

Chairman's report August 2021

Year to March 21

Dear Member,

2020 proved to be the start of a renaissance of club cricket in Berkhamsted and motivated by members being unable to go on holiday, we were able to play as much cricket as the weather allowed. After the season ended, we seemed to be on a decent trajectory as despite the pandemic removing promotion and relegation, all the teams ended the season close to the top of their respective divisions. Our men's first team has proved to be a slight exception as whilst capable of some excellent victories, rather like the national side, the batting proved to be fragile and reliant on a few to ensure consistency. What has been a joy to see is the progression of young talent to the higher teams and this is due almost entirely to the efforts of Mark Lewarne and James Bell in their coaching heroics.

With the significant growth in playing numbers comes the added challenge of preparing pitches and generally attending to the ground. When Ian Putman (Puds) started his journey with us at Berkhamsted, we played most weekends but relatively limited amounts of mid-week cricket. This allowed time to prepare wickets. As we now run 19 junior teams and are playing cricket on both squares almost daily, the club is indebted to Puds and his fellow groundsmen for their care and attention. At the start of this year, Puds required minor surgery and whilst now fully recovered, all members should be grateful that Puds was able to secure help notably including Ian Campbell and they have rallied around to keep the place looking good. Our enormous thanks should go to all those who lavish such care and attention on the ground. Members have also helped out and I would like to remind all members, young and old that there are always odd jobs requiring attention and we do love volunteers. If people can spare a bit of time, just ask and we can find a few jobs that will make Berkhamsted CC a better place to play cricket. I made a plea last year to increase the number of trees at the ground and I am delighted to report that over 100 new saplings have been planted all around the perimeter. If we can keep the local wildlife from eating them, it should make the hedgerow around the club much more sustainable in years to come.

As I mentioned in my report last year, with so many players seeking cricket, we have had a lot of challenges to meet in getting players game time. I repeat my apology to those who feel that they have been deprived but we are considering if the club is genuinely capable of running five league teams. Players are one aspect and pitches the other so it is a significant challenge that I and fellow committee members will need to consider.

I thank all of the captains and the cricket committee generally for their help and leadership on and off field. Special mention should also be made for Dave Chrispin who has chaired the men's cricket committee through some considerable selection challenges. Mention should also be made of Peter Dudley who keeps the statistics up to date on the website and helps organise the ever-increasing burden of match management.

Ladies cricket proves to be a continuing growth area for the club. We are now running 5 girls' teams, and this provides a very good conveyor of talent for our ladies' league team notably from the U15 team. The logistical challenges are the same with a need for pitches and umpires. I would urge all members to consider if they can make time available to support the ladies. A key issue for the ladies

will be ensuring that we have both the quality of available players in the squad to compete in senior league cricket. As a club, we will be doing all we can to ensure this area of the game improves.

With the increase in player numbers and better than expected revenue from the bar, we have sought to improve our playing facilities by providing two new sightscreens and some additional equipment for use on the ground. The club is giving serious consideration for the reintroduction of an all-weather wicket that will ease the burden of pitch preparation but also allow games to progress when rain might have suggested otherwise. With careful consideration of the location, it might be possible to host up to three junior games at once having regard to the shorter boundaries required. We shall explore grant support for this investment.

As reported earlier the bar and decking in particular, has been very well supported by all our members and guests. Thanks to Carol Preedy and James and the team for making this space work so well. The financial oversight of the management company is run by Samantha Allen and in partnership with club treasurer Ollie Chinneck, we are most thankful that we have such excellent financial stewardship for the club. My thanks to both for their efforts.

My thanks also to the committee for their time and commitment and all the parents who make the management of the junior games possible. Of particular note, John Gerry has led the club through the maze of paperwork required for all of our clubmark ranking. His patience and perseverance are greatly appreciated.

In the past year fund raising has been difficult to progress but I am grateful to all members for donations that help us through the pandemic related challenges. Other organisations have been supportive, and we hope that as normality returns, we can once again see the club facilities well employed by the town.

Our sponsors have also been very helpful and whilst relations with the Kings Arms have been stymied by their own challenges, we remain very grateful to them and to Harrowell and Atkins for their support of the junior section. DP cricket also remain loyal supporters and we hope that we can strengthen our arrangements with them in the future.

Last year I reported that it is appropriate to offer some challenges for the future so we can continue to improve. Whilst rightfully accused of marking my own homework I consider that we have done well in most areas.

- Improve the league positions of our lower teams. IN PROGRESS
- Continue the development and growth of ladies and girls' cricket WELL UNDERWAY
- Continue the investment and development of our facilities. DONE...FOR NOW
- Introduce new committee members to develop our succession planning. FAILED.

Thanks to everyone at the club for their support and contributions and let us continue to aspire to improve in everything we do.

Regards

Tim Buckley

Chairman September 2021

