

## Chairman's Report to the 2024 General Meeting.

We have had another interesting and rewarding season. I would like to extend our congratulations to all the divisional winners, to Horspath 1s in particular who have been successful in returning to the Home Counties and to Bicester and North Oxford 1s who maintained their position in the HCPCL.

The introduction of Play Cricket has been successful with over 80% of Tier 1-3 live scored. Hopefully this trend will continue in 2025. The Dinner to celebrate 50 years of the Cherwell League is intended for 29<sup>th</sup> March 2025 so be on the lookout for further information.

I have been pleased that our umpire coverage continues to improve. David Quinn has indicated that he is unable to continue as Umpire Secretary so David Hall will assume the role. My thanks to David Quinn for all of his hard work whilst a member of the League Management Committee. Most clubs in Tiers 5/6 have umpires although thought needs to be given about when the named individual is not available. As I said last year in Tier 5 in season 2025 the umpire point will be replaced by a penalty. Although Panel Umpires are preferred we have taken the advice from the forums and will allow trained Club Umpires in this tier. Any club umpires who would like to try a few panel appointments should contact David Hall. It is intended that this will roll out to other tiers in subsequent years.

There are still a handful of games that have no umpires. As I have stated previously the way forward may be to find some individuals who will assist as club umpires at home as a starting point. Looking for a small group of volunteers rather than a single person to fill the umpiring commitments usually bears more fruit.

Obviously clubs are required to ensure that their officials are DBS checked and have completed a course. Ian Royle is currently devising Cherwell friendly courses so can be contacted if you have suitable candidates. Level 1 is online and links to courses are available via the website. Also Panel Umpires need to have up to date ACO membership. The provision of a competent scorer helps the smooth running of the game. The requirement for two scorers now applies to Tier1/4. In Tier 5 at least one scorer independent of the game is required for 2025 so look out for details.

We have been monitoring ground reports and some clubs can expect to hear from the Management Committee. In the Admin\Rules and regulations section of the website is the ground standards document. A great deal of work has gone into this document so that you can see what is expected. You were asked to check your facilities against this so communication should not be a surprise. A reminder of some of the questions you should ask. Do you have an umpire room? Is it clean and accessible? Have you a designated scoring point sheltered from the weather? Is there a power supply for laptop scoring? Is there a working clock? There are many such questions aimed to improve the environment for the game. The size of the structure needs your help to ensure we can improve

I was pleased that we were able to continue with the Cup competitions which the OCA have run in the past. Paul Salway, ably assisted by Barrie Pudwell, will replace David Quinn here. The Pullinger Cup T20 competition has been well received.

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 but I shall not be continuing as Chairman. I have been on Management committees for OCA and Cherwell since 1982 including Chair since 1994 so it is time for others to take up the baton. There are still vacancies so if anyone feels they have something to offer to enhance our league they should e-mail Ian Murdoch in the first instance.

We have come a long way but there is still much to do. 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.

Brian Standish

Chair ~ Cherwell Cricket League