring performance against CPA items identified as “Gold” requirements. This included progression of the introduction of a Skills Matrix (Rule 10.6) using Survey Monkey for completion by Directors. Additionally, Gareth and Nick were progressing consideration of the extent and content of Stakeholder Agreements (Rule 3.1.6). Gareth had requested and received additional information and guidance from the ECB regarding the criteria and evidence requirements which will be applied in respect of these items. This included the conduct of regular staff, member and volunteer surveys, communication of results and acting on learnings. The information confirmed by the ECB would inform this continuing work moving forward.

**7.2 ECB Articles.** On behalf of the Board, Helen was conducting a review of Articles which had been circulated by the ECB as part of an approval process linked to the continuing sale process for the Hundred teams. This included adoption of a revised set of ECB Articles of Association and a “Beneficial Owners Letter”. In conjunction with continuing ECB updates and briefings, Helen advised that a review was being conducted, including assessment of potential changes to shareholder requirements and liability.

**7.3 General Items.** The Governance Group had additionally progressed consideration of how the Women’s County team and Disability County teams should be represented on the Board. Additionally, the Group had further considered the requirement and search for an additional iNED with a legal background, preferably in employment law. Helen was progressing actions to identify potential candidates for this role.

**8. CWCL and Women & Girls.** Joanna referred members to the CWCL and Women & Girls Reports circulated prior to the meeting (**see Appendix 2**).

**8.1 Annual Rules meeting.** Joanna advised that preparations for the season ahead had continued, including the annual rules meeting which established more firmly which clubs and teams will enter the league in 2025 and addressing ongoing and emerging issues as an executive committee. In addition to rule changes and addressing league structure and related issues, this had also included review of the league’s ambitions set in 2020, with discussions beginning on ambitions for the next 3-to-5-year period. It was considered that the position anticipated in 2020 had been exceeded, with the growth of the league a significant success story.

**8.2 CWCL update.** The bottom division pipeline in particular continues to grow, with expressions of interest from new clubs and clubs progressing from the softball division. The League now features a healthy regionalised 4<sup>th</sup> division in the league, with seven teams in each of the three regions and a mix of club teams represented. Similarly, the top of the division remains in a strong position with a competitive mix of teams. A number of clubs had entered the Thunder Cup which starts for the first time in 2025 and the impact of this competition and how it fitted with the league would be reviewed. Travel distances, teams folding and second team eligibility represented key challenges for the CWCL, primarily in the middle divisions. This included the impact of out of county teams joining the CWCL and continuing work in respect of the Constitution would focus on this point and associated practicalities. Joanna reported that Hawarden Park and Appleton have withdrawn from the CWCL, and review has indicated the circumstances were specific to the individual clubs. This matter, however, remained under review in conjunction with the CCB W&G team to provide support where possible. This point prompted a discussion regarding player profiles, parent engagement and volunteer strategies. A key balance was necessary to identify and reflect differing playing requirements and support participation in a sustainable way. Additionally, Buxton had reduced their teams from 3 to 2 and Staffordshire-based clubs were also focusing on newly available playing opportunities in their county. Key points for the Board were identified as supporting growth and facility availability.

**8.3 Women and Girls update.** A report from Jess Lewis had been circulated prior to the meeting (attached with Joanna’s Report at Appendix 2). This provided key updates regarding League Cricket and the accommodation of growth in 2025/2026, work in secondary schools, the CAG including the relaunch of the Cheshire Women’s team and Metro Bank programme in 2025 with 12 Cheshire Clubs selected to be part of the Ignite and Enhance Pillars. The Metro Bank programme would also enable networking events for volunteers to be hosted and the provision of bespoke coach development opportunities.

**8.4 CCC Women’s team.** Arrangements and planning for the season were progressing. The team would represent Cheshire in the Tier 3 competition and training for the season in place at the Grange. Actions were continuing in respect of player eligibility, fixture planning and player recruitment, including senior players and u18s. It was noted that Club support for players would be a key factor in respect of selection and availability.

**9. Cheshire County Cricket Club.** Jim had sent his apologies for the meeting. Nick referred members to Jim’s updates in the County Club report circulated prior to the meeting (**see Appendix 3**). Nick indicated that planning for the season was progressing and had progressed into the “prep cycle” with squads being organised and nets due to get underway shortly in the coming weeks.

