**Chairman’s report for the 2022 AGM**

It has been a year of change.

In September 2021, Mr Keith Brewer played cricket for the last time in Dorset colours. He has held the crease for 20 years (not-out) and has left big boots to fill.

Lots of people can attest to having shared experiences and cricket moments with Keith and have been enriched. He had led us on a roller coaster ride since 2018/19 as we started the collaborative working with the executive that led to the development of our 5-year plan; the engagement with all stakeholders throughout 2019 and the presentation to the ECB in the March 2020 meeting at Exeter just before the lockdown started. He started and managed the development journey and achieved the initial County Partnership Agreement (CPA) with the ECB.

In July we interviewed 5 candidates and appointed Mr Ben Skipworth as the new MD. Ben has a lot of experience of IT, data protection (in secure environments), high-level management (including financial) and organisational processes in different industries. He has detailed knowledge of County Age Group (CAG) cricket, has extensive contacts in Dorset clubs, is the Dorset U18 manager and coach working with Richard Scott and the Dorset County Cricket Club. He also has extensive experience organising and managing district cricket activities with all the attendant communications with parents and managers.

The board look forward to the next decade or so with Ben at the helm.

Reviewing the year, the highlights for me are:

* The training of substantially more activators (25 female) in early 2021 to drive the growth of the National programmes - AllStars and Dynamos cricket.
* The appointment of another well-qualified female community coach in April to work in Schools for the Chance to Shine (CtoS) project and to deliver summer cricket activities such as AllStars and Dynamos.
* Purple HR were appointed in April to provide modern professional HR capabilities for the board and staff.
* Two clubs were helped to start new junior sections in a plan to become sustainable.
* The new ECB CPA was signed in April 2021 which provided slightly more funding and the potential for Performance Related payments for exceeding targets in some areas like the growth of Woman’s and girls activities.
* The Dorset National County Club scheduling four games in Dorset at three different clubs.
* The appointment as Ben as the new MD in July.
* The appointment of a new board member with strong organisational skills who is a HR professional as an independent director. This brings the number of female directors on the board to three.
* Applying for and receiving a grant from the Lords Taverners to support the appointment of a part-time Disability Cricket Development Officer and a part-time Disability Cricket coach.
* The huge increase in girls for the assessments for the U11 and U13 CAG squads which reflects the growing base of girls’ cricket in Dorset.
* The growth in Chance to Shine activities helped by the increase in coaching capacity.
* Two lads from the Emerging Player Programme (EPP) have joined the Hampshire Academy, two are part of the Hampshire U18 winter training programme and three players joined the Dorset County U18 squad with links to the County Cricket Club.
* The number of teams entering the league competitions for 2022 has gone up by 7 compared to 2021.
* Two cricketing hubs held sessions for junior disability players throughout 2021.
* The training of more female cricket coaches.
* The first Club Engagement evening held on 16th March 2022 which was well attended. (Thank you all for taking the time to attend).

This increase in capability and capacity meant that we exceeded the KPIs agreed with the ECB and were awarded extra Performance Related Fee Payments (PRFPs) for 2022 because of our “Growth by way of market share in relation to other County Cricket Boards (CCBs)”. This was because of the growth in National programme numbers (AllStars and Dynamos); the uptake of the Safe Hands Management System by clubs; the growth in women and girls cricket activities and the growth in the number of junior teams on Play-Cricket.

This was all achieved because of the efforts of our staff and clubs in 2021. The board would like to thank all the staff and volunteers for their achievements in growing Dorset cricket over the last three years, especially James Mitchell, Katrina Cole and Sean Fitzgerald who have left to pursue opportunities elsewhere.

There were some storms in late 2021 as we received some adverse publicity in the Bournemouth Echo regarding the processing of “late umpires reports”. This caused a lot of internal stress as it was discovered to be a process failure which has been now fixed.

The League committee continues the process of preparing for the adoption of ECB Premier League status for the 2024. The committee have started 1:1 Zoom meetings with interested clubs to determine their ability to meet the new league entry criteria and prepare their grounds and facilities. The committee was also strengthened by the appointment of a secretary who has a wealth of experience and contacts in Dorset cricket.

In 2022 we plan to maintain the momentum and develop in many areas. We will publicise our current objectives on the web site. A new financial officer has just been appointed and currently, we are in the process of recruiting two more community coaches, a Women and Girls Development Officer and a CtoS and Competitions manager. This will provide an increase in development capacity and some capability resilience.

One of the key projects for the ECB is the drive to promote Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) throughout the cricket landscape. This includes the promotion of on-line EDI and Anti-discrimination courses for all staff and volunteers as well as several other initiatives that will require some effort and goodwill to achieve.

We cannot operate without the work and support of active volunteers in clubs and committees. To achieve more participation requires the retention and recruitment of more volunteers. Hopefully we can help clubs do this in 2022 and provide some tangible reward for their efforts.

As I was reflecting upon the 2022 cricket development activities, Russia continued it’s “pacification mission” by shelling civilians trying to flee the destruction their invasion is inflicting. It provides a striking contrast to any highs and lows of the cricket landscape.

As ever, any feedback is welcome.

Yours

Tom

March 2022