

Worcestershire County Cricket Club

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Club held in The John Moore Theatre, King's School, Worcester on Monday 9th February 2009 at 7.00 p.m.

Present:	President	Mr P J Seward
	Chairman of the Board	Mr J M Price
	Chief Executive	Mr M Newton
	Director of Cricket	Mr S J Rhodes
	Captain	Mr V S Solanki
	Together with 53 members	

The President welcomed Members to the Meeting and explained that the meeting was not yet quorate. It was explained that the meeting would go ahead and the Chief Executive would write to Members to seek approval.

The President expressed thanks to Mr Tim Keyes, Headmaster of King's School, for once again allowing the Club the use of the excellent facilities in the School's Theatre.

The President then referred to the deaths of ex-player John Whitcombe and ex Committee Member John Pugh during the year:

JOHN WHITCOMBE He had played cricket for the County between 1949 and 1952.

JOHN PUGH John was a well remembered and well thought of member of the Committee for many years.

The President then asked Members to stand for a moment in silent tribute to these and all Members and friends of the Club who had died during the year.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from: Mr Chris Smith, Mr Tim Curtis, Miss Meriel Harris, Mr Roy Booth, Mr John Chadd, Mr David Exall, Mr Duncan Fearnley, Mr Tom Graveney, Mr Vic Whittingham, Mrs Joyce Booth, Mrs Monica Chadd, Mrs B J Day, Mrs Mary Fearnley, Mrs Jackie Graveney, Miss Ann Turvey, Mrs Lillah Whittingham, Mr A J Bentall, Mr Michael Needham, Mr Harry Greenway, Mr D A Kennedy, Mr W Smith, Mr George Farrimond and Mr Nigel Boswell.

2. **Confirmation of Minutes of the AGM held on 15th February 2008**

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.

Several Members entered the meeting at this point and the meeting was now quorate.

3. **President's Address**

The President thanked the Chairman, Board, Vice Presidents and Members for the privilege of being President for the last two years. He said that he had been a member of the Committee who had changed the rules so that a President could only serve two years and now he was regretting it.

He said there had been a lot of special moments plus several floods but these had brought members together in fellowship working to get the ground back to normal.

The President said that in 2007 we had won the NatWest Pro40 and due to some success in 2008 we were now in the first division of both major competitions.

He congratulated the three players in the England Lions side and also congratulated Steve Davies on being called up to the Test side playing in the West Indies.

He felt that after 30 years as a member of the Committee, the Dressing Room was the happiest he had ever seen and he thanked the Director of Cricket, Steve Rhodes, and Captain, Vikram Solanki, for this. He said the Club tended to retain its staff in all departments and this reflected well on all members of the club. He said we had a first-class Chief Executive, a Chairman who leads from the front and a hard working Board.

He said there were plans for a first-class arena at New Road and he was sure his successor would do well over the next year.

The President thanked his wife Yvonne for all her support and commended the new President to the Members.

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

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

The Chairman said that it gave him great pleasure to give his 3rd Annual Report.

He said that the Club had made a surplus of £318,636 against a deficit of £603,211 in the previous year. This had been achieved with the help from the Supporters' Association, Advantage West Midlands, The National Sports Foundation, the Flood Club and Members and Supporters. He also said that we had received tremendous support from ECB. This meant that in total £900,000 of the £1.1m attributable losses from the 2007 floods in last year's report had been recovered which is a fantastic achievement.

The Director of Cricket would report on the cricket but he wished to offer his congratulations as we would be only one of six counties to compete in the first division of both competitions in 2009. He said that we continue to punch above our weight.

He congratulated Stephen Moore, Steven Davies and Gareth Batty on their selection for the England Lions and Steve Davies on his call up for the England Test side in the West Indies.

The Chairman said that Graeme Hick had retired at the end of the 2008 season after 25 years with the Club. He had had a truly remarkable career and the Chairman said that he and the Board wished to offer their appreciation for all that he had achieved by naming the new pavilion the Graeme Hick Pavilion.

