

CHESHIRE CRICKET BOARD LIMITED
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT CHESHIRE FA OFFICES, MOSS FARM
ON FRIDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2025 – 10am

1. Attendance: Nigel Muirhead (Chair), Di Totty (Vice Chair), Richard Newton (Managing Director), 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), Helen Nicholson (Independent Non-Executive Director), Joanna Seddon (Independent Non-Executive Director). Invitee: Julie Rafferty (County Safeguarding Officer).

Apologies: Scott Elliott (Management Group Chair), Mike Guest (Treasurer), Neeruj Luthra (Independent Non-Executive Director).

Nigel congratulated Joanna for her participation in the Great North Run, and David Humpage and his wife Barbara on the occasion of their diamond wedding anniversary. Nigel thanked Nick for presenting the Cheshire Men's Cup on behalf of the Board to winners Didsbury CC at the cup final at Lindow CC on 7 Sept..

2. Minutes of the meeting 23 May 2025. Agreed and then signed by the chair as a true record.

3. Matters arising from the meeting 23 May 2025

3.1 Our Countywide Plan (item 3.3 of 23 May 2025 meeting refers). The plan was presented to ECB representatives by Board representatives (Nigel, Scott, Richard, Jess Lewis and Gareth Moorhouse) at Emirates Old Trafford on 18 June 2025. The plan was well received and ECB deems our Board 'investible'. Member representatives and secretaries are encouraged to make their members aware that this key document is available to view on the home page of the Board's website (see 4.1 below).

4. Management Group. Richard referred members to the minutes of the MG meeting held on 22 July 2025 which had been circulated to the Directors and Member representatives prior to the Board meeting.

4.1 Countywide Plan review. Richard presented our first quarterly review which had been circulated to Directors and Member representatives prior to Board meeting.

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

4.2.1 Sale of The Hundred. Our share approx £50,000 per year from the sale of The Hundred (first £6 million) will be received over three years.

In view of the anticipated income from the sale of The Hundred alongside our existing resources and in line with our Countywide Plan and the prospect of funding from the Game Changer Fund it was agreed that at the November Board meeting we would discuss suitable projects for investment. **All Board members please have a think of potential external funding partners whom they believe may be interested in investing in Board activities.**

4.2.2 County women's team. The £30,000 from ECB had proved insufficient to meet the costs of the season's County women's team match programme.

Di advised that when the old Cheshire Women's Club had folded its account balance had been transferred to the CWCL and had been ring-fenced ever since. The rebirth of a senior county team in 2025 provides the opportunity to hand it over to the Board. The Board will arrange for an invoice of £2380 to be sent to the CWCL Treasurer.

4.2.3 Girls secondary and GMCA Primary school funding. Girl's secondary school funding and GMCA (Greater Manchester Council Authority) Primary School funding has been terminated for 2025/26.

4.3 Board staff. The Board employs 32 full and part-time staff. Graeme Rickman left the Board on 15 August after 19 years service. The following have recently joined the Board: Henry Dobson (8 September), Nigel Burrows (1 September), Sam Hunt (1 September). And Toby Ward starts on 1 November.

4.4 Cricket Collective Awards 2025. The Cheshire and Lancashire Cricket Collective Awards 2025 took place on 26 August at Emirates Old Trafford during a Metro Bank One Day cup fixture between Lancashire and Middlesex. Awards were presented by Leshia Hawkins (ECB) and former Cheshire Youth cricketer and Lancashire 1st XI player Charlie Barnard. The full story is available on the Board's website.

5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The working group (Neeruj, Julie, Richard, Gareth Moorhouse, Chris Edwards and Reehan Rather) had not met since the last Board meeting (meeting planned for 24 October). The focus continues to be aimed at ingraining and embedding inclusivity in all we do. An earlier suggestion from Di that a representative from the Women's league joins the group remains on the table.

5.1 EDI census. This is the fifth year of the EDI census for those working in cricket. Staff and Board members are encouraged to complete the survey via <https://surveys.tell-us-what-you-think.com/s3/57ad1a456901> before 10 October 2025. From last year's national census Cheshire was ranked 2 out of 38 in terms of most inclusive County Board.

6. Safeguarding. Julie delivered her Safeguarding report which had been circulated prior to the meeting (see **Appendix 1**). The following items included in the report had comments or actions added at the meeting.

