



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held in the Doug Insole Pavilion and via video conference
on Wednesday 23 November 2022

Present

Mr J P Stephenson (Chief Executive and Interim Chair), Mr D L Acfield (President and Interim Cricket Committee Chair), Mr I Paterson (Treasurer) and 206 Members of the Club.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The President wished all a good evening, welcomed everyone to the 2022 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and apologised for the lateness of the meeting in 2022. The need to hold the meeting in November was noted as a requirement due to the investigations around historic allegations of racism. It was hoped that the investigations would have been concluded ahead of the AGM but this was not possible and the Board had chosen to go forward with the AGM. It was confirmed that apologies for absence had been recorded.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 16 June 2021

The President advised that the minutes, which had been previously circulated, were taken as read. The minutes were duly agreed to be signed as a true record of the meeting. The President handed over the Chief Executive and Interim Chair to report.

3. Chief Executive and Interim Chair's Report

The Chief Executive and Interim Chair shared his thanks with the Members for their attendance, both in person and online. He acknowledged the strangeness of looking back on the 2021 season when fast approaching 2023, following the completion of the 2022 season. The Chief Executive and Interim Chair shared his hope of holding another AGM within the next six months if the Katharine Newton report had been concluded.

The Chief Executive and Interim Chair confirmed that the Treasurer would review the finances of the Club in his report, recognising that it was clear after coming out of Covid, it was a challenging time and the continuing issues faced in relation to ongoing claims and the investigation into historic allegations of racial discrimination had exacerbated the difficult financial situation.

He mentioned some of the points of interest from the 2021 season, stating that although Essex had won silverware once again, in winning the second Division trophy, it was with a tinge of regret that it was a season of slight underachievement by the Club's own lofty standards. The 50 Over campaign was exceptional, with the team losing eventually in the Semi-final to Glamorgan, the eventual winners. He shared how great it was to see young players perform so well in the competition.

The Chief Executive and Interim Chair continued by stating how Women's cricket in the county was flourishing, with Maddy Villiers representing England against New Zealand in Chelmsford and that she was awarded a central contract. She also played for the Sunrisers and the Oval Invincibles in the Hundred competition. Kelly Castle was named a fully contracted player for the season and captained the Essex Women's side in both white ball formats. The Club's Pathway team continued to produce exceptional talent with Jamal Richards, Eshun Kalley and Robin Das all signing rookie contracts.

Essex had three teams competing in the ECB National Disability Competitions, and in the community Essex was one of the founding members of the Super 1 format.

The Chief Executive and Interim Chair said it was sad to see Ryan ten Doeschate leave the Club after a long and successful career and noted his captaincy had brought remarkable success. He also acknowledged Varun Chopra's contribution over a lengthy career, before his retirement was announced at the end of the 2021 season.

The Chief Executive and Interim Chair continued by sharing his memories following the passing of Peter Butler. He noted Peter's dedication, generosity and incredible loyalty to the Club and his legacy lived on through the trust, EASST. The Chief Executive and Interim Chair acknowledged the sad passing of Ray Cole, who was the Club's physiotherapist in previous years.

He registered his thanks to the staff who had been outstanding during an incredibly challenging year and thanked Simon Cooper for stepping in as Interim Deputy Chair, being a great support to Chief Executive and Interim Chair. He thanked the outgoing members of the Board, with special mention to Nigel Hilliard, who had given so much to the Club over the last 30 years. He thanked Ian Patterson and Mike Smith as they retired.

Finally, he shared a special thank you to the Club's outgoing President, David Acfield, particularly for his roles at the Club as President and the Acting Chair of the Cricket Committee. The Chief Executive and Interim Chair noted that the President's contribution to the Club had been monumental.

4. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer shared his report and reminded the Members that the focus of the information would be on 2021. The Treasurer advised that the normal course would be to compare the 2021 financial year with the previous year, but as 2020 was such an unusual year it did not compare to anything before or since.