Three Worcestershire cricketers had achieved 100 centuries in their career, Glenn Turner, Tom Graveney and Graeme Hick. The Club had decided to honour Tom Graveney by naming the Members' Lounge the Tom Graveney Lounge but he said that Glenn Turner had not been forgotten and would be remembered in the next phase of the development.

The Chairman told the meeting that the Club had now completed the purchase of the freehold of the Severn Bridge site and had signed a contract with Premier Inn Hotels Ltd for a 120 bedroom hotel subject to the Council giving planning permission for an additional 40 bedrooms.

The new pavilion work had commenced in September last year and was due to be completed on the 20th May. It was currently on time and on budget. Early season arrangements for members will be communicated in due course.

The Chairman told members the Club intended to stay at New Road. We had recently been voted one of the top ten grounds in the world that people wanted to visit. The intention is to construct all the buildings above the flood level thus ensuring more resilience against future floods.

The first year of recovery had gone extremely well. We had received a lot of generous donations and if the ground had not flooded again in September last year we would probably have made a greater surplus. The rearranged Flood Club Dinner would take place on 21st July.

Cricket generally is in good shape with the TV agreement in place until 2013. Attendances in 2008 were up right across the game.

Membership subscription in 2008 had not been increased but the Board felt that the increases made in 2009 are justified for the following reasons. There is unbelievable pressure on players' salaries due to the IPL; the introduction of 12 month player contracts and the upkeep of the ground does not get any cheaper. We not only want to survive we want to thrive.

The Chairman said he had been a life member of 35 years standing having paid £75 for his life membership and he felt that life members got pretty good value for their subscription. Out of 850 life members 158 had already paid the extra £35 for the Twenty20 games and interestingly only 25 life members had complained and the Chief Executive had written or spoken to every one of them.

Worcestershire County Cricket Club has a ground capacity of 4500 for Twenty20 games and because we do not know how many members will turn up it costs the Club a lot of money with many seats unoccupied. Most other counties charge for Twenty20 and we still think our members get extremely good value for money.

The Chairman said that he was determined that the Club should remain a members' club unlike Hampshire which was owned by Rod Bransgrove and Durham which was owned by a consortium of local businesses. The Club needed to stay competitive on and off the field.

The Chairmanship of the ECB has been in the press recently. The Chairman was pleased that Giles Clarke would continue as Chairman of the ECB as he was a great supporter of the small counties.

Finally he wished to express a vote of thanks to the outgoing President, Peter Seward, and his wife Yvonne. He said he would always be known as the Flood President. He thanked him for all his hard work as President of the Club over the last two years. Ken Mills he knew would be the President of Sunshine.

He also thanked the staff of Worcestershire County Cricket Club and thought we would have a very successful year on and off the field.

Cricket Report

The Director of Cricket said there had been a lot of positives during 2008. Simon Jones was a pleasure to watch and he had been a pleasure to work with. He is recovering well from the operation he had last September and we are optimistic that everything will be okay this season.

Kabir Ali did a fantastic job during the summer. The manner in which he took his wickets by knocking over the top order was tremendous.

Steve Davies had a brilliant season winning the most valuable player in the NatWest Pro40.

Ben Smith was one of three players who scored over 1000 runs in the season.

Vikram Solanki captained the team extremely well.

Stephen Moore has developed slowly over the last few years and was the highest scorer in the country in 2008. He is a very determined character and it is good to see him knocking on the door of the England side. His target is to play consistently.

The Director of Cricket said it was wonderful to see three of our young players in the England Lions side and also to see Steve Davies called up to the England Test side in the West Indies.

Overall in four day cricket he thought we played some very good cricket and felt we were the best team in our division. Although Warwickshire had won the division,

both our home and away game against Warwickshire had been badly affected by the weather with the team in a strong position.

