

**CHESHIRE CRICKET BOARD LIMITED**  
**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT ALDERLEY EDGE CC**  
**ON FRIDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2026 FROM 10.15am**

**The meeting followed immediately after the 16<sup>th</sup> annual AGM and addresses by Leisha Hawkins and Jessica Lewis**

**Meet Leisha Hawkins (ECB Managing Director, Recreational Game).** Leisha's visit was in response to Nigel's invitation to meet our Board. Leisha shared ECB's views on a number of current topics and stimulated discussion and questions as we all seek to support a shared vision for recreational cricket – cricket for everyone.

**Meet our Staff – Jessica Lewis (Women & Girls Senior Manager).** Jessica's presentation highlighted the ambition to provide playing offers so every woman and girl has an opportunity.

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

**Invitees:** Leisha Hawkins (ECB Managing Director, Recreational Game), Jessica Lewis (Women and Girls Senior Manager), Julie Rafferty (County Safeguarding Officer).

**Apology:** Lauren Forrester (Independent Non-Executive Director).

**2. Minutes of the meeting 28 November 2025.** In addition to the following amendments the minutes were agreed and then signed by the chair as a true record:

**2.1 Amendment to 6.4.** The following sentence has been inserted - The SSSG revised draft of its terms of reference was approved by the SSSG at that meeting.

**2.2 Changes to Safeguarding Report appendices.** Prompted by Nick some changes have been made to the Safeguarding Report appendices.

**3. Matters arising from the meeting 28 November 2025 - none**

**4. Management Group (MG).** The minutes of the MG meeting held on 29 January 2026 had been circulated to the Directors and Member representatives prior to the Board meeting.

**4.1 Countywide Plan.** Richard presented our updated Countywide Plan and highlighted: self-generated income continues to provide over 40% of our total income; the actions and activities involved in achieving our five strategic priorities (ignite a spark, unleash potential, a gender-balanced sport, champion the 'cricket collective', and cricket includes everyone).

**4.2 Age group cricket (County and District teams).** Richard presented statistics from 2025 season highlighting those representing Cheshire age group teams for boys were 78% state school, 22% private schools and 32% ethnically diverse. For girls the figures were 70% state school and 30% private school, and 14% ethnically diverse. For District representative cricket the figures for boys were 78% state school, 22% private school, and 30% ethnically diverse. For girls the figures were 82% state school, 18% private school, and 29% ethnically diverse.

**4.3 Accounts 2024/25.** The accounts approved at the November meeting and formally adopted at the AGM will be submitted to Companies House by Murray Smith, our independent accounts examiner. A filleted version will be circulated and made available on the Board's website.

**5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).** Neeruj re-iterated his wish for EDI to become embedded across the entire CCB agenda, rather than being an entity in its own right, and believed that we are well on the way to making this happen.

**5.1 EDI planning and strategic documents.** Neeruj drew our attention to the recently updated Impact Report and EDI plan available to view on the website.

**5.2 Communities Indoor League.** A news video was shown at the meeting and is available to view on the website. This winter's league, now with three divisions involving 18 teams, has recently concluded.

**6. Safeguarding.** Julie referred members to the Safeguarding report (see **Appendix 6**) which was circulated after the meeting. The topics are listed below. See appendix 6 for details.

Safeguarding CPA2 update

Training – Safe Hands, Talent Pathway, Anti-discrimination, Board members, First aid for mental health (FAMH) Wellbeing & Mental Health Strategy

Policy Development (Low-level Concern and Wellbeing & Mental Health Policies)

Club Safeguarding Officers (CSOs) survey

Player Ambassadors

CSO pre-season network meetings

CCB Safeguarding Steering & Support Group (SSSG)

Safeguarding Themes – Threshold, Low-Level Concerns & Safeguarding Panel

**7. Governance/Risk.** The working group (David, Helen, Richard, Nick, Lauren – supported by Gareth Moorhouse and Mike) met on 16 January and a report was circulated prior to the meeting (see **Appendix 1**).

**7.1 CPA Governance diversity targets.** To achieve a minimum of 40% directors of either gender by 31 May 2026, it was agreed that Mike cease to be a director but would continue to act as Treasurer and attend Board meetings. Thereafter the Board would consider ways of maintaining the 40% minimum male/female without jeopardising the Board's effectiveness.

**7.2 Senior Independent Director.** The proposal to appoint Scott as our Senior Independent Director was agreed. This person would lead a group of our independent non-executive directors.

**7.3 External valuation every four years.** Before 2028 we need to arrange an external investigation of our skills and performance. ECB recommends two Effectiveness Review Providers.

