

Neon Cricket Wiltshire County Cricket League

Admin Officer: David Norman, 2 Manley Close, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8DT.

Minutes of the WCCL 2023 AGM held at Beversbrook, Calne on Monday 27th November 2023.

Present:

WCCL Clubs, and members of the WCCL Committee.

The League's Chairman, Mike J Smith, took the chair. Mike began by welcoming everybody to the AGM, and apologising for the slightly delayed start, due to a venue double-booking which clashed with the start of the league's booking.

From the committee, Anton Newton gave apologies for their absence.

Marshfield CC and Purton CC failed provide a representative. This is the second consecutive AGM at which Marshfield CC have failed to provide a representative.

1, Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting were proposed as a true record. Proposed by Corsham CC. Seconded by Wilcot CC, and accepted.

2. Matters Arising from the 2022 AGM

There were no matters arising.

3. Chairman's Report

Mike congratulated Purton 1st XI and Marlborough 1st XI who were promoted to WEPL, and welcomed back Westbury 1st XI and Biddestone 1st XI. He also congratulated the winners and runners up of all divisions.

Mike welcomed the six new teams to the league: Swindon Royal Challengers CC, Swindon Titans CC, Bradford on Avon 3rd XI, Nationwide House 2nd XI, Swindon Super Strikers 3rd XI and Westbury 3rd XI. He expressed sadness at the loss of Swindon United Churches to the Cotswold League, Ramsbury who are going to play friendlies, and Spye Park 2nd XI. David Martin (Swindon United Churches) gave thanks for the many years which Swindon United Churches CC have played in the league.

Unfortunately, discipline has started to get worse after a couple of good seasons. The process takes a long time, so with just 12 incidents, it is still a lot of work for the league. We are not the only league having problems, it is a nation-wide issue. Mike emphasised that it is the captain's responsibility to maintain discipline within their team, not the umpire's.

The season was not easy for groundsmen. It was wet in the run up to the season, then dry for May and June, then wet in July and August. This didn't make pitch preparation easy. Richard Mosdell, the WGA groundsmen, is available to advise clubs if needed.

There are still grants available to help with purchases, to a maximum of £300. Details of what a grant can be claimed for are on the league website.

WACO produced a handbook for 2023. Every team received two copies. They will be doing this again in 2024. The cost of the handbook is paid for by advertising, so the only cost to the league is a small donation to Julia's House, the charity which WACO supports.

Finally, Mike thanked the committee for their hard work, especially on disciplinary issues.

4. Administration and Fixture/Results Officer's Report

David started his report by discussing discipline. It is felt that standards have slipped to the extent that players no longer know where the limit of acceptable behaviour is. One captain reported that during the 2023 season, there were only two matches where he considered that there had not been something reportable happen during the match. Therefore a single sheet has been produced, which summarises the most common offences. This has been circulated to all clubs as part of the AGM pack. It will also be sent to all captains who have provided their email address, and put on the home page of the league website, before the season starts.

The divisional structure has been released. With 97 teams, we have 10 divisions. Division 9 contains 8 teams, who will play each other home and away, and will play some teams a third time to make up the 18 matches of the season. Division 10 contains 9 teams, who will play each other home and away, and each have two bye weeks.

David reported that despite having less requests for matches to be played at the end of April than previously, he still has more requests than he has oppositions for. This has never happened before. Clubs were asked to make themselves available if they possibly could.

David reported that a number of teams who have joined the league for 2024 had struggled to find a ground to play on. Clubs who only have one team on their ground were asked to consider what would allow them to share their ground with another team – whether that's financial, help with pitch preparation, etc.

5. Disciplinary Officer's Report

Anton was not present, and Mike and David covered most of the issues in their reports.

Mike feels that a lot of issues are partially caused by poor umpiring, or lack of non-playing umpires. There are courses being run in January and March for new umpires. If club members go on an umpires course, the league will give a rebate to the club of 50% of the cost.

6. Treasurer's Report

The fines are slightly increased, and we also have received some bank interest for the first time in several years.

The course rebates have gone up, due to getting better lists. Other grants have gone down.

We made a donation to Julia's House in return for the WACO handbooks.

Insurance has gone up 13.5%. We will look next year as to whether we can reduce this, either by reducing cover or changing provider.

The bank balance has decreased by about £2.5K. This has been replaced by a stock of cricket balls, which will be used in 2024. We will have to pay a deposit this year for the 2024 balls, which we are able to cover.

There is a small surplus overall, compared to a small deficit in 2022.

After 15 years, Mike is stepping down as Treasurer at this meeting.

