

Chairman's Report to Cherwell League General Meeting 2020

The season has certainly proved to be challenging. It was a relief when we were allowed out of lockdown in July and able to get onto the playing field, albeit with restrictions. My thanks go to the Management committee and particularly to Gary Murton who restructured the fixtures in a short timeframe to allow for a meaningful competition. My congratulations go to all tier winners.

During lockdown six viable candidates expressed an interest in moving to the Cherwell League. They were all from the OCA and their departure would have been problematic for them. I was pleased, therefore, that the Cricket sub-committee was able to enter a constructive dialogue with an OCA sub-committee which has enabled the integration of their clubs into the Cherwell League. The recent SGM has ratified this and it will come into place after the General Meeting.

I would like to welcome these clubs whose involvement will enable a more regional approach in the lower divisions of the league. The upper divisions remain as before allowing the Cherwell League to remain aspirational while participation can also be encouraged. I am hopeful that the new structure will stimulate interest in the east of our catchment.

Given the increase in the number of teams the Cricket subcommittee and the Grounds subcommittee intend to develop a patchwork of local individuals to provide a conduit for communication and monitoring. It is hoped that this will enable clubs easy lines of communication to the Management committee. The standards on grounds and facilities are available to clubs via the website.

The pandemic has hindered our progress with adding the names of Club Umpires to the website. The Umpires subcommittee will undertake this as part of the integration of OCA appointees. In addition many of our umpires were shielding and we hope they will be able to return in 2021. Clubs need to ensure that their Club Umpires who cover more than 3 games have a DBS clearance and have attended a course. Also Panel Umpires need to have up to date ACO membership. Please contact Dave Billingsley or Ian Royle if your club have a candidate for a course. ACO have run regional courses for Cherwell League Umpires so if your club has a demand please contact Dave. If "club umpires" wish to be involved in the neutral panel this can be accommodated and they should contact Neilson Hinks.

I am pleased that the use of laptops in Division 5 and 6 has led to more downloads direct to the website. This has greatly assisted the management of the games. We hope to transfer this to Tier 5 and above in the new structure. I am also pleased to learn that some scorers in lower divisions have also embraced the technology. I remain keen to see scorers independent of the game.

From the AGM Agenda you will see that the Management Committee has responded to discussions with clubs about the hardships involved in coping with the pandemic. We hope that Subscriptions will be minimised and registration fees restricted. One of the advantages of increased numbers is economy of scale which I hope will apply in our ball purchase.

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. 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.

Regrettably Len Payne has not put himself forward for re-election. He has been a sterling servant to the League as Treasurer for the last nine years and will be sorely missed. We are fortunate that Lesley Pykett has agreed to fulfil the role.

I look forward to an interesting and challenging 2021. I hope we can 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.

Brian Standish

Chairman ~ Cherwell League