**7.4 CPA 2 Gold Accreditation Scheme.** At the Governance group's next meeting we hope to be in a position to contact I Trust Sport or ECB to plan our accreditation process.

**7.5 Amendments to Board's Rules.** Changes to the Rules agreed by the Governance group and highlighted in a revised version of the Rules circulated to the Board members prior to the meeting were formally adopted.

**7.6 Identity verification for Directors from 18 November 2025.** Those Directors who had gone through the process were thanked for verifying their ID and providing their confirmation codes to David for inclusion in our annual confirmation due to be submitted to Companies House by the end of Feb 2026.

**7.7 AGM 2026 Elections/Re-appointments.** Four Directors were re-appointment for two years at the AGM. Four other directors are scheduled for re-appointment in 2027, thereby achieving our staggered rotation target.

**8. Cheshire Women's Cricket League (CWCL).** Joanna referred members to the report circulated prior to the meeting (see **Appendix 2**).

**8.1 2026 Fixture scheduling.** CWCL fixtures are being confirmed, with the juggle between CWCL, National competitions, county senior (and junior) schedules and the regional Thunder Cup continuing to challenge even the best of schedulers.

**8.2 CWCL rules.** The rules meetings are now complete and divisional structures and teams confirmed for the season. Division 1 continues to progress, moving to align rules even more closely with national competition standards, and to a panel umpire system similar to the men's league.

**9. Cheshire County Cricket Club.** Jim referred members to the County Club report (see **Appendix 3**) circulated prior to the meeting and highlighted the following: a new team management process; 1<sup>st</sup> XI fixtures finalized; awaiting some 2<sup>nd</sup> XI venues; pre-season nets; enhanced player registration; membership packs being finalized; and the forthcoming NCCA AGM.

**10. Cheshire Clubs Cricket Committee (4Cs).** David H referred members to his Clubs Committee report (see **Appendix 4**) circulated prior to the meeting David H and highlighted the following: County League/Cheshire League merger; impact of expansion; girls sections for leading clubs; growth of the women and girls game; umpiring and grounds issues; and the County Grant Fund.

**11. Cheshire Youth Cricket (CYC).** Paul's report (see **Appendix 5**) had been circulated prior to the meeting and highlighted the following: development programme progress; age group squad briefings; and the impact of starting age group squads from under 13s.

**12. AOB.** None

**13. Remaining 2026 meetings.**

Friday 22 May 2026 10am at Warrington Sports Club.

Friday 18 September 2026 10am at Hartford House.

Friday 4 December 2026 10am at Hartford House.

Signed .....

Appendices follow below.

**Appendix 1 – Governance** (Helen, Lauren, Nick, Mike, Richard, Gareth and David S)

**Highlights from the Governance groups meeting on 16 Jan 2026**

- 1. CPA Governance diversity target 40%/40% male/female with a minimum of one person from an ethnically diverse community by 31 May 2026** G10.1 (Bronze)
  - a. We are currently not compliant. We are 4 females out of 11 (i.e. 36.4% female). On request ECB has clarified we should be a min 40% by 31 May 2026 or have a timetable for being min 40%. We discussed ways by which this could be achieved and when. After consideration and further consultation with ECB we propose that we reduce to ten Directors by 31 May and thereby achieve a min 40% compliant with a min of four of either gender.
  - b. We are currently compliant with a minimum of one person from an ethnically diverse community.
  - c. It was noted that as a Bronze requirement G10.1 this applies to all cricketing organisations.
  
- 2. Senior Independent Director** G2.4e (Gold) & G13.1 (Silver)
 

We propose that we appoint Scott as our Senior Independent Director. This person would lead an annual evaluation of the Chair.
  
- 3. External valuation every four years** G13.2 (Gold)
 

We need to consider who performs an external investigation of our skills and performance every four years. We have clarified with ECB (Nick Ball) that this is separate from the Gold Accreditation Scheme (see 4 below). ECB recommends two Effectiveness Review Providers.
  
- 4. CPA 2 Gold Accreditation Scheme** Under CPA 2 at some point before Jan 2028 each county is invited to go through the Governance Gold Accreditation Scheme. At the Governance group's next meeting we hope to be in a position to contact I Trust Sport or ECB to plan our accreditation process. This is separate from G13.2 requirement (see 3 above)
  
- 5. Amendments to Board's Rules.**

At its Nov 2025 meeting the Board delegated authority to the Governance group to make necessary changes to the Board's Rules in line with CPA 2. The changes to the Rules agreed by the Governance group are highlighted in a revised version of the Rules circulated to the Board members prior to the 20 Feb meeting for formal adoption at that meeting.