- 6.1 Board safeguarding training.** It was agreed to arrange an evening video conference meeting to provide Board members with the appropriate level of safeguarding training.
- 6.2 Mental health first aid training (MHFA).** MHFA awareness training is being planned and will be delivered at clubs by Roger Pickering and funded by the Cheshire Cricket Trust. Di offered to help Roger with the club visits where she could and if that suited Roger.
- 6.3 Safeguarding Steering & Support Group (SSSG).** The first meeting of the CCB SSSG took place on 1 September 2025, chaired by Nick and with representatives from clubs, Board, talent pathway and Cheshire FA (football). The meeting was productive and created an energy to develop safeguarding even more in the Cheshire cricket area. Joanna proposed that a representative from Women's cricket is included in the group.
- 7. Governance/Risk.** The working group (David, Helen, Richard, Nick – supported by Gareth Moorhouse and Mike) had not met since the last Board meeting. It was agreed that Lauren be invited to join these working groups.
- 7.1 CPA Gold items.**
- 7.1.1 Stakeholder agreements (rule 3.1.6).** The extent and content of Stakeholder Agreements remains under review.
- 7.2 Privacy Policy.** This policy remains under review.
- 8. CWCL and Women & Girls.** Joanna referred members to the CWCL report circulated prior to the meeting (see Appendix 2). A summary of the Women and Girls season from Jessica Lewis will be circulated prior to the next meeting.
- 8.1 Women's League match programme.** As the women's league season draws to a close there are still some divisional league and cup titles to be decided.
- 8.2 Growth.** As the women's game continues to grow there is a need to consider our playing offers e.g. cricket specifically for the over 30s to keep them in the game.
- 8.3 Clubs from outside Cheshire.** CWCL clubs have been asked to vote on the principle of admitting clubs (or additional teams) from outside the county boundary.
- 8.4 Thunder Cup.** The final on the 21 September is between two CWCL clubs – Stockport Georgians and Leigh. Discussions are in progress regarding the format of the same competition next year.
- 8.5 National competitions.** Leyland 1st XI won the Plate final and became the first of the current CWCL clubs to win a national competition.
- 8.6 League XI v MCC.** A league XI beat an MCC XI at Alvanley CC in the annual friendly match.
- 9. Cheshire County Cricket Club.** Jim referred members to the County Club report circulated prior to the meeting (see Appendix 3).
- 9.1 NCCA Performance Awards.** All NCCA counties are rewarded financially on performance over all competitions and Cheshire CCC awaits confirmation of its award for the season.
- 9.2 Peter Babbage.** Peter stepped down as Head of Cricket at the end of the season.
- 9.3 Nick Brooks.** Jim praised Nick for his involvement through the season and also to Gavin Colebourn, Harry Dearden and Andy Dufty for their coaching support across all competitions.
- 9.4 Showcase game.** There was no home 'Showcase game' v Yorkshire due to fixture clashes but ultimately travelled away to Lancashire at Sedbergh School as a late substitute.
- 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:
- 10.1 Pre-season ECB information.** The County League executive met with Justin Preston (ECB) during the season to air grievances surrounding constant and late changes to regulations.
- 10.2 Facilities.** Lindow CC have acquired the land next to their ground and plan to create a second square and ground there. In addition, Stockport Georgians have acquired the rights to the land adjacent to their current ground and planning to create a second ground there. And Winnington Park CC remain confident to continue playing at their current location, despite the demise of the host sports club.
- 10.3 County League 50th anniversary.** The game against MCC on 19 June at Toft CC to commemorate the CCCLs 50th Anniversary went ahead on a gloriously sunny day. The game was followed by a dinner in the evening at which Robert Croft proved to be an able speaker. Geoff Wellstead's excellent book of the history of the league is still available. copies can be obtained online or from David Humpage.
- 10.4 ACO (for Umpires and Scorers).** The Cheshire ACO reports a slight increase in umpire numbers, but there is a constant struggle each week to get enough Umpires to cover the game.
- 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. The GA arranged a number of courses this season including one aimed at younger players.

