

CHESHIRE CRICKET BOARD LIMITED
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT CHESHIRE FA OFFICES, MOSS FARM
ON FRIDAY 23 MAY 2025 – 10am

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

Di welcomed Lauren Forrester to her first meeting as an Independent Non-Executive Director

- 2. Minutes of the meeting 9 February 2025.** Agreed and then signed by the vice chair as a true record.

3. Matters arising from the meeting 9 February 2025

3.1 Public policy support (item 3.1 of 7 February 2025 minutes refers). When opportunities arose 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. This item would no longer remain a continuing review item by the Board.

3.2 Representation of the women's and disability county teams on the Board (item 3.3 of 7 February 2025 meeting refers). The Cheshire County Cricket Club (Cheshire CCC) confirmed its agreement that formal representation of the county women and disability representative teams on the Board should sit with Cheshire CCC. Cheshire CCC is to attend to: representation of the teams on its committee; amendments to its constitution; and providing a list of teams to its insurers for which insurance cover is required.

3.3 Our Countywide Plan (item 4.1 of 7 February 2025 meeting refers). This key document was circulated prior to the meeting and was formally approved by the Board at the meeting. The plan will be presented to ECB by Board representatives (Scott, Richard, Jess Lewis and Gareth Moorhouse) at Emirates Old Trafford on 18 June 2025. Gareth was praised and thanked for his considerable effort in producing the plan, and Neeruj was thanked for his professional input in enhancing its presentation.

- 4. Management Group.** Minutes of the MG meeting held on 1 May 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 commenced in February 2025 until January 2029. The associated Countywide Plan will be formally presented at Emirates Old Trafford 18 June 2025 (see 3.3 above).

4.2 ECB/Chance to Shine/self-generated income.

ECB has yet to decide how monies from the sale of The Hundred will be distributed.

Our ECB EDI strategic funding bid (£60,000) was successful.

It remains uncertain whether the £30,000 from ECB will be sufficient to meet the costs of the season's County women's team match programme.

4.3 Board 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 1 June 2025.

4.3.2 Staffing levels. The Board employs 30 full and part-time staff. The following have recently joined the Board: Nathan Brown (22 April), Emily Page (17 March until 29 August), Carys White (1 May) and Ellie Mason (1 May). The following have left or will leave the Board: Marianne Lea (9 March), Rohan Luthra (31 August), Ben Duckworth (September). Joanne Herbertson returns from maternity leave in January 2026. Michele Alder will retire in April 2026.

4.4 Finance. Mike confirmed that cash flows were satisfactory and a budgetary surplus for 2024/5 is now likely.

4.5 Overview. Scott commented that the move towards a budgetary surplus reflected our proactive management across core Board business areas.

- 5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).** The working group had been unable to meet since the last Board meeting. Our focus continues to be aimed at ingraining and embedding inclusivity in all we do. Di confirmed a suggestion from the Women's league that a women and girls representative join the group.

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

6.1 CPA 2. Further to a meeting between Julie Rafferty and the CR County Safeguarding Advisor, Nick updated that the Board continues to make strong progress and is currently on track (green) for all standards. In respect of Low-Level Concerns (LLCs), it was noted that excellent work had been completed in respect of

club support, reporting historic LLCs, and that Cheshire has been selected as a test county for a new Clue Case Management System.

6.2 Policy reviews. The following policies have been reviewed and updated, and were agreed by the Board at the Board meeting: Safeguarding Policy Statement; Safeguarding Adults policy; Whistleblowing; Safer Recruitment; and Anti Bullying.

6.3 Low level concerns. The CCB is part of a pilot group, testing a system called Clue, an investigation and intelligence management system. Later this year, it is planned that this system will replace the Smartsheet-based solution that all boards currently use to manage lower-level concerns.

6.4 Safeguarding support and steering group. The membership of the group is being finalised, and the draft Terms of Reference have been circulated to Board members. The planned group membership will include an independent member and representation from Club Safeguarding Officers.

