



GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY CRICKET CLUB LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN PERSON AND VIA A ZOOM CALL ON THURSDAY 27TH APRIL 2023

PRESENT: The meeting was attended by 114 Members in total. 49 attended in person and 65 online.

WELCOME: The Chair, David Jones welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Also in attendance were, Chief Executive Officer, Will Brown; Deputy Chair, Steve Nelson; Honorary Treasurer, Rebecca Watkin; Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Neil Priscott; Finance Director, Bernard Cooke; Director of Cricket, Steve Snell and Head Coach, Dale Benkenstein.

Before moving to the main items on the Agenda, it was confirmed that the following Resolutions had been put before Club Members:

- a) To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Gloucestershire County Cricket Club Ltd held on 14th April 2022
- b) To confirm the appointment of Mr R Foley as member of the Executive Board
- c) To accept the appointment of Mr D McLaughlan, Mr J Hollingdale and Mr P Jubb as additional Vice-Presidents of the Club.
- d) To re-appoint Messrs Saffery Champness as Auditors.

In memoriam.

In the last 12 months the club have been notified of the passing of the following Members: Mr C Bascombe, Mr R Body, Mr M Carter, Mr D Chrisp, Mr S.N Clayton, Mr D English, Mr R Gladwin, Mr S Gregg, Mr D Henderson, Mr B Hicks, Mr S.J.M Hulme, Mr A Hutchinson, Mr B Jackson, Mrs D Jones, Mr R Kibblewhite, Mr J Moore, Mr M.K Priday, Mrs B Roles, Mr M Seymour, Mr J.K Slater, Mr J Tottle, Mr F Touhey, Mr N Wheatley, Mrs M Willett and Mrs P Wyatt.

Thanks to all for their service to and support for the club. They will be sadly missed.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from several Members.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 14TH APRIL 2022

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting dated 14th April 2022 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Proposer: Alderman W Martin

Secunder: Mr A Britton

3. REPORT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive updated the meeting on various elements of national and local cricket including:

- The appointment of a new Chief Executive and Chair at the ECB (Richard Gould and Richard Thompson respectively).
- The aftermath of the High Performance Review which had been a very challenging period for the game
- The upcoming publication of the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) report, which was commissioned by the ECB to investigate racism and inequality across the game and the steps that Gloucestershire cricket were taking to address concerns already.
- The African Caribbean Engagement Programme (ACE) has produced nine players who have joined girls and boys pathways in the South West. Six of whom have joined Gloucestershire.
- The rise in new international tournaments and the potential impact on player availability.
- The growing financial disparity between venues that host Hundred teams and those that don't.
- Major match allocations from 2025-2031 will be available soon. Gloucestershire have been offered some high profile Men's and Women's matches over that period which are critical to the clubs financial success
- The ECB broadcast deal with Sky will be continuing from 2025 – 2028.
- The ECB County Partnership Agreement (CPA) - a governance document which sets out the criteria the ECB want Counties to fulfil to secure funding. This agreement is reviewed annually and contains a large amount of ring-fenced funding.
- The Chief Executive reported that the club had returned a financial deficit of £570K in 2022 having unfortunately had to forecast a deficit at the beginning of the year. The nature of the funding was then detailed, particular in respect of the ECB funding not being linked to inflation.
- Several areas of commercial revenue and costs were covered including T20 ticket sales, increases in squad budgets and match expenses, sponsorship and the BS7 gym
- The importance of off-site training facilities were highlighted as was the revenue generated by those venues with things like hotels on-site

Neil Priscott, Deputy Chief Executive then updated the meeting on:

- Catering operations and the move away from a third party management team to bringing the catering operations "in-house" giving the Club more control on the quality and costs of our offering.
- The importance of maintaining our focus on environmental sustainability.

- The need for income diversification such as concerts and a recent licence change has enabled this to be planned earlier in the calendar.
- New focus groups and in particular the formation of the Member's Working Group were highlighted
- The Club's 12 point EDI action plan was discussed as was the launch of the LGBTQ+ supporters group
- Facility development was discussed – notably the new bar at the back of the Mound Stand, the Multi-faith room by the Grace gates, the new accessible toilets and further improvements to the Korev Terrace

Pete Lamb, Head of Community then spoke about a number of key community programmes, including:

- The Eid Celebration at the breaking of the Ramadan fast
- The clubs' cricket kit swap and drop
- The Club's partnership with the "Her Game Too" initiative
- New community days with over 75% of the attendees coming to cricket for the first time

4. TO RECEIVE THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2023

The Treasurer, Rebecca Watkin, summarised the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 January 2023.

The £570k deficit was higher than originally expected for the reasons highlighted by the Chief Executive above.

Financial strengths include a bumper year for sponsorship and advertising, bringing in £484k. The commercial team have worked hard on ensuring there is a good mix of partners, including multi-year deals and new sponsors coming on board.

