

## 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 27th February 2012 at 7.00 p.m.

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Present:	President	Mr C D Fearnley
	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	

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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 Martin Horton, Graham Dilley, Basil D'Oliveira and Ted Tinkler, all former players with the Club, Mrs Lillah Whittingham, Pat Sharrock and Harold Rushton, all life long members.

### 1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from: Mr Neal Radford, Mr Angus Bentall, Mrs Joyce Booth, Mr Clive Fieth, Miss Roe Jackson, Mr Tim Jones, Mr D A Kennedy, Mr Michael Needham, Mrs Jane Radburn. Mr Robert Scott, Mr Peter Seward, Mrs Yvonne Seward, Mr Stuart Stockdale, Mrs Marguerite Stockdale, Mr Bill Tansell, Mr Ian Winnard.

### 2. **Confirmation of Minutes of the AGM held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011**

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 been a fantastic year for Mary and himself and he was proud to have been elected President of Worcestershire County Cricket Club. He said that although he had played for the Club and been Chairman for many years it was a great reward to be elected President.

He said that Mary and himself had visited most counties during the 2011 season as ambassadors for the Club.

He thanked the Executive Directors for their hard work during a very difficult time, as you appreciate when you go round the country, not only in cricket terms. He said that cricket wise they had done a magnificent job but to finish the year showing a profit was a great achievement. He also thanked the non executive directors of the

Club who did a tremendous job looking at ways to cut costs to continue to run this wonderful Club.

The President congratulated Steve Gibbs, Catering Director, and his staff for their work, saying that the new Pavilion was probably one of the best facilities in Worcestershire. During December they had been extremely busy as the Pavilion was used about 20 days out of 25.

Finally he wished to say that he did go away a lot last year and he was delighted to see so many of our members and supporters at the away matches. He said that this was an enormous boost to the players to have such support.

He was looking forward to the new season and wished everyone success.

#### 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.

Twelve months ago I stood here congratulating the team on promotion to the 1<sup>st</sup> Division of the County Championship and hoped to be stood here 12 months later having retained that 1<sup>st</sup> Division status.

I can proudly say that this has been achieved and congratulations to Steve and the players on what was a battling performance during the whole of 2011 which showed some great team spirit under the guidance of the Director of Cricket and the Captain, Daryl Mitchell and we all look forward to the 2012 season with a great deal of enthusiasm and excitement.

We have signed Phil Hughes, the Australian opening bat as our overseas player and also Saeed Ajmal as our overseas 20/20 player. We hope that these signings show that the Club has ambition and craves for success on the field.

I also stood here and said that to be one of only 3 counties to have made a profit in what are difficult economic times was testament to the hard work put in and the sacrifices made, both on and off the field, and that developing a young squad was key to the Club's viability and sustainability.

Again a number of clubs have reported losses, most recently Yorkshire with a loss of £460,000, Sussex with a loss of in excess of £170,000, and Lancashire reporting a loss of over £2 million due to legal problems. To see a football club of the standing of Rangers go into administration with debts of between £49 and £75 million emphasises the difficulties facing sport in general.

To have therefore achieved a profit for the second successive year when as mentioned many other counties, some substantially larger than ourselves, have announced considerable losses, is due to the continued hard work of the management team, and all the Club's full and part time work colleagues, who work diligently year in year out.

I should particularly like to mention Steve Gibbs and his team on the catering side who have produced excellent results not only in the standard of their food but also in their profitability whilst giving excellent value for money.

I would like to touch on the present situation with regard the Morgan Structure review, which has been talked about over the last couple of months since information was put into the public domain.

The review has a substantial number of points and recommendations across a wide area from recreational and academy cricket to the ECB and national management processes, but the key area to members and supporters is the potential cricket structure from 2014 onwards.

Creating a structure which fits in with the international schedule, the needs of TV and commercial requirements and most importantly what the customer and spectator wants is not an easy task.

A number of options have been put forward with the key question being the reduction of 4 day matches from 16 to 14. As a Club, as recently commented by our Director of Cricket and the County Coaches in general, we are fully supportive of a 16 match format with 2 divisions of 9 as is the present situation.

We feel the loss of the integrity with a non symmetrical system playing some teams once and others twice is not an option and does not out way the benefits created by reducing the number of days cricket the players play.

I have fought long and hard to preserve the 40 over format in favour of the 50 over game. However this is a personal opinion. Commercially the 40 over game wins hands down for this Club.

It is hoped that things will become clearer after the ECB Board meeting in March when I shall be there and I know I have the members support in keeping the 16 match format.

