

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 24th February 2014 at 7.00 p.m.

Present:	President	Mr J W Elliott
	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
	Captain	Mr D K H Mitchell
	Together with 153 members	

The President welcomed Members to the 149th Annual General Meeting of the Club and said it was good to see so many Members present

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 Joyce Booth, wife of Roy Booth, who had been a tea lady for many years; Bob Gittins who was a member of the Worcestershire Cricket Board and also Norman Whiting who had died the previous day. Norman had been Worcestershire's oldest player would be sadly missed.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from: Mrs Pat Mills, Mr Roy Booth, Mr Jack Randall, Mr Vic Whittingham, Mr Angus Bentall, Mr Tim Brigstocke, Mr Geoffrey Cox, Mrs June Cox, Mr Brian Dudley, Mrs Sheila Dudley, Mrs Marjorie Elliott, Mr Ron Fletcher, Mrs Pat Fletcher, Mr Ray Hipkins, Miss Roe Jackson, Mr Tim Jones, Mr David Lander, Mr Bruce Morgan, Mr Mike Niccolls, Mrs Linda Niccolls, Mr Graham Robertson, Mr Robert Scott, Mr John Talbot, Mrs Cynthia Talbot, Mr Bill Tansell, Miss Ann Turvey, Mr Jonathan Wilkinson.

2. Confirmation of Minutes of the AGM held on 25th February 2013

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 once again the Club had been ravaged by floods, one of the worst in history. In the last 18 months the Club had flooded 8 times and it will cost approximately £80,000. He said that we had only just recovered financially from the summer floods of 2007. Last week he had visited the ground and seen the groundstaff in waders with water up to their knees as they were pulling rakes across the square to remove the silt. He said that they were very special staff to work here and it must be demoralising for them. He thanked the groundstaff for all their sterling work in clearing up after every flood.

He said that our Prime Minister, Mr Cameron, has said that money was no object to help with clearing up and also rate relief for businesses. We will have to wait and see although the Chief Executive was not very optimistic. The good thing is that by April the ground will look considerably better than it does now.

With all our new facilities we have made our Club a 365 day a year business which should eventually make the Club more profitable and enable us to plough more money into cricket.

About ten years ago the Basil D'Oliveira Stand was built, this was well received and it is a great place to watch cricket from.

In 2008 the Graeme Hick Pavilion was built. This is very different to the old Victorian pavilion and very modern. The old pavilion was costing £50,000 to £70,000 every year to keep safe and open as it was very much in the way of any flooding. Now we are able to use this facility all year round and it is a great asset.

In 2014 we now have a fabulous new facility next to the Premier Inn. As a Club we have invested £7.5 million pounds to improve our ground. On behalf of the Members I would like to say thank you to all those who have been involved in improving our facilities. Firstly, the Supporters' Association who helped the Club purchase the old garage site and adjoining land. Thanks to Mark Newton and the Board Members who instigated and encouraged us to build the Basil D'Oliveira Stand and the Graeme Hick Pavilion.

About 12 years ago I invited Mr Roger Murray, a co-opted member of the Board, to come up with ideas for the garage site. After dismissing the idea of a cricket school he suggested either apartments or a hotel. After many obstacles we have a new Premier Inn and our own great facilities. We thank Percy and his Board Members for work hard and making it happen.

Special thanks to David and his staff for coping in very difficult conditions throughout the season.

We as a Club should be very proud of what we have achieved to enhance our beautiful ground. Spring is not far away, the floods will have disappeared and the ground will be back to normal. We can all look forward to cricket and meeting up with old friends.

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

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

“Mr President, ladies and gentlemen.

This is my last report as Chairman of Worcestershire County Cricket Club. When I was appointed as your Chairman in 2006 little did I realise the trials and tribulations that the Club would face over the next 7 years.

My main priority was to make sure that the Club continued as a first-class county. There was a move afoot to reduce the number of first-class counties down from 18 to 16 or even 14 and make no mistake about it, Worcestershire were on the hit list.