2021 was not a normal year, as it was affected by Covid related restrictions and social distancing. In the years pre-Covid, the Club, along with most first-class counties, was a loss-making Club. Operating a loss each year at somewhere around £500,000 or £600,000. Each single year the Club was "rescued" by something such as the Ashes series, the International played by India at Chelmsford, or the ICC World Cup in 2019. There was also impact seen from the global stock markets going up or any prizes won from the Championship and other competitions. There were things that changed the dynamic of the finances and allowed the Club to report small profit in some cases or breaking even in others.

Entering 2019-2020, the Club had funding from the Hundred competition to include, at around £1.3 million for five years. The funds changed the perception of the income the Club could report at the end of the year. Going into 2020 it was thought that the Club would be a roughly £500,000 profit making organisation. The Club hoped to save the money to build a "war chest" and build some facilities, being optimistic until March of that year when it became clear the plans would not come to fruition.

At the previous AGM, the Treasurer was able to report a modest profit, notwithstanding everything that had happened within the business with no cricket for the first part of 2020 and playing behind closed doors for the rest of the year. Looking at the Accounts for 2021, there was a loss of just £12,000. Across the entire two-year Covid period, the Club made a net profit of about £72,000. The reality was far different, as in 2020 the Club benefited enormously from three things - number one was the continued support of the Membership and sponsors. As a tough year of no cricket and no attendance at the ground, the Membership and sponsors supported the Club, and the Treasurer shared his gratitude.

Secondly, the government stepped in with the furlough scheme, which was utilised with over 70% of the business's total cost base related to salaries and national insurance (a people industry).

Third and finally, the ECB excelled with their financial support of clubs during the period. They met their own commitments to Essex, including £1.3 million for the Hundred competition, even though the competition did not take place in 2020, but they were also able to give an additional £300,000 in 2020.

The net result, when including the Club's investment portfolio, was that £1,000,000 was received in assistance in 2020 from the ECB, the furlough scheme and from the investment portfolio.

In 2021 the same dynamic was in progress, although the furlough scheme wound down in 2021, the Club were able to take advantage of it for the first part of the year (£276,000 in

furlough and local government grants). The ECB supported clubs once again, over and above its legal requirements to all the first-class counties, acknowledging restrictions on numbers of people coming into the grounds. They worked together to understand the T20 revenues for the last three years (2017-2019) and provided the Club with 75% of the value as support. The gross number was £550,000, so the Club received £380,000 from the ECB, in addition to the normal provision.

Finally, the investment portfolio in 2021, £166,000 of incremental value, added to the support received and the total was £826,000. Were it not for the support from government initiatives, the ECB, Members and sponsors, the Club would not have reported the modest profit, but rather it would have reported a loss of £1.8 million. The Club reserves remained intact, and all staff continued onboard, paid at 100%. The Treasurer confirmed the Club had moved into a period of rebuilding.

2022 had been a year approaching normality but was not quite there in terms of rebuilding revenues back to where they were in 2019, and some of the costs associated social distancing were still in effect. A small profit was made but the Club had to set aside £450,000 to cover legal costs. That £450,000 related to very specific costs incurred from legal firms, and did not include any compensation. The Treasurer reported it was the figure the Club could need to spend in order to process historical allegations and claims.

He informed the Membership that the vast majority the figure set aside had either been paid out or had been incurred and the invoices were awaited. £150,000 remained and the Club believed it would be accrued going forward.

Regarding the audit report, it was noted that the auditors did not just look historically, but also looked forward. RSM had agreed that the financial reports of the Club were accurate and fair, following all of the UK GAAP policies and procedures. They had also made special mention of concerns around going concern (the ability of any company to be able to meet its financial obligations for a period of 12 months from the date of signing of the accounts). This year, progress with the investigations and the outcomes were awaited for potential impact on the going concern. It was mentioned in the report as a risk.

He concluded by advising that a £12,000 loss became a £474,000 pre-tax loss once the legal reserves were factored in.

Questions

Q: Craig Morris – It was asked what figure was expected for the provision of losses for compensation or as a result of the various investigations.

