

WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY CRICKET CLUB IP27221R

Minutes of the Members' Committee Meeting

held on Tuesday 7 April 2026 at 17:45 at Edgbaston Stadium, Birmingham

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

In Attendance: Mark McCafferty (MM), Stuart Cain (SC), Gareth Howell (GH), Adam Lowe, (AL), Will Kerr (WK), Matthew Joule (MJ), Donna Allison - Minute-taker

1. Welcome, Apologies and Declaration of Interests

- 1.1. IA welcomed all and no apologies were recorded. He confirmed a declaration of interest in relation to Access Sport.
- 1.2. The meeting was quorate.

2. Minutes of the meeting held 11 December 2025

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2025 were approved.
- 2.2 Matters Arising/Action Log
 - 2.2.1 The Committee agreed to progress the action log items through the course of the meeting as relevant agenda items were discussed.

3. The Hundred & Auction Update

- 3.1. MM provided an update on Birmingham Phoenix; reporting progress against commercial and ticketing revenue targets and emphasising the Club's strategic focus on sustainable dividends and long-term value growth.
- 3.2. It was confirmed that the Club now retains full ticketing income and that broadcast rights continue to be a key driver of enterprise value. The Committee noted that the Club's 51% stake will be reflected in the accounts at an enhanced valuation because of the Club's controlling stake, with mechanisms in place to ensure an independent valuation in terms of broadcasting rights despite the Hundred being part of a bundled domestic media rights offer.
- 3.3. SC provided a detailed update on the auction approach for both men's and women's Birmingham Phoenix squads. It was noted that planning was based on identifying required skill sets rather than pursuing individuals, supported by analysis, scenario modelling and pre-agreed walk-away values.
- 3.4. This approach aimed to build balanced squads with depth and tactical options, maintain budget discipline, and retain flexibility for subsequent recruitment opportunities, including the wild card mechanism. It was also noted that the Club and coaching team will continue to learn from market dynamics, including the influence of global franchise ownership and player availability.

4. Members' Feedback

- 4.1. In response to queries raised by members, the Committee reviewed a series of operational, playing, and hospitality issues. The attached appendix provides a summary of the questions raised and the clarifications provided, reflecting information shared by the CEO, Coaching and Management staff.
- 4.2. The Committee discussed how member questions and responses should be communicated. It was noted that any member facing summary should be captured with consideration given to using a newsletter-style update and/or a summary minutes format.

5. Members' Engagement

- 5.1. The Committee noted updates on member engagement and communications, including use of multiple feedback channels, ie suggestion boxes, drop-in sessions, surveys, and visible responses to member input.

- 5.2. Membership pricing for 2026 was confirmed as frozen, and the programme of member events was expanded.
- 5.3. Improvements to communications included a redesigned members' newsletter to enhance transparency on governance, committee roles, and outcomes.
- 5.4. Strengthening communications around committee recruitment and election processes was also discussed.
- 5.5. Website redevelopment is scheduled for July, with interim updates, refreshed player headshots and committee pages, in progress.
- 5.6. Plans for a milestone recognition scheme for long-standing members were noted, with ongoing data recovery.

6. Heritage Update

- 6.1. The Heritage Group discussed approaches to recognising contributors to the Club. A range of options were considered, including potential naming opportunities, subject to agreed criteria and review of any commercial implications. Additional recognition approaches were noted, including media and display opportunities.
- 6.2. It was agreed that objective criteria should be developed to guide future recognition decisions.
- 6.3. The Committee agreed that objective criteria should be documented for future naming decisions to ensure consistency and to mitigate the risk of future misunderstanding.

Actions: AL/GH/MJ

- Develop and agree objective criteria for recognition.
- Review any commercial or sponsorship implications.
- Refer proposals for Board consideration.