Yes, we had built the Basil D'Oliveira Stand but our Pavilion was not up to the standards that the ECB required. I think that you will all agree that the Graeme Hick Pavilion has now blended in with the ground and has been a successful addition to the Club assets.

2007 was a horrendous year. We did win the Pro 40 Championship but we did suffer two summer floods and lost over £1 million.

This was a huge setback and resulted in a large reduction in our playing budget and confirming my strong belief that the Club had to become a 365 day a year business.

Hence, despite our insecure financial position plans were put in place to further develop the ground by building a hotel and also improving our member's facilities.

Today we have a 120 bedroom Premier Inn and a fantastic new stand called “The View” which houses a new bar, offices, elite club and conference facility. We are now a 365 day a

year business and I hope that income generated from off the field activities will further enhance the finances of the Club.

The Club finished 5th in Division 2 of the LV County Championship winning 5, drawing 5 and losing 6. In the Yorkshire Bank 40 we finished 5th out of 7 in our group winning 5 and losing 7. In the Friends Life T20 we finished 5th in the Midlands, Wales and West Group winning 4 and losing 6.

We also played host to the Australians at New Road and the County earned a creditable draw. Indeed without the Australians visiting us the Club would have lost a great deal of money, and the many positive comments from members, spectators and the Australian team showed how good the four days were.

Last December I visited Adelaide to see the second test and to lobby my Australian friends to visit us again in 2015 and help celebrate our 150th anniversary. Let us all keep our fingers crossed that our invitation will be accepted.

Unfortunately and unexpectedly Alan Richardson decided, just after Christmas, that it was time for him to retire after he was offered the position of Bowling Coach at Warwickshire. I should like to place on record our thanks to Alan for being a magnificent player for us in the 4 years that he played for us.

I am delighted to welcome Saeed Ajmal as our overseas player. He is, as you know, one of the best bowlers in the world. Could New Road become a spinner's paradise?

I should like to remind members that we are continuing to invite the players of both teams to join members for a drink in the Graeme Hick Pavilion on the second day of every championship match and they are expected to stay for at least one hour. We should very much appreciate if our members would take advantage of the chance to meet the players.

Congratulations to Moeen Ali on being selected to tour the West Indies for England and also Joe Clarke and Ed Barnard on being selected for the England U19s.

Our thanks go to Dave Bradley and his team at BBC Hereford and Worcester for providing ball by ball commentary of all matches on radio and online. Once again many thanks to Kings School who have been tremendous for allowing the Club to use their playing fields for car parking. The Worcestershire County Cricket Supporters' Association have once again been very generous in their support of the Club. I should like to congratulate Mrs Cynthia Crawford on becoming President of the Association and also, once again, thank Ken and Pat Mills for their continuing commitment to raising funds for the Association. Our thoughts are with Ken at this trying time looking after Pat.

It would be remiss of me not to thank the volunteer ladies who continue to provide teas in the Ladies Pavilion. This is unique on the county circuit and long may it continue.

I would also like to thank our Sponsors, Green King, Arctic Spas and the RAF who together with many others help greatly with the finances of running the Club.

We at Worcestershire are lucky to have a loyal and dedicated staff. My thanks go to David Leatherdale who has fully justified our faith in him when we made him Chief Executive and Steven Rhodes who continues to work as hard as anyone in the game. Jon Graham, as head of our Commercial Department and his staff have worked tirelessly and the Club are beginning to reap the rewards of their endeavours.

Steve Gibbs and his staff continue to provide excellent food and our thanks go to him and all our employees for making Worcestershire County Cricket Club a happy Club and one which is a pleasure to visit. They always remember that old saying "The customer is always right".

Finally we have to bid farewell to Joan Grundy, PA to David Leatherdale. Joan has served the Club faithfully for 17 years and we wish her a very happy retirement.

I have loved being your chairman. There have been many problems over the last 7 years but I have always tried to do my best in the interests of Worcestershire County Cricket Club. I like to think that despite all the floods and all the problems that we have encountered the Club is in a better condition than when I first came on board.