**9.1 Second eleven.** Nick outlined plans for the second eleven for the upcoming season, which included a new management team, with Andy Dufty and Nick working with Gavin Colebourn, who is also supporting the first team squad. The new team aimed to build on the longstanding success of Stewart Macleod in the role, harnessing their collective management and coaching experience to support the team and reflect its key developmental role in the Cheshire County Club set-up and as part of the wider player pathway.

Arrangements for the season were being actively progressed with squad selection, indoor training and a programme of fixtures being organised as key priorities.

**9.2 Match ball sponsorship. The Board agreed that a contribution of £1,500 would again be made available to the County Club for match balls.**

**10. Cheshire Clubs Cricket Committee (4Cs).** David H referred members to his Clubs Committee report circulated prior to the meeting (see **Appendix 4**). David H referred to the following points:

**10.1 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary match** – David H confirmed that a league XI would play a fixture against the MCC at Toft on 19<sup>th</sup> June as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the CCCL. This will be an all-day game commencing at 11.30am. David H also referenced a book written and prepared by Geoff Wellsted detailing the League's history. This book will be available in March/April 2025 and includes a number of photographs and highlights from the league's history.

**10.2 League AGM.** The league AGM had been held the preceding week. A new volunteer for play-cricket administration had been identified. Additional volunteers needed to be identified to fill other roles. The League would adopt the same playing format as the 2024 season. There would be changes to rules on wides.

**11. Cheshire Youth Cricket (CYC).** Paul referred members to the CYC report circulated prior to the meeting (see **Appendix 5**). The following items were reviewed:

**11.1 Juniors playing in open age cricket.** The ECB has published a new consent form for junior cricketers playing in open age cricket, also setting out the updated policy which had also been circulated in advance of the meeting and mentioned by Nick earlier in the meeting in respect of safeguarding (see 6.5 above). The ECB policy is that players should be allowed with consent to play open age cricket at the age of 12 (or 11 in the exceptional circumstances listed in the guidance. This guidance was discussed at length by the Board, and a range of issues including safeguarding concerns, risk management, the burden of implementing and administering the changes, inclusion and disparity policy were raised. It was noted that the ECB policy was intended as guidance and not a requirement. David H advised that the CCCL had no intention of changing the existing approach to this issue.

**This decision was fully supported by the Board and it was agreed that all cricket played under the auspices of the Board would therefore continue to apply the existing approach to Juniors Playing in open age cricket and that the ECB guidance would not therefore be adopted.**

**11.2 ECB early engagement strategy.** From next year CAG cricket will commence at under 13s level under the ECBs early engagement strategy. Discussions were continuing regarding the details of the strategy, but indications suggested that counties should select CAG squads in September/October each year with a view to providing training for these squads over the winter. This created significant concern over the impact on the CYC pathway which had operated successfully for many years. Further liaison is being continued with the ECB on this point.

**11.3 New kit provider.** Jess Lewis is exploring options for a new kit supplier. Initial discussions have been progressed with suppliers. Jess is also exploring a "trial" deal for the new County women's team and will liaise with the men's County Club as part of this process.

**11.4 "Hub club" project.** Dave Atkinson is liaising with a number of clubs with a view to entering into service level agreements to host a minimum of ten games per year of either CAG or district matches. CYC also remains keen to offer smaller clubs the opportunity to host games over the season.

**11.5 CYC ambassadors.** Rob Jones and Liv Bell had agreed to take on roles as CYC Ambassadors. Work is continuing to fully define the roles and develop a strategy to use this initiative to promote CYC.

**12. AOB.** None

**13. 2025 meetings.** 23 May time tba, 12 September time tba, 28 November time tba. All Fridays at Hartford House, Moss Farm times tba.

Signed .....