*Added as a footnote to the Rules is a schedule of teams covered by the Board's insurance. We have agreed with the insurers and Cheshire CCC that the schedule includes the Women's 1<sup>st</sup> XI and the Disabilities teams.*
  
- 6. Identity verification for Directors from 18 November 2025** - new legal requirement for Directors to verify their identity under the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency (ECCT) Act 2023 to reduce the risk of fraud and improve transparency. Directors have been reminded of the process and asked to provide their confirmation codes to David for inclusion in our annual confirmation due to be submitted to Companies House by the end of Feb 2026.
  
- 7. AGM 2026 Elections/Re-appointments** – there are four Directors scheduled for re-appointment at the AGM. All are eligible for re-appointment and willing to continue. This conforms with our two-year succession planning cycle previously agreed.
 

Neeruj Luthra, iNED – for two years. Neeruj was first appointed as a Director, 18 February 2022

Nick Brooks, iNED – for two years. Nick was first appointed as a Director 9 Sept 2022.

Joanna Seddon iNED – for two years. Joanna was first appointed as a Director, 10 Feb 2023.

Helen Nicholson iNED. Helen was first appointed as a Director, 10 Feb 2023.

## Appendix 2 Women and Girls (Joanna Seddon)

### Women and Girls

Off-season, the story continues to be one of growth and progression, with the CWCL-run and CCB-run leagues both growing to their highest participation numbers to date. Huge on-going credit to Jess and the team for the energy and time invested in building such strong foundations to support the growth of female cricket across the county, from beginners and juniors, through performance and pathway to the senior team.

### CWCL update

CWCL preparation for the season is well underway, with AGM and rules meetings complete and divisional structures and teams confirmed for the year. Division 1 continues to progress, moving to align rules even more closely with national competition standards, and to a panel umpire system similar to that used in the men's league. Division 2 continues to grow and is moving towards bridging the gap between development cricket in the lower divisions and highly competitive performance cricket in Division 1. Given challenges in recent years with reducing participation in division 2, travel distances, and conceded fixtures, it is encouraging to see the progression here. In the lower divisions, both continue to grow, with new hardball teams entering Division 4 for the first time, and the continued steady addition of 2<sup>nd</sup> XI teams from growing clubs.

CWCL fixtures are currently being confirmed, with the juggle between CWCL, National competitions, county senior (and junior) schedules and the regional Thunder Cup continuing to challenge even the best of schedulers. With most weekends filling up, and cup finals from 2025 still to be played, the 2026 season promises to be as busy as ever.

## **Indoor Leagues**

Our indoor programmes have been well attended once again. Women's softball leagues have taken place on the Wirral, in South Cheshire, East Cheshire and in Mid Cheshire, alongside the established Mid Cheshire women's hardball league.

In addition, we launched new girls' leagues in Mid Cheshire and East Cheshire. The Mid Cheshire league has been positively received, while the East Cheshire league has been more challenging to establish but remains an area of development focus.

In total, 49 women's teams and 10 girls' teams participated across the formats.

## **Pathway and Development Activity**

Alongside our ongoing girls' pathway courses, we have introduced MCC hubs for the first time. These sessions are running on the Wirral and in Mid Cheshire, supporting our commitment to increasing participation and performance opportunities for girls in these areas.

We are also delivering hardball transition sessions, women's coaching opportunities, and specialist skills workshops, all designed to support player development across the county.

## **2026 Season Planning**

Planning for the 2026 season is progressing well, and we approach the new year with confidence and strong momentum. Two new leagues have been introduced for the 2026 season, bringing the CWCL to a total of seven divisions. Interest in Divisions 5–7 has been particularly high, with 75 teams expressing a desire to participate—an increase of 33 teams compared with the 2025 season.

We are in the process of finalising entries for the girls' leagues, with early indications suggesting continued growth in participation. To support this development, we have committed to delivering six girls-only Dynamos bursary programmes at clubs across Cheshire, helping them establish or strengthen their girls' sections.

We will also continue to support the Metrobank Pillars and have identified specific clubs we plan to work with during the upcoming season.

## **Age Group Cricket and Women's Winter Programme**

For 2026, age-group cricket will move to U13, U14, U16 and U18. Early indications show strong depth across all groups, with promising squads forming for the new season.

Women's trials were completed before Christmas, and the winter training squad now includes several new players. This group is training through the off-season, ahead of selecting both a T20 squad and a 50-over squad for the 2026 season.

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

### **At a glance**

- New team management process bedding in well
- 1<sup>st</sup> XI fixtures finalised, awaiting some 2<sup>nd</sup> XI venues
- Pre-season nets underway
- Enhanced player registration process
- Membership packs being finalised
- Forthcoming NCCA AGM

### **Commentary**

With Pete Babbage stepping down as Head of Cricket at the end of 2025, we've realigned our cricket management process which is bedding in well.

