

Worcestershire County Cricket Club

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Club held in the Graeme Hick Pavilion at the County Ground on Monday 28th February 2011 at 7.00 p.m.

Present:	President	Mr K T Mills
	Chairman of the Board	Mr J M Price
	Chief Executive	Mr D A Leatherdale
	Director of Cricket	Mr S J Rhodes
	Finance Director	Mr C R Smith
	Together with 150 members	

The President welcomed Members to the Meeting.

The President then asked members to stand in silent tribute to all the members and friends of the Club who had died during the last year, in particular Lord Walker of Worcester, PC, MBE, Mrs Betty Godfrey, Jack Godfrey, George Farrimond, Colin Scholey, Jim Yardley, Bernard Bridgewater, Miss Jean Price.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from: Lord Lieutenant Michael Brinton, Mr Neal Radford, Mr George Chesterton, Mr John Elliott, Mr David Exall, Mr Martin Horton, Mr Jack Randall, Mr Vic Whittingham, Mrs June Cox, Mrs Marjorie Elliott, Mrs Pat Fletcher, Mrs Margaret Horton, Mrs Lyndsey McDonnell, Mrs Lillah Whittingham, Mr Angus Bentall, Mr Graham Robertson, Mr Clive Davies, Mr Robert Scott, Mr Ron Fletcher, Mr Tim Jones, Mr Ron McDonnell, Mr Michael Needham, Mrs Ann Mullen, Mrs Joyce Booth, Mrs Yvonne Seward, Mrs Jane Radburn, Mr Phil Mackie, Mr Ron Jackson, Mr David Hill, Mrs Elaine Bennett.

2. **Confirmation of Minutes of the AGM held on 22nd February 2010**

The Minutes (which had been available to Members prior to the Meeting and were taken as read) were approved by Members and signed as a correct record of the Meeting.

3. **President's Address**

The President said that it had given him much pleasure to be the Club's President for the last two years. He said that these days the President doesn't have much to say as was the case some years ago. The President doesn't have a vote so is basically a figurehead for the Club and one of the Club Officers. He thanked the members for electing him for the last two years.

He said that last year he had said that the members were disappointed with the way the season had gone and being relegated to the second division of the County Championship, but the younger players had made good progress and it was good to

see them gain promotion back to the first division and he hoped that could consolidate their position this year.

The President praised the Director of Cricket for the work he did during the season and with the way our young players were progressing.

He thanked the members for their support. He said that we were one of the smaller counties but had a big membership base in comparison to other clubs. The Club did appreciate all the support we received from members with the membership fees and also attendance at matches.

The President also thanked the members for their support of the Supporters' Association over the years. The Association was celebrating its 60th anniversary in June. He said that the Association made a donation of £5k to the Club last year and had also made £50k available to them this winter to help with cashflow problems.

He said that one of the sad things that had happened during his time as President was that the Year Book had been stopped. He felt that the older members had appreciated this as not everyone could look up news on the website. He wondered whether this could be looked at again by the Club or the Heritage Group.

The President wished the Director of Cricket and the team every success for the 2011 season and hoped that the new President would enjoy his time as President.

4. **Approval of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts**

The President invited the Chairman to speak to the Annual Report.

"Mr President, ladies and gentlemen.

There have been some high points as well as some low points, and a number of tough decisions have been made over the last 12-18 months or so, many well documented with regards players, some not so with work done behind the scenes.

It is evident after recent financial statements from other Counties that the cricket and sporting market place is a particularly difficult place at present unless you are Manchester City or Chelsea Football Club.

Leicestershire announced losses of over £400,000 a few weeks ago.

Lancashire CCC expecting to announce substantial losses combined with a recent statement from their Chief Executive, Jim Cumbes, that the future going forward is "frightening".

Yorkshire CCC recently announced losses of £1.6million for last year and a budgeted loss of over £250,000 for the year ahead while also not bidding for an Ashes test in 2013 due to the financial commitment and the risk involved. This shows how difficult things are.