Appendices follow below

## Appendix 1. Safeguarding Report (Julie Rafferty)

### 1. Safeguarding CPA update

The CPA is moving to CPA 2 and self-assessment for 2024 is due for completion by 3 March 2025. The current updated situation is:

CPA Review					
No	Standard	Actions, progress, comments	Tracking		
			Red	Yellow	Green
4.1	Safe Hands Policy	Evidence produced shows the acceptance by the board and acknowledgement by all CCB staff			
4.2	Safeguarding policy and procedure	All new/updated policies and policy statements are on the CCB website and signed Codes of Conduct by the board and by CCB staff			
4.3	County Safeguarding Officer (CoSO)	The CCB has a CoSO currently working 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. Evidence of board reports for the last 12 months provided			
4.4	Board Safeguarding Lead	NB is in place and ensures that safeguarding matters are prioritised in meetings. NB is up to date with all training and CPD. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item for all board 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. A training matrix is maintained for all aspects of the CCB			
4.6	Safer recruitment	The CCB have trained staff in safely recruiting paid and volunteer staff and have a structured process of recruitment. The DBS and SHMS are used effectively to track non-compliance in clubs. This is a transitional period for clubs as club officials change before the start of the season.			
4.7	Listening to children	Player Ambassadors have been identified from boys and girls CAG, who have a clear role description who are helping to draft a CCB Youth Engagement Plan. Initiatives in place allowing children to report concerns and developing ways to show how their views are being listened to			
4.8	Safeguarding reporting*	Low Level Concerns (LLC) and Referrals are recorded by the County Safeguarding Officer. All LLC are now on the ECB system but require reviewing and finalising. 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, although a review is underway with managers to ensure all necessary safeguarding measures are in place. 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 players and parents/ carers. "Safeguarding in the Talent Pathway" training has been delivered, with a mop up session planned. A plan is being developed to ensure that safeguarding is imbedded effectively			

4.11	Safeguarding Adults	Several staff have attended 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.	
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In CPA 2, the number of safeguarding standards has been reduced, with the 7 existing standards being:

- Policy, Procedure and Risk Management
- Safe and Inclusive cultures
- Safeguarding staffing structure and oversight
- Safeguarding Compliance and training
- Listening
- Reporting
- Talent Pathway

The standards have been accompanied by aspirational guidance, assisting the CCB to focus on activity which will continue to elevate the CCB as a leading board in safeguarding. There is an expectation that each County Board will have a linked action plan for the next 3 years.

The standards and guidance will be discussed in the impending meeting with the Cricket Regulator County Safeguarding Advisor, Fiona Holden, which will be outlined in the next board report.

***In view of these developments and suggestions from the ECB and Cricket Regulator, can the board consider the value of having a 'Safeguarding Support/ Steering Group', which would help to support the County Safeguarding Officer and strengthen the safeguarding provision for the Cheshire Cricket Board.***

## 2. Safeguarding training

### **New suite of safeguarding eLearning (Level 1 & 2)**

The new suite of safeguarding courses (mentioned in the November 2024 board report):

- *Safeguarding Level 1* – SGL1 (previously ECB Safeguarding Induction)
- *Safeguarding Level 2* – SGL2 (previously SSR + relevant bolt on)

has been delayed and will now be made available at the end of February 2025. Clubs are being updated as they are keen for club officials to complete the training, as it will support safer recruitment of volunteers and paid staff across the Cheshire Cricket area and ultimately impact compliance on the Safe Hands Management System (SHMS).

### **Safe Hands Courses & Safeguarding in the Talent Pathway (Level 3)**

The delivery of Safe Hands courses for Club Safeguarding Officers (CSO) starts at the end of February 2025, with 6 courses being delivered in 5 locations:

1. Thursday 27 February 2025 @ Nantwich CC 6.30-9.30pm
2. Monday 17 March 2025 @ Cheshire FA/ CCB office 6.30-9.30pm
3. Tuesday 22 April 2025 @ Cheshire FA/ CCB officer 6.30-9.30pm
4. Thursday 24 April 2025 @ North East Cheshire CC (Poynton) 6.30-9.30pm
5. New Brighton CC – date is due to be confirmed
6. Marple CC - date is due to be confirmed

An additional 'Safeguarding in the Talent Pathway' course is being delivered for staff and volunteers involved in the county pathway who were unable to attend the training in September 2024.

