

## **CEO's Report to AGM 2020/2021**

2020 and maybe 2021 will forever be remembered for the Coronavirus pandemic.

As far as club cricket and National Counties cricket was concerned, it looked very much in the Spring that no cricket at all would be played in 2020. Throughout the 'lockdown' regular NCCA meetings were held using the internet tool 'Zoom' to discuss the possibility of a start should club cricket be given the go ahead. Club cricket resumed on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July. Eleven of the twenty National County Clubs voted that no National Counties cricket of any format should be played. The T/20 and 50 over cup competitions planned for early in the season had already been cancelled. However, county clubs were allowed to play friendlies with neighboring counties if desired.

On four Sundays in August, friendlies were played against Dorset, twice, Cornwall and Wiltshire. The games were very worthwhile and there were plenty of positive outcomes. The emergence of a couple of young players in Elliot Hamilton and Sam Read looked very capable – neither seemed out of his depth - they are certainly players for the future. The outcome was two good wins a narrow defeat and a match abandoned because of a dangerous pitch in a planned two T/20 match programme v Dorset v at Bridgwater C.C. The occasion was abandoned after six overs as the pitch was not up to standard.

The Director of Cricket, David Tall is to be praised for his efforts in organizing the squad and congratulated in getting the selection of the teams correct. Rachel Tozer is also thanked for scoring all of the matches played.

Unfortunately, the newly formed Academy in partnership with the Devon Cricket Board and the David Shepherd Cricket Trust encountered some teething problems. The Academy's indoor coaching sessions had not worked desperately well in the winter of 2019/2020. They only operated for 5/6 weeks through January/February until abandoned because of lockdown caused by COVID-19. It was agreed that it has to be seen as an equal partnership between the DCB and Devon CCC with help from the David Shepherd Cricket Trust. Ultimately, the best of the Academy team's feed into the full Devon CCC side. It is hoped that Sandy Allen (DCB) will link more closely with David Tall and Tim Western in the Academy's operation this year. Although it was agreed that Sandy Allen would lead, it has to be acknowledged by all organisations that major decision making over player selection for the Academy and the team to be collective. The ECB requirement is for the Academy to be high profile and to operate for at least five days of competitive cricket. Such standards must ultimately be met by Devon CCC in order to achieve appropriate funding.

At the present time with the pandemic still evident, negotiations about the coming season and training in the first three months of the year are currently on hold. The timing of the pandemic and the lockdown presented huge problems in getting the 2020 brochure circulated with many of the committee unable to circulate it as in past years. In normal circumstances, over 350 brochures, of the 1500 printed, can be given to the member clubs of the Devon Cricket League at their pre-season meeting. Understandably this was cancelled. The sponsors who had kindly advertised in the brochure received less exposure for the adverts than they been given to expect. The charging of advertising in the 2021 brochure is having to be reviewed. David Thorneley once again oversaw the 2020 brochure and he is to be congratulated on producing a fine publication which highlights Devon County Cricket well. He is now hard at work on the 2021 brochure.

Our Finance Director, Roger Wensley, took on full responsibility for the accounts at the end of the Club's financial year from October 2019. Roger did a fine job and sought various ways of how money could be saved, without any cricket. Roger's report will provide more detail of how the 2020 accounts turned out. Ms. Stephanie Busby, the examiner and Guy Curry, a lawyer with tax expertise are also to be thanked for their help for Roger Wensley.

Because of the pandemic only two committee meetings were held, again by using 'Zoom' In an effort to improve our communication with members we are using a new database 'Membership mojo' Members who have provided their email addresses will have received some communication already, including the AGM agenda and this report.

**We are requesting all members to provide their email addresses if they have one. Naturally, membership cards/brochures will still need to be posted, and AGM documents to those who do not use email.**

Our Chairman has once again worked tirelessly on behalf of the Club. I see at first-hand what he does and how well respected he is by the NCCA committee and all of the other Counties. Both the Chairman and I have attended many virtual 'Zoom' membership forum meetings regarding the County Partnership Agreement (CPA) and governance from 2021. At the AGM our Chairman will provide more information on the standards required in the CPA, together with compliance and governance issues.

Cullompton Cricket Club are moving to a new ground just outside the town as a relief road is going to be routed through their existing ground. The new venue will have two pitches and the plans for a 'state of the art' facility. The plans for the Pavilion and Clubhouse look impressive. Devon C.C.C. have supported Cullompton C.C. in their planning applications and it is hoped that we will be using the new grounds on occasion in the future, subject to the pitch being of the required standard. As a new railway station is being built and because the ground is close to the M5 Motorway the new venue will benefit from excellent transport links.

With Covid vaccinations well advanced and play likely to be possible at the end of March it is hoped that we will get a full season in this year. However some restrictions may still be in place until the middle of the year, adherence to which will be mandatory.

Hopefully, the sun will shine and we shall enjoy some entertaining cricket.

**Nigel Mountford  
March 2021**