7. Accessibility Update

- 7.1. EH reported on venue accessibility improvements, praising Ella Hogan for her support in this area.
- 7.2. Key enhancements included controlled balcony access via a barcode system, a comprehensive Accessibility Manual developed by Access Able, upgraded Changing Places facilities, a P-Rails trial and ongoing collaboration with Level Playing Field. Additional measures such as lower counters for wheelchair users, ramp access to the museum, extra disabled parking, and improved queuing arrangements were also noted.

Action: EH/Ella Hogan

- Publish and signpost the Accessibility Guide/Manual, once finalised.
- Monitor outcomes of the P-rails trial and evaluate for potential future implementation.

8. Governance Update

8.1. Annual General Meeting

- 8.1.1. The Committee were made aware of the governance matters to be progressed through the AGM process, including the appointment of the incoming Chair effective 1 May 2026 following the AGM. It was further noted that Board re-elections (Dominic Wong and Louise Jones) were uncontested as the number of nominees matched the number of vacancies, and that a Members' Committee reappointment (PAM) was also to be progressed in line with the Club's rules.
- 8.1.2. The Committee noted the President succession arrangements. It was reported that the current President had indicated an intention not to stand for a further term. The Nominations Committee had considered succession, and it was proposed that Jamie McDowell be elected President at the AGM for an initial one-year term, with the intention, subject to AGM election in 2027, of a second one-year term, consistent with the Board's approach to two-year presidential tenures.

8.2. AGM Special Resolution

- 8.2.1. SC provided progress on the special resolution proposed for the AGM and the discussions held with the proposer.
- 8.2.2. Subject to Member voting at the AGM, this will provide Members with a say in matters relating to the Men's County Championship, covering changes to match numbers and/or promotion and relegation.

- 8.2.3. The proposed process provides that the Board will consult the Members' Committee on the Board's position, communicate that position to members, and facilitate a members' forum prior to inviting members to vote. It was noted that a minimum participation threshold of 250 members would apply for validity, and that, where the majority supports the Board's position, the Board would vote; accordingly, where the majority does not support the Board's position, the Board would abstain.
- 8.2.4. It was also noted that, following member feedback, options to stream the AGM and enable electronic voting would be explored, subject to alignment with the Club's rules.

8.3. Sub-Committee Updates

The Board received updates from key committees.

- The Remuneration Committee reviewed approved the 2026 pay structure and assessed the bonus scheme with external advice.
- The Audit and Risk Committee noted stable cash flow for the hotel and Birmingham Phoenix, despite minor construction delays.
- The Cricket Committee considered planning for a new high-performance facility, pre-season preparations, and squad management.
- The Edgbaston Experience Board reviewed the 2026 retail strategy with a £2.1 million profit target, confirmed the 51%/49% ownership structure with Compass Group, noted the hotel remains on track for completion ahead of the 2027 Ashes, and reported ongoing recruitment of a General Manager, targeted for Q2 2026.

9. **Any Other Business**

- 9.1. Hosting and Chair's Lounge: The Committee discussed hosting arrangements and expectations within the Chair's Lounge. It was noted that room hosts are responsible for overseeing and supporting visiting committees, and for managing seating and service protocols to ensure an appropriate experience for guests. The Committee noted the importance of clear guidance on privileges and service arrangements, including use of reserved tables and flexible seating, and agreed that hosts should feel supported to address issues of conduct discreetly and appropriately at the time.
- 9.2. New member induction sessions: The Committee acknowledged the success of recent induction sessions for new members, noting positive feedback and the valuable involvement of Club ambassadors.
- 9.3. Incoming Chair participation at Members' Committee meetings: The Committee discussed arrangements for the incoming Chair's attendance at Members' Committee meetings. It was agreed that the Chair would attend to answer questions and ensuring accountability, without directing discussions, to preserve the Committee's autonomy.
- 9.4. Digital Advisory Group and fan experience: The Committee noted the formation of a Digital Advisory Group to support improvements to the Club's digital platforms and fan experience, including website, app, social media, ticketing and in-stadium technology. Participation from the Members' Committee was invited and it was noted that Stuart Brereton would support the initiative on behalf of the Committee.