## 3. Policy development

- The draft 'Low Level Concern' policy has been circulated and requires discussion by board members, with a view to agreeing the content and then publication.
- The existing 'Safeguarding Policy Statement' and 'Safeguarding Adults Policy' are due for review in February 2025. The contents of both policy documents have been assessed, and the contents of Safeguarding Adults policy will remain the same, but the Safeguarding Policy Statement will require some very minor amendments. These will be circulated to all board members for comment and final agreement.

## 4. Procedural changes

### **DBS – annual renewal and update service**

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has modified its user agreement and initiated a change in the process for volunteers seeking to renew or update their DBS certification. This is affecting all volunteers across the country, not only those in cricket.

As a result of this change, to renew their certification, all volunteers **must** respond to the correspondence received from the ECB as well as log into their Disclosure Service account and renew on an annual basis.

If a volunteer does not follow the steps outlined, then their account will lapse, resulting in a failed check by the ECB and a new full DBS application will need to be completed! Recognising the potential impact this may have, the CCB have attempted to summarise the new process in ~~the explanation attached:~~

Changes-to-the-DBS-Update-Service-CCB-explanation-Jan-2025.pdf

**Impact:**

- Confusion in clubs,
- Reduced compliance on the SHMS,
- Increase in new DBS checks being completed,
- People in regulated activity do not have a DBS check in place for the start of the forthcoming season

**Juniors in Open Age cricket**

Junior cricketers playing in Open Age cricket has always been a contentious issue and a continuing theme every season. The regulations around when a junior cricketer can play in Open Age Cricket have been slightly amended and are now:

- 1 Subject to the exceptional circumstances, Junior Cricketers are not eligible to play Open Age Cricket until they are 12 years old and with written parental consent. *The ECB have removed Year 8 in the guidance, so 12-year-old cricketers in Year 7 are now eligible to play Open Age cricket*
- 2 In exceptional circumstances only, a player who:
  - 3 is 11 years old.
  - 4 has started school year 7.
  - 5 is selected for a squad in either County Age Group Cricket, Wales Age Group Cricket squad, or a Sub-County Programme.
  - 6 has written approval from their County Talent Pathway Lead; and
  - 7 has written parental consent,

is also eligible to play in Open Age Cricket. A consent form now must be completed to include all the relevant parties.

**Impact:**

- Removes any confusion of age and who can play in Open Age cricket
- The main Cheshire Cricket leagues will have to consider the leagues rules, as they currently outline that a junior player would be eligible to play in league cricket if they are in Year 8 and that no junior cricket in Year 7 is permitted to play league cricket.
- Increase issues relating to juniors playing in open age cricket
- Potential for junior cricketers to be unsafe if involvement not carefully considered
- Senior cricketers' experience impacted with more junior players playing in the senior game
- Consent form not being completed appropriately
- CCB to increase awareness of the changes to clubs

**5. Supporting County teams**

The County Safeguarding Officer is currently supporting the County Men's team to ensure safeguarding compliance is in place for the start of season and this will be replicated with the County Women's team, following their relaunch on Wednesday 15 January 2025.

The County Safeguarding Officer attended the Cheshire County Disability Induction sessions on Sunday 2 February 2025, delivered safeguarding awareness to the teams and parents/ carers and co-facilitated values sessions with all the teams.

Safeguarding awareness sessions will also be delivered to the CAG boys' and girls' groups once selection has been made.

**6. External review information – key information**

The ECB Cricket Regulator has circulated a review document of 2 cases relating to historic sexual offences involving women and girls. The cases outline offences of voyeurism and sexual assault in club and county pathway settings.

Several recommendations have been made by the authors under the following headings:

- Reporting
- Coaching
- Facilities
- Education

The ECB Regulator has given a response with a commitment to influence change and improve processes within safeguarding.

The main aim of the ECB Cricket Regulator, through their new safeguarding strategy for 2025-2028 is to move the game from a position of "Safeguarding compliance to safeguarding culture"

The full report can be accessed via ~~the attached link~~: [External Safeguarding Review January 2025.pdf](#)

**7. Key pieces of work for 2025****Youth Engagement Plan**

The Player Ambassadors are part of a small team starting to develop the CCB Youth Engagement Plan, with a view to getting something in place for the start of Season 2025. This is a key piece of work to show that the CCB are committed to listening to children in cricket and how their opinion can help influence positive change.