Surrey, the biggest Club in County Cricket in financial terms, made 21 people redundant last September after investing heavily in their squad for 2010 and still finished bottom of Division 2 in the LV County Championship.

To achieve a six figure profit during these difficult economic times we are going through is due to a great deal of hard work and many sacrifices made over the last 18 months both on and off the field. Further sacrifices have also been made going forward into 2011 and beyond.

While it is disappointing for all involved in the Club to see what are seen to be high profile players leave us, to achieve promotion to Division One of the LV County Championship is testimony to the effort and spirit within the team. The players, Director of Cricket, coaching and backroom staff should be commended on their performance, particularly during the last 6 weeks of the 2010 season.

With regards to the present state of play on the development of the ground, when it became clear last November that funding would not be forthcoming for Phase 2 due to the present economic climate, it was evident a change of thinking needed to take place to try and progress the project further.

The present layout and design whilst fulfilling many needs and being eminently suitable 2-3 years ago, does not now work when looked at on a cost basis and the infrastructure and ancillary facilities which would have been included.

Our site, as I am sure everyone is aware, is not short of its individual difficulties but these are not insurmountable and it is hoped that in the very near future a revised scheme will be presented which will work for all parties involved giving the Club new revenue generating facilities as well as a financial boost which would be extremely helpful at the present time.

Discussions are ongoing with the City Council, Premier Inn and ourselves in order to produce a facility which is not only beneficial to the Club, but to the City as well and its future as a whole.

The main aim, as has always been the case, is to do as much as possible without additional cost or exposure to the Club which will enhance the Club and also allow for a more viable and sustainable long term future

We are a strong Club with a loyal membership and support that many would say belies the size of the Club. A great deal has been achieved over the past 20-30 years, championship wins, one day trophy's, promotion and yes relegation which are all in the nature of sport which make it both exciting and frustrating at the same time.

As in other years, 2010 had its ups and downs both on and off the field but culminated in a magnificent last day of the season against Sussex with a tense hour watching how the match at Cardiff was panning out in order to gain promotion to Division 1. The players, coaches and backroom staff should all be congratulated on what many said was an "impossible challenge" after the loss of a number of key players at the end of 2009.

As the England and Wales Cricket Board continue to reward counties for developing younger, home grown players, something that is foremost in many Counties mind.

The progression of younger players combined with the spirit of the senior members of the squad have shown what can be achieved and while with youth comes exuberance and some inconsistency, also comes spirit, passion and energy in abundance.

As has been said many times over the last year or so as a Club we have addressed a number of operating issues and ongoing work in relation to ground development during 2011 as well as further investment in the development of younger players who led us to promotion, will stand us in good stead for the future. It is vital that we create a viable and sustainable Club going forward, both on and off the pitch.

All involved within the Club whether players or colleagues, volunteers or members and supporters, have a great deal of pride in what the Club has achieved over the last 146 years and with the effort that continues to be put in there is a considerable amount of faith in our future to compete at the top level for success in 2011 and the years to come.

He thanked Ken Mills for his two years as President of the Club, also his wife and the rest of the members of the Supporters' Association for their help to the Club this year. In November the Supporters' Association gave the Club £50k to help with the cashflow.

He said that it would be remiss of him if he did not pay tribute to Mark Newton who had been Chief Executive of the Club for 10 years. He said that Mark had worked hard for the Club over the years and Mark and his wife Sue would always have a warm welcome at New Road.

Mark's successor, David Leatherdale, had settled in well and he knew that the members had a high regard for David. From what he had seen so far he was going to be a very good Chief Executive. We could have advertised the position but the Board were adamant that they wanted David as Chief Executive. He was sure that along with the Director of Cricket they would bring success to the Club in the future.

He concluded by saying that he hoped we would have good weather and success at Worcester this coming summer."

Cricket Report

The Director of Cricket said

"Looking back to the start of the 2010 season we were the bookies favourites, not to get promotion, but to come bottom of Division 2.