Nick Brooks, Gavin Coleburn and Andy Dufty are supporting the captains across match organization, selection and coaching.

With 1<sup>st</sup> XI fixtures in place, we've also an impressive list of 2<sup>nd</sup> XI games (more so than most counties) and are finalising venues. We've a challenging travel schedule throughout the season and will be running a coach for our 1<sup>st</sup> XI three-day match in Cornwall (seats available at all prices!).

Pre-season nets have been held for our 2<sup>nd</sup> XI, and the 1<sup>st</sup> XI are now underway in Ashton-under-Lyne with planning for the season well underway.

Despite frustrations in organizing a 2026 'showcase' day against Yorkshire and possibly Lancashire – to include men's and women's T20s - we're persevering!

David Sharp is now well into his 121<sup>st</sup> (!) year of helping prepare our fixture list and membership pack and these will be distributed prior to the season.

We're required to prove our financial resource to the NCCA (assuming reduced ECB contributions) – this we've proven with satisfactory resource levels. We've also undertaken to update our constitution to reflect new insurance responsibility requirements.

Work continues enhancing player registration processes, Julie's bringing us up to date with safeguarding and we're working with Gavin to develop our 'kit shop'.

The NCCA advise us FCC analysts are requesting access to NC matches/data, to talent spot. So far, we've had the Surrey analyst become a Cheshire member!

The NCCA AGM is next week with the election of a new president (succeeding Staffordshire's Nick Archer) and will also no doubt bring us yet more administrative challenges ahead of the season.

Regardless, we're in a good place.

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

Despite the cold start to the year, days are lengthening and the new season is on the horizon.

The CCCL and the CCL have now held their AGMs, and little changes have been made for the forthcoming season.

The concept of the merger between the two leagues is gathering pace with four sub-committees drawn from people in both leagues looking into various aspects of the potential merger. In addition there seems to be an appetite for open cricket throughout the new structure, and this additional concept is also being researched.

What of the game in the county overall?

Current ECB policies are concentrated on girls/females, disability cricket and ethnic participation. Whilst these are laudable causes, we must be aware of the potential impact of expansion in these fields on facilities, volunteer levels, and not to mention the financial viability of our clubs. Facilities continue to be a major concern. It has been possible to accommodate lower-level female cricket played over 30/40 overs by play in evenings, but once the standard increases, and games are played over 80 overs then the shortage of available pitches to accommodate those games becomes really apparent.

There continues to be financial pressures on clubs, and the smaller clubs are finding it increasingly difficult to survive. Is the future less clubs in number but larger in size, with the 4/5 team club with a number of out grounds becoming the norm? We shall see, but we must be aware that none of the aims above bring financial gains to the clubs – probably the opposite.

The CCCL in conjunction with the Cheshire Cricket Board is working on the ECB edict that all teams in the top two divisions must have a girls section taking part in games by the end of the 2026 season or face relegation. Was this a sensible idea? Let us say supporters are rather hard to find in this region where women's and girls' cricket is thriving (see figures later)! The CCCL is probably as well placed as any league in the country to comply, but work still needs to be done. Gareth and Jess are working with those clubs that currently do not comply and we are hopeful to achieving full compliance by the time of the deadline

I will, as always, leave Di and Jo to report in detail on the Women's League, but suffice to say that side of the game continues to grow with a number of new clubs joining the hardball section in 2026. It is worth noting that in 2025 there were 195 women's and girls teams in Cheshire compared with 145 in 2024. More in 2026.

The Cheshire ACO are working hard over the close season to try to attract more umpires. It is a fact that the majority of games played across the leagues are umpired by the players themselves which brings its own problems. It is planned that Division 1 of the Women's League will have panel umpires from 2026. As I reported previously the fact that ECB regard umpiring the male and female games as separate is causing some frustration to our local ACO over cross code levels of qualification. Even some umpires on the CCCL premier panel are apparently deemed not good enough by ECB to umpire female games!

More pitch inspections are planned for 2026 under the auspices of the Groundmen's Association. I will repeat what I said previously that 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 again laid on a number of courses this season. Stan Aspinall has relinquished his role as an ECB Pitch Advisor, and we are actively looking for a replacement.

The County Grant Fund work is about to start again, and the sub-committee has held a preliminary meeting to set the scene. It appears that we will have around £190K to distribute to deserving club schemes, and invitations to submit claims have been issued. The maximum grant has been increased to £15K for 2026.

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

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

Aside from the CYC AGM which was held on 27 January the CYC committee has not met since the last CCB Board meeting and therefore the updates this quarter are relatively brief.