**Safeguarding/ Safer Culture Development Plan**

The Cricket Regulator have highlighted the importance of having an action plan to harness a safer culture in the organisation, which is outlined in the 2nd standard "Safe & Inclusive Cultures" of CPA 2. By developing a Safeguarding/ Safer Culture plan will help to imbed effective safeguarding procedures which influence and impact everyday practice.

#### **8. Safeguarding themes:**

- Cheshire cricket official who was a victim of stalking and harassment – the defendant, another cricket official from another county, received a suspended sentence, 100hrs unpaid work, restraining order and probation supervision
- Cricket coach convicted of stalking and harassment – recalled to prison for breach of license conditions
- Club captain and coach – subject to an independent safeguarding panel – given several sanctions, including being prevented from a holding position of regulated activity until the end of the 2025 season, which would then be subject to review.
- A Player has been subject to an independent safeguarding panel review and their suspension from cricket remains in place

### **Appendix 2 Women and Girls**

#### **CWCL update – Joanna Seddon**

Since the last update to the board at the end of November, further progress has been made on preparations for the season ahead, including the annual rules meeting, establishing more firmly which clubs and teams will enter the league in 2025 and addressing some of the on-going and emerging issues as an executive committee. In addition to rules changes, and addressing the league structure and issues, we have also been reviewing our ambitions as a league set back in 2020, and begun discussions on what those ambitions might look like for the coming 3-5 year period. Overall, we have exceeded the position we anticipated in 2020, with the growth of the league particularly at the bottom division being a huge success story.

Our bottom division pipeline continues to grow, with new clubs entering as well as clubs progressing from the softball division of the league up into the beginning of their CWCL hardball journey. We now have a very healthy regionalised 4<sup>th</sup> division in the league, with 7 teams in each of 3 regions and a real mix of club 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> teams represented across this division. Similarly, the top end of CWCL is in a very strong position with a highly competitive mix of teams. Leyland move up to this division for 2025 following promotion. The main challenges for CWCL sit in the middle divisions. Travel distances, teams folding and second team "eligibility" criteria all play a part in this.

Travel distances are mainly a challenge connected to teams from out of county joining the CWCL, as discussed in previous meetings. As part of updating and refreshing the CWCL constitution we are tightening language on non-Cheshire teams joining, and will continue to challenge and debate practicalities of accepting new teams from Derbyshire, Lancashire and Staffordshire. One Staffordshire team (JG Meakins, formerly Porthill Park) has just withdrawn from CWCL, largely due to Staffordshire commitments impacting their squad availability. Whilst this doesn't solve all the travel challenges across the middle divisions, it does ease the load for some of the remaining Cheshire teams in the short term.

Very sadly we have had a couple of clubs withdraw teams from the CWCL over recent months too. Hawarden Park have "re-set" following a significant departure of players to a nearby club (we expect them to re-build and enter in future years), and Buxton reduced their teams in the CWCL from 3 to 2. Appleton have withdrawn both their 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> teams from the CWCL after a long and previously successful history in the league, and will not be sustaining a women's team going forward. Circumstances behind each of these are very specific to those clubs, and there does not seem to be a wider issue with clubs struggling to thrive with women's cricket. However, of course this is something to keep a close watch on and work with the CCB W&G team in parallel to understand and support where we can.

As part of the recent rules meeting, and as the league continues to grow with clubs fielding multiple teams, there was a clear vote for change to establish rules around 2<sup>nd</sup> XI (and 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> XI) eligibility criteria. We are working through proposals at the moment and expect to have a resolution in the next couple of weeks to implement before the 2025 season. This has been a source of contention over previous seasons, and it is hoped the implementation of clear rules will help reduce the number of complaints and challenges previously only supported with a "Spirit of Cricket" guidance. Related to this, we have increased the volunteer group supporting the league successfully, with additional safeguarding volunteers and divisional representatives from a wider range of clubs to support the existing CWCL exec.

Looking more widely to the NW, a number of clubs have entered the Thunder Cup competition which starts for the first time this season. Final details are yet to be confirmed – clubs progressing through the first application round



have been invited to present their W&G plans and strategy to a panel at Old Trafford over the next couple of weeks before the successful teams are confirmed. No doubt they will do Cheshire and the CWCL proud.