It would be fantastic if we could end my 8 years as we began it by winning a trophy.

Many thanks to my Board and you, our members, for continuing to support the Club. I have one more year as your Chairman. I shall still be perambulating the ground so please do not hesitate to stop me and have a chat. Despite all the alterations we have still preserved the ability to walk around the ground.

It has been a great honour and privilege to have served Worcestershire County Cricket Club as your Chairman for the last 7 years. Thank you for your forbearance and I trust that my successor will receive the same support from all our members.

Cricket Report

The Director of Cricket said that the 2013 season was certainly an up and down season partly because he couldn't get any consistency on the winning side of things. We seemed to win games and then lose games but we must take confidence from some of those victories. The one against Sussex at Hove, Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge and it is always good to beat Warwickshire at Edgbaston.

In the Twenty20 we were again up and down. We just needed to string together more performances like the ones against Somerset beating them home and away in the same year is some achievement and then beating the eventual winners of trophy, Northamptonshire.

How to improve. We need our players to be in form and in settled roles with the batters and bowlers doing their jobs. Hopefully we can improve our one day game this year and Saeed Ajmal should be a great asset in this regard. He is currently classed as the number one spinner in Test and one day cricket. He is a guy who will certainly be very good in the dressing room. He will miss about five weeks in the season to take part in the Caribbean 20/20 competition but we felt that this was worth it.

The loss of Alan Richardson leaves a big hole in the squad, although we are pleased for him in his new role. This should give opportunities to some of the younger guys to come through into the first team.

We can't go without mentioning Moeen Ali. He very much deserved his England Lions call-up and then to get into the England side for the West Indies and the T20 World Cup was tremendous. This is a huge boost for the Club. Moeen loves playing for Worcestershire and this hopefully will have a knock-on effect for other players. Moeen was also the Most Valuable Player of 2013.

The big bonus last year was actually the nucleus of players we managed to retain on longer contracts. Moeen signed for 5 years, which was brilliant, he wants to play for us and he knows that we respect him and his religion.

There are two bowlers who are going to be important for us next year and they are Gareth Andrew and Jack Shantry, both of whom have signed two years contracts.

Ross Whiteley, who has had a very good winter in Australia, could be very important and is on a 3 year contract.

The one frustration is Alexei Kervezee. He is a wonderful talent and a wonderful striker of the ball. Hopefully he will be a much better season this year.

Finally, Daryl Mitchell, who has been a very loyal captain and is very much in the thick of things and he has agreed a 3 year contract. He is an important player for us in all forms of cricket.

We have some good young players who we hope will play a part in the season, Tom Fell, Tom Kohler Cadmore and Charlie Morris. Also we have Ed Barnard and Joe Clarke who have been with the England U19 squad all winter.

Hopefully in the future we will look to sign a couple of young 'Lions' class players. This is not easy as it is not always about money. It will be helpful having Moeen in the England team as this might encourage other players to take a look at us.

The lads have worked hard this winter and Malvern College is a good venue to do the work. Today the players went to Loughborough University for the day and these are excellent facilities although the guys didn't bowl very well.

No promises, but hopefully the one day performances should be better in 2014. We need come confidence and momentum.

Lastly, he said he would like to thank his support staff, Daman D'Oliveira, Matt Mason, Ben Davies and Ross Dewar who do a brilliant job. He also wished to thank Daryl Mitchell who has gone through a lot and is improving day in and day out as a captain.

Finance

The Finance Director gave the finance report.

He said the accounts in our Annual Report were a consolidation extracted from the accounts of Worcestershire County Cricket Club Limited and Worcestershire County Cricket Trading Ltd. These accounts are audited annually by Bishop Fleming 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.

The AGM accounts are comprehensive, there are two main schedules, income and expenditure account and the balance sheet for years ending 30th September 2013 and 2012, 5 pages of notes which support the figures in the main schedules, a 10 year summary review showing ups and downs of the last decade and a brief narrative which attempts to explain the main factors which underpin the results. He said he would not go through all the detail but focus on the two main schedules.