There was a 2% growth in membership.

BS7 Gym is a very strong performing area of the business and has bounced back following COVID, contributing £168K to the business in 2022. There is also potential for continued growth.

The 2022 Men's International match was a sell out and women's cricket is showing steady growth in interest and attendance. Income from both matches was up on the previous year.

The challenges last year included ticket sales and catering operations which have been mentioned above.

Financial targets, monitored by the Board, include the ratio between equity and debt. The target to get this down to 1 was met part way through the year but this is now 1.03 due to the deficit generated. This is at the same level as of Jan 2021.

56% of income in 2022 came directly from the ECB. This increases to 69% if international fixtures are included. The impact of increased inflation has meant a real terms decrease in funding year on year as explained by the Chief Executive above.

Therefore, a major objective for the club in the future must be to diversify and grow non-ECB income.

A focus for the Board moving forward will be on how to maximise revenue generating opportunities within the ground.

There will be a budget deficit again in 2023 with the aim of returning to a surplus position by the 2024 season. This has been set through discussions with ECB and the clubs lenders.

The Treasurer thanked Finance Director Bernard Cooke and his team for the accounts which have been audited and there were no adjustments required.

Vote to accept statement of accounts.

Carried by numbers.

The Chair invited questions from Members.

Are there sufficient funds in place to support another year of deficit?

The Treasurer responded that the Board are comfortable with the cashflow position, particularly regarding future international matches, which generate a lot of cash up front. The bank have reviewed cash flow and are happy with this.

The Chair confirmed he has also been involved in relationship management with the bank.

Hugh Kirkbride asked how non-test/non-Hundred venues are working together to address the financial imbalance within the county structure?

The Chief Executive confirmed that any changes to current structure of the Hundred needs a two thirds majority vote to pass. This means 12 of the 18 counties voting in favour. It is unlikely under the current structure that counties with franchise teams already will vote against their own interest.

The 10 non-Hundred venues are all experiencing the similar financial issues and are presenting a united front to the ECB on the subject of financial equity.

The County Partnership Agreement (CPA) sets out minimum funding levels which can be expected from the ECB. Non-hundred venues are asking for an increased proportion of the total funding pot available to counties, plus a share of the revenue from that competition.

Hugh Kirkbride also asked how can the club work with local Councils to improve transport links to Bristol from the North of the County?

The Chief Executive confirmed that a local train station at Ashley Down is due to open in 2024 and conversations are ongoing with the local Council regarding transport and parking.

Adrian Thomas asked are we guaranteed a bottom line in funding from the ECB?

The Chief Executive replied that of £4m received from the ECB only 8% is index linked. The club will continue to receive the same amount as a minimum until 2028. If the total is worth c. £750k less as a result of inflation, this shortfall needs to come from somewhere alongside a greater share of wealth generated by the Hundred.

The Chair confirmed that the Board are confident about short term financial sustainability, but the landscape of cricket is changing hugely and rapidly and the 10 non-Hundred venues are currently at a financial disadvantage.

Mike Dudley asked whether the Welsh Fire Hundred Matches have to be played at Cardiff, or could they be shared between Taunton and Bristol? And if the competition continues post 2028, is there an option to have a franchise team in Bristol?

The Chief Executive confirmed that the ECB were planning that by Jan 2024 all major match allocations, CPA funding and the future of the Hundred would be agreed. Knowing this helps with longer term planning and stability for the club.

At present there are no plans to play matches in Bristol. However, the new ECB Chief Executive and Chair are open to discussions with counties about developing the tournament further and are considering changes to the scope, timings, number of teams etc.

Adrian Thomas asked are all non-hundred venues (bar Somerset) making financial losses at the moment? And have bigger clubs such as Lancashire and Yorkshire recovered to pre-pandemic levels?

The Chief Executive responded that not all clubs are in exactly the same financial position. This varies based on factors such as squad expenditure, ticket sales etc. But all non-hundred venues are demonstrably at a financial disadvantage.

A lot of the bigger clubs will be trading profits but have significant debts, a number of which will have been underwritten by private individuals or Local Authorities.

Another member asked, following the reorganisation of the cricket department do the figures include one off severance/ redundancy payments? Also, why have squad clothing expenses trebled since the previous year?

The Chair stated that the club won't discuss individual contracts or staff changes but confirmed there was no material impact on finances from changes in personnel.

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the increase in clothing expenses was due to the sponsorship deal with Samurai coming to an end and a new one starting with New Balance.

Chris Coley asked is it time to consider ceasing to be a members club and become a limited company?

The Chair confirmed that there are no plans to change the structure of the club at present.

Only three of the eighteen counties are not member-lead.

However, lots of clubs are looking to change how they operate, for reasons already stated, given the changing landscape of cricket.

There are risks associated with ceasing to be member-lead and the Board are being creative in exploring ideas about a sustainable future for the club.