- The final (Excellence) courses for the winter are now in full swing with the course to end the weekend after Easter with squad selection taking place shortly after that. After strong performances in the three ECB competition years (under 14s, 16s and 18s) last year we are optimistic for another strong showing this coming season.
- We are holding our annual squad briefing for all of the county age groups squads (boys and girls) on 23 April – this initiative was originally started by Jess with the girls sides but we have now rolled it out the boys and girls squads and it was very well received last year.
- We were of course delighted to see the county represented at the U19s world cup by Freddie Ogilby (Ireland) and Joe Moores (England)
- The impact of starting County Age Group cricket at under 13s this year is still to be fully understood. Many counties have moved to selecting their CAG boys sides before Christmas in line with ECB's broader early engagement strategy. A consequence of this is that we are seeing large numbers of parents from other counties putting their boys forward to join our programmes.
- Given that historically we have produced stronger sides than most of these counties and that many of these boys will not qualify for Cheshire the vast majority will not be joining our programme but it is perhaps an indication of the impact of picking sides early and underlines concerns about the impact that following this approach would have on course attendance in Cheshire
- I expect Jess will provide an update elsewhere on the Girls section and there are no updates at this stage from the junior leagues with most clubs gearing up their pre-season junior training at the moment.

## **Appendix 6. Safeguarding Report (Julie Rafferty)**

### **1. Safeguarding CPA2 Update and Next Meeting**

The CPA2 Smartsheet was reviewed and updated in January 2026 and shows that CCB is on track across all seven safeguarding standards.

This will be discussed further with Fiona Holden, County Safeguarding Advisor, at the meeting scheduled for 5 March 2026.

### **2. Training**

#### **Level 3 – Safe Hands Courses (Club Safeguarding Officers)**

Delivery began in November 2025. Six courses are being delivered across five locations:

1. 20 November 2025 – Sale CC ✓ Completed
2. 2 February 2026 – Mottram CC ✓ Completed
3. 25 February 2026 – Cheshire FA (Moss Farm, Northwich)
4. 10 March 2026 – Upton CC
5. 18 March 2026 – Woodley CC
6. 15 April 2026 – Cheshire FA (Moss Farm, Northwich)

#### **Level 3 – Safeguarding in the Talent Pathway**

This course will be delivered to CCB staff and volunteers involved in the county pathway on: 7 April 2026 at Wilmslow High School

This ensures coaches and managers understand wider safeguarding risks and responsibilities within the talent pathway.

## **Anti-Discrimination Training**

The “Introducing the Boundary” and “Youth Boundary” eLearning packages continue to be promoted to clubs. Access is available via the CCB website or individual ECB eLearning accounts (self-registration)

## **Board Safeguarding Training**

Updated safeguarding (culture) training for Board members is being organised and will take place online prior to the next Board meeting.

## **First Aid for Mental Health (FAMH)**

- 17 CCB staff completed accredited FAMH training on 19 December 2025, delivered by an independent trainer and funded by the Cricket Regulator.
- This strengthens mental health oversight across junior and adult cricket.

## **FAMH Awareness Training for Club Champions**

Funded by Cheshire Youth Trust and delivery begins in March 2026:

- 16 March – Oulton Park CC
- 30 March – Crewe Vagrants CC
- 13 April – Weaverham CC
- 20 April – Oxton CC

Two additional venues are to be confirmed

This training supports the CCB Well-being C Mental Health Strategy.

## **3. CCB Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy**

CCB is committed to promoting the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of participants, staff, volunteers, coaches, and officials. Mental health is recognised as equal in importance to physical health, and cricket environments must be safe, supportive, and inclusive.

Current activity includes:

- Participation in the Safe and Effective Practice pilot with Active Cheshire C Cheshire Mind, focusing on the Talent Pathway
- Drafting a Wellbeing C Mental Health Policy for wider consultation
- Accredited FAMH training for CCB staff
- Launch of FAMH awareness training for clubs, creating Club Champions

## **4. Policy Development**

- Minor amendments have been made to the Low-Level Concern Policy to reflect the introduction of Clue as the case management system, with updated links to the documents and the Clue reporting form (Appendix A).
- A Wellbeing C Mental Health Policy is in development and will be circulated for consultation prior to the next Board meeting.

## **5. Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO) Survey**

A short survey was circulated to CSOs regarding their experience of the 2025 season. Over 50% of clubs have responded.

Findings will inform the pre-season CSO network meetings and support priorities for 2026.