6.5 Culture and Networking.

6.5.1. League Meetings. Julie has attended league meetings (Cheshire Women's Cricket, Cheshire County Cricket League and the Cheshire Cricket League, highlighting the main issues that clubs need to be aware of for the 2025 season to help ensure all people are safe in cricket and reflecting the importance of setting a healthy club culture.

6.5.2. CAG meetings. Julie has also attended all the CAG player and parent meetings in May 2025. Input had highlighted the main areas of safeguarding for both players and parents, the importance of feeling safe and supported, being listened to and a focus on enjoying cricket.

6.5.3 Club Visits. Club visits are also being conducted by the County Safeguarding Officers, to discuss the club's 'Safeguarding Self-assessment Report' and provide support to reviewing and developing safeguarding procedures. Board members noted this excellent work and the importance of being able to offer support and advice to clubs and their volunteers across all business areas wherever possible.

6.5.4 Club Networking. Five online CSO network meetings are taking place in May and June, providing an opportunity for Julie to outline the main safeguarding themes from the 2024 season, and update changes and main issues for the season ahead. Importantly, the meetings also provided an opportunity for CSOs to ask questions and outline issues identified at their clubs. Nick updated that he had joined one of the meetings, which featured an excellent update on relevant issues, and an opportunity to listen directly to, and discuss a range of interesting safeguarding questions and points raised by attendees. Relevant documentation and guidance had subsequently been shared reflecting points raised.

6.6 Training. 88 new and existing Club Safeguarding Officers (CSO) attended six Safe Hands courses conducted in March and April 2025. 98% of clubs now have a trained and compliant CSO and Julie is working proactively with relevant clubs to ensure access to appropriate training and that risk assessment processes are in place.

7. Governance/Risk. Those present from the Governance/Risk groups highlighted the following from notes shared with Board members prior to the meeting.

7.1 CPA Gold items.

7.1.1. Skills matrix (rule 10.6). A Directors' skills matrix has been produced and circulated for completion, and will be a source of information to identify any gaps in our knowledge base.

7.1.2 Stakeholder agreements (rule 3.1.6). The extent and content of Stakeholder Agreements remains under review. Scoping work had been completed identifying related evidence requirements and the structure of related reporting.

7.1.3 Risk register (rule 3.2.5). The register has been reviewed, updated and circulated prior to the Board meeting. The updated version was adopted at the Board meeting.

7.2 ECB Articles. After due consideration by the Governance group of the revised set of ECB Articles of Association circulated to County Boards as part of an approval process linked to the sale process for The Hundred teams, Nigel as CCB Chair has signed the document on behalf of CCB Ltd.

7.3 Additional iNED (rule 10). Further to discussions at previous meetings, an additional iNED has been identified. Following two interviews with a Nominations Committee (NC) chaired by the Board Chair the NC had proposed to the Board on 8 March 2025 that Lauren Forrester be appointed for a period of two years. The proposal was agreed and Lauren was appointed on 23 April 2025 and is now registered as a Board Director with Companies House.

7.4 Board members' Code of Conduct (Safeguarding). This document scheduled for annual review was signed by those present. David S it to contact the absentees for their signatures and then return the document to Julie.

7.5 Complaints Policy. This policy had been reviewed, updated and added to the website.

7.6 Privacy Policy. This policy is under review. This issue was identified as complex, and it was agreed that further representations would be made to the ECB in respect of the requirement for further guidance in this key area.