We finished third in the FPT and fifth in the Twenty20 and they are both areas where we need to improve.

It was good to stay in Division 1 of the NatWest Pro40 especially with a very convincing win against Glamorgan in the playoff game at the end of the season.

The Director of Cricket said that he was very proud that we were in Division 1 of both major competitions.

The Director of Cricket told the meeting that we had managed to keep our better players. Moeen Ali had just signed a 3 year contract. Alexei Kervezee is knocking on the door playing better and better at each net during the winter.

He said that Graeme Hick had been a wonderful servant to the Club and it had been a privilege to play in the same team. He will be missed without a doubt but the Club goes on and the door will now open for others.

Our bowling attack of Simon Jones and Kabir Ali will be added to by our experienced overseas player Ashley Knoffke. He has not played much this winter and has not been picked for the IPL.

It was good to have Matt Mason back in the team and also Imran Arif was performing well.

The spin bowling felt limited which is why Ian Fisher has joined us during the winter. Ian had a lot of success at Gloucestershire and will be good for the team in one day cricket.

Ben Smith and Matt Mason have taken on the responsibility for fielding and bowling coaching alongside their playing roles. This has been showing great progress during the winter months.

We have four satellite academies covering Worcestershire, Shropshire, Herefordshire and the Black Country. The Director of Cricket said that the future was bright with some good young cricketers coming through the Academy system.

The 12 month contracts are going extremely well. The players had been working Monday to Friday from November and hopefully they will be in the best shape ever for the start of the season.

The Director of Cricket told the meeting that our Strength and Conditioning Coach, Dave Lowe, is now a full time member of the staff. The guys have a great relationship with him. Ben Langley is our full time Physiotherapist and Ben Davies is a Physiotherapist for the summer months.

He wished Vikram Solanki and the team all the best for the coming season and hoped for a wonderful year.

Finance

In the absence of the Finance Director the Chief Executive gave the finance report.

He said that the accounts being presented were the merged accounts of Worcestershire County Cricket Club Limited and Worcestershire County Cricket Trading Ltd.

The accounts for the year show a pre-tax surplus of £318,636 compared to a deficit in the previous year of £603,211. The determining factors over the last two years had been the floods but the two year recovery plan was on target.

The Chief Executive said that the Chairman had already outlined where some of the extra income had come from during 2008 but we had to continually look for new ways of raising income.

The Chief Executive then moved for the formal adoption of the Annual Report and Accounts. This was seconded by Mr Peter Jewell.

The President then asked for questions about the Annual Report.

Mr Mike Niccolls asked about the tremendous increase in Note 6 - Commercial Department surplus and the increase in the salaries shown in Note 9 - Match Expenses.

The Chief Executive said that this was due mainly to the fact that we had lost part of the season in 2007 and therefore had not needed extra staff in the shop or extra stewarding at matches.

Mr Jim Waits spoke regarding the decision to charge Life Members for Twenty20 games. He also added his congratulations to the Board and the Chief Executive for the excellent work involved in the new development.

With regard to the Life Member issues he felt that this was illegal and asked the Board to re-consider its position.

The Chief Executive said that the Board had been a long time considering this and the reason why had been given tonight and this would not be re-considered.

The President added that it was legal.

Mr Edwin Buckhalter asked why the President was certain that it was legal as he understood no legal advice had been taken.

The Chief Executive said that legal advice had not been taken. He said he was happy to have a meeting outside of the AGM. He said it was quite clear in the Club Rules

that the members appointed the Board to make these decisions with regard to membership privileges. He said that a question could be brought to next year's AGM or with 200 signatures, an SGM could be called.

Mr Buckhalter said he had spoken with the Chief Executive prior to the meeting and had arranged to meet and discuss this issue with him. He had not been going to make these remarks at this meeting but asked the President to retract his comment about this being legal.

The President agreed to withdraw the comment.

