

Minutes of the Annual Supporters Meeting, held at The County Ground

16th August 2023

The Club Chairman, Gavin Warren, opened the meeting by asking the audience to be upstanding for a minute's applause to signify the loss and celebrate the life of the Clubs long -term serving scorer Tony Kingston, who passed away just a few months before.

Gavin then opened the meeting to the supporters, setting out that the next hour would be an extremely open and honest conversation between staff at Northamptonshire County Cricket Club and Supporters in attendance. Gavin then went onto listing the evenings agenda, which followed:

- Club Chairman to open – Chairman, Gavin Warren
- NCCC Draft Accounts- Chief Executive, Ray Payne
- Steelbacks Foundation – George Wood
- Recreational Cricket – Jim Hawkins
- First Team Update – Head Coach, John Sadler
- Club President to close – Lord Naseby

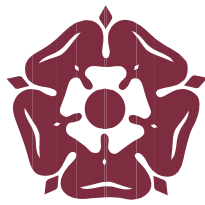
Apologies for absence – apologies were received from Linda Fisher, Roger Fisher, Shelia Kent, Lynn Gamble, Gill Gibb, Bob Purser

The meeting began by Gavin breaking introducing the structure of the board to the supporters. Former Club Captain, Stephen Peters, was introduced as the newest member of the Northamptonshire board. He joined earlier in the year as non-executive Director and will Chair the Cricket Strategy Committee. Gavin commended Stephen's commitment and willingness to return to the Club. He then took the time to thank Nigel Felton for the contribution and influence that former Chairman of Cricket and Ex player, had provided over the last 13 years.

Following on from this, Shahnaz Zaman, was introduced as a board member who works closely with Dave Weston, a name that was already familiar with the audience, on the Safeguarding and Welfare surrounding the Club and Community. Gavin reiterated the importance and seriousness of the subject to the room, giving examples of the Board agenda, now heading with topics such as Health and Safety, Safeguarding, EDI whilst also discussing Cricket. This further reinstated the importance of the role that Shahnaz is head of and relaying the Club's duty of care to their employees, players, the general public and pathway.

Gavin then went onto naming the remaining board members and structure, which supporters were already familiar with, it followed as:





ECB Communication and Working Groups – Gavin Warren, Ray Payne

Commercial – Gavin Warren, Mike Macdonell, Sam Kiddy

Finance and Legal – Tim Robinson, Mike Macdonell

EDI and Safeguarding – Shivani Kaushike, Shahnaz Zaman

Ground and Property – Mike Macdonell, George Howard, Godfrey Hammon

Season Ticket Representative – Linda Fisher

Recreational Cricket – David Hartley

Cricket Strategy – Stephen Peters, Ian Peck

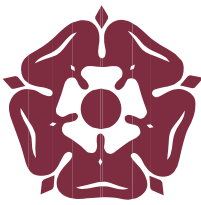
Before closing, Gavin had explained to the group that for some, their term on the board is due to come to a close at the end of the season and that there will be further changes to the structure of the Northamptonshire board over the course of the year.

Ray Payne shared Northamptonshire's 'draft' results for the year. Ray began by casting back to the Pandemic and the uncertainties that came as a consequence of going through such a turbulent time. Ray had openly told the room that the Club were unsure of how quickly it would take to 'recover' from such financial uneasiness. Ray stressed the difficulty of running the Events element of the business in such climate, the restriction to crowds, the concern as to whether concerts and gatherings would be able to return and of course people's own personal views, opinions and wariness of returning to 'normal life'. Ray was incredibly pleased to announce to the room that despite such factors and expectations, the Club has bounced back much quicker than first predicted. The Club had gone beyond figures pre COVID, acquiring over one million pounds worth of business within its Catering and Events division.

