

Minutes of Gloucestershire County Cricket Club Members' Working Group Meeting

Held at Seat Unique Stadium

on

Wednesday 22nd November 2023 4-6pm

Attendees:

Members
Chris Toft
Dominic Ferguson
Jim Bath
Matt Davis
Ruth Sharville
Wendy Body
George Cook
John Gordon

Also in Attendance	Role
Neil Priscott	COO (Chair)
David Finch	Ticketing & Membership Administrator
Dan Porter	Marketing Manager
Ellen Mutch	EA (Minutes)

Apologies:

None

Matters arising:

Item 1: Introduction and Apologies

- New Marketing Manager Dan Porter was introduced to the Member's Working Group and set out some of the areas which the Marketing Team want to focus on for 2024 season.

Item 2: 2024 fixtures.

- The 2023 Schedule had an impact on club finances.
- All seven Blast games took place in one pay month, impacting attendance and ticket purchases.
- Feedback on the schedule to the ECB has been taken into consideration and the schedule is different in 2024.

- The Blast tournament has been elongated to optimises ticket sales over a longer period.
- The Hundred will be finishing earlier in 2024 and there will be two home County Championship matches scheduled in August. This was in response to feedback from non-Hundred venues and Members on the lack of domestic cricket offering in August last year.
- The first home County Championship match will be on Friday 12th April v Yorkshire.
- There will be one County Championship game at Cheltenham in 2024, however there are three T20's scheduled for the festival as well as an England V India U19 test match.
- Lots of Friday starts for County Championship matches this year mean lots of opportunities for play on weekend days.
- There will be Two Friday night T20 Blast games in Bristol.
- The Double header with Western Storm will be on 9th June. Western Storm were given Choice of playing before or after the men and chose to play in the earlier slot.
- The One Day Cup starts late July with four matches in Bristol, two on Wednesdays and two on Sundays

Membership/ticketing:

- Memberships go on sale Thursday 23rd November.
- Blast Passes will be available for Bristol. All T20 matches are included at a slightly discounted price.
- A price increase is required to cover increased costs and inflation but kept to a minimum and mirrors last year's percentage increase.
- 20% of members didn't attend any T20 matches last year.
- Early bird ticket prices are in place to make it cheaper to purchase in advance. Prices will be more expensive on the gate.

Item3: Cheltenham Festival 2024:

Fixtures:

In 2024 there will be:

- One County Championship
- Three T20 Blast
- Two Western Storm
- One Eng v Ind U19 four day Test Match.
- General feedback from the WMG was positive but with an acknowledgement that most Members in the North of the County would prefer two Championship matches and may express disappointment regarding this year's schedule.
- This is the first time three T20's have been hosted at Cheltenham since 2017, providing an opportunity for commercial growth at The Festival.
- This schedule will likely remain in place until 2028.
- Day four of the County Championship game clashes with England Women's One Day International match in Bristol.
- The U19 Test and Western Storm matches are included in membership.
- Blast matches will start at 2.30pm on Friday & Sunday and 5pm on Thursday. This was the latest possible start time due to lack of floodlighting.

Commented [DF]GC1: On the fixture list, the start time of the Thursday match at Cheltenham is showing as 5pm, not 4-30pm

- The current licence allows for Max of 4,999 capacity.
- A new Licence application in progress to increase capacity to 6,000 without impacting on comfort or customer experience.
- To achieve this, more stands will be required due to slope/visibility issues.
- Also, additional toilets, bars and concessions will be required as well as extra stewards.
- There will be no additional club tents (Old Pats will still be in residence).
- There will be no Members' Area for T20 games (as before at Cheltenham).
- The MWG did a lot of work on the Members' Area for 2023 which was well received and there were no complaints from home Members.
- The streaming tent will be relocated to allow for additional seating next to the Pavilion stand.
- Catering will be moving in-house, including increased concessions utilising more local suppliers.

Item 4: Commercial:

New Website:

- Analytics on the current site show users mainly access it via their mobile phone.
- The site is not very compatible with mobile access and doesn't suit current user or business needs.
- The current site also makes it harder to reach a non-cricket audience and advertise online (e.g. for events).
- A tender is in progress to find a suitable provider to build and host a new site.
- The Club are aiming to start this project asap and to switch to the new site by start of 2024 season; an update on progress will be available at the next meeting.
- The Ticketmaster system will remain in place for 2024 membership purchases.

Merchandise:

- There has been a request from members for more Female friendly clothing ranges sold in the shop and online.
- The Club currently have a contract with New Balance to supply the shop and online store. If they can't supply items required/desired these can be ordered elsewhere.
- The Commercial Team want to use the six colour stripes on shirts and other clothing where relevant/appropriate.
- Bucket hats will be available to purchase next season.

