

Minutes

Meeting	Lancashire Cricket Members' Representative Group	Date	7 February 2024
Location	BOX 1, Emirates Old Trafford	Time	17:00 – 19:00
Attendees	Daniel Gidney (Chief Executive), Jonathon Nuttall (Head of Ticketing & Hospitality Sales), Liz Cooper (Director of Commercial Partnerships), James Price (Head of Comms), Chris Peacock (Board Member), Christian Mullarkey (Head of Marketing), Phil Johnston (Member Relations Manager), Mark Chilton (Director of Cricket Performance MRG reps Kirti Sharma, Phil Clarke, Steph Neville, Interim MRG members: Simon Reynolds , Kate Crane , Jo Dibben , Jack Rule , Freya Ryder (Minute taker)		
Apologies	Gaz Morris (Head of Guest Experience), Lee Morgan (Company Secretary) Angela Hodson (Sales Director), Sandy Mitchell (Foundation), Michael Hewson (Director of Operations), Interim MRG members: Mark Montaldo, Mark Orr, Gillian Singh		

#	Item
7.1	Welcome/Apologies
7.2	Approval of the Minutes of the July 2022 Meeting Unanimous decision to approve minutes from the August 2023 meeting.
Matters still outstanding	
7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5.13 Coaches for away games - Survey ready to go to 2024 Members to gauge interest in potential setup of coach travel club for away games - - 5.15 Phone issues during season - Last season there was a significant improvement in the answered call rate to Members. Confirmation that the new phone system should go live over the next few weeks. This should filter the calls so that they're directed to the appropriate department more effectively. The contact us page on the website has also been updated to help improve the communication channels. - 6.10 Access to pitch for spectators – Review with other departments to see if can improve access to pitch at lunch break – Meeting arranged with relevant department prior to start of season. - 6.11 Food prices in the Edge – Meeting took place and MRG asked why pricing is so much higher than in the Long Room and could this be taken into consideration. Lancashire Cricket explained that the menu in the Edge is a more premium offering with table service and larger portions, we carefully considered the pricing for Members and feel from the feedback and uptake that it is priced right. We will continue to review prices based on all factors. - 6.15 Platinum Members' wall. - PJ working with CM on this and briefly discussed plans to market it. PJ to work with JP on creating an event and comms plan around the unveiling etc.

Cricket update (Mark Chilton)

7.4

- All contracts with current players have been agreed. The contract process is becoming more complex due to franchise cricket. The market presents an ongoing challenge, particularly concerning players that play a lot of franchise cricket such as Phil Salt and Luke Wood. There is a need to monitor and strike a balance between enabling availability for franchise competitions, their engagement with Lancashire as well as their commitment to the club. This is mixed with the challenge of managing player welfare and the fact that performance cannot be guaranteed. So, there is a constant tension that exists. Nevertheless, MC is confident that we have a committed group of players that offer a good balance.
- **MRG question:** How are players encouraged to buy into that commitment to the club?
- MC responded highlighting that players are provided with a lot of support around cricket, which includes medical and welfare support. A reciprocal relationship is encouraged so that their needs and the club's needs are met, and a balance is struck. In this way, players feel that they have been provided with a 'home'. One of the medium-term strategies is investment in the Player Pathway. The example of Liam Livingstone is used. He is a good example of a player who developed through the Player Pathway and who remains committed to playing for the Red Rose. Although he is a sought-after player and capable of attracting generous offers from franchise competitions, he has an inherent desire to play for the club which limits the extent to which he can be lured away from Lancashire.
- DG reinforces how much more challenging the contract situation has become. The money that is available to players through franchise cricket is considerable. It is acknowledged that players want and need to make as much money as possible with sport being a short-lived career. Also, changes to the PCA Standard contracts have altered the terms surrounding the signing of non-objection certificates. This presents us with increased challenges. Trent Boult is used as an international example of the challenge presented. A player that gave up his New Zealand central contract to opt for a freelance lifestyle yet still wanted to enjoy the medical perks that a central contract provides. So, whilst we provide amazing facilities and fantastic medical support, the franchise market is increasingly enticing to players.
- MC added that that there are potential welfare issues surrounding players that return from tournaments and may be exhausted.
- Currently 8 players at home training. Craig White and Steven Croft leading the training at home.
- Staff in various places around the world. Dale Benkenstein in South Africa working on the SA T20 tournament. Dale is due to return on Monday (12 Feb). Notes that Dale has previous experience working with Craig White and performed well throughout the rigorous interview process for the Head Coach role. MC feels he is the right individual to lead the team forward.
- Highlight of Tom Hartley over the winter. Carl Crowe deserves a lot of credit for the work that he's done with Tom. It may present a challenge over the summer in terms of managing his expectations. But Tom is a great character, and there will be a focus on daily improvement. Tom ideally to bat at 8 rather than 7. Excited by Nathan Lyon's incoming arrival. There is a hope that there will be opportunities for them to play in the same team but this will be dependent on several factors.
- Squad is training well. In particular, Mitch Stanley and Jack Blatherwick. Mitch Stanley has made a lot of fitness progress since arriving. Working on building his core strength. He has very promising raw attributes, including natural pace, and he is an exciting prospect. 2024 could be build-up year for him and we need to carefully manage him to ensure that he continues to develop.
- Overseas player signing of Tom Bruce. Tom has been on the fringes of international cricket. He has a strong record in domestic cricket. Fills some of the talent gap and is available across the season.
- **MRG question:** Does he not take a Pathway Player's place in the team, thus undermining the strategy?
- MC response: there is a need to strike a balance between success and opportunity. Tom Bruce provides the middle order with the benefit of experience which can be complimented with young players around him. Competition for places in the First XI is positive. It is important to develop players on the Pathway programme and provide them with opportunities but ultimately win games too.

