

WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY CRICKET CLUB IP27221R

Minutes of the Members' Committee Meeting

held on Thursday 10 July 2025 at 17:45, Edgbaston Stadium, Birmingham

Present: Iftkhar Ahmed (IA)(Chair), Courtney Rowlands (CR), Ian Head (IH), Marina Dorward (MD), Elizabeth Homer (EH), Stuart Brereton (SB), Mohammed Hussain (MH), Philip Astley-Morton (PAM), Lachlan Smith (LS), Chris Welton (CW), Stuart Cain (SC)

In Attendance: James Thomas (JT), Donna Allison (DA) - Minute-taker

Apologies: Mark McCafferty (MM), Adam Lowe (AL)

1. Welcome, apologies and conflict of interest

- 1.1. IA welcomed all attendees, extending a warm welcome to our newest Committee Member, Chris Welton and James Thomas, High Performance Director.
- 1.2. Apologies were noted, and there were no new conflicts of interest declared.

2. Minutes of the meeting held 8 April 2025

- 2.1 The minutes of the Members' Committee meeting held on 8 April 2025 were approved.
- 2.2 Matters Arising
 - 2.2.1 The Committee noted that individual member check-ins had been delayed pending completion of Value Alpha's skills matrix, which has now been finalised.
 - 2.2.2 The review of hospitality costs for Honorary Life Members remains ongoing and will be revisited post-season.
 - 2.2.3 The Heritage Committee is being re-established, with EH, IH and MD. AL will arrange an initial meeting, with Heritage matters remaining a standing agenda item.
 - 2.2.4 Additionally, the new Head of Digital has commenced a website review, with significant changes deferred until the current contract expires in 2026.
 - 2.2.5 The Committee noted Dan Clarke's departure, for a new role at Arsenal and thanked him for his services and contribution.

3. Cricket Update – Observation to-date – James Thomas, High Performance Director

- 3.1. IA invited JT to share his initial observations following his first 30 days in post.
- 3.2. JT outlined his early focus on engaging with staff and players to build a clear understanding of the club's current environment and performance landscape. He spoke of a strategic framework centred on three key pillars: establishing sustainable performance systems, strengthening inclusive talent pathways across men's and women's programmes, and enhancing facilities to support player development and recruitment.
- 3.3. He highlighted a positive, committed staff culture but identified operational inefficiencies, particularly the siloed nature of the men's and women's programmes and inconsistent delivery of elite player progression. He stressed the importance of improving alignment, refining recruitment processes, making better use of performance data, and embedding a unified "Bears way" to ensure long-term cultural and operational stability.
- 3.4. Further priorities included strengthening performance review processes, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, safeguarding player health and well-being, and managing player workloads, in light of the demanding competition schedule.

- 3.5. JT concluded by committing to shaping a clear performance strategy and reviewing structures to support future development and engagement.

4. Domestic Schedule – update

- 4.1. SC led a detailed discussion on proposed changes to the domestic cricket structure, following a pre-read report from MM.
- 4.2. Members expressed a range of views and explored several structural models, including alternative league splits (e.g. 8-10, 10-8, 12-6). There was broad support for a solution that balanced financial viability with the member experience.

- 4.3. **Recommendation**

The 12-6 (Option C) with thirteen rounds was still the preferred option, but Members asked that consideration be given to all teams playing the thirteen games, not just those in the ‘top three’ slots of the two top groups. This recommendation also reflects the need to safeguard competitive integrity, player welfare, and long-term structural viability.

Action:

- A. SC/MM to respond accordingly when asked to vote.
- B. SC to communicate with Members once a decision has been made.

5. Hundred – update

- 5.1. A brief discussion took place on the Hundred and its potential impact on player availability and scheduling. The Committee acknowledged that the tournament could influence county cricket logistics and player selection during the Championship period.

6. Heritage

- 6.1 The Committee discussed ongoing Heritage initiatives, including the Champions Walk display, improved visibility of historical content across the venue, and plans to expand these efforts ahead of future redevelopment.
- 6.2 Emphasis was placed on embedding history into staff inductions and ensuring the inclusion of women’s cricket.

Action:

- A. AL to schedule and coordinate the initial meeting of the re-established Heritage Committee with EH, IH, and MD.

7. Members’ Disciplinary Process

- 7.1 The Committee received an update on a disciplinary case involving racist language at the England -v- West Indies match, resulting in one individual being suspended until the next season. The WCCC Board upheld this recommendation.
- 7.2 Work is underway to tighten disciplinary policies and improve reporting mechanisms, whilst the Committee was made aware of a second case that remains ongoing.

8. Sub-Committee Updates

- 8.1. **Nominations:**

Reviewed the criteria for Honorary Life Membership, the governance skills matrix, and succession planning, considering the forthcoming Chair vacancy.

- 8.2. **Remuneration:**

Discussions centred on the review of staff roles, responsibilities, and remuneration in response to structural changes within the Club, including the integration of Birmingham Phoenix and findings from the recent staff survey.

- 8.3. **Masterplan:**

An update was provided on the major redevelopment project, covering planned improvements to the hotel and stadium.

8.4. **Cricket Audit Committee:**

Focus areas included squad depth and recruitment across both men's and women's teams, with updates on player contracts, renewals, and measures to address gaps caused by departures/retirements. Budget 2026, financial variances, and current season performance against expectations was also discussed.

8.5. **Audit & Risk:**

Updates included matchday security concerns, specifically around VIP treatment inconsistencies, cyber security improvements such as phishing drills, and collaboration with Intercity to safeguard infrastructure.

9. Members' Discussion Items

- 9.1. Members raised several concerns around limited food choices, ticket resale visibility, and technical issues with the new ticketing app. Accessibility and stewarding were also discussed. Pitch and wicket conditions drew criticism, though environmental factors were acknowledged.
- 9.2. SC confirmed that these issues are being addressed, with the new Operations Director expected to support improvements to the overall member experience

10. Any Other Business

- 10.1 No other matters of business were discussed.

11. Date and time of next meeting

- 11.1. The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday 16th September 2025 at 5:45pm.**

Meeting concluded at 20:10.