## **Women and Girls update – Jessica Lewis**

### **League Cricket**

For 2025, 84 teams have shown interest in joining the CGCL, which is an increase of 11 teams compared to last year's EOI. Last summer, 56 teams participated in the CGCL, and we anticipate this number to rise by 10 teams this summer. Additionally, we will expand our girls' soft ball and hard ball festival offer to provide more playing opportunities

In 2023 and 2024, Division 5 (soft ball league) had 27 teams. The EOI indicates that 48 teams wish to compete in this division in 2025, marking a 21 team increase in just one year. To accommodate this growth, we will need to restructure and discuss new divisions for 2025 and 2026 with wider league representatives.

### **Schools**

This summer, we are working with 18 secondary schools across Cheshire and have planned 18 secondary school competitions to help transition girls from playing during PE lessons to actual matches.

### **CAG**

The Excellence courses have commenced, with all age groups looking strong and healthy numbers for district cricket. All fixtures have been organised, and we are exploring options to further develop the district cricket offer. Plans are in full swing for the relaunch of the Cheshire Women's team, and hopefully, more information will be shared about this in the meeting.

### **Metro Bank**

The Metro Bank programme will run in Cheshire in 2025, with 12 Cheshire Clubs selected to be part of the Ignite and Enhance Pillars. This programme will also allow us to host networking events for volunteers and provide bespoke coach development opportunities.

## **Appendix 3 Cheshire County Cricket Club (Jim Law)**

### **At a glance**

- 1<sup>st</sup> XI fixtures and venues finalised, 2<sup>nd</sup> XI to follow.
- ECB Showcase game v Yorkshire unlikely to go ahead.
- 1<sup>st</sup> XI (white ball): Sam Perry (captain), Harry Dearden (vice-captain), Gavin Colebourn (coach)
- 1<sup>st</sup> XI (red ball): David Wainwright (captain/coach), Henry Dobson (vice-captain) Gavin Colebourn (coach)
- 'Senior scouts' in place across Cheshire County League
- 2<sup>nd</sup> XI new management team: Nick Brooks, Andy Dufty, Gavin Colebourn
- 1<sup>st</sup> XI 50 overs now from April, T20 reverts to mid-summer, Championship from July
- Squads in preparation and the registration process underway
- Pre-season nets from February
- Discussions underway for County Club to represent Women/Disability XIs on Board
- Enhanced 'two camera' streaming for 2025.
- ECB performance based financial incentivisation for 2025.

### **Commentary**

Ongoing work throughout the Winter puts us in a decent place ahead of the 2025 season.

1<sup>st</sup> XI fixtures have been finalised with long haul trips to Wiltshire, Cumbria and Hertfordshire but by and large, less miles (at present!) than 2024.

We are now into the 'prep cycle' with squads being organized and nets due to get underway in a couple of weeks.

The 1<sup>st</sup> XI season sees a tweak with the 50 over competition kicking things off in April and the T20 tournament sensibly reverting to mid-summer, followed by the Championship from the end of July.

The now traditional 'ECB Showcase' game – we have been paired with Yorkshire – seems unlikely to go ahead. We and many other counties are scrambling to play a first-class county, but it appears the NCCA have fallen short in securing set dates amidst a more crowded than ever first-class diary.

An updated (rolling) five-year development plan is to be drafted.

### Streaming

The NCCA have requested an enhanced streaming service focusing on highlights and including a camera at each end of the ground.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> XI**

Exciting plans for 2025.

With Stewart Macleod stepping down as coach, the Board's very own Nick Brooks and Andy Dufty will lead our 2<sup>nd</sup> XI development, working with Gavin Colebourn who is also supporting the 1s.

We've great coaching and managing experience across this triumvirate and importantly, even closer links with our age group sides, enhancing the playing pathway.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> XI is likely to play an increasingly important role in developing 'multi-day' cricketers – our age group players playing more red ball cricket.

The group have quickly set about their business and fixtures will be available shortly.

### **Seniors**

The Over 50's have had their financial benefit ended by ECB. They will once again have two sides playing. We're awaiting fixtures and venues.

Tim Wearden has taken over the captaincy of the Over 60s.