It was questioned as to whether the £1,500 sponsorship per year was good value for the league. It was advised that this will be due for renewal for 2024, as the 3-year deal ended in 2023, but ultimately, it came down to what was on offer from potential sponsors.

The accounts were adopted as a true record, proposed Swindon NALGO CC, seconded Winsley CC, and carried.

Treasurer Mike recommended that the affiliation fee remains at £80 per team. Proposed by

Trowbridge CC, seconded by Wilcot CC, and carried.

Chairman Mike presented Treasurer Mike with a leaving gift, an Air Fryer.

7. Rule Amendments and Additions

The league proposed the following corrections, clarifications and minor rule changes:

- Clarification around amendments to proposals at the AGM.
- Changes to simplify, speed up and improve the disciplinary process.
- Clarify the process for the assessment of playing conditions with one non-playing umpire.
- Re-instate the definition of Forum-Trained Umpires.
- Clarification as to the process to change the start time of a match.

There were also two sets amendments which had been voted on in advance via email, which were ratified as part of this vote. They were:

Divisional Structure. The teams in Divisions 7 and below voted 17 in favour, 15 against returning to a linear structure. Therefore the league will end regionalisation.

It is noted that the teams in Division 7 East (which had the most negative effects of regionalisation) voted 8 in favour, 1 against returning to a linear structure.

Number of Overs in a match. Division 10 voted 5 in favour, 4 against, reducing matches to 40 overs, and Division 9 voted 6 in favour, 2 against reducing matches to 40 overs. Therefore division 9 and 10 will play 40 over matches.

It is noted that Division 10 voted 3 in favour, 6 against reducing further to 35 overs, and Division 8 voted 3 in favour, 5 against, and 2 abstentions on reducing to 40 overs.

These proposals and ratifications were seconded en bloc by Allington CC, and unanimously passed en bloc.

The meeting then moved onto two league proposals where it was felt that discussion would be needed.

It was proposed by the Committee and seconded by Chippenham CC, that batting points are adjusted to be scored from 100 to 225 runs, rather than 75 to 200 runs. Points for bowling a team out for under 75 to 150 runs would also be adjusted to 100 to 175 runs.

An amendment was proposed by Winsley CC and seconded by Swindon NALGO CC, that this change should only apply to divisions which are playing 45 overs. Divisions which are playing 40 overs would continue to use the existing points allocation. This amendment was passed by a majority.

The proposal was then voted on, and passed by a majority.

It was proposed by the Committee and seconded by Winsley CC, that an additional clause be added to Rule 22, that no player shall represent a WCCL team in a league match in the last two weeks of the season if they have played at least nine matches for a higher team, and have not played at least two matches for this team or a lower team, in the first 16 weeks of the season.

Questions were asked about players who are returning from injury, players who are out of form, etc. It was clarified that Rule 22 already includes a clause which allows the Fixtures and Results Officer to allow exceptions where a player is clearly not playing below their normal level of cricket.

The proposal was then voted on, and passed with 2 votes against.

The meeting then moved onto the proposals which had been received from clubs.

It was proposed by Chippenham CC and seconded by Potterne CC and Corsham CC, that in Division 1, any ball which passes to the leg side of the batsman and the stumps is called a wide,

regardless of any movement of the batsman. This was voted on by Division 1 clubs, and passed by 7 votes to 3.

It was proposed by Chippenham CC and seconded by Potterne CC and Corsham CC, that fixtures should only be allowed to be rearranged if the ground is not available. This would only apply from 2025. This was voted on, and passed with 1 vote against.

It was proposed by Chippenham CC and seconded by Potterne CC and Corsham CC, that matches should start at 12:30pm.

An amendment was proposed by Box CC and seconded by Keevil CC, that this should only apply to matches in August. This amendment was voted down.

The main proposal was also voted on, and was also voted down.

It was proposed by Devizes CC and seconded by Melksham CC, that the league should adopt Play-Cricket. As this would be a major change to the operation of the league, it required 2/3 of votes to be in favour in order to pass.

This was voted on, and a majority were against.

Clubs were reminded that most of the perceived benefits of using Play Cricket could be achieved by clubs using it as their club website.

8. Officers and Committee 2024

As the Vice chairman was not present, the Admin Officer, David Norman, ran the election of the chairman. Mike Smith offered to remain as chairman, proposed by Corsham CC, seconded by Wilcot CC. With no other nominations, Mike was re-elected unanimously.

The remaining officers were proposed en bloc. These were the same officers as in 2023, with the exception of Matt Harrington replacing Treasurer Mike. This was proposed by Allington CC, seconded by Swindon Super Strikers CC, and passed unanimously.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.