We had lost some good players and had a policy of playing young players, and we also lost our captain halfway through the season. To gain promotion on the last day

was particularly good for the team and the younger players in the team. I think the balance of senior and younger players is good.

You might ask how we did it. We did it with having a fantastic spirit in the team. Did we have this in 2009 with a better team, I don't think we did.

Let's break it down. The Championship was a revelation for us. Daryl Mitchell, Alexei Kervezee and Moeen Ali got the bulk of the runs and this was a great effort from all three of them. It was good to see Moeen maturing wonderfully and good to see that Daryl's form was not affected when he took over the captaincy. Alexei had a very special season in championship cricket. The 1200 runs he scored were very entertaining. He has shown tremendous loyalty to the club in signing a five year contract.

James Cameron also showed a lot of potential during the season, but unfortunately our more experienced batters struggled. Phil Jaques only averaged 31 which was below form for him. Vikram Solanki and Ben Smith, both experienced batsmen, both struggled during the season.

One thing that we are focussed on in the Championship are 50 partnerships. This doesn't sound a lot but what this does it stops the collapse when you lose four or five together.

With the ball Shakib al Hasan was a revelation in four day cricket getting 35 wickets. Alan Richardson bowled over 500 overs and took 55 wickets. He answered some critics who were saying that he was the wrong kind of signing for Worcestershire. Alan is a good team man.

Matt Mason had injuries and it was difficult to get him on the park. He played eight games and took 31 wickets.

There were signs with the youngsters of what is to come in the next few years.

Gareth Andrew showed some improvement in his four day bowling.

In summary in 2010 I felt that they had bowled as a unit and they bowled with control.

In the one day games we were not good enough. The 40 over competition was a big disappointment. We had a terrible start prior to the T20 competition. We were on a downward spiral and it is difficult to change. We didn't field as well as we can.

After the T20 competition Vikram got back into the runs and Moeen Ali and Alexei Kervezee started to show some one day form.

With the ball in the second part of the 40 over competition Shakib al Hasan gave us some international experience and bowled well. Jack Shantry was the best bowler and he bowled at difficult times.

The T20 competition was a disappointment once again. A lot of the games that we lost were close but I know we have to win these games. We had some tough games with Sanath Jayasuriya showing some fireworks but we needed more from the middle order. We need to address this going forward.

Moeen, Sanath and Jack Shantry were the better bowlers in this competition with Jack Shantry being the best in tough situations. The other seamers were quite expensive and we are addressing this in winter training.

On the last day of the match at Colwyn Bay Vikram spoke to me about standing down from the captaincy. Vikram said that he felt it best for Mitch to take the team forward.

Daryl has now got the opportunity to take over the captaincy and he is ready for the challenge. It was good to see a lift in the team performance following this and it also was good to see Vikram scoring some runs. Daryl is very much respected by his team mates and he has a good cricket brain.

As far as looking forward, on the overseas side of things we have signed Damien Wright. He is a quality bowler who swings the ball a little bit. He is not the quickest but an aggressive character on the field and a tremendous guy in the dressing room which is something we consider when selecting our overseas players.

Saeed Ajmal is a little bit of a test. He seems quite a character but a different type of spin bowler for the back end of the season. When he is playing he is the type of bowler you can put on one end. He has done well in international cricket. He is a good T20 bowler, with good economy rates and quite a bit of experience.

We will have Shakib al Hasan back for the T20 competition. The reason he is only with us for the T20 is that this is the only time he is available due to other international commitments.

All the support staff at Worcester do a very good job. Ben Langley, our physiotherapist, moved on to the England post at the end of the season. Team success goes down to the players but all the support staff have done a fantastic job.

He also wished to add his thanks to Mark Newton. He said that over the years they had had a few battles but had never fallen out. He had found him a great person to work with and had learnt a lot from him. He was delighted to have David in his role as they had known one another for a long time and hopefully they would form a strong partnership.

He also thanked Ken Mills and said that he had done a good job as President and also thanked the Supporters' Association for their contributions towards the playing staff over the years.