### **Finance**

Financial incentivisation is on the cards for 2025. The ECB is funding a performance payment bonus for all counties along the lines of the Women's Ashes points system.

As ever, we are looking to fund raise wherever possible and have several commercial opportunities (see website). The 'new' 200 Club will be heavily promoted across the year.

## **Appendix 4 - Cheshire Clubs Cricket Committee (David Humpage)**

Not a great deal has occurred since the last Board Meeting, so this report will be somewhat shorter than usual!

The CCCL held its AGM last Monday with no major changes to report. We intend to hold three regional forums pre-season to impress on clubs the importance of timely and accurate reporting, amongst other subjects.

We are now in the process of closing down our current web site and moving all the data from it to the Play Cricket site. We feel this will make the information more easily accessible to players and officials.

I referred in my December report to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the CCCL in 2025. There will be a game against the MCC on 19<sup>th</sup>.June at Toft CC. This will be an all-day game commencing at 11.30 a.m. with a buffet luncheon. The book on the history of the league from its inception written by Geoff Wellsteed to mark the occasion will be available mid-April and will be sold by the CCCL at cost which is £5 per copy. The book is superb, and we anticipate high demand.

The Cheshire League held their AGM last Wednesday, and at the time of writing I have no information as to any changes for the coming season. The plans for the extension of regionalisation in the lower reaches of the league are still being discussed. The trade off between strength of fixtures and distance of travel is never an easy one to resolve.

I will leave Di and Jo to report in detail on the Women's League season, but suffice to say that side of the game continues to grow with several new clubs joining the hardball section in 2025.

No further news from the Cheshire ACO who are still digesting the implications of the merger of the umpiring associations. I understand that they are considering the use of "Who's the Umpire" to collate umpires marks but details have yet to emerge.

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

## **Appendix 5 - Cheshire Youth Cricket (Paul Brown)**

### **Juniors playing in open age cricket**

The ECB has published a new consent form for junior cricketers playing in open age cricket, also setting out the current policy (copy attached with this report). The policy from the ECB is that players should be allowed with consent to play open age cricket at the age of 12 (or 11 in the exceptional circumstances listed in the guidance).

The thought within CYC is that it would be appropriate to adopt the policy as set out (subject of course to the views of the leagues) but that there should be a clear message to all clubs which emphasises the safeguarding aspects of younger players playing in adult cricket. The consent form should ideally be adopted as presented to ensure that parental consent is appropriately given.

### **ECB early engagement strategy**

From next year CAG cricket will commence at under 13s level across the board under the ECB's early engagement strategy. Discussions are still ongoing on the detail of the strategy, but the suggestion continues to be that counties should select their CAG squads in September/October each year with a view to providing training for those squads over the winter. This clearly creates significant concern over the impact on the CYC pathway which has operated successfully for many years. Gavin continues to liaise with the ECB on this.

### **CYC ambassadors**

We are delighted that both Rob Jones and Liv Bell have agreed to take on roles as CYC ambassadors. Gavin & Tim are working with the two in order to fully define their roles and also to develop a strategy to use this to promote CYC as a whole.

Separately it is pleasing to see Archie Vaughan captaining the England under-19 side on their tour to South Africa with Joe Moores keeping wicket in the same side.

### **New kit provider**

Jess is exploring options for a new kit supplier for CYC, looking for a four-year contract starting January 2026. Initial discussions have been had with various suppliers with a view to inviting three to present with samples. Jess is also exploring a "trial" deal for the new women's senior side and will be liaising with the men's county club as part of the process.

### **"Hub club" project**

Dave Atkinson is liaising with a number of clubs with a view to entering into service level agreements with them to host a minimum of 10 games per year of either CAG or district matches. We are still keen to offer smaller clubs the opportunity to host games over the season, but the hub club programme allows us to secure grounds for a significant number of games each year

### **Financial support for junior players**

CYC has recently offered to fund places on pathway courses for two refugee children, while the Bobby Spencer award (which provides support for a player from a fund in memory of Bobby, a CYC player who sadly passed away) has also been awarded for this year.

At the other end of the spectrum a CYC player has been offered an (almost) fully funded place at Harrow School sixth from after the school got in touch with Gavin last year to explore whether there might be an opportunity for such a scholarship.

END