

Minutes of Gloucestershire County Cricket Club Members' Working Group Meeting

Held at Seat Unique Stadium

on

Tuesday 20th August 2024 4-6pm

In attendance:

Members
Chris Toft
Dominic Ferguson
Matt Davis
Wendy Body
George Cook
John Gordon
Ruth Sharville

Also in Attendance	Role
Neil Priscott	Interim CEO, Chairing the meeting
David Finch	Ticketing & Membership Administrator
Dan Porter	Marketing Manager
Austen Cornell	Ground Operations Manager
Joe Kaniecki	Head of Commercial
Richard Foley	Board Member
Tracy Sansom	GCCC Life Member, Severn Region Committee Member

Apologies from members

Jim Bath

1. Welcome and Introductions

Joe and Tracy were introduced to the group.

2. Regions

Tracy introduced her proposal for a single fundraising committee to replace the remaining regional committees and to include members of those committees, the number of whom has been on the decline. The new committee would provide a bigger pool of people, working together. The Exiles would remain a separate entity with a representative on the committee if they wished. The 59ers and Triple Chance are successful sources of funds for the Club; whilst these would need to continue to be run separately to some extent, members of the new committee would continue to support

them. This new arrangement would streamline communication with the Club providing one point of contact for publicity and marketing. Any constitutional implications would need to be discussed and approved at the next AGM.

George was concerned that those Members living outside the major conurbations (Bristol, Cheltenham, Gloucester) might feel left out by the creation of one committee and the abolition of the smaller regional groups. His concerns were acknowledged by the group but it was accepted that those members could continue to be members of or be represented by the new committee. Matt Davies agreed that there should be a representative of the Exiles on the new committee together with someone from Heritage. On behalf of the Board, Richard indicated that a clear case for change had been made and that the necessity of any constitutional amendments requiring discussion and/or approval at the next AGM should not delay proceeding with the proposal. However, he requested that the objectives of the new group should be clearly identified along with plans and targets.

Actions arising	Assigned to
Plans for new fundraising committee to proceed	Tracey Sansom/Joe Kaniecki

3. Appointment of new Chair

John Gordon reported to the group on the recruitment of the new Chair as the Members' representative on the interview panel. The panel saw five good quality candidates, all of whom highlighted their view of the importance of the MWG and its continued involvement. The appointments of the new Chair and the new elected member of the Board are due to be announced week commencing 26th August.

4. Membership

Member Behaviour

Austen reported that relations between Members and the Club have improved this season although one visitor has been banned for life following abusive, unacceptable postings on social media. However, following instances of threats and bad language after a parking issue ahead of the first One-Day Cup match that was quickly resolved, Austen advised that the Club would be adopting a lower tolerance to such behaviour which, in its view, is never acceptable. The Group were fully supportive of this position whilst wishing to highlight that it was only a small minority of members who behaved in such a way.

The MWG has requested that the Club puts in place a disciplinary procedure regarding the online conduct of Members and supporters. The Club will present a suggested policy to the MWG for implementation ahead of the 2025 season.

2025 Membership Proposal

Dan Porter updated the Group on the Club's current thinking around next season's membership. The Club has been considering asking Members to pre-book their attendance at Blast matches in order that an estimate does not have to be made of how many Members will attend and that, therefore, the maximum number of tickets can be made available for purchase and the correct ground infrastructure can be implemented including stewarding, bar staff and toilets.

A number of options are being considered to allow Club management to make informed decisions on matchday provisions based on attendance data with the option to sell to seat level rather than general admission being a possibility. This would include asking members to pay a nominal sum to choose specific seats within the ground for Blast matches.

Chris Toft queried what arrangements would be made for Life Members in this scenario. Ruth Sharville highlighted that accessibility needs of Members would also need to be considered.

The Club will continue to reflect on the options over the coming weeks but there will be an emphasis on offering appropriate Membership types to allow people to access the type of cricket that is most important to them and not having to pay for cricket that they will not be attending.