7.7 Representation of the women's and disability county teams. See 3.2 above.

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 Women's League.** All 41 teams in the softball Division 5 have played their first fixtures, with strong growth in participation in the west. Good growth too in Division 4 (hardball) where newcomers Whalley Range and Brooklands have made strong starts. Division 1 fixtures have been slow to progress with Thunder Cup, National Knockout and County Women fixtures taking place.
- 8.2 Thunder Cup.** The first two rounds (of three) group fixtures have been played. Semi-finals 17th August and final 21st September. Experience so far has been mixed, with very few Lancashire senior players being available for fixtures, and a mix of academy and EPP players distributed amongst the clubs. White ball cricket also presents a facilities challenge with the need for black sightscreens. Richard commented that a similar challenge exists in other ECB competitions involving national counties particularly age group cricket where the use of the pink ball, if permitted, would eliminate the need for black sightscreens. Richard will raise this issue with ECB during the meeting at Emirates Old Trafford on 18 June 2025 (see 3.3 above).
- 8.3 Transgender ruling.** The impact of the transgender participation ruling has been felt across the clubs. We wait to see how this may evolve, and will support those impacted to remain involved with the sport the best way we can.
- 8.4 Girls' League.** The league has expanded to 72 teams this season (56 in 2024).
- 8.5 County Women's team.** To date the team in Tier 3 of the national competition has won two and lost two.
- 8.6 Softball Festivals.** The Board is supporting a minimum of 20 Women's and 8 Girl's festivals at Clubs across the county.
- 8.7 Schools' and Clubs' Support.** Our ongoing support for schools and clubs continues through Chance to Shine, Metro Bank, and additional club initiatives. Ellie Mason and Carys White have recently joined the Board's W&Gs team and are integrating well. Their contributions will be instrumental in the growth of the W&Gs game.
- 8.8 Performance Cricket.** County and district squads have been selected for the 2025 season, with 131 girls involved.
- 9. Cheshire County Cricket Club.** Jim referred members to the County Club report circulated prior to the meeting (see Appendix 3). Jim highlighted: an 'intense' start to the season with matches on six consecutive Sundays; praise for the new team management (Gavin Colebourn, Andy Dufty and Nick Brooks) from players and committee; and a get-together arranged by Andy Newton for several ex-players at the Cheshire/Staffordshire T20 double header at Nantwich on 15 June.
- 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 Pre-season ECB information.** The late receipt and accuracy of safeguarding and match day information from ECB prior to the start of the season caused considerable consternation.
- 10.2 Facilities.** Lindow CC are planning to create a second ground on land which they have acquired next to their existing ground. A number of Cheshire grounds are currently being used on Sundays by teams in the Greater Manchester Amateur League, thereby reducing the number of grounds available for Cheshire cricket teams.
- 10.3 County League 50th anniversary.** The Board congratulated the League on its excellent anniversary book produced to commemorate the occasion. A league XI would play a fixture against the MCC at Toft on 19th June followed by a celebration dinner. The Board's Cvent booking system is being for those wishing to buy a book and/or a ticket for the dinner.
- 10.4 ACO (for Umpires and Scorers).** There has been a small increase in umpire numbers, including those who completed a winter training course. "Who's the Umpire" now being used in the CCCL and CCL for appointments has brought an improvement to the administration.
- 10.5 Groundsmen's Association (GA).** Recommendations to clubs following pitch inspections made on behalf of the GA are extremely useful in themselves, but progress can only be made if clubs actually carry out the recommendations. Certain grants are available from ECB but not all needs can be met in that way, and lack of finance means that some recommended work does not get carried out or at best is delayed.
- 11. Cheshire Youth Cricket (CYC).** Paul referred members to the CYC report circulated prior to the meeting (see Appendix 5). Paul referred to the following:
- 11.1 Parents' and players' evening.** Julie delivered some key safeguarding messages, and Gavin ran a presentation on expectations for the season and advice on preventing injuries though managing player workloads and also some thoughts on nutrition.
- 11.2 Junior Leagues.** The junior league programmes are under way and running smoothly.
- 11.3 U13 and U15 Cups.** Entries for these club national competitions are consistent with last season.
- 11.4 Kit deal.** Jess is continuing to work on a new kit deal with Surridge Sports and is liaising with Cheshire CCC.
- 11.5 Juniors playing in open age cricket.** Richard referred to the decision made at the last Board meeting, and confirmed that issues which may arise would be directed to the appropriate league.