Ray also told the audience of an increase in Sponsorship money that was brought in from the Commercial Department. As with Events, Sponsorship was an area that was hit by the impacts of the pandemic, with businesses unable to sponsor the Club due to own priorities and the temporary 'closure' of the Club. Ray was thrilled to announce to the club supporters of the reinvestment, from both longstanding partners of the Club as well as new business to join the growing network – Ray singled out sponsorship as a key area of strength and success.

Annual season and match tickets injected revenue into the annual accounts. Ray specifically mentioned the Clubs one- off T20 tour match versus India, which saw Northamptonshire Steelbacks host the world number 1 ranked T20 side last July. The fixture was commercially recorded as the 'most successful night at the Club'.





Ray had put the finances into perspective by highlighting to the group that of the revenue streams combined had resulted in the Club obtaining over a million pounds more taking than budgeted. This was applauded by supporters.

Costs were discussed next with Ray opening by reaffirming one of Northamptonshire's principles that: 'if the Club is performing financially, and there is revenue available, increased funds will feed into the playing squad and the academy

He highlighted the increases in cost of living affect Cricket as it does everything else and the Clubs 'cricketing costs spiralled', this included items such as: hotels, travel, grass care and maintenance.

Ray noted that the increasing cost of energy was a concern and in a bid to combat and reduce outgoings, during the winter, solar energy was installed across areas of the ground, which has in turn has reduced energy unit usage which is seen as a huge positive. Ray also touched upon a new scheme that the Club are implementing which will see the Club selling back unused units back to the grid, to repurchase at a cheaper rate – all resulting in increased savings.

To conclude the segment on the Clubs current accounts and finances, Ray had rounded off by digesting the figures into a final statement that despite predictions that the Club were forecasted to make a loss of £110,000, instead this has been overturned into a profit of £155,000. Ray expressed his personal pride in the outcome, giving thanks and praise to his team of employees, who had worked extremely hard to achieve this financial years results.

The budget for current year was then touched upon, explaining how it was largely based on the previous year. Despite efforts, the showcase fixture versus India was unable to return, however, the 2023 Blast campaign shone ticket sales in a particularly positive light, along with sponsorship figures, putting the Club commercially in a positive position. This year, similar cost issues will and have continued to have been an obstacle, resulting in budgeting for a small loss, however, all efforts are focused on again, defying the budget.

The Chairman, Gavin Warren continued by commending Ray and his team for achieving such turnaround. Gavin took time to pass his thanks to Ray specifically, also Jonathan Taylor, Operations Manager, and to Head of Commercial, Daniel Vernon, who was called attention to for his efforts and successes to the Club. Supporters again applauded staff for their achievements over the past year.

Gavin then shifted focus to the new initiative that the Club are in the final stages of introducing George Wood, to the supporters. George opened his piece by firstly expressing gratitude to be involved with the Steelbacks Foundation that is being launched this September. George clearly relayed the vision to the audience as: 'an outstanding charity that embeds Northants Cricket in the fabric of the community'.

George commended the Club for the 'phenomenal job' that Northamptonshire have already achieved by recovering the Club's financial status from where it has been in the past, as well as the Club's existing engagement with Northamptonshire Businesses and particularly commended the





Clubs commercial sponsorship portfolio. George used the Steelbacks Foundation as an example of how the Club are driving into areas beyond.

George set out two major impacts of the Foundation:

1. Using cricket to promote health, education and life chances. He described this as going beyond getting more children into playing cricket, but more about making fundamental differences to those children's lives through the engagement cricket offers. George highlighted the opportunity to engage, which links to the second impact as a knock-on effect.
2. Cricket benefitting from diversity and greater inclusion. George went onto his next point, giving real life examples of his own cricket club, echoing again how further inclusion and the perception of cricket needs to change, presenting to the supporters that 'Northants is at the forefront of making change'.

The passion that George has for the Foundation was clear as he set out three overarching thoughts and strives of the charity:

- To be more than cricket
- To build from the bottom up
- To consistently tell the story

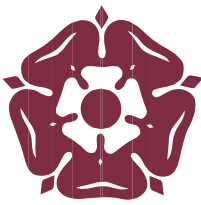
In order to fulfil the Steelbacks Foundation's potential, George then discussed the first introductory steps. Networking and consulting stakeholders will be the starting point, making those aware of the brand-new initiative. George stressed the importance of involving the whole Club and surrounding community to make the Steelbacks Foundation a success.

George told supporters that the 'first steps' have already been made into launching the charity. With the funding and support from outlets, has already enabled projects to be proposed:

1. Fit and Fed Program: Whereby sports clubs run a program, getting children in, and playing sport, whilst also providing food for the duration. Allowing children to have nutritious meals, whilst engaging with Cricket.
2. To allow for talented young cricketers from disadvantaged backgrounds to access the pathway.

To close, George listed the logistics into allowing for the Steelbacks Foundation to launch and promoted the idea to the supporters in the room. In order to do so, he stated that the requirements is that the charity raises £25,000, and told the room how supporters can donate and play their role, expanding on the work that Northamptonshire are already achieving.





Gavin then introduced Jim Hawkins to the room. Jim was introduced as Clubs and Community Manager as part of the Recreational Cricket Team at the Club. He began by giving a personal introduction, explaining to the group his job description covering: 42 community clubs, disability cricket lead, offers volunteer support, heads the U19s Competition and focuses on other specific projects across the department.

Jim then went on setting out and relaying the team's objectives and priorities and for this year, the aims are:

- To see further growth in women and girl's teams:
Jim began by educating supporters on the work that the Club has already achieved relating to the growth in Girl's teams across the county, and further highlighted that the aim is to maintain and continue the expansion, and to provide sustainability in the teams that are already established. Jim explained that the team have since a achieved an 11% increase on the numbers from the previous year. Further impact stats below:

	2022	2023
Girls Teams	7	18
Girls in National Programmes	489 (26%)	539 (29%)

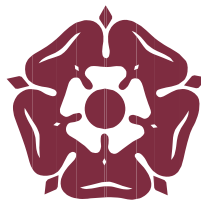
League impact stats:

188 girls involved
173 matches played
13,644 runs scored, 746 wickets taken

- Growth in volunteer recruitment:
Jim made clear that the next priority had come directly from Clubs across the county, as they had expressed a lack of support from volunteers. Jim expressed that volunteers are pivotal for recreational cricket to succeed as he shone a light on the extensive roles and areas of which they cover from coaching to ground staff. In a bid to beat the issue, Jim told the group that his team have run surveys and relaunched a central volunteer role in order to increase recruitment. As well as this, Jim also touched upon further pilot programs that the Club is putting together, as well as reaching out to local University students.

Jims final piece was around the team's 10-year Facility Strategy. Jim explained that for all cricket clubs across the county, each undertook an detailed site survey, which has in turn, led to a productive list of requirements needed to be fulfilled in order to allow for community cricket to be accessible for all across the whole county. The strategy entailed a list of five key areas that they are to tackle:





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1. Growth in Junior and Female cricket
 2. Impact of climate change
 3. Socio – Economic factors
 4. Expected Population Growth
 5. Geographic Gaps

Coming towards the end of the evening's agenda, John Sadler and his team of coaching staff were invited to the front of the room. John began by reflecting on his tenure as Head Coach, describing that his priorities were to correct the infrastructure and roles within the playing group and environment, and to ensure sufficient support was provided for the squad both on and off the field. He transitioned to the current season, and his objectives to continue with progression across all areas and to further build on players to allow them to perform to their highest potential.

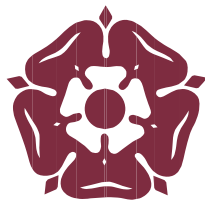
John then went onto discussing the first teams pre-season tour to Cape Town, which was led by coaching staff and the teams 'new' captain Luke Procter. John was satisfied with the tour and preparations despite some minor logistical and weather issues, but overall, it was a good trip for the team.

John broke his segment into the three different formats beginning with the County Championship. John took ownership and recognised that as a group they have played and produced 'poor cricket' and described the display as some of the groups 'deepest lows'. He mentioned the team's position within the league and accepted that the run of fixtures remaining in the format would be 'tough', but reassured supporters that the team were still 'giving everything that they have got to stay up in the Division'. John broke the analysis down further, saying bluntly that the batting had been poor, and that the three batting points over the course of the run of fixtures 'just wasn't good enough'. Reflections continued with the bowling, agreeing in the poor performances, being clear in saying that 'only taking twenty wickets once, simply isn't good enough'. Similar themes and tones of dissatisfaction was also clear by John when describing the fielding in this competition.

John supported the playing squad in the effort that had been put in behind the scenes and of which has continued. John explained a series of contributing factors that were of course contributing to the poor season, such as: the rule changes in the format that were introduced by the ECB, John felt that had damaged the team from a strategic perspective. As well as this, a collection of injuries and unavailability across members of the playing squad, particularly the senior team, John listed all of the players that had suffered, including: Ben Sanderson, Luke Procter, Rob Keogh, Tom Taylor, James Sales, Simon Kerrigan, Emilio Gay, Hassan Azad, Josh Cobb, Lewis McManus and David Willey. John made the point that as a result of the list of above, the team had 'lost out on over 500 games of experience'.

Moving onto the T20 Blast campaign, John discussed his decision to make the change of captaincy from Josh Cobb to David Willey. John supported his decision to do so as it was 'in the best interest of the club' despite the uncertainty he knows it did cause. John made it clear to the room that he would make the decision to change captaincy again as he listed the reasoning behind naming





David Willey captain of the campaign. John praised some of the T20 performances, praising the team for getting to the stage that they had reached despite the uncertainties at the beginning of the championship. John rounded off this segment by looking ahead to next years campaign and believes the team are in good stead to attack.

Finally, looking at the day's performance in the Metro Bank One Day Cup, John remembered some of the huge positives in the tournament, especially with the arrival of Prithvi Shaw which came to an abrupt end. John was positive about the remainder of the fixtures and had every intention to progress to the final.

Before opening up the floor for questions to the Head Coach, Stephen Peters took to the microphone to share and extend his support to all those in the professional environment, backing the work of the senior team despite the challenges that those directly involved have experienced. John was asked only two questions by the supporters in the room:

1. Do you regret the timing of the change of captaincy, rather than experience the situation that happened with Josh Cobb and the fall out?
John replied, simply, no. He then went on to explain that David Willey may not have been around due to his playing commitments within the IPL. As a result, tactically he may have been 'off the pace' and that it would have been 'unfair' for him to have come into the group in such a role, hence the late decision to change the captaincy.
2. Will Josh Cobb ever play for the first team again?
To which John replied: 'not sure'.

Gavin Warren commended John for his honesty, showed his appreciation and reaffirmed to John and the audience that he has full backing from the board, from Chief Executive and Chairman personally. Gavin then extended his well wishes and praise to the 'new' captain.

Gavin's last words before handing over to the Club President to close, touched very much on the foundations of the Club. He praised the work of Jim and the recreational department, as well as our pathway, mentioning David Willey's continued success and links with England, which led on nicely to the news that academy fast bowler Raphael Weatherall had been selected in the England U19 side – which Gavin announced to the room - applause from the audience followed. That concluded Gavins final thanks for the evening.

Lord Naseby opened with praise to the Club, players, staff, and supporters for the position of the Club. He asked for supporters to applaud the Club and all staff for their continued efforts and passion for the Club's success. After telling a personal anecdote, he went on to thank all involved and gave particular mentions to the Captain and finally, Chairman, Gavin, for his leadership into driving the Club forward. The meeting finished in a final round of applause.