When I became Chairman of the Club my first priority was to ensure that we were viable to enable us to continue to be a first class county. Also to try and become a venue that could be used 365 days a year. In this regard the Graeme Hick Pavilion has been a superb success.

We are no longer spending £50,000 per year to keep the old pavilion up to scratch.

Hopefully the city planners will approve planning permission for the hotel development later this week which will further improve the revenue which we receive from the ECB, Members and supporters. If anyone wishes to ask any questions about the development please address these in any other business.

At this point I should like to thank our sponsors for their support. Without the help from Cotswold Group, Allpay and Marstons the Club would certainly struggle to survive.

I would like to thank, one again, the Supporters' Association for their continued support, particularly the unstinting work done by Ken and Pat Mills.

Can I thank you, the Members, who have been so supportive over the last few years since our issues with the summer floods of 2007.

We now have a growing membership in both physical and financial terms, something most counties would be proud to say, a developing young and enthusiastic squad dovetailed with quality overseas player and plans in place to make the Club a viable and sustainable 365 day a year business.

Indeed last year we won the award for our campaign for new membership in the ECB National Awards beating Warwickshire into second place. I should like to place on record the Club's thanks to Amy Lester and Carrie Lloyd for masterminding this campaign.

This year we already have 150 new members and revenue is up on the same time as last year.

Thanks also to Jodi Brandwood for her sterling work in the Commercial Department.

Finally, I should like to place on record our thanks to our local MP, Robin Walker, for his help in supporting the continuous operation of Hereford and Worcester cricket ball by ball commentary. To be able to tune in to 738 and listen to the superb commentary of Graham Hill, Trevor Owens and Dave Bradley on all of our matches is something to treasure. I am sure that we all hope that Dave has recovered from his illness and we look forward to seeing him at New Road this year and hopefully for many years in the future.

Thank you and we look forward to seeing you all on the 26<sup>th</sup> April for the first home championship match of 2012.

### Cricket Report

The Director of Cricket said

"Last year had been a tough learning curve for a predominantly inexperienced squad.

Division 1 of the County Championship had nine excellent teams all capable of beating one another and survival was always the goal for the team, although we knew how tough this would be.

The best part of surviving was proving the bookies wrong again and the experience of playing in Division 1 will hold the team in good stead for 2012.

If you look at the two sides who were relegated, Yorkshire, a test match ground, with a rich tradition for cricket and a massive county full of talented youngsters and talented cricketers who failed to deliver. Hampshire, another test ground with a financial benefactor, high profile players, who also underperformed. It was a really good effort to beat these two teams.

One of the reasons we avoided relegation was the spirit amongst the players. The dressing room is a happy environment where we all work together, particularly as we wasted some good opportunities early in the season but we stuck together and it came good.

The stand out performer of the season was Alan Richardson with 73 wickets in 16 games (128 in 30 games in the two years he has been with the club).

Vikram Solanki returned to form with 1148 runs and 3 centuries.

Also our overseas players did well. Damian Wright started off our season well and showed experience and control with the ball. We then had Saeed Ajmal for the middle of the season. His guile and skill with the ball were tremendous. Then we ended the season with Kemar Roach who showed us pace and aggression for the last few games.

The key game for us was the Lancashire game at New Road at the end of August. Lancashire all out for 80, with Alan Richardson's figures of 15 - 8 - 22 - 6. James Cameron's 98 on a tough wicket when returning to open the batting was very good.

How can we do better and improve on the 7<sup>th</sup> place this year.

Our batting needs to be more resilient and we need bigger partnerships and we certainly need to get bigger scores.

We have had some tough training sessions during the winter months working on these areas.

The 40 over competition was a big disappointment to the team and the captain and is something that needs addressing.

Apart from Jack Shantry the seamers struggled with the ball to contain the opposition batsmen. We certainly missed Alan Richardson in this form of cricket and will play him next season if possible.

Not making any excuses but whilst we endeavoured to put in as much as we did in all competitions our exertions in the championship took their toll in the Pro40.

James Cameron and Moeen Ali played their part with the bat but too many times we had mini collapses which hurt our totals.

One day bowling and batting haven been a big part of our winter practice at Malvern College, in particular putting the lads in testing situations.

In the T20 competition it was a case of almost, but not quite. We only just avoided qualification and there was some definite improvement in how we played our T20 cricket.

The consistent bowling of Saeed Ajmal was a plus factor as well as two stand out performances, one by Aneesh Kapil 4 - 9 - 3 against Northamptonshire at Milton Keynes, and Gareth Andrews match winning 65\* against Warwickshire at Edgbaston.

While Shakib al Hasan bowled with distinction he took up a key batting spot at No.4 and his lack of form with the bat was a major part of us just missing out on qualification.