12. AOB.

12.1 ECB Honorary Life Vice Presidents. Richard advised of the announcement of these awards (three from the first-class game and three from the recreational game) at the recent ECB AGM. This is a new ECB initiative to celebrate individuals who have made exceptional contributions to breaking down barriers or demonstrated extraordinary long-term service to the game. We were unaware of these awards or how they had been decided. The awards will be made annually, and we will endeavour to ensure that we are given an opportunity to nominate suitable candidates on future occasions.

13. Remaining 2025 meetings. 12 September time tba, 28 November time tba. All Fridays at Hartford House, Moss Farm.

Signed

Appendices follow below.

Appendix 1. Safeguarding Report (Julie Rafferty)

1. Safeguarding CPA2 update

The CPA has now moved to CPA 2. Julie Rafferty met with the ECB County Safeguarding Advisor, Fiona Holden, on Thursday 13 March 2025 to discuss the self-assessment of the new CPA2 standards, the aspirational guidance and other safeguarding matters. The Cheshire Cricket Board continues to make good progress and is currently on track (green) for all standards. The current updated situation is:

CPA2 Review					
No	Standard	Actions, progress, comments	Tracking		
			Red	Yellow	Green
6.1	Policy, Procedure & Risk Mitigation	All the policies have either been or are being reviewed by the board and will be up to date by the end of May 2025			
6.2	Safer Cultures	It was identified good work being conducted with Leagues and the club safeguarding reviews following LLCs is an excellent way to evidence this standard. Also, the forthcoming online CSO network meetings, which FH was keen to attend. JR shared that she was setting up a Safeguarding Support and Steering group. The Safeguarding lead for Cheshire FA is to sit on the group and provide an independent and cross sport perspective. The Terms of Reference for the group was shared with FH.			
6.3	Safeguarding Structure & Oversight	JR attended the November Board meeting and presented to the board. FH explained that CSOs should attend 2 board meetings a year. JR commented that CSO and BSL are working well together. FH commented that it was refreshing to receive NB's feedback following the case review communication to the network.			
6.4	Safeguarding Compliance & Training	Several members of staff have attended the Safer interview and Safer Recruitment Training. As a result, the recruitment process was reviewed to ensure consistency. JR is to attend Lime Culture Lead Safeguarding training in March 2026, following the completion of a Post Graduate qualification in Leading Culture Change in Safeguarding at Worcester University.			

6.5	Listening	Discussed the PPAR (Plan, Produce, Action, Review) model which is an adaptation of the continuous improvement model and how it could be applied to gather information to show we are listening to children and adults and it's having an impact on our responses in cricket. FH is keen to hear how listening has shaped programmes and delivery.	
6.6	Safeguarding Reporting	JR confirmed that the LLC Policy has been signed off by the board at the last board meeting. Cheshire has been selected as a test county for the new Clue Case management system. JR is actively working to upload LLCs and has volunteered to be part of the Clue initial test.	
6.7	Talent Pathway	WhatsApp guidance was discussed including NSPCC guidance doc. JR explained how the player ambassadors were pivotal to involving junior players and using them to feedback, as a voice for the players on the pathway.	

2. Policy review

A policy review of existing policies has taken place. The following policies have been updated with minor amendments and require board approval. The review date will be extended to three years, unless changes need to take place in the meantime:

- a. Safeguarding Policy Statement
- b. Safeguarding Adults policy
- c. Whistleblowing
- d. Safer Recruitment
- e. Anti Bullying

3. Safeguarding Support & Steering Group (SSSG) – Terms of Reference & membership

Work is nearly complete in the organisation of the CCB sub- committee: the Safeguarding Support and Steering Group (SSSG). The membership of the group is being finalised, and the draft Terms of Reference are complete (see Appendix A). The first meeting will take place once the County Safeguarding Officer starts with the CCB on a full-time basis. The Safeguarding Lead for the Cheshire Football Association Lystra Landon has agreed to be a member of the SSSG. She will provide a level of independence and a welcome cross-sport perspective.

4. Safeguarding Conference

The Cricket Regulator Safeguarding Conference for Safeguarding Board Leads and County Safeguarding Officers took place at the beginning of March 2025, with the theme of the conference being 'Moving from Compliance to Culture'. There were conversations about Safer Cultures and experiences of Listening Cultures. The operational workshops for the County Safeguarding officers focused on three key themes that contribute to the implementation of the safeguarding strategy for 2025-28:

- Understanding of low-level concern patterns
- Exploring ways to support our broader network of clubs and leagues
- Strategies to promote reporting from minority groups

The conference provided an opportunity for those individuals leading and creating safer cultures across the game to come together and share best practice and help to establish the priorities for the year ahead.

An important strategic workstream for 2025 is understanding how we (Cricket) work with, support and learn from those who have a lived experience of harm within the game.

The content of the safeguarding strategy 2025-2028 and the themes discussed at the conference will be subject to further discussion at the SSSG.

5. Trialling 'Clue' for management of Low-Level Concerns

The CCB are currently part of a pilot group, who are using and testing a system called Clue, which is an investigation and intelligence management system, to the cricket network. Later this year, this system will replace the Smartsheet-based solution that all boards currently use to manage lower-level concerns.

6. Discipline update

A newly formed Cricket Regulator Recreational Discipline Team is responsible for supporting the implementation and ongoing application of the General Conduct Regulations (the "Regulations") within recreational cricket. To assist County Cricket Boards, leagues, and other cricket organisations in ensuring fair, efficient, and consistent disciplinary processes. The Recreational Discipline Team is available to assist across several key areas, including:

- Training and development
- Guidance on disciplinary cases
- Referral of complex cases
- Appeals process
- Process implementation support.

A small group from the CCB met online with Leah Thomas and Liz Madra, from the Recreational Discipline Team on 26 March 2025, discussed their remit and the support they could offer to boards and leagues.

7. Culture & Networking:

The County Safeguarding Officer attended the leagues meetings for the Cheshire Women's Cricket, the Cheshire County Cricket league and the Cheshire Cricket league, highlighting the main issues that clubs need to be aware of for the 2025 season, to ensure that all people are safe in cricket and setting a healthy club culture. Club visits are currently being conducted by the County Safeguarding Officers, initially prioritising the clubs where safeguarding concerns occurred during the 2024 season. The purpose of the visits is to discuss the club's 'Safeguarding Self-assessment' and to support them to review and develop their safeguarding procedures.

8. Training:

Safe Hands Courses - 88 new and existing Club Safeguarding Officers (CSO) attended the six Safe Hands courses delivered in March and April 2025. As a result, 98% of the clubs now have a trained and compliant CSO. The County Safeguarding Officer will be working with Merseyside Sports & Cultural CC and Romiley CC, to ensure their CSO's receive appropriate training, and a risk assessment is put in place until their CSO's can attend a Safe Hands course.

CSO Network meetings - Five online CSO network meetings are taking place in May and June 2025, which is an opportunity for the County Safeguarding Officer to discuss the main safeguarding themes from 2024 season, the changes and main issues for the season ahead, but also an opportunity for CSO's to ask questions.

Additional safeguarding training

- The new **SGL1 and SGL2 eLearning** are now available and can be accessed via a personal ECB eLearning account or by registering via the link on the CCB website.
- **Culture training for clubs** is now available and can be delivered face to face or online by one of the County Safeguarding Officers.
- **Youth Boundary Training** is now available to be facilitated by coaches and activators. It is specifically designed for 15/16yrs olds, although the Cricket Regulator states that junior cricketers 12 years and above can receive the training.
- **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** – funding has been provided, so a series of MHFA awareness training sessions will soon be made available to clubs.

9. Transgender

On 2 May 2025, the ECB released a statement on their Transgender Policy which stated:

"with immediate effect, only those whose biological sex is female will be eligible to play in women's cricket and girls' cricket matches. Transgender women and girls can continue playing in open and mixed cricket "

This immediately had an impact on the Cheshire Women's League, with at least 3 players becoming ineligible to play women's cricket.

10. Safeguarding themes & LLCs:

Since the last board meeting, several LLCs and threshold cases have been reported. Of note:

- A player & junior coach is currently suspended and being investigated by the police for exposing himself to other players, including players as young as 12 years old
- Mental health concerns about junior players and support plans being put in place.
- Increase awareness of neurodivergent participants, their additional needs and differences.

Appendix 2 Women and Girls

CWCL updates – Joanna Seddon

A much sunnier start to the season than this time a year ago thank goodness with all divisions of the CWCL now well underway. Softball right through to the top of the league and beyond has seen a continued increase in participation and great to see the off season plans now in action in the sunshine.

All 41 teams in the softball Division 5 have played their first fixtures, with particularly strong growth in the west of the county, hopefully cementing the pipeline of clubs ultimately transitioning to hardball cricket in future years. In Division 4, newcomers to the league Whalley Range and Brooklands have both made strong starts to the season, with good growth across this 'entry' division. Divisions 2 and 3 are currently well balanced and too early to call, however worth noting that Didsbury 2s (the first 2nd team to progress up to 35 over cricket in Div 2) are proving their depth and strength early in the season with strong performances.

Division 1 fixtures have been slow to get started with both Thunder Cup and National Knockout fixtures already being squeezed into the calendar alongside CWCL. With the balance of clubs also having players representing the newly reformed Cheshire Women's team (and CAG) on many league fixture days, Division 1 could well be wide open and super competitive for the remainder of the season. A great opportunity for a wider number of players to experience the top level of CWCL cricket in the county.

The new Thunder Cup competition is now also well underway, with the first two rounds of group fixtures (of three) now played (to be followed by semi-final 17th August and final 21st September). Experience so far has been mixed, with very few Lancashire senior players being available for fixtures, and a mix of academy and EPP players distributed amongst the clubs. White ball cricket also presents a facilities challenge with few clubs able to accommodate black sight screens for example. Doubtless there will be an in-depth review of this first cup competition before any decision made about future years and plans.

The impact of the transgender participation ruling has been felt across the clubs, and we await to see how this may evolve, whilst trying to support those impacted to remain involved with the sport in ways we are able to.

Looking forward to the continued good weather to enjoy as full a season as possible (although a little rain would be very welcome given recent grounds challenges).

Women and Girls update – Jessica Lewis

League Cricket

CWCL Division 5 (soft ball) has seen significant growth, with 42 teams participating in 2025—an increase of 15 teams from the 27 that entered in 2024. CCB and the league will need to discuss expansion plans, particularly concerning playing offers.

Similarly, the CGCL has expanded to 72 teams for the 2025 season, a 16-team increase from the 56 teams in the previous year.

Additionally, CCB remains committed to running a minimum of 20 WSF events and at least 8 girls' festivals.

Schools and Club Support

Our ongoing support for schools and clubs continues through Chance to Shine, Metro Bank, and additional club initiatives. On 1st May, Ellie Mason and Carys joined the W&Gs team and are integrating well. Their contributions will be instrumental in the growth of the W&Gs game in Cheshire, and we are eager to see the positive impact of an expanded workforce.

Performance Cricket

County and district squads have now been selected for the 2025 season, with 131 girls set to compete across both programmes this summer.

Appendix 3 Cheshire County Cricket Club (Jim Law)

At a glance

- 1st XI qualified for KO Trophy quarter finals

- 2nd XI season underway
- No showcase match for 2025
- Old players lunch at Nantwich
- Cheshire Countywide Plan looks great
- New ECB County Partnership Agreement awaited from ECB (2025-2028)
- Finance & administration
- Governance: code of conduct developed
- Commercial ongoing
- County Club to represent Women/Disability XIs on Board

Commentary

1st XI performance

An intense start to the season with six consecutive Sundays for the 1st XI.

Having been routed at Hertfordshire in the first game of the season, a spectacular recovery has seen three back-to-back wins to line up a quarter final in the knock-out stages away at Berkshire on 1 June.

Under Sam Perry, a much-changed side from last year's Wormsley final has seen several outstanding performances including hundreds from Perry, George Lavelle and Dan Newton, with five wicket hauls for Mike Finan and Max Law.

The T20 campaign gets underway against Shropshire at Wem on 1 June followed by games at Nantwich, Barrow-in-Furness and Oxton.

Chester Boughton Hall hosts the KO Final (which hopefully Cheshire will reach!).

Gavin Colebourn's support as coach has been much valued.

2nd XI

We recognised Steward Macleod's significant contribution as coach at the Wales NC game with a small presentation. Meantime his successors have been working hard to build a squad for 2025.

A successful start too for Nick Brooks, Andy Dufty and Gavin with a five wicket win over a Staffordshire side featuring half a dozen of this season's first teamers at Macclesfield.

Next up is Worcestershire at Northwich on 23 June.

A reminder that with Inge Bevers at the scoring helm, all first XI and 2nd XI games are being live screened this season.

Showcase game

Along with several national counties, Cheshire miss out on a showcase game this year. A crowded first-class county diary didn't allow for a planned game with Yorkshire and despite discussions with several other sides, a date couldn't be sorted. The NCCA advise the counties missing out they'll be given 'extra support' next year.

Nantwich lunch

Andy Newton is arranging a get-together for several ex-players at the Cheshire/Staffordshire

T20 double header at Nantwich on 15 June.

Cheshire Countrywide Plan

In line with our Cheshire colleagues, we congratulate Gareth Moorhouse on an excellent, painstaking piece of work putting this plan together.

Cheshire CCC's highlighted priorities are:

- Achieve promotion back to Division 1 of the NCCA Western Championship and aim to win silverware.
- Develop more young cricketers with the ability to play multi-day cricket.
- Manage the Club's operational affairs, ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for all participants.
- Retain close links with our local leagues whilst providing additional support as required.

New ECB County Partnership Agreement

Running from 2025-29, CPA 2 reduces 'required county standards' from fourteen to nine, with some absorbed into specific competition regulations. Funding is increased to £37,900 pa with revised monthly payments.

After much ECB/NCCA deliberation, this is to land with us for sign-off in the next couple of weeks. We await it with interest.

Finance & administration

Stuart Anderson and John Petch continue to battle the various ECB/NCCA challenges admirably. A new portal – not without teething difficulties – is now in place to allegedly improve our administrative input...

Stuart anticipates a potential small loss/break-even for the season but with the new playing financial incentives this year and progress in various competitions, this may change. The scheme works along the lines of the Women's Ashes' points programme – 2024's performance (KO Trophy Final, T20 group stages, league relegation) would have provided £3,200. The 'leading county', Berkshire, would have pocketed £4,000.

2024 accounts are now available on the website.

Governance

We're indebted to Julie Rafferty for developing a revised code of conduct for all players and officials and hosting a governance session with key individuals.

Commercial

Membership packs have been successfully distributed. Our thanks again for David Sharp's support with this.

We are lucky to have an amount of additional financial support provided to the Club and thank our colleagues. As ever we seek that 'scarlet pimpernel' big name but soldier on with our 200 Club, raffles and other activities.

Women/Disability sides

We have agreed the County Club will become a formal 'mouthpiece' for the Disability and Women's sides – much like the current set-up with the Men's Senior sides. Both groups have their own committees (women led by Jess Lewis, Disability by Chris Edwards) and manage their own affairs and finances.