## **Overall Season Experience**

Most described the season as:

- Generally positive
- Balanced
- With some challenging periods

***Safeguarding systems appear effective but under pressure at times.***

## **Common Safeguarding Challenges**

Most frequently reported:

- Managing concerns/incidents

- Ensuring training completion
- Embedding safeguarding policies
- Raising awareness and compliance

***Compliance and implementation remain the main operational pressures.***

### **Confidence in safeguarding processes**

Responses indicate:

- Majority are very or fairly confident
- A smaller group feels unsure

***Confidence is strong overall, but consistency could be improved.***

### **Positive Culture and Awareness Changes**

CSOs observed:

- Greater willingness to report concerns
- Increased safeguarding awareness
- Improved training visibility
- More openness in discussions

***Safeguarding culture continues to improve.***

### **Confidence for 2026**

Most CSOs feel:

- Fairly confident
- Very confident

***Despite challenges, CSOs largely feel prepared.***

### **Suggested Improvements for 2026**

Recurring themes:

- Better awareness for new members C juniors
- Increased volunteer capacity / safeguarding support
- Improved training compliance
- Stronger safeguarding presence within clubs

***Capacity and shared responsibility remain key priorities.***

A more detailed report will follow once further responses are received.

## **6. Player Ambassadors**

Following the November 2025 Board report, Player Ambassador roles have been expanded to include representation across age groups and genders. Nominations have been received and the structure is now in place.

The revised role description (Appendix B) emphasises:

- Listening to players
- Sharing feedback
- Promoting opportunities
- Supporting inclusion

Online welcome meetings have been well attended.

Monthly online sessions and a timetable of activities have been established. Player Ambassadors will also be encouraged to attend Young Cricket Collective Leadership courses during the Easter holidays.

Reasons Player Ambassadors volunteered include:

- “To build leadership skills”
- “I want the responsibility of being a role model”
- “To connect with different players and understand their experiences”
- “To help make the programme better”

## **7. CSO Pre-Season Network Meetings**

CSO network meetings are being organised for late March and April to:

- discuss survey findings
- share emerging themes
- provide updates and guidance for the 2026 season

## 8. CCB Safeguarding Steering s Support Group (SSSG)

Although the SSSG has not met since the last Board meeting, the proposed development of the Player Ambassador programme has now been implemented. The next SSSG meeting is scheduled for March 2026.

## 9. Safeguarding Themes – Threshold, Low-Level Concerns and Safeguarding Panel

### Threshold:

U11 Team Manager suspended from job due to unwanted sexual advances towards females, the matter was reported to the local authority (LADO) and the Cricket Regulator. Suspended from role.

It was discovered that a cricket club volunteer (not in regulated activity) was a convicted sex offender. The matter was reported to the Cricket Regulator and the Police were consulted. Volunteer received an interim suspension whilst the matter is being investigated by the Cricket Regulator.

Former player and coach at several Cheshire clubs was charged with historic allegations of indecent assault involving boys U16yrs and appeared at Crown Court. They are currently not involved in cricket

### Low Level Concerns:

- A captain grabbed a junior player by the arm during a match. Resolved by disciplinary process at club
- Concerns that a social member at a cricket club has exposed himself and taken recreational drugs. They are not currently attending the club.

### Safeguarding Panel decisions:

15 December 2025 – A player and coach who was suspended from all cricketing activities due to convictions for harassment, breached the suspension for interacting and attending clubs, received a further suspension of 12 months

## Appendix A

### Safeguarding – Low Level Concerns Policy

Policy Management:	
Business Area	Safeguarding
Author	County Safeguarding Officer - Julie Rafferty
Effective Date	7 February 2025
Review regularity	
Last review Date	9 February 2026
Next review date	February 2029
Version number	V2
Applicable to	Cheshire Cricket Board, Cheshire County Cricket Club, Cheshire Youth Cricket, Cheshire Clubs Cricket Committee, affiliated Cheshire cricket Clubs

<b>Method of dissemination</b>	Induction, website, email
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## **Cheshire Cricket Board**

### **Low-Level Concerns Policy**

Cricket is a game which unites communities and improves lives. Across England and Wales, the enjoyment, structure, fitness, and companionship which cricket brings to its participants, including children, is of immense value to them in their formative years. Our aim must be to harness the power of the game for their benefit and continue to inspire a generation.

It is very clear that cricket should be a game for everyone. Children and young people are the future of our sport – so it's vital that they experience cricket in a safe, secure, and enjoyable environment. Everyone involved in cricket, whether as a player, coach, umpire, administrator, staff member, volunteer, spectator, or parent/carer has a role to play.

Individually and collectively, it is our actions both on and off the field, which can help achieve this positive outcome. It is our commitment that every individual and club should have the appropriate tools and confidence to create a supportive and safe environment in which children can flourish. A welcoming, inclusive, and diverse environment is at the heart of this commitment.