Overall Moeen Ali was our leading run scorer and thoroughly deserved his call into the England Lions team who recently played England in Dubai. Add to his batting his improvement with the ball and he is proving to be a valuable member of the team. He also made a good job of substituting for Daryl Mitchell, as Captain, when he was injured.

Several of our players have been overseas during the winter months.

James Cameron has had a successful season in Perth scoring two centuries. He is now back bowling again and this is a huge bonus for us.

Matt Pardoe has spent the winter as part of the Darren Lehman Academy in Adelaide.

Neil Pinner has also been playing in Adelaide and Chris Russell has been playing in Cape Town.

Richard Jones and Daryl Mitchell have both been successful in short stints playing first class cricket in Zimbabwe.

Moeen Ali has been to Sri Lanka with the England Development squad playing first class cricket.

Alexei Kervezee has been to the West Indies with Holland for their T20 and then onto Bangladesh playing in the BPL, although unfortunately he didn't get too many games.

Aneesh Kapil has been part of the U19 England set up who are preparing for the 2012 World Cup in Australia.

Jack Shantry is the leading points scorer in Auckland. He is playing for Cornwall CC with excellent performances with ball and bat.

The remainder have played their part in developing as players under the instruction of the support staff. Ross Dewar, Strength and Conditioning Coach, Ben Davies, Physiotherapist and coaches Matt Mason and Damian D'Oliveira. We have also enrolled the evergreen Norman Gifford to help out with the spin bowlers following the resignation of Ben Smith.

The players have been given really tough sessions to take them out of their comfort zones and the main focus for improvement has been plenty of purposeful practice. We remind them that they improve by repetition of testing practice. You might call it bloody hard work!

Looking forward to the 2012 season. We are again expecting a tough campaign.

We may be hampered by surgery to Gareth Andrews knee which means he will miss the start of the season. Ben Cox is recovering from a hip operation but expects to be fit for the start of and season and Vikram is also recovering from a groin operation. Also Aneesh Kapil will be away for a major slice of the season due to U19 commitments. England are going all out to try and win the World Cup.

Additions to the team. First and foremost we have a new scorer, Dawn Pugh, who is moving up from the second team to the first team,

David Lucas is joining us from Northamptonshire. As an experienced bowler he will give us some variation.

Ben Scott is now with us on a permanent basis. He has experience and an all round batting ability.

Phil Hughes will be joining us as our overseas player. Phil has a lot to prove as he is looking for a return to the Australia squad.

Saeed Ajmal's participation in the T20 may be in jeopardy due to a proposed addition to the Future Tours Programme with a suggested tour to Sri Lanka by Pakistan.

My personal goals for the team are to improve on their 7<sup>th</sup> place in the County Championship and to qualify for the Quarter Finals in both the CB40 and T20 competitions.

This will be a big year for a lot of our players who are in the last year of their contracts and they have a lot to prove. I now want the players to kick on from last years' experience in Division 1 but most of all I want them to become tough, resilient and determined.

### Finance

The Finance Director gave the finance report.

He said the accounts in the Annual Report were comprehensive set of accounts supported by pages of notes which provide the detail. There was also a two page narrative highlighting the main points which underpin the accounts. It was felt best to briefly review the main points in the narrative rather than trawl through the detail and if anyone had any questions he would try to answer these later in the meeting.

He said the accounts being presented were the consolidation extracted from the 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.

The income and expenditure account shows a surplus for the year before interest and tax of £391,193, after interest and before tax of £211,893, and a surplus after tax of £186,656.

The 2011 figures have been achieved by improvements in some of our non cricket income streams and by tight cost control. They reflect a continuation of a process which began in 2010 but in 2010 we concentrated mainly on reducing cricket costs whereas in 2011 we have tackled the non cricket income and the non cricket overheads.

In summary we have produced a combined surplus after interest and before tax of £300,874 in the two years 2011 and 2010 so thus far we have achieved our very challenging targets set for 2010/11 income and expenditure account. This is very encouraging and just goes to show what can be achieved by planning and hard work and an element of good luck..

In the balance sheet as at 30<sup>th</sup> September the net assets are £1,653,625 which is the land and buildings and the value is supported by Christies.

The current liabilities decreased from £2,159,319 in 2010 to £1,795,755 in 2011 by way of a cash surplus of £146,508 and some re-scheduling of short term loans.

As well as increasing the value in our balance sheet we have improved the shape of the balance sheet so overall I think we have produced a god set of results in 2011 in both the income and expenditure account and the balance sheet. This has been achieved in very difficult trading conditions and on this positive note I will end my accounts presentation.