A: The Treasurer advised that there was no information about future fines that could be incurred over and above those which had already been announced by the ECB. There was also no information available regarding any compensation claims which could be received. None had been received to date. The Club could not account for unknown claims due to a high bar of specificity around certainty in these areas.

Q: Craig Morris – Regarding the provision, it was repeatedly said that the Club could not provide for unknown claims. Without knowing what provisions would be required for responses, he suggested the Club provide for future events that could not be known with any certainty. He suggested using reasonable calculations to reach the provisions.

A: The Treasurer advised that the Club makes provision for liability that exists, but potential claims for compensation against alleged comments had not been received meant no provision was made for further legal fees. There was no reasonable certainty to make provision speculatively against future claims that may or may not come forward in a report that had not been received.

Q: It was suggested to put an amount in as a provision and release it when proved not to be real, by using generally accepted accounting practices.

A: The Treasurer responded that the Club could not add a provision at this stage. An overestimation of £25,000 had been built in and there was no appetite to overestimate beyond that. £450,000 was provided and the auditors believed that a proper, fair amount in reserve would be £425,000, so effectively 5% was overprovided.

Q: Peter Edwards – He thanked the Treasurer for his work through the stressful Covid period. It was asked if the Club paid the living wage for all staff.

A: The Treasurer confirmed that the Club did and had topped up furlough payments to provide 100% salary for staff.

Q: Kevin Mansell – From the legal fund set aside, only £150,000 remained (over £300,000 had already been paid out). It was asked if the payment had been a prepayment for the King's Council report, legal costs associated with the Club's dealings with the ECB or had some Essex employees had legal costs reimbursed.

A: The Treasurer advised that no reimbursement had been made to any staff for legal costs. The majority of payments were due to the Katharine Newton report being billed on time spent rather than paying in advance.

Q: It was clarified that the main financial risk that had been discussed was based on judgment the likely outcome of if it finds in favour of the complainants that they can appeal in courts of law to get redress for what they alleged to be discrimination.

A: The Treasurer advised that deferral from the balance sheet would take the Club up to the point of publication of the report and more knowledge around other ongoing investigations. After the report would be a "new chapter" in the Club's finances. If anything were to come out of the report, or lead to further claims/litigation, potentially any compensation type issues that would have to be dealt with entirely separately.

Q: Brian Frost – It was asked if there was an update on the status of the fine from the ECB.

A: The Treasurer asked the Finance Director to explain, and it was advised that the reserve of £450,000 included the ECB fine of £50,000.

Q: Ian Brown – In the Accounts it stated, “these matters indicate that a material uncertainty exists that may cast doubt over the ability of the Club to continue as a going concern”. He felt it indicated a relatively dreadful situation for the Club and asked if there was any feedback from potential sponsors or from Members not wishing to renew because of the suggestion the Club could struggle to exist in six months’ time.

A: The Treasurer responded that there was no specific information to reflect the Club would not be in existence due to reduced income or any litigation or compensation claims. It was just evident that the business was in “unsettling waters” while not knowing the outcome of the KNKC report and what it could produce. It was therefore prudent to warning the Members as part of a conservative approach.

It was not known when the report would be received. The Chief Executive and Interim Chair hoped it would be by the end of the year. The Club had been conducting regular webinars and Zoom calls with all sponsors, keeping them up to date with the status of the report. They had been extremely supportive and understanding.

Q: Matthew Holdings – Regarding a Covid interruption insurance policy, it was asked if it had been agreed in principle and why the number of staff in commercial activities appeared to have tripled.

A: The Treasurer advised that the Covid interruption insurance claim had taken up a significant part of the Finance Director’s time, in consultation with insurance company for due diligence. No amount had been agreed to date.

The increase in commercial staff numbers was noted as a by-product of the Club taking catering operations in house, after the previous joint venture was closed out a year before.

The President proposed the adoption of the Report & Accounts.

Proposer – Brian Springall and Seconder – Debbie Knight.

The Treasurer discussed the appointment of the Club’s auditors. After working with RSM for many years, it was discussed that good governance would include reviewing the relationship from time to time. During the Covid period, the Club wanted to maintain the relationship with RSM as they understood the business intimately.

The Treasurer proposed appointing RSM for one more year. He reiterated that the Club should continue to review the relationship in the future.

Proposer – Chris Nott and Seconder – Michael Lording

5. Result of the Essex County Cricket Club Board ballot

The Chief Executive and Interim Chair advised that the Board had appointed three people, Azeem Akhtar, Sir Stephen O'Brien and Queenie Porter, directly to vacancies and then shared the result of the Essex County Cricket Club Board ballot. There were 11 candidates for 5 places on the Board this year. The count took place the previous day.

Elected and appointed to the Board, commencing with immediate effect:

Simon Cooper
Chris Townsend
Anu Mohindru KC
Jo Faragher
Victoria Keil

Those not elected;

Neil Faraday
Peter Edwards
Baiju Solanki
Alan Yetts
Ralph Camp
Janet Hargreaves

6. Result of the Members' Committee ballot

The Chief Executive and Interim Chair shared the result of the Members' Committee ballot. There were 11 candidates for 3 places on the newly formed Members' Committee. The count took place the previous day.

Those elected were;

Millie Dillane
Piyush Somaiya
Chris Grant

Those not elected were;

Alan Yetts
Daniel Haggard
Janet Hargreaves
James Horsley
Richard Martin
Nigel Barrick
Claire Wightman
John Welch

7. In person Constitutional Change vote

The Chief Executive and Interim Chair presented the Constitutional Change to the Members present and asked for a show of hands for and against the changes.

The President advised that the minor changes to the Constitution had come through suggestions from the FCA.

With a show of hands and many votes over the required two thirds majority, the Constitution Change vote was accepted.

Q: Debbie Knight – She highlighted point (8.15) in the Constitution, reminding the Membership were required to be cancelled if not re-subscribing.

The President thanked Debbie Knight for her comment and all those in attendance who had voted.

8. Questions & Answers

The Chief Executive and Interim Chair started the question and answer item with pre-submitted questions from the Membership –

Q: Alan Mayo – He queried the income in 2021 from Membership at £270,117 which he believed looked low and asked for clarification of the costs associated with Membership.

A: The Treasurer advised that there were 3183 Members of varying categories, including 1522 Senior Members and 61 Students. Both of those categories were lower in cost than a standard Membership.

The Club also had 668 Life Members, where income was historically taken into profit loss in prior years. There were also discounts for 2020 Members renewing using early bird prices.

The Membership costs were associated with staff costs, appropriate to the functions that they performed within the company. The figure also included the ticket and access control systems which the office lease.

Q: Kevin Watts – It was asked what progress the Club had made with the ECB's diversity targets. It was also asked what the status of the ECB's Strauss High Performance recommendations was.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair advised that following the announcement of the outcome of the ballot, the Board has met the ECB diversity targets.

It was noted that the high-performance review was not progressing further. In 2023, the schedule would remain the same and in 2024 it looked highly likely that the schedule would be very similar to 2023. 14 out of the 16 recommendations in the review had been adopted.

The two contentious recommendations about the divisional structure and the structure of the domestic schedule, were being discussed and considered by the county chairs. The only compromise being discussed was the potential flip in divisions from 8 to 10.

Q: Ian Brown – It was stated that Members were aware of the tired facilities at the ground and noted the revised development plan would be considered by the new Board at their first

meeting, but an update for Members regarding the future was requested, with particular focus on financing.

A: The Interim Deputy Chair responded, first thanking all the Members for their votes and advising he would take the responsibility of being on the Board extremely seriously and continue to do his utmost for the Club.

He advised that the ECB set all ground standards for first class counties and the Club would not currently be able to meet them. It could be seen by all that the ground was not befitting of a modern professional sports organisation, and therefore, even without the ECB standards, the Board should continue to address it.

They had commissioned some work in recent months that was ongoing, looking at options to stay in Chelmsford or the potential of looking at other options of moving. The constraints and restrictions on the attendance and the maximum capacity at the Cloud County ground left no option to improve capacity above 8000-9000 attendees.

It was noted that the ground was extremely accessible and a great location, being in the city centre but the constraints meant discussion was needed with Essex County Council, Chelmsford City Council and others.

He suggested the Club could be in a position to progress the work in the New Year. The landscape from where the work started a number of months ago to where the group were now, both in the economic outlook, but also the ECB's support with the possibility of millions of pounds to give to counties for facilities, the pot of money no longer existed. The options for the Club in terms of financing was very challenging but the Board wanted the ground to be an asset for Essex and continue the fantastic work both on the men's and women's game.

The Interim Deputy Chair highlighted the great work being undertaken by Essex Cricket in the Community (ECiC) and the Chair of their Board, Rachel Lewis.

Q: Ian Brown – It was asked if Members could be reassured the pension scheme was fully funded. If not, what steps were being taken to address the deficit.

A: The Treasurer confirmed that there were two pension schemes, one for staff and one for players. Both were defined contribution pension schemes and not defined benefit or final salary schemes. The Club did not maintain the fund, so it was neither underfunded or unfunded.

Q: Matthew Tokley – It was stated that the tangible fixed assets value was held at historical costs, based on a disclosure paragraph 1.4 of the Report & Accounts, rather than being based upon a re-evaluation model approach being adopted. It was asked if there was a reason.

A: The Treasurer confirmed this was the case and the value of the land and buildings was held at the original cost (around £2.5 million) because the Club were allowed to choose not to revalue them.

If the Club were to look at a move from Chelmsford, as discussed by the Interim Deputy Chair, then the market value of the land and buildings would be reviewed.

Q: Kevin Mansell – It was asked if there was any information available on the strategy of the Cricket Committee for improving performance for the next season. It was also noted Sam Cook was the first person in the Championship since Alan Ward in 1971 to take 200 wickets at under 20 years of age and asked if the Club would recognise the achievement.

A: Anthony McGrath responded that the Club and Cricket Committee were aware of the underperformance of the team, particularly with the bat in the Championship. The plans were simple as the team had the batting talent and depth but required better performances. Scoring rates were noted as a problem both home and away. Individual improvements would be key for the team.

Q: It was asked if there would be any response from the ECB regarding the pitch for the Championship match v Lancashire and if action could be taken to find a fair balance on the pitches.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair stated that in 2022 it was difficult to get the balance. There were a lot of flat pitches which produced results but also the other extreme. In February and March, the ECB would undertake a health check of the square, take out cores to analyse any underlying problems.

The Club had also relayed pitch number six, as a shallow relay. With any relay program there would be a couple of years where the pitch could not be used. The Cricket Committee were aware of the need to continually improve the pitches.

In reference to the Lancashire game, the grounds team had answered every question in relation to the pitch and the Club did not receive a fine or points deduction.

Q: It was asked if the ECB had initiated any discussions regarding the use of floodlights and the match timings, due to the use of power and the related costs.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair responded that the Club were aware of the cost of using the floodlights and had accounted for it. The floodlights utilised the latest technology, with LED lights which cost less than normal lights.

Q: Brian Frost – It was asked what the cost would be for using Perrett Laver in the Board application process.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair confirmed there was zero cost. The ECB funded the whole process.

Q: It was asked why there was no charge for Members using Meteor Way parking in the season.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair stated that there would be a cost involved in setting up card readers off site and other elements in taking a £1 payment. It was also a decision by the Club to share the facility with Members at the lowest cost possible.

Q: It was asked if the three Board members that had retired this year would be up for re-election at any time.

A: The Treasurer advised that the three Board members had retired. He noted he was part of the group generically challenged by Katharine Newton KC, as part of the Board in January 2018, for not dealing with one aspect of the allegations against the Club adequately at that time. The group had taken and were taking collective responsibility through the process.

The Treasurer had been on the Board for seven years and had been grateful for his time in the role. He stated he believed the process the Club was going through to identify new Board members was very positive, with people of great quality taking the roles on the Board.

Q: It was asked what the status was of the Boundary Club.

A: Peter Northfield advised that the Boundary Club were looking for volunteers to run it and hoped the Members' Committee would support the process.

Q: It was asked if the Club had purchased a coffee machine for the Members' area.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair advised he would approach the Boundary Club to look into funding a coffee machine for Members.

Q: It was asked if the provision of effective Wi-Fi at the ground was being reviewed, as well as the condition of the men's lavatories near the corporate boxes.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair advised that the Club had invested in a new public Wi-Fi system that would benefit the Members from the next season.

The issue with the men's lavatories was taken as noted.

Q: Ivor Hobson – It was noted the Women's T20 world tournament was being held in 2026. Given the Club's great record of hosting Women's Internationals, it was asked if the Club would apply to host some of the games.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair confirmed the Club would and the process had already begun.

Q: Rob Smith – It was asked whether there were any plans to erect water hydration stations around the ground in the closed season.

A: The Chief Executive advised there were no plans within the winter works, however, I was agreed as a great idea as the ground were lacking that provision.

Q: Richard Campbell – It was asked if the sight screen could be reduced next to the seats in the River end.

A: The Stadium Operations Director advised that the sight screen positions were determined by regulations regarding exits (there must be 14 seats to an exit). The sight screen was sometimes bigger for safety reasons and for compliance to the green guide for stadiums/crowd management.

Q: Brian Springall – It was raised that there were sporadic issues with the operation of the scoreboard.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair noted the issues.

Q: It was stated that the Club is a democratic organisation. With three Board members directly appointed by another body it felt less democratic. It was suggested one of the appointing Board for permanent appointees was a conservative MP, appointed another ex-Conservative MP, with no scope for the Membership to vote. It was felt that did not contribute very much to the image of diversity.

A: Vicky Ford MP stated that she was originally asked to join the Board as an Essex cricket fan and not involved as a politician. She then stood by ballot as a Member of Essex Cricket and was appointed at the last election by the Membership. Both she and the Interim Deputy Chair were the only two members of the Board who had not been on the Board at the time of the historic allegations.

It was noted as normal to appoint candidates to the Board following a vacancy with time remaining on the term. The three new Board members were appointed by the existing Board members, from the list of people who applied. They additional five people were appointed by the Membership's votes.

Over 70 people applied for the Board. The Nomination Committee shortlisted the candidates to recommend to Members for their votes. The Nomination Committee were supported by Perret Laver, an expert in recruiting Boards with diversity.

The candidates needed a passion for Essex Cricket. 26 people were interviewed within the different categories and skillsets required for the Board.

The Members chose the vast majority of skillsets that the Nomination Committee recommended. There's been no politics in this whatsoever.

Vicky Ford MP noted that she had been able to help the Club by liaising with the Sports Minister and shared some of the Members' concerns regarding the ECB.

Q: It was asked if Members of the Board would be directly appointed in future or if it was a temporary solution.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair advised that it was a temporary arrangement in place to fill vacancies after three resignations. The Board were able to appoint three directors to the terms remaining for the resignations. In the future, the Club would be back to a fully elected Board.

Q: Brian Searle – It was asked if the Members would be fully involved in any potential decisions regarding the proposed or possible move to another ground, as it would be such a major change for the Club.

A: The Interim Deputy Chair advised that the new Board would review the work carried out so far in reviewing the provision at the ground and the discussions regarding potential moves. The Board would then bring any information to the Membership.

The Club wanted to continue to host Women's cricket and the ECB did not have a minimum capacity for Women's games at this time but could introduce it in the future.

Q: Kevin Watts – It was asked if there were sites/locations in mind.

A: The Interim Deputy Chair advised there were a number of places which would like to be chosen for Essex Cricket and the discussion was not new. There were options inside and outside of Chelmsford. There was a set of criteria to thoroughly and properly review in order to make decisions.

Q: Brian Frost – It was noted that for many previous years, there was difficulty in getting candidates for the Board and this AGM had seen 70+ applications for the vacancies.

A: Vicky Ford MP advised that the Perrett Laver team advertised positively for applicants and approached some candidates. The applicants were passionate about Essex Cricket and wanted to help and contribute towards a better future for the Club following the situation with allegations of historic racism.

Many of the applicants were cricket fans since a young age and brought a huge range of different skills. They wanted to be part of making sure Essex Cricket had a bright future that represented the diversity of talent across the county, focusing on all the different teams across the sport.

Q: Kevin Mansell – It was suggested the next AGM would not take place until the Katharine Newton KC report had been published. It was asked if time could be set aside to discuss the report with the Members before the Board would make a public response to any recommendations.

It was also suggested the DCMS (digital culture, media and sport) Select Committee could hear from a witness wanting to make allegations and comment under parliamentary privilege. It was asked if parliament was usurping normal processes to intervene in the operation of the game.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair advised that the next AGM would be due in May 2023 if the report had been published and following necessary legal counsel.

He shared his thanks for the comments related to having time for Members to comment on any recommendations after publication. The Club would be acting on any recommendations.

The Chief Executive confirmed he had had no direct contact with Katharine Newton KC as a completely independent report was being prepared, commissioned by the Club. All communication was through the Club lawyers and questions regarding the process were invited.

Vicky Ford MP noted that she was not part of the DCMS Select Committee but understood the main focus of the committee hearing was about Yorkshire. Essex Cricket had written to the Select Committee to explain the process with the KNKC report.

The Select Committee were cross-party committee (it would have backbench members from all different parties) and not a government committee. The Select Committee were investigating racism in sport and looking at whether regulatory bodies or the government had acted properly, then making recommendations on potential future changes to the law.

Q: Is it appropriate for one ex cricketer to make allegations of racism against another ex-cricketer in front of a select committee protected by parliamentary privilege. Is that the way cricket and politics should be run

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair clarified that the individual had been invited to Select Committee and had not confirmed attendance.

Vicky Ford MP stated that those who had made allegations had a right to a fair hearing.

Vicky Ford MP said it was important that the independent report from KNKC was completed when possible.

The Chief Executive and Interim Chair clarified that the Board had not sent the letter to the Select Committee to date as they were awaiting confirmation of attendance by the individual.

Q: Richard Martin – It was asked if the newly appointed Board members would circulate more with the Members over the coming years and making themselves available for questions.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair advised that the new Board would be meeting all staff in the coming weeks as a positive step forward to start the process of circulating more.

There would be an induction evening for the new Board and a dinner with senior staff to support the Board in being more present.

Q: It was asked if the ECB could take the decision regarding relocating the ground out of the hands of the Club Board by stipulating quotas for T20 Blast competition seating capacity for example.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair advised the Club were in constant dialog with the ECB regarding the issues and were acutely aware of the requirement to maintain minimum standards to stage cricket matches. The ECB were helping the Club with the requirements as well as having their own financial review with their new Chair and Chief Executive.

The Club had some big challenges with the ground, but were working very hard in the background to address them.

Q: It was asked when the new Chair of the Board would be announced.

A: The Chief Executive and Interim Chair confirmed that the Board would convene the following day to elect a Chair and Deputy Chair. The Board would also discuss the replacement for the President role.

A round of applause and thanks from the Members was given for the outgoing Board members and President.

9. AOB

The President advised that the Board would like to propose Ian Patterson to be an Honorary Life Vice President as thanks for the superb job he had done as Treasurer during very difficult circumstances.

All were in agreement.

The Treasurer shared his thanks and his great memories. He said he was honoured by the offer of Honorary Life Vice President status. He qualified the last six to seven years as having some extremely difficult times but only among the really good times, such as when Essex were promoted, which summed up the best of the County Championship competition, as well as the trophies won in 2019 and 2020.

The President shared that the AGM would be his last after many years and again thanked the Members for the confidence shown in him.

The Chief Executive and Interim Chair wished further thanks and that everyone travel safely.

The meeting closed at 8.43pm.

John Stephenson
Chief Executive

Essex Cricket