We will create a safe culture across cricket which engages children and adults through effective leadership, values, and learning. We commit to support all those involved in the game to understand their personal and organisational responsibilities.

Everyone that participates or watches our game should do so safely in the knowledge that we see our responsibility to keep them safe and protected as our paramount consideration.

#### **Purpose of this Policy**

We set the highest expectations of behaviour for our staff, volunteers, and contractors. We are committed to a culture in which behaviour that does not meet these standards or does not adhere to good practice guidance, such as the Coaches Code of Conduct and England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Safe Hands Guidance, is identified and addressed at an early stage.

We are committed to fostering a culture of transparency and openness in reporting and responding to concerns. This policy outlines how staff, volunteers and contractors can raise a concern, no matter how small, about their own or another's behaviour and the framework in which this concern will be recorded and addressed.

#### **Who does this policy apply to?**

This policy applies to any person involved in cricket within the Cheshire Cricket area specifically employees, including casual staff, and volunteers working in or on behalf of Cheshire Cricket Board (CCB) and cricket clubs in the Cheshire Cricket area.

#### **Concerns that are covered by this policy:**

A 'low-level concern' is a concern about the behaviour of an employee, including casual staff or volunteers, towards a child or adult that does not meet the threshold for referral to a statutory agency such as the Police or Local Authority. It might be a concern, no matter how small, that someone might have acted in a manner which:

- Is not consistent with Safe Hands Safeguarding Policy and Guidance
- Is not consistent with the ECB Coaches Code of Conduct or other professional codes of conduct.

For Example:

- Swearing or using inappropriate language in front of a child
- Showing favouritism towards a particular child
- Having social media contact with a child in a way that does not adhere to agreed guidance.

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour which may look inappropriate but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

The term 'low-level concern' does not mean that the concern isn't important, or that the behaviour doesn't need to be addressed, but that it is a concern that does not on its own meet the threshold for referral to a statutory agency such as a Local Authority Designated Officer or Children's Social Care. The latter are often referred to as "allegations" and are defined as situations in which someone who works with children or adults has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children\*.  
(\*this would include behaviour with or towards adults).

In addition, a safeguarding concern might include concerns about a specific child or adult's safety or welfare

Concerns of this type must be reported to the appropriate statutory agency in line with the ECB Safe Hands Safeguarding Policy.

Irrespective of whether you think a behaviour might be an allegation or a 'low-level concern' the important thing is that you report it.

### **What to do if you have a concern?**

Addressing 'low-level concerns' positively at an early stage can prevent more concerning behaviours from developing and provide staff or volunteers with the support and training they need to ensure that they can maintain the highest standards in their practice. Dealing with these concerns effectively not only protects children and adults but also protects those working within our organisation from allegations and misunderstandings.

The approach promotes a culture in which everyone is clear regarding expected standards and provides an opportunity to identify developing patterns of behaviour that might place children and adults at risk, ensuring that they are effectively addressed.

All 'low-level concerns' should be reported to the County Safeguarding Officer. A Clue reporting form is provided at **Appendix 3** to ensure that all the relevant information is captured.

Very often there will be an innocent explanation for the conduct and individuals should not feel awkward either about making or being the subject of reports. Reporting is and should be seen as a neutral act and any person making a report of a 'low-level concern' or an allegation in good faith will suffer no detriment as a result and will benefit from protection under the CCB Whistleblowing Policy.

### **Procedure for Managing a 'Low-Level Concern'**

The County Safeguarding Officer will work closely with the Cricket Regulator Safeguarding Team and may consult with them at any stage of the process described below.

The person who has the concern should speak to the County Safeguarding Officer and/or complete a Clue reporting form with as much information as possible. The record (whether completed by the staff member or County Safeguarding Officer) should be signed, timed, and dated and provide a chronological, factual account of the concern.

On receipt of a report the County Safeguarding Officer will assess whether the concern is a 'low-level concern', or an alternative response is required.

Provided that it is deemed to be a 'low-level concern', the Club Safeguarding Officer(s) and/ or the County Safeguarding Officer will discreetly speak with any witnesses and the individual identified in the concern to ascertain their view of the incident or behaviour and record this.

The County Safeguarding Officer will review the information and determine whether the reported behaviour is appropriate and in line with expected behaviour, remains in their view a 'low-level concern' or may meet the harm threshold and must therefore be referred to the Cricket Regulator Safeguarding Team immediately.

If the behaviour is assessed as being within expected standards of behaviour, the individual who is the subject of the concern will still be made aware of this, and feedback will be provided to the person raising the concern. Consideration will be given to whether additional clarity is required in specific guidance/code of conduct or in the implementation of this 'low-level concerns' policy.

If a 'low-level concern' is identified, the County Safeguarding Officer and the individual will develop a proportionate plan to address any behaviour which has fallen short of expectations. This may include guidance or advice regarding conduct or identification of training or support needs and in certain circumstances, may need to be addressed through discipline or capability procedures (see **Appendix 1**).

### **Repeated Low-Level Concerns**

Several similar reports regarding poor practice by the same individual which in isolation may be considered 'low-level concerns' may, viewed together, potentially meet the harm threshold and result in a referral to the Cricket Regulator Safeguarding Team, especially if there appears to be a failure by the individual to respond to advice or training already provided.

### **Self-Reporting**

From time to time, individuals may be aware that their own conduct or practice could have, or may be seen to have, fallen short of expected standards, could be misinterpreted or may appear compromising to others. Self-reporting of concerns is encouraged in these circumstances as it demonstrates self-awareness on the part of the individual and enables us as an organisation to identify and address any potential gaps in policy and practice guidance. This also emphasises our commitment as an organisation to aspire to the highest standards of conduct and behaviour.

### **Recording and Retention of Information**

All 'low-level concerns' will be recorded in line with ECB systems and Privacy Policy as outlined in Appendix 3

Periodic reviews of 'low-level concerns' will be undertaken to ensure that they are being dealt with appropriately and that patterns, problematic behaviour or cultural/policy issues are identified and addressed.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Addressing a 'Low-Level concern'**

- Discussion regarding conduct that constitutes a 'low-level concern' should be proportionate and positive for example: "I am sure that you adhere to CCB values, and to help me understand how you came to behave in a way which is not in keeping with those values, so that we can understand what actions or support you might need so that we can both be confident that it won't happen again."
- Be clear regarding why the behaviour is inappropriate, problematic, or concerning and what change is required, including what support might be required to achieve this change.
- Be clear about the possible consequences of repeated behaviour.
  - Ensure at the end of the meeting that you and the individual have a clear plan regarding how the concern is addressed.
  - For employees there may be a need to refer to disciplinary or capability procedures if a 'low-level concern' raises misconduct or poor performance issues and advice should be taken from human resources as

appropriate.

- For contractors, any report of a 'low-level concern' on their part should be notified to their employer.

## Appendix 2

### Key Documents and Guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

[Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#)

- Keeping Children Safe in Education

2025 [Keeping Children Safe in](#)

[Education 2025](#)

- Keeping learners safe: The role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002

[Education Act 2002](#)

- Developing and implementing a Low-Level Concerns Policy: A guide for organisations which work with children – Farrer and Co 2022

[Farrer & Co - Developing and implementing a LLC policy](#)

- CCB Whistleblowing Policy

[CCB Whistleblowing policy V2 May 2025](#)

- ECB Low Level Concerns Guidance (November 2024) [Low Level Concerns Club Guidance](#)

## Appendix 3

### Cheshire Cricket Board Reporting form

All CCB staff, volunteers and contractors and representatives from cricket clubs in the Cheshire Cricket area are encouraged to report all 'low-level concerns' to the County Safeguarding Officer and/or using the relevant reporting form below.

Link to the Cheshire Cricket Board 'Low Level Concern' Reporting form:

[Clue LLC Reporting Form](#)

All reported 'low-level concerns' will be recorded in line with ECB systems and the Cricket Regulator privacy policy

[Cricket Regulator Privacy Policy](#)

## Appendix B

### Cheshire Youth Cricket - Player Ambassador – Role Description

#### What it's all about <

As a **Player Ambassador**, you'll be a voice for young cricketers across Cheshire Cricket Board (CCB) player pathway and Cheshire Youth Cricket (CYC) match programme. Your job is to share what players really think about cricket in the county — what's going well, what could be better, and how the game can be more fun and fair for everyone.

You'll help make sure young people are listened to and that cricket keeps improving for future players.

### **What you will do in the role?**

- Talk to other young players about their experiences in cricket.
- Share their views and ideas with the CYC team and Pathway Leads.
- Make sure young people have a say in how cricket is run in Cheshire.
- Help players raise any worries or concerns safely and pass these on to the County Safeguarding Officer.
- Promote different ways to get involved in cricket.
- Help make cricket welcoming, fair, and inclusive for everyone.

### **Extra things you might do**

- Attend workshops or events to talk about the Player Ambassador role.
- Enrol on the Youth Cricket Collective development programme
- Help plan topics to discuss with other players.
- Use email or social media to connect with young cricketers.
- Complete safeguarding training and a DBS check (if needed).

### **What kind of person makes a good Player Ambassador?**

- Friendly and easy to talk to
- Happy to listen to others
- Organised and good at communicating
- Passionate about cricket