The President then asked for questions about the Annual Report.

Mr Vic Whittingham said that the President would know of his interest in the Catering Department. For 23/24 years we have ploughed our own furrow with catering and for the reason for the massive balance this year is because of its management, the captain of the ship Steve Gibbs. I think he deserves a tremendour amunt of praise for what has been achieved.

Mr John Walker asked the Director of Cricket where he saw a spin bowler coming from in the four day game.

The Director of Cricket responded by saying that it was an area which left a definite hole in the side. Unfortunately there were a few holes and he couldn't fill every one. Moeen Ali is definitely an improving spin bowler but this does not happen overnight and he is progressing all the time. He is not quite the finished article yet.

Finally the wickets here at Worcester do not spin as much as they do elsewhere. Also Shaiiq Choudhry and Brett D'Oliveira have spent their entire winter with us and have both improved their bowling.

We are developing as a side and we have to give opportunities to the younger guys. He said he would love to be in a position to sign a top spinner but this is not always possible. We are certainly aware of the situation.

A member asked if there was any possibility of getting more four day cricket in June as this was by far the best month for watching cricket.

The Chief Executive said that the structure of cricket for 2014 is currently being discussed and there is a proposal that T20 may be spread over a longer period rather than concentrated and this will mean more four day cricket, but nothing has been confirmed.

Nigel Watkins said that our results in the 40 over competition has been disastrous. Our two best batsmen open and when they have gone there is nothing left.

The Captain said that from his point of view you need to open with your best batsmen because of the powerplay situations and the beginning of a game is a very important time in an innings and you need your most explosive batters for that period. Personally he batted down the order as he was not that sort of batter.

A member said that the food in the pavilion at lunch time is very good but there is a tendency for members to eat their meal and then linger and watch the cricket. Could people not be asked to move on once they have finished their meal to enable others to sit down to eat their meals.

The Chief Executive said he would take this on board and he said we were looking at adding in more tables this year. It is very difficult as many members like to sit in the pavilion and watch the cricket. This may need some self policing.

Mr Fred Kitson said that it had been mentioned that there is some good practice cricket coming up in March but this isn't really marketed properly as several members would like to come down and watch. Could we say when the fixtures were taking place.

The Chief Executive that these fixtures were on the website and had been sent out to Members with the magazine in December. We will speak nicely to the WEN and see if they will publish them for us.

Mr Mike Andrews asked which players were out of contract at the end of the year.

The Director of Cricket said there was nine players. Alan Richardson who has always been on a one year contract. Jack Shantry, Brett D'Oliveira, Matt Pardoe, Neil Pinner are all in the last year of a contract. Vikram Solanki is in the last year of a longer contract, and James Cameron.

We are hoping that some of these guys perform well early on so that we can sort out deals by mid season. If they are doing well we will want to keep them.

Richard Jones is another one who is in the last year of his contract.

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, on behalf of the Board, said it gave him great pleasure to propose Duncan Fearnley as President of Worcestershire County Cricket Club for 2012.

He said that Duncan is known throughout the world of cricket and has been a great ambassador for Worcestershire in the last 12 months. He has visited virtually every country during the year.

Mr Roy Booth seconded this proposal and the meeting voted in favour of the proposal.

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

The President thanked everyone and said he couldn't wait for the season to start and was honoured to be President.

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 three nominations had been received for the two available places on the Board, Mr Peter Radburn, Mr David Broughall and Mr Dennis Hewitt and a ballot had been held. The results were Mr Radburn 1231, Mr Broughall 1102 and Mr Hewitt 468).

Mr Radburn and Mr Broughall 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 Peter Radburn and Mr David Broughall 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 Norman Whiting and approved by the meeting.

9. **Any Other Business**

**BBC Hereford & Worcester**

Mr David Bradley said that BBC Hereford & Worcester would be broadcasting ball by ball commentary during the 2012 season.

**Hotel Development**

Mr Brian Shearer asked where the members would dine next season if the hotel development went ahead.

The Chief Executive said that nothing would happen this summer. The Planning Committee were due to meet on Thursday and if the plans were passed nothing would happen until September. It was then hoped that our part of the new development would be completed first, and hopefully this would be in time for the 2013 season.

One member asked how we would make money out of the hotel.

The Chief Executive said that Premier Inn would paid a lease fee. Then with all the new conference and banqueting facilities we would have the opportunity to generate further revenue through hospitality packages.

The hotel is going to cost £7.5m and our new facilities £2.5m but this hopefully will be all through grants and sponsorship with no loans from the Bank.

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

Signed .....

Dated .....