The income and expenditure account shows that we achieved an overall surplus after interest and before tax of £59,749.

We have received loan forgiveness from the Supporters' Association of £50,000 and from the Chairman of £85,000 and the Finance Director thanked them for their generosity and said this was much appreciated.

In 2012 we had an operational loss which was caused by the weather and in 2013 there was an operational loss caused by the delay in completion of our new build which should have been

ready in early June was we took delivery in late September. This reduced our income by approximately £600k.

Each year since 2007 the Finance Director said he had been reporting exceptional / abnormal items, ie floods, Graeme Hick build, cost re-structuring, weather, Severn Bridge build, etc., and had become convinced that a truly exceptional / abnormal year would be one that did not have exceptional / abnormal occurrences. The problem had been that if you look at our 10 year review you will see that income and costs have a very small margin and if you exclude exceptional profit of £72,500 we lost approximately £39k pa over the past 10 years.

We have not just sat and let this happen we have cut costs and tried to boost income. The simple fact is that a few years ago our buildings were old and tired, cost a lot to maintain and had limited use in winter because of floods, so without investment in the ground we were only going to make more and more losses. Hence, the Board's decision to invest in new buildings which has in the main been carried out between 2008-2013. This will now considerably increase our earning capacity as the number of venues on the ground and increased flexibility we now have. We can now use the Cricket Suite, the Graeme Hick Pavilion and three new floors at the Severn Bridge end whereas in 2013 we had the Graeme Hick Pavilion and the marquee.

He explained the balance sheet and the extra loans due to extra investment in buildings.

In summary he said that we now have a new hotel next door with 35,000 - 40,000 occupancies per year, plus our new facilities. We have completed a very ambitious build programme and there has been a lot of work executed by the Audit Committee, which comprised Mr Peter Jewell, the Chief Executive and himself. He thanked the Chairman and the Board for their backing throughout the build and thanked the members and supporters for their support.

This ended the accounts presentation.

The President then asked for questions about the Annual Report

Hal Miller asked why the catering and bar outlets at the back of the Basil D'Oliveira Stand were not open. He said that this had been the case several times, even on a T20 game.

The Chief Executive said that he was quite surprised this was happening especially on a T20 game as we normally bring in extra bars for these games. This would be looked at.

Mr Richard Heading asked why match expense sundries had grown to be a bigger figure.

The Finance Director said that this was basically due to the Twenty20 insurance cover which increases every year.

Mr Ross Wilde wondered why we were so surprised by the loss of Alan Richardson. He was 38 years of age and could have retired or got injured at any point. It seems that all our cricket plans were based on him.

The Director of Cricket said that we were going to miss Alan because he was a good guy to have around the dressing room and with the younger players. We have moved on and we have bowlers itching for a go but it is very difficult to just go out and buy a new player.

Mr Roy Dursley said that wasn't it necessary to bring any changes to membership to the AGM first before instigating them

The Chief Executive said that this was not the case and the rules allowed the Board to change membership at any point.

Mr Richard Rawcliffe said that he noted the Club was now producing a business plan and every year we look at a set of accounts. Was it possible to have financial budgets and forecasts in future year and secondly a lot has been made of the new facilities we have and was it possible to have a firm indication of figures from the new facilities.

The Chief Executive said that with regard to budgets and forecasts this was up to the Board to decide.

Mr Geoff Sidaway asked if there was a threat in the future with regard to the number of first-class counties being reduced.

The Chief Executive said that it was certainly not the intention of ECB at the current time to reduce the number of first-class counties.

A member asked when the next Christie's valuation was to be done.

The Finance Director said that we were required to do a valuation every 3 years and he wasn't thinking of changing this at the moment.

Mr Alan Davies asked if we were making a claim for any Government money in relation to the recent flooding. He also asked if the Club had any thoughts about a fundraising event towards the flooding.