10. **Note of Thanks**

- 10.1. The Committee recorded its thanks to the outgoing Board Chair, MM, for his leadership and service, including stewardship through the COVID-19 period and delivery of key strategic initiatives.
- 10.2. MM thanked the Committee and noted continued support for the Club.

11. **Date and time of next meeting**

The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday 7 July 2026**.

Meeting closed at 20:15.

APPENDIX: MEMBERS' FEEDBACK

In response to queries raised by members, the Committee reviewed a series of operational, playing, and hospitality issues. A summary of the questions raised and the clarifications provided, reflecting information shared by the CEO, Coaching and Management staff are as follows:

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. **Why are there so few chairs in the David Heath suite this season – somebody counted that there are only 35 chairs for 14 tables? The feedback on the new settee has been positive.**

The reduced number of chairs was not a conscious decision and will be corrected for the next game. The new settee has received positive feedback from members.

2. **A member in a wheelchair has enquired why there are no tables in the Accessible Lounge of the David Heath suite.**

There was no intentional change regarding tables in the Accessible Lounge; the absence was not deliberate.

3. **How are the volunteers who help at major matches recognised?**

Volunteers are acknowledged through golden jackets, invited to a session at the start of the season with lunch, and at the end of the season. They also receive tickets for games. Volunteers are generally well-recognised and valued for their contribution.

4. **The new machines in the TD do not offer a decaffeinated option for varieties of coffee (e.g., cappuccino/latte).**

New machines with a wider range of options, including decaffeinated varieties, are on order to improve the offering.

5. **Is there a members' food discount at the Rugby food outlets?**

No, the catering is operated by a third party, and no commercial arrangement exists. A strategic multi-year deal could potentially include discounts, but no such agreement is currently in place.

6. **The website had no content on the pre-season friendlies. Why were the pre-season friendlies not live-streamed?**

Pre-season friendlies were treated as trial games with experimental line-ups, often not playing full 11-a-side cricket. Publicising or streaming them was deemed unnecessary by coaching staff; wrap-up summaries may be provided instead.

7. **Why were members not allowed at the Worcester friendly or at the Women's game?**

Venue restrictions, construction on the hotel site, and very low expected attendance made it impractical to open the grounds to members. Safety and operational costs outweighed the benefits for small audiences.

8. **Why was the men's captain changed so close to the beginning of the season? The coach was changed just before the season started last year.**

Over the winter, Ian Westwood worked with Alex Davies on the captain's role and what is required, and following pre-season in South Africa there was an honest conversation where they felt that change might be beneficial in order for Alex to focus on fulfilling his potential as an opening batter and keeper. Two crucial roles if the Bears are to succeed this season. Ed Barnard is an excellent captain and showed during last year's 50 over competition that he has the ability to lead the team without it impacting on his personal performance.

9. **Michael Booth was previously advised to be England-qualified this year – is this no longer the case and if so, why not?**

Booth is technically overseas-qualified for the current season due to passport date calculations but will be fully domestic-qualified in November 2026.

10. A number of concerns have been raised as to why we have not signed an overseas batsman.

Management and coaching staff have placed confidence in domestic players to perform at the top order. The squad includes capable batsmen who are expected to develop consistency. Overseas recruitment may be reconsidered in the future if required.

11. Do we think the Phoenix batting line-up is as strong as it should be?

Yes, both men's and women's Phoenix teams have strong batting line-ups with multiple options across the top, middle, and finishing positions. Strategies and individual player roles are clearly defined.

12. Has there been an improvement in the quality of the food being served in the Wyatt?

Efforts are ongoing to improve the food offering with better-quality sandwiches, pies, and sausage rolls. Limitations exist due to the kitchen facilities available, and the menu aims to balance practicality with quality expectations.