11. Cheshire Youth Cricket (CYC). There has been no CYC committee meeting since the last Board meeting, the next CYC meeting being in October. Paul would provide a report for the November meeting and meantime referred to the following:

11.1 CYC match programme. With the number of representative matches across all age groups it was becoming increasingly difficult to find club venues to host matches.

11.2 Junior Leagues. The junior league programmes continue to thrive. Stewart Macleod, Albert Condliffe and Kate Barratt had retired from their involvement with the South Cheshire Junior League after many years.

11.3 County age-group matches from 2026. It was noted that ECB guidance is that county age group cricket should not start until under 13s level and we are following this next year, with a more robust district offering for under 12s and below. Some other counties seem to be planning to run under 12 county sides next year against the ECB guidance and there is a concern this may tempt some of the under 12 and below players to join the programmes for those counties.

12. AOB.

12.1 Ground share. Joanna recorded a thank you to Alderley Edge CC for staging a Lindow CC women's match.

13. Remaining 2025 meeting. 28 November time tba at Hartford House, Moss Farm.

Signed

Appendices follow below.

Appendix 1. Safeguarding Report (Julie Rafferty)

1. Safeguarding CPA update and County Safeguarding Advisor engagement

The CPA2 standards 4.1 – 4.7 remain the same as at the last board meeting in May 2025 and show that Cheshire are on track for ongoing development and compliance. Fiona Holden, the County Safeguarding Advisor (Cricket Regulator) has interacted differently with the County Safeguarding Officer (CoSO), over the last couple of months. She attended an online Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO) network meeting on 2 June and accompanied the CoSO on a club visit on 7 August.

She commented: **“This was great way to build the CSO network and offer CPD to CSO’s. The webinar along with the club visits are a great way to evidence safe cultures are being developed in Cheshire”**

The CoSO has also worked with Gareth Moorhouse to develop the relevant section “Safe & Welcoming” of the CCB annual delivery plan.

2. Training

Level 3 training:

- The delivery of the Safe Hands course will start in November 2025 through to April 2026 for the 2026 season. With approximately 80-90 CSO's requiring the training, five to six courses will be delivered across the area
- A further “Safeguarding in the Talent Pathway” will be delivered to new and existing staff members requiring the training

Anti-Discrimination training:

- ‘Introducing the Boundary’ and ‘Youth Boundary’ training, are training packages relating to anti-discrimination. They have been promoted amongst the clubs and staff, and they are also available on the CCB website.

Board Safeguarding training

- Further Board safeguarding training needs to be organised to ensure that all board members have had the appropriate level of training.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

- MHFA training will be delivered to at least sixteen staff in December 2025, delivered and funded by the Cricket Regulator
- MHFA awareness training is currently being planned and will be delivered to club champions before the start of the 2026 season, this will be delivered by Roger Pickering and funded by the Cheshire Cricket Trust.

3. Safeguarding Steering & Support Group (SSSG)

The first of the CCB SSSG took place on Monday 1 September 2025, with representatives from:

- Clubs
- Board
- Talent Pathway
- Football (Independent)

The meeting was productive and created an energy to develop safeguarding even more in the Cheshire Cricket area. The next meeting is due to be arranged for November 2025.

4. **Safe Hands Management System (SHMS) compliance**

Compliant or all most there	None or minimal information	5-10 club officials not compliant	10+ club officials not compliant
70%	5%	20%	5%

Although SHMS compliance can fluctuate throughout the season, it is expected that clubs are compliant for the start of the season. This has been frustrated by the introduction of the new DBS procedure, which has caught many club officials out which has led to their DBS expiring, consequently this has had an impact on SHMS compliance.

As a result, there has been an **increase of 33% in new DBS checks being completed**, compared to this time last year!! Lots of communication has gone out to clubs and it was discussed at the Club Safeguarding Officer network meetings in May & June

Much work is still ongoing by the CoSO and the Developments & Coaching Officers (DCO) to help and support clubs to improve their SHMS compliance.

5. **Club visits**

Many club visits have taken place, and clubs have appreciated the opportunity to discuss concerns and cases face to face with the CoSO, as well as outlining the club profile, developments and activities.

The purpose of the club visits is to help and support all clubs with their safeguarding processes and create a healthy safeguarding culture, encouraging them to complete the club safeguarding self-assessment, providing an outline of their status and any further work that needs to be completed.

