

Chairman report to 2021 General Meeting.

It has been a momentous year. We have been able to play a full season, albeit with restrictions. The amalgamation with the Oxfordshire Cricket Association has exceeded all expectations and the introduction of regional recreational cricket has been widely welcomed.

I have been pleased that there have been over 150 umpires involved in fixtures every week. Many of you will be aware that I have always been an advocate of the Panel umpire. I am pleased that we have benefited from this legacy from the OCA. During my time umpiring in Cherwell I have come to appreciate some high quality umpiring from good Club umpires. Special mention must be made of Russell Hayes (Shipton) and Nick Scott (Leighton Buzzard) who were club umpires and managed a higher average mark than me this year. Any club umpires who would like to try a few panel appointments should contact Neilson Hinks or David Quinn. I would like to encourage those clubs who have found umpire provision difficult to persevere. It may be some individuals will assist as club umpires at home as a starting point. Club secretaries need to be aware that Away Club Umpires are asked to discuss Umpire reports with their colleague and submit them. It may be worth checking if help is required in this process.

Obviously clubs are required to ensure that their officials are DBS checked and have completed a course. Level 1 is online and links to courses are available via the website. Also Panel Umpires need to have up to date ACO membership. Course details are found on the front page of the website. If you have demand at a particular club/area then Ian Royle would arrange for a local course.

My thanks go to the captains and umpires who have completed the reports on their matches. Now that the league has 88 matches per week the Management Committee needs the input to successfully monitor standards and ensure that we can enjoy our Saturdays. We are going to fix an anomaly and require all captains to complete the form. If you are providing a club umpire please attach them to the fixture beforehand or notify Neilson Hinks/David Quinn/Ian Royle who will assist you. This means that the umpire name will appear on the scorecard. On scorecards double check that Captains and Wicketkeepers are indicated for both teams. Please get into a routine where these reports can be done by Monday rather than generating reminders.

I was pleased that we were able to continue with the Cup competitions which the OCA have run in the past. I am proud of the 121 year history of the Airey Cup and the 110 year History of the Telegraph Cup ~ even if that makes the bases so heavy with all of the names of winning players. Hopefully these competitions will continue to grow in 2022. You will have seen that volunteers are sought to assist with this venture ~ please contact Ian Murdoch to express interest.

I would like to thank the Management Committee for their work on your behalf. They volunteer to ensure that we have an aspirational league. The objective of the Management Committee in this is to help member clubs to focus on issues which will generate improvement. I trust that clubs can understand this when communicating to our volunteers. I am pleased that most of the Management Committee is willing to continue. There are two current vacancies and those with an interest in Social Media and the Cups mentioned above would be particularly welcome. This does not exclude the

involvement of others and if anyone feels they have something to offer to enhance our league they should e-mail Ian Murdoch in the first instance.

I would also like to pay tribute to the service of David Prior on the Management Committee. His input and actions have helped many ways over the years. He worked on the sub-committee which enabled the integration of teams formerly in the OCA.

On a personal note it is now 40 seasons since I joined the OCA Executive Committee. John Brown, Max Eason and Neil Harris were involved in that first committee. I was Cup Secretary in 1982 before Fixture Secretary (1983-2010), Vice-Chair (1992-1994) and Chair (1995- 2017). I have been Chair of the Cherwell League since 2017. I still enjoy the challenge of the high standards that we seek to maintain. I found the umpiring particularly enjoyable this year. It was nice to visit many old grounds and a few new ones as well as getting in a full season.

I look forward to an interesting and challenging 2022. The new division at Tier 3 will give us the opportunity to pursue our travel reduction targets and assists in the integration of our new league structure. With no team coming in from HCPL we are fortunate to be able to only relegate one team in each division which in each case is adrift of the rest of the division. Also the promotions allow for the structure to settle after the amalgamation. We have a clearer picture of the format of our new league. The proposal to move Tier 5 to 90 overs comes from a consensus in the forums. This allows aspirational cricket in Tiers 1-4 and recreational cricket in Tiers 5-7. The overs proposal allows full use of the 90 overs. Tier 8 is termed Grass roots cricket.

I hope we can continue to work together to achieve our aim ~ an aspirational league, with an atmosphere which is challenging and competitive whilst remaining an enjoyable recreation, allowing all teams to achieve their potential.