Mr David Rolf asked when the old pavilion would be re-erected.

The Chief Executive said that it was difficult to give an exact date. He said that he had a great deal of respect for the heritage of the Club and he said that the old pavilion and the old scoreboard would be re-erected at some time in the future.

Mr Richard Leadbeater said that in 2009 Life Members were to lose the Twenty20 games and in 2010 the Pro40 competition would cease. Did that mean that Life Members would lose more cricket and life membership therefore be further diminished.

The Chairman said that we would not be charging any more money for the EPL competition as this would be the replacement for the Pro40.

Mr Barry Wainwright was concerned about the lack of Sunday games during the season.

The Chairman said that this was because we had two floodlit games and one on a Bank Holiday. He had already spoken to ECB regarding this and hoped this would be looked at for next year.

Mr Roger Gurney said he had spoken to someone who told him that a firm of consultants were looking for ground to relocate the cricket club and asked if this was in fact true.

The Chief Executive said we had not instructed any consultants and we had no intention of relocating away from New Road.

The Annual Report and Accounts were then 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 Ken Mills as the next President of Worcestershire County Cricket Club.

He said that Ken had been associated with the club for many years, Chairman of the Supporters' Association and a fantastic servant to Worcestershire and it was an honour he richly deserved.

He then proposed Ken Mills as the Club's President for 2009.

Mr Norman Whiting seconded this proposal and the meeting voted in favour of the proposal.

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

The President thanked everyone for the great honour of electing him President of the Club. He said it was good to follow in the steps of his cricketing heroes of the 1960s, Don Kenyon, Tom Graveney and Roy Booth. He said he would do his best to follow the previous president and back the Club as much as possible to see us progress.

He thanked Peter Seward for his services over the last two years as President and for his many years as Treasurer of the Club.

He said he had been a member since the early 1960s and a Life Member since 1980 and he thought most life member would have got their monies worth out of the club if they had joined several years ago. He had sympathy for those who had become life members in the last couple of years.

He became involved with the club committee in 1974, most of the time helping the Supporters' Association in the shop and organising the coaches to away matches and hoped this would continue.

Finally, he thanked everyone for their support.

6. **Confirmation of Additional Directors**

The Chief Executive asked for the meeting's formal approval of Mr J M Price and Mr WSC Richards OBE DL as non-elected Additional Directors to the Board. He said they had served for the last year and had contributed enormously during the year.

This was approved by the meeting.

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

The Chief Executive said that there had been two vacancies on the Board for the current year and three nominations had been received, David Broughall, Timothy Davies and Peter Radburn.

The result of the ballot was David Broughall 1342; Peter Radburn 1296 and Timothy Davies 581.

The Chief Executive asked for the meeting's formal approval to the re-election of Mr David Broughall and Mr Peter Radburn 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 Jewell and approved by the meeting.

9. **Any Other Business**

Mr Mike Niccolls had given notice that he wished to ask the cost of maintaining a steward in the Board Room and the average occupancy of that room and the number of those occupants who were in fact Board members.

The Chief Executive said that including NI the cost was approximately £1819. It was difficult to give accurate occupancy numbers, as numbers range from half a dozen to a couple of dozen depending on the match. Others using the facility include Vice Presidents and visiting guests.

Mr Niccolls said that his reason for asking this was because many people commented on this issue and the empty seats and how this could be best used.

The Chief Executive said it was fair to say that most of the people who use the room certainly paid for their food and a contribution towards the drink. We pay only for guests. In the new Graeme Hick Pavilion the whole of the room will be for the use of members and an alternative will be made for the Board and any visitors and guests.

Mr Richard Leadbeater asked if the choice of ales would be the same in the new pavilion.

The Chief Executive said that a ground survey was commissioned by the ECB last year and we came in the top three in the country. The number of real ales had been commented upon by respondents so the choice would remain.

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

Signed

Dated