Concerts and events

- The Club are planning to host up to three music concerts at Bristol in 2024.
- Fireworks was very successful again this year. The Club worked in partnership with two local schools for a share of the ticket revenue.

Drones:

- The Club have a new partnership with YUUP to host six drone shows in December 2023.
- A Media event is taking place for 180 digital influencers including ITV/BBC west to promote the show to a wider audience.
- This is a good commercial opportunity to reach a non-cricket audience who have not previously attended the ground.

Live stream:

- To save on costs, likely to revert to BBC commentary only for County Championship and One Day Cup matches.
- The Club are actively seeking a digital sponsor for the live stream and other digital partnerships.

Members Survey:

- The aim of conducting a full Members' survey would be to gather general feedback from Members and to find out what the major concerns/opportunities are.
- The questions being asked would need careful consideration to make sure feedback is relevant and can be used to change/improve areas identified.
- Two Members' surveys were completed before and after COVID, with a focus on catering and aimed to find out what people want, don't want and would like more of in that area.
- Match day surveys go out to all attendees after each match. Members fed back that there are too many questions to answer for each match.
- Consideration given to sending out a Members' survey post Cheltenham/mid-season.
- Some clubs have a Members' Forum meeting in January.
- Members would prefer the Member's Forum to be held after play rather than lunchtime to allow plenty of time for discussion.
- The Club should consider linking Members' Forum to a social/informal event E.g. Sunday lunch/meal.
- Members requested an opportunity for a Member attend a Board meeting or a Board Member attend the Member's Working Group meeting.

Cups:

- The cup deposit scheme was changed as a result of complaints received from Members and other customers about drinks being emptied and cups taken in order to get deposits.
- No cup deposit led to a loss of revenue due to cups being taken home or put in general waste rather than in the recycling receptacles near exits.
- Fully compostable cups will be used at the ground next season as an alternative.

- Some investment is required to purchase the cups which may add a few pence to the price per pint to cover additional costs.
- Specific bins, clearly labelled will be required at every exit for the new cups. Cricketeers and Stewards will be encouraging people to use them on their way out of the ground.
- Location and labelling of recycling bins will be essential to meet sustainability targets.
- A method is required to clearly identify non-alcoholic drinks that allow people to easily access the low/no-alcohol stand without being challenged.

Actions arising from item 4.

Action	Assigned to	Timescale
Compose questions for members survey to share with MWG	NP/DP	Pre-season
Add Members' survey planning to next MWG agenda	EM	
Ask a member of the Board to attend MWG	NP	
Request Members' forum meeting in January	NP	Note: Members' Forums on exploration of other ground sites conducted in December '23
Identify method of identifying non-alcoholic drinks for Jack Russell Stand.	NP/DP	

Item 5: Remembrance of past players, Members and others:

Seat Plaques:

- The Head of Operations has the seat plaques for past members.
- The Heritage Team can decide where to place them in the ground.

Remembrance at the AGM:

- Tradition has always been to read aloud the names of players and Members who have passed during the year.
- At the 2023 AGM, names were not read out. They were displayed on screen but could not be seen by those attending online and also by some Members in the room.
- The club flag was flown at half-mast during the AGM as a mark of respect.
- Members expressed strong feelings about this change and felt it was disrespectful to those who have contributed to the Club in various ways.

- The Members Working group would like those who have been lost over the past year, including past players, to be better acknowledged at the next AGM.
- The criteria for remembrance should be people who have passed in the last 12 months and invested significant time and/or money into the Club.
- Members agreed that remembrance should be an item on the agenda, but not at the start of the meeting.
- Members requested a montage with pictures/music which could also be put on Social Media following the meeting.

Actions Arising from Item 5:

Action	Assigned to	Timescale
Mount Plaques on the wall next to Legends Café	Operations Team	Prior to the start of 2024 fixtures
Speak to the Board regarding reinstating remembrance during AGM	NP	

Item 6: AOB:

White Ball Team Name:

- Reinstating White Ball team name was considered by Members pre-2019 season. The Majority of Members surveyed at the time were not keen on 'Bristol' being part of the name as this did not represent the whole county.
- White ball teams were previously named the 'Gloucestershire Gladiators.'
- It is part of the overall marketing plan to work on strengthening the White Ball team identity but any change of branding/logo would have cost implications and this is not a priority for the marketing team at present.
- Other counties have dropped their White Ball team names.
- A question about reinstating a team name can be included in a Member's survey.

The Hundred:

- There is a proposal to increase the number of teams in the franchise to align better with counties.
- Gloucestershire definitely want to be involved in the tournament.
- Club needs to consider all options for sustainable future but members questioned the potential introduction of private equity into Hundred teams and how this would change the member-led club model.

Next meeting: 13th March 2024.