**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held at the County Ground 5th March 2020**

1. The Club Chaplain, David Chawner, led a minute’s silence to remember those supporters, past players & staff who have passed away in the last year.
2. Apologies for absence – apologies were received from Godfrey Hammon, Lynne Gamble, Tony Edmonds, Daphne & Andrew Lane.
3. The minutes of the AGM 21st March 2019 were agreed & signed as a true record.
4. The Chairman, Gavin Warren, thanked all those for attending and introduced Andrew Radd, the Club’s archivist. Gavin emphasised the importance of maintaining the history of the Club. Andrew is compiling an A-Z of Northamptonshire cricketers and will also become the Club’s radio correspondent this year. Gavin felt 2019 had been a watershed moment for cricket with success in the CWC and an exciting Ashes series; hopefully this would inspire the next generation of cricket players and spectators. Gavin reminded the audience of the Club’s other wonderful achievements with both the Northants Disability and Steel-ettos teams being unbeaten for the 2019. Then for the first time in 22 years the boys Under 17 team won the National Cup. Gavin stated that the club was entering the final year of its 5-year business plan. He reminded the audience that the club was close to going out of business in 2015; the objective of that plan was to be profitable, debt free and competitive on the field – the club were on course to achieve those objectives and Gavin expressed thanks to Ray Payne, David Ripley and the board of directors for making that happen. Gavin showed a slide illustrating the composition of the Board of Directors and thanked his fellow volunteer directors for their efforts. He reminded the audience that Fred Gordon continued to attend board meetings to represent the interests of season ticket holders; that was something established when the club ceased to be a member’s club. He introduced the Board members; David Hartley representing recreational cricket, George Howard, Mike Macdonell and Godfrey Hammon looked after property matters, Tim Robinson finance, Ian Peck acted as vice chair and assisted Nigel Felton with cricket matters and of course Lord Naseby, acting as President was a great ambassador for the club. Gavin reported that Helen Pack was now attending board meetings to provide a wealth of experience. Finally, Gavin expressed thanks for the continuing support of the Shareholders, Sponsors and Supporters. The object of the next 5-year plan was all about sustainability and relevance within a challenging environment for cricket with ambitions to develop national and international partnerships. He introduced Ray Payne, Chief Executive.
5. Ray Payne noted that last season had been a success on the field with promotion to Division 1 achieved. This would be the 4th time the Club had played at that level since 2000; the Board’s ambition was to challenge in that division; not just to survive. The supporters will also have seen that the Club have been ambitious with their T20 recruitment. Ray reported that ground improvements continued and replacement seating was currently being installed; developments to establish the County Ground as a first class venue would continue. Ray reported that two of the smaller style concerts had been confirmed and he was hoping to arrange more. Ray reported that the merger with Recreational Cricket was working well with the ambition to create a clear pathway to the first team. There had been a change in that over 13 boys now came under the club’s academy rather than recreational. Ray reported that the club continued to develop partnerships with the local National Counties, Beds, Bucks and Huntingdonshire. Finally, he thanked the Supporters Club for their continued support and noted that there would be a forum at the final supporters club lunch. Gavin introduced Tim Robinson, Finance Director.
6. Tim produced a slide showing 2019 results compared to budget and the previous year. He explained 2019 had been the last year of the previous agreement with the ECB and the 2020 budget would reflect the new funding cycle. Tim pointed out that ECB funding was not some sort of hand out; the ECB sell our product and then distribute the proceeds back to the Clubs. The 2019 results showed ECB income was in line with budget and non-ECB income showed an improvement, the EBITDA of £470k was healthy and in line with expectations. Tim then produced a slide showing the 2020 budget; although the club would receive £1.3m from the Hundred; other one-off payments like last year’s receipt from the CWC would cease, leaving the club about £600k-£700k better off. This was further reduced by the fact that the new agreement with the ECB was aligned with their financial year ended 31st January which meant we would only receive 8 months of the new money in our 2020 year ended 30th September. The new agreement with the ECB also required minimum spends on players’ salaries and the academy which had significantly increased the cost base. Therefore 2020 was very much a transitional year into the new agreement and a break-even position at the bottom line had been budgeted. Tim then produced slides showing a 5-year profit & loss account and cash flow. This confirmed increased profitability after 2020 and the build-up of a large cash balance after the remaining Council loan had been repaid. Tim asked if the audience had any questions. A supporter queried if the increased crowd supervision costs were necessary; Tim noted that these were the safety requirements that the Club had to adhere to. Another supporter asked why the 2021 result showed such an improvement over 2020; Tim confirmed that this was due to the commencement of the full 12-month funding under the new CPA rather than just 8 months reflected in 2020. Overall the club was forecasting to be in a healthy position. Gavin reflected on this and thanked Mike Macdonell, for he was instrumental in organising the share issue that had raised the £1.2m that had proved vital in producing this turnaround. Gavin then introduced Callum Berrill, the club’s Strategy and Community officer.
7. Callum explained how the club, being one of the smallest counties, needed to expand its boundaries to broaden its catchment area and relevance to cricket. Therefore the club had launched a National Counties engagement programme and had initially developed partnerships with Beds, Bucks and Huntingdonshire to support their needs and develop joint programmes in line with the ECB’s “inspiring generations” initiative. Northants had a population of 750,000; by linking into these adjoining counties you were looking at a population of 2.5m. As the first-class county we had to take the lead in getting children interested in and playing cricket. Callum reported that 2019 had seen 80 hours free coaching in those areas, our head groundsman had held a groundsman forum that had been attended by over 70, youngsters on the pathway had been issued with complimentary season tickets and matchday offers had been extended to the National Counties. Callum reported that feedback for these initiatives had been very positive and the aim in 2020 was to further build on these partnerships, offer support where we have the expertise and develop the trust of the National Counties. Gavin introduced David Ripley, Head Coach.
8. David stated that 2019 had obviously been a mixed season. A disappointing performance in the 50 over game and in the T20 our bowling improved, but the batting was inconsistent. Generally in white ball we showed our potential in flashes but not on a consistent basis. In the County Championship, although we started well, we could not find a way to win games. Adam Rossington took over from Alex Wakely mid-season and the team seemed to find a little bit extra, which shows the fine margin between winning & losing. David recorded what a great job Alex has done for the club; you only have to look back on recent past achievements. David felt it was important that we gained promotion by finishing second not by last season’s one off third place spot. David recalled the last time we were promoted and what a tough experience it was; however this time the players were determined to be competitive and not just survive. We would be operating with a larger squad this time and he would be facing difficult selection choices. David outlined the additions to the squad: Faheem Ashraf had played test cricket for Pakistan so he was excited to see his red ball cricket. Emilio Gay was an exciting graduate from the academy. Jack White was injured last season but reminded him of Ben Sanderson. Gareth Berg had extensive experience of Division one cricket. Many key players had extended their contracts which showed their confidence in the club and provided a level of consistency. The two coaches recently appointed had brought in new ideas. David reported that the players and coaches were ready to go to Singapore to finalise their preparations for the coming season. David added that the T20 additions of Pollard and Stirling should lead to some big hitting at the County Ground this summer. Finally he reported that Tony Kingston had made a good recovery and hoped to resume his scoring duties. Gavin added that the Board had taken medical advice about the trip to Singapore and were taking all necessary precautions to ensure players & staff safety and had therefore decided it was safe. Gavin handed over to Lord Naseby to conclude the AGM.
9. In closing the meeting, Lord Naseby emphasised how pleased he was to hear that the club were involving their neighbouring counties. In an era where there were rumours of a reduction in the number of First Class Counties, it was important that the club increased its relevance. He reported that when he attended an ECB Presidents meeting, he was congratulated by other presidents on the achievements of our club. He was looking forward to exciting times ahead – the club had a good product both cricket, concerts and events.

Finally, Lord Naseby expressed his thanks to the Board and especially to Gavin Warren, the Chairman, for his efforts.