The Chief Executive said he was looking into the question of Government money and as far as the fundraising question we generally try to survive without going down this route. However, next year would be the Club's 150th Anniversary so this may present some opportunities for Members and supporters to do something.

A member said that he understood that the ECB would not be prepared to help us in the future if the ground suffered severe flooding.

The Chief Executive said that we were doing everything the ECB wanted us to do with regard to the ground. The Club was only closed last week due to the Worcester Bridge being closed. He said he would be very surprised if the ECB had made such a comment.

A member asked if we had met with the Environment Agency to see if there was anything that could be done.

The Chief Executive said that he had spoken with the Environment Agency and also with a company from Droitwich. There are certainly things available now that weren't available 5 years ago and discussions are on-going.

Mr Ian King asked if we had had penalty clauses in place for the late delivery of the new build.

The Chief Executive said that we had and discussions were currently on-going with the contractor for the 7 week late delivery.

The President then put the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts to the meeting for approval.

The meeting agreed unanimously.

5. **To Elect a President**

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

The Chairman said that it gave him great pleasure to propose that John Elliott continue as President for a further year. He said that John had done a great job over the last 12 months and he was happy to propose him for a further year.

This was seconded by Mr Alec Mackie seconded the proposal and this was agreed unanimously by the meeting.

Mr Elliott thanked the members for making him President again and said he was looking forward to the next 12 months.

6. **Confirmation of Additional Directors**

The Chief Executive said that David Green had been an Additional Director last year but had stepped down and the Chief Executive thanked him for his support over the last few years.

He said that we now have our Chairman Mr J M Price and a new Director, Mr Stephen Taylor. Mr Taylor had been extremely supportive of the Club and very helpful when dealing with the LEP during the building scheme.

Mr Curtis proposed the election of Mr J M Price and Mr S Taylor as Additional Directors for the next 12 months. This was seconded by Miss Meriel Harris and approved unanimously by the meeting.

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

The Chief Executive confirmed that three nominations had been received for the two available places on the Board, Mr Peter Jewell, Miss Meriel Harris and Mr Martin Weston and a ballot had been held. The results were Mr Jewell 1003, Miss Harris 955 and Mr Weston 860).

Mr Jewell and Miss Harris were re-elected for a further 3 year period.

The Chief Executive asked for the meeting's formal approval to the re-election of Mr Tim Curtis and Mr Neal Radford 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 Advisers.

The proposal was seconded by Mr Tim Curtis and approved by the meeting.

9. **Any Other Business**

There were no questions at this point.

Before closing the meeting the President said that he would like to thank the following people.

Ken Mills and the Worcestershire Supporters' Association for the donation of £85,000 which will pay for the two stands and all the seating in front of the new Premier Inn. The Board has decided quite rightly to name the Stands, the Mills Stand and the Brookes Stand for all their outstanding contribution to our Club over many years.

Dave Broughall. This would be Dave's last AGM as Vice Chairman of the Club. He has to retire after 8 years in office, but will remain a member of the Board. Dave has served for 15 years on the

Board and has been a very generous sponsor as Chief Executive of Apollo for many years. The President thanked Dave for all his hard work over the years.

Thirdly, he wished to thank the Chairman who would also be retiring at the end of September under the 8 year rule. Percy has put his heart and soul into the position and worked tirelessly. He has done a great job. Following the first flood he raised £200,000 by running the Flood Club and encouraging a number of his friends and acquaintances to join. He convinced the Australians to visit New Road last season and has pushed forward with our new facilities. He is also a kind benefactor, matching the Supporters' Association donation of £85,000 and loaning the Club for the last 8 years £500,000 with no interest. The President said he felt satisfied that it was his choice to have Percy as Chairman when the constitution was changed. It was the right decision and he was proud of what Percy had done for the Club. He was sure Percy would always be around to help and give advice and hoped that he enjoyed his retirement when it came.

The President thanked the members for their attendance and formally closed the meeting at 8.20 p.m.

Signed

Dated