Reciprocals

The subject of reciprocal agreements has been raised with members of the MWG and the Club has been reviewing its approach in this area in light of feedback received from Members and research into policies adopted by other clubs. Dan Porter outlined the Club's desire to increase its reciprocal links and expand the offer to include One-Day Cup matches and admittance into Members-only facilities at both venues; he proposes however to move away from offering free admission in order to emphasize the value of the competitions, at the same time as continuing to offer an excellent deal to members of other counties and equally our members in return. Bookings in advance will help the Club in planning for matches and enable us to obtain information on those members of other counties attending. A charge of £5 for Championship matches and £7 for One-Day Cup matches was proposed.

The MWG approved this new strategy.

Actions arising	Assigned to
Contact all other counties with our Reciprocal offering for 2025	David Finch

5. Cheltenham feedback and 2025 outlook

Feedback from The Festival has been very positive in terms of catering and general operations. Ticket sales were fewer than expected however due to inclement weather, the clash with Euro 2024 and the June start meaning that it concluded before the beginning of the state school holidays. The Club is reflecting on the cost of the event and will work hard to secure beneficial dates and fixtures for 2025.

6. The Hundred

Neil Priscott and Richard Foley updated the group on the current situation of The Hundred and its proposed sale and possible future expansion.

The proposal is for each host venue to retain 51% of each franchise with income from the remaining 49% being shared between the 18 counties and the MCC. The consensus from the non-host venues is not to challenge this arrangement and that the best way of maximising revenue is to stick together. Richard emphasised that the Club and its Members should not be focussed on the size of any cheque and will not be budgeting for the receipt of any such payment. The Club however is fully committed to the tournament and is instead focussed on becoming a franchise host from 2029.

7. AOB

Scoreboard

Austen up-dated the group on the situation with the scoreboard. He confirmed that it is defunct and beyond repair having been installed in 2002; the company that provided it are no longer involved with cricket and are no longer based in the UK. The operating system is very out of date. The Club are working with the ECB and an independent specialist to get a replacement in place for the start of the 2025 season. A full tender process will be conducted for this large project.

Website

Further to previous discussions, the Club had committed to replace the website before now; the costs have, unfortunately, proved prohibitive up until this point. The Club fully appreciate the urgency of this project and will proceed as quickly as possible with a financial contribution from the new marketing fund provided by the ECB as part of the new County Partnership Agreement (CPA).

Mike Procter – permanent recognition/memorial

John Gordon suggested to the group that there should be a permanent recognition to Mike Procter at the Seat Unique Stadium and it was agreed that naming the current Mound Stand after him would be very appropriate. Neil indicated that this was a matter that would need to be put to the Board and also actioned ahead of 2026 international fixtures going on sale given that the large temporary stand erected along the Kennington Avenue side of the ground is currently named the Mike Procter Stand. This will be discussed at a future Board meeting and brought back to MWG.

Walkers and Talkers taking place on 1st X1 match days

Matt Davies has received feedback from Members expressing concern around Walkers and Talkers continuing to take place alongside matches on a Wednesday with potential confusion over access to ticketholders and Members. Neil acknowledged that the clash was not ideal but an undertaking had been made to Andy Brassington that Walkers and Talkers would only be cancelled in the event of a commercially significant conference/event making the venue unavailable and the judgement was made that such a significant and popular group should be allowed to continue on County Championship and One Day Cup match days.

MWG term of membership

Members were reminded that their initial two year term of membership is due to come to an end in March 2025. The Club will be having conversations with existing MWG members to ascertain their intentions and whilst wanting to re-offer the opportunity to contribute as an MWG member to the wider membership of the Club, it will certainly be its intention to retain a core of the existing MWG membership.

Members' Forum

Dominic reminded the group of the Members' Forum scheduled to take place during the Championship match versus Sussex next month and asked that the Club give due consideration to the way financial updates are presented to Members.

Date of Next Meeting

TBC – late November 2024.