Both Matt Pardoe and Neil Pinner had come through the scholarship system and we now had Brett D'Oliveira signed for this season.

Expectations for 2011. We don't want to be that up and down club. If the lads can stay in Division 1 this year the young players will gain such experience from this. It should be seen as progress if we can just consolidate and stay in Division 1 this season.

We need to improve in the one day competitions and this is being looked at during training.

We will, no doubt, be the bookies favourites to go down but it is up to us to prove them wrong.

Finance

The Finance Director gave the finance report.

He said the accounts being presented were the merged accounts of Worcestershire County Cricket Club Limited and Worcestershire County Cricket Trading Ltd. These accounts are audited annually by Rabjohns and signed copies of these accounts are held at the Club's offices and are available for inspection during the year and I have copies with me this evening should anyone wish to see the accounts at the end of the meeting.

There are two main summaries in the Annual Report - the income and expenditure account and the balance sheet. The other pages are notes which support the detail in these summaries.

The income and expenditure account for the year ended September 2010 shows a post tax surplus of £103,627, This compares with a pre tax loss of £101,346 in 2009.

The main point to note is that the improvement was driven by significant cost reductions. The Board had decided at the end of 2009 on a cost reduction programme aiming to save costs of approximately £400k in 2010 and future year and thus return to profitability.

We achieved a 14% reduction in operating costs during 2010 compared to 2009, with operating cost reduction against 2009 of £436k which was just as well as our income was lower than 2009.

An income reduction was expected bearing in mind the economic conditions but one area was worst than expected, this was match receipts which were £137k less than 2009. In 2010 eight Twenty20 games produced a total income of £118k whereas in 2009 five Twenty20 games produced a total of £115k.

Interest and finance costs went up but this was partly due to the Graeme Hick Pavilion. Our loan repayments commenced in April 2009 so we only had 6 months interest against 12 months for current year. Other reason for the increase were that we had lost money in the period 2007-2009 and had invested heavily in land and building at New Road. This resulted in a higher level of indebtedness which in turn produced a higher level of interest costs. One final reason for the increase is that

banks are now charging more for their services than was the case in previous years, for example facility fee costs are now approximately 4%, 12 months ago they were 1%.

However, the main thing to note is that we achieved our targets and produced a surplus in the year.

The Balance Sheet shows assets of £1.466m. That is the value of the Club at that date. This was an improvement on the previous year of £103k which was the income expenditure surplus in the year which had been retained in the business.

The Balance Sheet showed a modest improvement on the previous year and we are working hard to see that further improvements will be made in the next 2 to 3 years.

The Finance Director formally asked the meeting to adopt the annual report and statement of accounts.

This was seconded by Mr Tim Curtis.

The President then asked for questions about the Annual Report.

Mr Les Davies said that last year he had asked how we were going to replace the players we had lost and he guessed he had been answered by the way we had played.

He wanted to ask the Finance Director about the fact that on the income side of the income and expenditure account, fundraising and other income was about £170k more than in 2009. Wasn't this the main reason for us making a surplus in 2010 and the question is would there be money available for the 2011 accounts.

The Finance Director replied that the main reason we had achieved a surplus was because of the cost savings. The item in Note 4 is money from the ECB for ground development which we have done over the years and this undoubtedly helped the figures. We hope to get £300k altogether and so we could have another £100k in the 2011 accounts.

Mr Stewart Bailey asked if we shouldn't try and attract more internationally known overseas players.

The Director of Cricket said he would like nothing better than to sign a top international star but it comes down to how much the Club can afford. Saeed Ajmal is an international player for Pakistan. We have done some good deals to get these overseas signings. Another aspect is that the top players are not always available.

Mr Selwyn Charles-Jones asked whether membership subscriptions were falling. He understood why they fell last year but asked if there had been any signs of an increase with the prospects of a more interesting time in the first division coming.

The Chief Executive said that the positive news was that the membership was up 6/7% on this time last year. The success of last year has been very positive and if the trend continues we should reach our target and hopefully go past it.