The Deputy Chair spoke about how people drive improvement. There are a lot of great people working at all levels who underpin the strategic work being done by the Board.

5. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CRICKET

Director of Cricket, Steve Snell confirmed that 2022 was a year of transition for the Cricket Department, with changes to staff and players.

Will Porterfield was appointed as Assistant Coach. He comes with 13 years' experience playing as captain for Ireland.

Robbie Joseph is a specialist bowling coach adding clarity and direction for that group of players.

Kirk Russell, former England Physio, has joined the team to head up the Science and Medicine Department. This will help players feel supported both on and off the field.

There was some inconsistency on the field last year in Division One.

Six of the first four day games were played with little break in between and almost all went to the final session on day four. This presented challenges for the players physical and mental health.

Experience in Division One shaped the squad for this season and has given players clarity regarding their roles and responsibilities on and off the field.

There have been some good signings including bowler Marchant De Lange to play across all formats.

The decision not to have a pre-season tour was a difficult one and impacted on preparation for the start of the season. Poor weather and not having an out ground means minimal access to outdoor net facilities for pre-season preparation.

The meeting then heard from Head Coach Dale Benkenstein about his reflections on last season.

2022 was a tough year for the squad but Dale relished the challenge as a coach and learned a lot from it.

Individual performances of note included younger players Tom Price and Ajeet Singh Dales breaking records with bat and ball.

The focus for the year ahead is to build a strong culture with a competitive edge.

Mark Thorburn has been appointed as interim Head of the boys Talent Pathway and has been extremely proactive in the role so far.

The priority of the Pathway is always to develop players to feed into the senior squad and to have players coming through who represent of diversity of the local community.

There is also a focus on coach development and working in collaboration with the Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation to ensure highly skilled and motivated coaches are coming through.

David Jones thanked Steve and Dale for their input and optimism and invited questions from Members.

Deputy Chair Steve Nelson asked about how the club intend to work with coaches to assess talent from public as well as private schools?

The Director of Cricket confirmed that there are initiatives providing opportunities for state school pupils to access more cricket sessions to address the disparity in opportunity.

Gloucestershire will maintain and build on the partnership with the ACE programme, which identifies and develops talent from the African Caribbean community.

Work is being done to educate coaches on natural biases, how to identify and select talent and how to network with recreational clubs to give talented local players more opportunities.

The Head Coach added there is a natural element to cricket skills and coaches should be able to identify those attributes in individual players regardless of their background or experience.

A member asked whether there have been any adjustments made following the large number of injuries within the squad last year?

The Head Coach confirmed that the new physio brings over 10 year experience with the England squad.

There were issues with players overdoing things at the start of the season, contributing to risk of injury and therefore limited availability towards the end of the season. This was a big learning point for the coaching and medical staff regarding squad rotation and ensuring player's longevity across the whole season.

Adrian asked about Grant Roelofsen and the transition of players from 2nd XI to 1st XI cricket.

The Head Coach confirmed that Roelofsen performs as is an international quality player who fulfils a role within the T20 squad.

There were some gaps in the T20 squad with the loss of players like Benny Howell, but Roelofsen is a potential opener with Marchant De Langer bowling and batting in the lower order.

The Director of Cricket stated that the increase of youth and athleticism in the squad adds to the energy and agility in the field which can make a huge difference in white ball matches.

The Chair thanked Steve and Dale for their hard work and expressed excitement for the season ahead.

6. ELECTION OF A NEW MEMBER TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Chair paid tribute to outgoing board member David McLauchlan who has served two terms. It was acknowledged that as a volunteer there is a real challenge in managing the demands and expectations of Board members whilst working fulltime.

David will remain a regular presence on match days and will continue to collaborate with the Community Team on projects and initiatives in and around the ground.

David is a great advocate for members and will be sadly missed by the Board.

The Chairman then introduced newly elected board member Richard Foley to the meeting and asked him say a few words about himself and his ambitions for the future.

Richard summarised his personal and professional background including his experience as a lawyer, his love of cricket and drive to become more involved with Gloucestershire, particularly as the county has a good understanding of the challenges currently facing the game and ambition to tackle these head on.

7. APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

The Chairman announced that the Club wished to appoint three new Vice Presidents. Firstly outgoing board member Mr David Mclauchlan. The second, ex-chair Mr John Hollingdale. And finally ex-board member Mr Peter Jubb.

David McLaughlan offered his sincere thanks to the club for the honour of being made a Vice President and wished Mr Foley all the best on his appointment to the board.

Approved by show of hands.

8. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR

Messrs Saffrey Champness LLP were, accordingly, reappointed as Auditors of the Club for the next financial year.

**Proposer: Miss R Watkin
Plus show of hands.**

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

In concluding the meeting, the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and continued support.

The Chair also gave thanks to all the staff and supporters before closing the meeting.

Signed:

Dated: