

BCC Chairman report year ending March 2023

Two weather events had a profound bearing on the reporting period. The summer of 2022 was hot, sunny and the ground became a dustbowl. Good for uninterrupted cricket but less helpful for our capable team of groundsmen. The other event which had a much more damaging financial outcome was the spell of very cold weather in December that caused significant damage to the pipework and subsequent water ingress.

Dealing with the events on field first, we remain immensely grateful to all of our volunteers and those supporting our groundsmen Ian Putman are especially worthy of praise. To use their common references, Sharpie, OC, Dave and Chris worked tirelessly last summer to offer excellent playing facilities. The Saturday teams did respectably with our 1st XI mid table, the 2nd XI in the top three, 3rd XI were second by one point and 4ths mid table. Our occasional 5th team performed well, and we were delighted at being able to provide so much cricket. In addition, we secured a notable win for the T20 team in the Heath Park Cup and got to the semi-final of the Herts League T20.

Sunday cricket continues to pose a challenge. We have availability but often very mixed in terms of ages and capabilities. Securing opposition capable of making a decent game is difficult but we still managed to host the Royal Opera House XI, old boys returning in search of past glories and a reasonable number of T20 matches.

The growth in our Women's section is very heartening and as a club we are fully committed to providing increasing support to the women and girls. Playing in the HCWCL Div 1, our women's 1st XI experienced a challenging season but with Emma Potts scoring her maiden half century and Immy Hopkins recording her first five wicket haul we have two excellent performances to celebrate. Hannah Davis is part of the Sunrisers academy, and we continue to look to recruit new players to support the development of this part of the club.

Of the juniors, huge thanks to Mark Lewarne and James Bell for their continued work and the results proved just how excellent our junior network has become. With 22 junior teams, the administration burden is enormous and beyond coaching, officiating and general management, there is also the safeguarding and league compliance. Our thanks to John Gerry and James Clarke for their work in this area.

The U13 girls won their league, the boys U11 were champions of the summer league. All the coaches and parents and supporters of these junior teams should be commended for their efforts and as a club, we remain fully committed to the development of junior cricket across all sections. Particular note should be made for Natalie Gurnett who was voted 2022 Herts young coach of the year.

Within our junior ranks we were pleased to welcome some of the Afghani families relocated to Bourne End. After traumatic events in their home country, they settled and contributed enormously to their junior teams. The Jomegal family are naturally talented, and we are delighted to be able to support them as they settle in our area.

All playing events are supported by the legion of administrators and officials. Particular thanks to all that scored and umpired. Without you, we are going to struggle to secure all the points. Noted contributions from Tim Sims, Guy Lewis, Stephen Rees, Carol Clarke and omnipresent Mark Lewarne.

Off the field, financial matters were and remain a high priority. We always seek to try and offer value and to ensure that cricket remains accessible and affordable. This challenge started to get become more difficult during the year as inflation started to bite. Your committee work tirelessly to manage

affairs and I am most grateful to all those that spend many long hours without any reward to ensure we remain compliant, solvent and delivering to the membership. Notable thanks to Ollie Chinneck and Samantha Allen for their efforts.

The Ross dynasty got involved with the pavilion management as James had left the previous autumn. With Marie as Pavilion manager and Faith as bar manager we sought to review all of the bookings, state of the building and back of house. Like all business in the hospitality sector, we struggled with staff recruitment and wage inflation and as a consequence, were constantly needing to review operational practice of the bar to limit our costs. The changing landscape for the bar means that as we approach the end of this 2023 season, we will undertake a further review and a sad consequence will be an inevitable increase in subscriptions. We will limit the uplift where we can but without a greater volunteer base, there is no option to ensure we continue to provide the services that the membership wishes to enjoy. All third-party users of the club will support this financial review and we have already revised our agreements to uplift our income. With both Marie and Faith moving on, we are grateful to Ashleigh (plus team) stepping in and she continues to do an excellent job in the pavilion management.

As referenced in my opening comment, the cold weather in December had a profound impact on our financial position. Having completed internal redecoration works that were long overdue, we were just about to relaunch when the pavilion suffered significant water damage as a result of burst pipes in the roof void. It was only due to extraordinary good fortune that we discovered the damage and thanks to Marie and Faith for their prompt action. The damage could have been significantly worse if left undiscovered.

Whilst the damage has largely been repaired, the number of insurance claims from this period means that some works are still to be completed and these will be done at the end of the 23 season. A sad consequence probably well understood by members is the uplift in insurance costs. Our premium has increased by over 70% and with utility costs rising as well, the daily costs of simply having the pavilion are close to £80 per day. Members will understand why subscriptions, donations, sponsorships etc are all greatly appreciated.

Our sponsors deserve specific mention with Our Garden Room becoming the new club sponsor. Thanks to Mark Cutler for initiating this arrangement. Our junior sponsor remains Harrowell and Atkins and thanks to Mike Atkins for remaining such a loyal supporter over the years.

I close my remarks in a similar way to last year's report. The club is used and enjoyed by many but sadly the responsibility for making all the good things happen falls on an ever-reducing group of individuals. Volunteering used to be one of the best things about BCC but the number of people willing to help is diminishing. If we are required to go to external providers for all the aspects of club life, the costs to members will need to be increased. One of the key challenges for the next few years will be building maintenance and repairs and I propose to review budgets to ensure that sufficient sums are made available for future investment. Any time or skills that members can contribute to this process would be gratefully received.

Overall, 2022/23 was good year for BCC and we should enjoy the successes. We should also remember that success doesn't just happen, and all members should look to do their part to ensure we continue to thrive.

Tim Buckley

Chairman BCC August 2023.