6. **'Clue' training and roll out**

The CCB has been a pilot site for trialing the new 'Clue' system, which is being introduced to support low level case management. Training is taking place in September with a view to implementing the system on 7 October 2025. This will naturally replace the existing Smartsheet system that is currently being used.

7. **Cricket Collective Awards**

The Cheshire and Lancashire Cricket Collective Awards took place on 26 August 2025, to celebrate volunteering in cricket. Sarah Hallas, Deputy CoSO, won the 'Safe Hands' award, being recognised for her work in safeguarding as a CSO and the support she provides the CCB CoSO, even though she has a demanding full-time job.

8. **Safeguarding themes**

The 2025 season has another busy season, with the following:

Low Level Concerns (LLC) - since the start of the season there have been **45 LLC's**, the main themes being: discriminatory language, behaviour, recurring discipline, mental health, drugs issues, inappropriate behaviour, poor practice (coaches, captains)

Threshold Cases - **10** threshold cases have been reported to the Cricket Regulator. The main themes being: sexual, harassment, breach of suspension, physical assault, inappropriate behaviour, breach of conditions

Blemished DBS's – There have been **9** blemished DBS checks, some of which involved a temporary suspension as they didn't send their DBS certificate to the Cricket Regulator for risk assessing and some were discussed by an Independent Safeguarding Panel

Julie Rafferty Sept 2025

Appendix 2 Women and Girls (Joanna Seddon)

Cheshire Women's Cricket League

Even with the season drawing almost to a close there are still some titles, both divisional league and cup, to be decided across the CWCL competitions for 2025.

In **Division 1**, Lindow have won the title in their second season in the top division. Runners up are still to be determined, with Chester playing Leigh this weekend to determine the second-place spot. At the other end of Division 1 there is a 3-way battle between Stockport Georgians, Leyland and Nantwich to avoid relegation. Nantwich play Leyland on Sunday whilst Georgians will have to nervously watch for the outcome of that match, which could determine their fate for the 2026 season. The top division this year has seen a number of challenges for many teams on availability, due to repeated clashes with county fixtures, and a significant variation in "regular" sides for many of the teams in the division.

Division 2 saw Northop Hall claim the title after a very strong first season in the league (albeit with many former known players from other clubs making up the majority of the side). Pushed on many occasions by Hayfield and Upton who could finish level on points after a number of close games in this division. Didsbury 2nd XI performance in division 2 this season should be noted as the first of the recent 2nd XI sides to step up to this level in the league. Some strong performances through the season and maintain their well-deserved place in this division.

Division 3 (split into West and East) sees Alvanley finish as champions in the west, and at the time of writing a battle between Stockport Georgians 2nd XI and Lindow 2nd XI in the east with one match remaining. Whilst next year's divisional structure has not yet been defined, it is hoped that the champions of both these divisions will be able to take the step up to Division 2 next year, to strengthen and grow that division and provide a stronger platform for cricket building to the top level for clubs progressing through the levels.

Division 4 (3 way split into West, East and South East) sees unbeaten Runcorn make an impressive impact in the West, remaining unbeaten all season. Division 4 East saw a battle between newcomers Whalley Range and Brooklands for most of the season, with Whalley Range proving the stronger and finishing unbeaten and champions. In Division 4 South East, the remaining fixtures in coming days will determine the champions, with NECCC sitting at the top closely followed by New Mills with one game remaining for both sides. Until the last couple of weeks this was a 4-way battle between these two sides plus Macclesfield 2nd XI and Lindow Development XI in what has proven to be a very competitive entry level division this year.

This year, for the first time, the previous Regional T20 competition (which culminated in an East vs West final on finals day) was transformed into a T20 championship, with 6 teams playing each other once in a mid-week T20 competition. Didsbury proved their continued strength in the short format mid-week and were crowned champions winning all 5 of their fixtures.

CWCL Cup competitions are still to be completed, with our first attempt at Finals Day 31st August at Hale Barns washed out after only 9 overs' play. In the development cup, Alvanley 1st XI take on Lindow 2nd XI (and very much had the upper hand when the game was rained off) and in the senior cup Lindow 1st XI take on Didsbury 1st XI. Finals Day will go again on Sunday 21st September weather permitting, once again at Hale Barns CC.

External competitions and other fixtures

CWCL representative team once again took on an MCC XI in this annual friendly fixture. A significant win at Alvanley CC (the hosts) for them over the MCC this year, thanks to an incredibly impressive squad filled with depth in both batting and bowling (despite some last minute changes!). Thanks due to Martin Saxon for his diligent organisation again, as well as Alvanley for hosting and the umpires and scorers on the day.

In the National competitions this year, Leyland 1st XI made it all the way to the Plate final and ran out winners, beating Falkland CC from Berkshire. Leyland become the first of the current CWCL clubs to win a National competition.

In the Thunder Cup, we await with interest the final on the 21st September which will be between two CWCL clubs – Stockport Georgians and Leigh. Semi finals on 17th August showcased some excellent cricket with Georgians beating Lindow, and Leigh knocking out Ramsbottom. Discussions are already starting regarding the format of the same competition next year, and clubs and players have been invited to feedback via a survey and scheduled discussion sessions.

Other comments:

Following on from points raised at previous board meetings, and other discussions across the CWCL exec, CWCL clubs have been asked to vote on the principle of admitting clubs (or additional teams) from outside of the county boundary into the CWCL going forward. Voting is being used to determine the next steps to take and gauge the feeling of the member clubs before taking any further action. No doubt this will be a topic of further discussion as the voting outcomes transition into rules proposals and suggestions at the AGM later in the year.

Women and Girls update – Jessica Lewis

An update will be circulated prior to the next meeting.

Joanna Seddon September 2025

Appendix 3 Cheshire County Cricket Club (Jim Law)

At a glance

- 1st XI: 50 over quarter finals / T20 group stages / 3rd in Western Division 2 Championship / close game with Lancashire in rearranged showcase match
- NCCA income performance tbc
- 2nd XI: good progress re bedding in new process / management and closer integration with age group cricket
- 2nd XI positive performances
- Pete Babbage stepped down as Head of Cricket
- ECB County Partnership Agreement agreed (2025-2028)
- CPA Self-Assessment submitted 5/09/25

Commentary

1st XI performance

The side rallied after a heavy defeat in first game of season to reach the 50 overs quarter finals (lost to Berkshire). T20 performance was disappointing, failing to qualify from group stage.

Unbeaten in Western Division Championship with a win and three draws; went into final game with Dorset with outside opportunity for championship title and promotion.

Closer links with U18s/2nd XI saw good progress from several youngsters notably Rohan Luthra, Freddie Vaughan-Hawkins, Jack Corran, Seb Botes, Dan Wilson and Henry Murray who made his maiden championship hundred in our final game with Dorset.

Gavin Colebourn, Harry Dearden and Andy Dufty provided significant coaching support to the squad across all competitions.

Performance in numbers:					
1 st XI	P	W	D	L	A
50 over	5	3	-	2	-
T20	8	4	-	4	-
Championship	1	1	3	-	-
Showcase	1	-	-	1	-
2 nd XI	6	4	-	2	-

2nd XI

Nick Brooks stepped up to manage the side with coaching support from Gavin, Andy and Henry Dobson.

The aim – as well as performing well on the field of course – was to enhance pathway opportunities for youngsters and develop closer links between senior and 'junior' sides.

Nick took to this like a duck to water, quietly and effectively overseeing and managing.

Wins were recorded against Wales NC, Shropshire, Staffordshire and the MCC with close defeats to Worcestershire and Cumbria.

A full review will follow once the dust has settled from the season but there was undoubtedly good progress.

Grounds

We were once again extremely grateful to our host Cheshire grounds. We're so fortunate to have such high-quality facilities at our disposal. 2025 saw us play at Alderley Edge, Chester, Didsbury, Hyde, Macclesfield, Nantwich, Northwich, Oxton and Toft.

Off the field

Pete Babbage stepped down as Head of Cricket at the end of the season. He's been involved with the Cheshire CCC committee since 2005 and has been a mainstay of our progress.

We're hugely grateful for his time and effort. A full 'review' is on the Cheshire CCC website.

Our management committee once again rolled up their sleeves. There's a lot of cricket played and a lot of organisation needed across a long season.

Stuart Anderson manages our finances and travel arrangements impeccably, John Petch juggles more administration that can surely be healthy, and Inge Bevers somehow manages to score amongst many tasks. Of course, Julie Raffery and Di Babbage back us across governance and EDI too.