The Annual Report and Accounts were approved by the meeting.

5. **To Elect a President**

The President handed over the meeting to the Chairman at this point.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Board, said it gave him great pleasure to propose Duncan Fearnley as President of Worcestershire County Cricket Club for 2011.

Mr Fred Kitson seconded this proposal and the meeting voted in favour of the proposal.

Mr Fearnley, as President, then took over the meeting.

Mr Fearnley then spoke to the meeting.

“Mr Chairman, Board members, Members.

I would like to say thank you very much for electing me to this position and I am sure Mary and myself will be good ambassadors for the current year.

I have been with the Club 50 years on the 9th April and to be appointed to this position from being an ordinary player to being President is I am sure the best honorary position in the 18 counties.

Looking back over the years it would be very easy to say that we have won everything, but we have. There are some counties who haven't won a single championship and Steve, particularly, what you have done over the last 3 years during difficult times, I would like to congratulate you and the players and I hope this continues.

Contrary to what you may have heard about the Yorkshire mafia, being the oldest here, Steve and David played in the Bradford League, which is one of the best leagues in the world, and that is why it is the Yorkshire mafia. I can assure you that Steve, David and myself are 150% behind this Club.

Thank you for your support and we will be around all summer if you want to have a word.

Thank you for electing me as President and Mary and myself will be following the Club all season with a great deal of interest. “

6. **Confirmation of Additional Directors**

The Chief Executive asked for the meeting's formal approval to the re-election of Mr J M Price and Professor David Green, Principal of Worcester University as Additional Directors.

This was approved by the meeting.

7. **Confirmation of the Election to the Board**

The Chief Executive confirmed that two nominations had been received for the two available places on the Board and therefore Miss Meriel Harris and Mr Peter Jewell were re-elected for a further 3 year period.

The Chief Executive asked for the meeting's formal approval to the re-election of Miss Meriel Harris and Mr Peter Jewell to serve for three years.

This was approved by the meeting.

8 **Vote of Thanks to Honorary Advisers**

The Director of Cricket, on behalf of the Board, proposed a Vote of Thanks to the Club's Honorary Medical Advisors.

The proposal was seconded by Mr Peter Radburn and approved by the meeting.

9. **Any Other Business**

Year Books

Mr Alan Bennett said that he would like to agree with the former President's remark concerning the Year Book. He felt that this was a serious matter and we should seriously consider providing a Year Book as not everyone has a computer. He asked for an assurance that they would be looked at again.

The Chief Executive said that this would be looked at again and he had already spoken to the Heritage Group about this but there is a huge cost involved in this. To commit this amount of money at the moment was not possible. Alternatives are being looked at.

Directors

Mr Selwyn Charles-Jones said that he felt members should be grateful to the Directors of the Club who give their time free of charge to the Club.

Pavilion

Mr Peter Asquith thanked the Club for putting handrails down the steps of the pavilion. He asked if it was possible to lower the handrail along the walkway as his wife was in a wheelchair and found it difficult to see over the rail.

The Chief Executive said we could look at this but the handrails have to be set at the height dictated by the Health and Safety Regulations. We did not have a choice in this matter.

Mr Talbot said that when he visited the ground at Durham last summer their handrails were of a height which would be suitable.

The Chief Executive agreed to look at this.

Twenty20

Mr Ian McRae said that it had been mentioned in the national press that the following year could be changed but he felt there was too much T20 and it was better with more 40 over cricket.

The Chief Executive said that would be answered in the next 3 to 4 weeks. He said that he would be attending a meeting the following day with the Chairman to discuss the format of cricket for 2012 onwards. One of the areas they are looking at is playing less four day cricket which Worcestershire is against.

Ladies Pavilion

Mr Nick Lynam said that one of the things that makes this Club great is the Ladies Pavilion teas and he hoped that this would continue.

Miss Harris said that there was no sign of this being stopped.

The President thanked the members for their attendance and formally closed the meeting at 8.00 p.m.

Signed

Dated