Jim Law, May 2025

Appendix 4 - Cheshire Clubs Cricket Committee (David Humpage)

Now the season is under way firstly one or two comments about the close season.

Once again ECB demonstrated a lack of understanding of the working of the recreational game by making a number of late changes to the safeguarding rules in late March. This gives little time to understand the implications and communicate with umpires and clubs. The ACO people were particularly aggrieved in that the report cards printed and issued were incorrect and had to be scrapped. No replacement cards were issued. I have written to ECB to express our disappointment and suggested that a 31st December deadline be placed on future changes.

The changes themselves were buried in the small print of a plethora of regulatory documents, and no attempt was made by ECB to highlight them. All creating more work for our volunteers and potentially causing more of them to give up.

There is a gap that grows ever wider between ECB and the clubs, particularly in the North where our season begins before the southern leagues. As I have reminded ECB on more than one occasion there is a huge difference between sitting on a chair in an office in London and making up a 2nd XI on a Saturday morning after a couple of cry offs! That difference grows ever wider year by year.

Interestingly Paul Bedford (the main Premier League ECB contact) has now retired and been replaced by Justin Preston.

In complete contrast to 2024 the season has begun in glorious sunshine – who remembers the heavy rains that accompanied the start of the 2024 season? Now the ground staff are praying for rain as the pitches and outfield dry up! Didsbury are the current front runners in the CCCL Premier Division, but there is a long way to go.

On the facility front I am pleased to hear that Lindow CC have acquired the land next to their ground and are planning to create a second square and ground there.

It is of note that a number of Cheshire grounds are currently being used on Sundays by teams in the Greater Manchester Amateur League, thus reducing the number of grounds available for Cheshire cricket teams. This is a source of income for the clubs concerned, but could be a source of problems ahead, particularly as the Women's game expands.

Winnington Park CC are now confident that they will be able to continue playing at their current location, despite the demise of the host Sports Club.

Arrangements are in hand for the game against MCC on 19th. June at Toft CC to commemorate the CCCLs 50th. Anniversary. The game will be followed by a dinner in the evening. The book of the history of the league from its inception written by Geoff Wellsted to mark the occasion is available. The book is superb - copies can be obtained online via the Board and CCCL web sites, or from myself in person.

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. Good to see the County team playing again.

The Cheshire ACO have reported a slight increase in umpire numbers, including a number of new umpires who have joined the panel having completed a winter course. "Who's the Umpire" is now being used in the CCCL and CCL, and first indications are that it has brought a significant improvement to the administration.

More pitch inspections are to be held this summer under the auspices of the Groundsman's Association. Whilst the inspections themselves and the subsequent reports are extremely useful in themselves, progress can only be made if clubs actually carry out the recommendations. Certain grants are available from ECB, but not all needs can be met in that way, and lack of finance means that some recommended work does not get carried out or at best is delayed.

Finally, the now customary thanks to Gareth, Jess and Dave - well deserved.

Appendix 5 - Cheshire Youth Cricket (Paul Brown)

The County Age Group programme is now well under way for the season with some notable performances already – including the Under 15s side chasing down 299 for one wicket down to beat the Worcestershire sub-Academy side. There will also be a full district programme at under 13s and under 15s level.

Prior to the start of the CAG programme we held a parents and players evening on 6 May at Northwich – this has been an event that Jess has organised for the girls' sides previously but this year for the first time this was extended to both boys and girls CAG sides. Julie delivered some key safeguarding messages to the group while Gavin ran a presentation on expectations for the year as well as passing on some messages around preventing injuries through managing player workloads and also some thoughts on nutrition.

Dave Atkinson reports that the junior league programmes are also under way and so far all seems to be running smoothly. Entries to the club national cup competitions at U13 and U15 level have remained broadly consistent with last year.

Jess is continuing to work on the new kit deal for next season with a view to having a new deal in place by November. I understand Jess is liaising with the County Club on an ongoing basis.

The next CYC Committee meeting is scheduled for early September.

END