We're grateful too to our small number of sponsors/benefactors for their vital income too.

Our president David Bailey also receives our thanks in his final year in position for his unwavering guidance and support.

We also recognise the Cheshire County League and Cups committees' support in arranging early starts to some league games to assist travel, and rearranging Cheshire Cup games.

Finance

2025 costs are being finalised but likely to fall in line with projections i.e. break-even/possible small surplus.

We await confirmation of 'NCCA Performance Awards' – all clubs are rewarded on performance over all competitions. Current indications are 9/10 of 20 – potentially £2k (range £4,000 - £200).

2024 accounts are available on our website.

Administration

CPA 2 is up and running for 2025 with updated monthly income streams.

Many thanks to Gareth Moorhouse for his significant support to John Petch in reviewing our CPA self-assurance requirements.

Challenges

- Lots of cricket! Significant selection issues – schools were back by the time we played the last championship game (30 players across 15 games (34/15 in 2024))
- No home 'Showcase game' v Yorkshire due to fixture clashes (ultimately travelled away to Lancashire as late substitute)
- Fixture clashes with National Club Championship / some local 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

Next steps

The planning starts now!

- 2025 review
- 2026 development
- Cheshire Countrywide Plan
- ECB review

Senior and Women/Disability sides are covered elsewhere

Jim Law

September 2025

Appendix 4 - Cheshire Clubs Cricket Committee (David Humpage)

The season is nearly over with one more CCCL game to come. Several of the key results have already been decided with Didsbury completing the league and cup double last weekend, clinching the CCCL Premier League and narrowly defeating Lindow in the final of the Cheshire Cup.

Division 1 has been won by Cheadle who will be joined in the Premier League next season by Bramhall or Macclesfield. Relegation from the Premier League is still to be resolved with two of Widnes, Bowdon and Oxtun to go down.

Alvanley have won Division 2 and Tattenhall Division 3. Over Peover and Mobberley have finished in the league relegation spots and will be demoted to the Cheshire League and replaced in 2026 by Irby and Bredbury who topped the Cheshire League.

Elsewhere Wallasey were the highest placed Cheshire side in the Liverpool Competition, and Alsager the highest in the North Staffs and South Cheshire League despite being relegated. Broadbottom were best placed in the Derbyshire and Cheshire League.

After the rains of 2024 it has been pleasing to see that the weather has been favourable this year and enabled the season to progress almost without interruption.

I referred last time to problems we had had with the ECB, and can report that the CCCL Executive held a meeting with Justin Preston during the season at which we had the opportunity to air our grievances. The main problem being constant and late changes to regulations. Hopefully Justin took note of our thoughts - we shall see.

On the facility front I commented last time that Lindow CC have acquired the land next to their ground and are planning to create a second square and ground there. In addition, Stockport Georgians have acquired the rights to the land adjacent to their current ground and are planning to create a second pitch there. The ground used to have a cricket pitch on it - indeed the writer once played there many years ago!

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

The game against MCC on 19th June at Toft CC to commemorate the CCCLs 50th Anniversary went ahead on a gloriously sunny day. The game was followed by a dinner in the evening at which Robert Croft proved to be an able speaker. The book of the history of the league from its inception written by Geoff Wellsted to mark the occasion is still available. The book is superb - copies can be obtained on line 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 and more to follow in 2026. Good to see the County team playing again and indeed the Under 18 side which has performed well. However, the addition of these two sides and also the much maligned Thunder Cup created a plethora of fixtures which has caused some problems which no doubt Di and Jo will report on. A meeting has been planned with the CCCL to discuss options.

The Cheshire ACO have reported a slight increase in umpire numbers, but there is a constant struggle to get enough Umpires out each week to cover the games. Martin Roberts has a number of ideas in an attempt to increase numbers, but none of them guarantee success. However, we must keep the effort up. "Who's the Umpire" has proved to be a success as hoped, and reporting is much improved.

More pitch inspections have been held this summer under the auspices of the Groundsmen'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. The Association has laid on a number of courses this season including one aimed at younger players. There is a national shortage of cricket pitch expertise and anything we can do to increase interest in the subject is to be welcomed.

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

David Humpage

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