- DG reinforces MC's points highlighting that there is a delicate balance between developing the Pathway, the spending on overseas players, Member expectations as well as the success of the team.
- New Thunder Head Coach Chris Read has made a very positive start.
- A couple of the players from the Thunder team are in Australia. There was also a spin camp in India. Funding, particularly from Hilton, has helped to enable these opportunities for the Thunder squad. They have more funding than any other county. MC commented on the rapid progress that he witnesses in the Academy sessions. Looking forward to the Dubai trip.
- MC confident that the Thunder have a coaching team that can drive the team forward. They have experience working in the women's game and believes they can create a comfortable environment yet crucially challenge the players and the team to achieve more. MC would like to see more dynamic style of play and more self-belief. Self-belief is a challenge for every player, but the women perhaps don't have the same foundation as the men. Psychology and medical support essential in this. They're hoping to secure a couple of overseas players too.
- Hilton has transformed the funding process. Lancashire have more contracted women's player than any other county. 16 full time pros. Hilton and Sportsbreaks.com have played an instrumental role in enabling this. There is increased pressure on the ECB to plug the funding gaps. ECB have announced their plans to evolve the women's game with a three-tiered domestic competition. All 18 counties have been formally invited to tender to become a women's 'Tier 1 Club'. Lancashire are already fulfilling most of the aims outlined. As stated in the meeting by DG, LCC will submit a Tier 1 tender by 10/03/2024.

MRG 2024 Recruitment update

7.5

- CP led an informal chat a few weeks ago with the MRG which included the new recruits.
- Interview process concluded with 7 candidates. The 7 candidates have been invited to join the MRG on an interim co-opted basis (January 2024 to the date of the AGM). There will be an election at the AGM where the vacancies will be filled by a democratic vote.
- Communication scheduled to be sent to Members shortly.
- MRG profiles to be circulated. CP would like to update the website with names, photographs and a paragraph which outlines their experience and intentions to be ratified by Members at the AGM.

Stand opening 2024

7.6

- **MRG** - Towards the end of last season there were limited stands open during County Championship games. Dialogue with Trafford Council to agree stewarding requirements was previously discussed. Is there scope for parts of both Stands A and E closest to the pavilion to be considered for opening to help to satisfy some Members affinity for Stands A & E?
- **Lancashire Cricket response** - Proposing a more pro-active approach to risk assessments using the Green Guide.
- Comparison drawn between the profile of concerts and County Championship matches attended as well as the risk factor which is very different. Venues with a capacity of less than 10,000 do not require a safety certificate.
- We are actively engaging with other counties to understand how they manage their fixtures and meet Safety Advisory Group requirements. Importance of considering wicket position, costing, and stewarding when deciding which stands to open for a given fixture. Although the club will ensure that at least one upper tier is opened for all matches.
- MRG requested for more detail to be included in the Match Day Guides. Offer advance notice of stand openings.
- All agreed that the Match Day Guides had improved.

Actions:

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- More pro-active approach to communicating which stands will be open in Match Day Guides.
 - Continue exploring more pro-active approaches to risk assessments.
 - DG to pick up discussions on Stand E specifically.

Flexi members – use of Membership cards for entry

- Confirmed new access control provider at the end of the 2023 season. Testing of new RFID membership cards is in progress. Hoping to trial loading the games that Members have booked onto membership cards, therefore eliminating the need for Members to download tickets. If possible, this will be applied across all membership categories and not just the Flexi.
- **Question CP:** Is there an update of the distribution of membership cards considering the issues faced last season?
- **Lancashire Cricket response** – Cards being produced now will be distributed in March ahead of the cricket season.
- We will provide instructions to simplify the booking requirements according to membership category in the Members' handbook.
- **MRG response:** Can communication to be sent to Members relating to the proposed changes for entry?
- **Lancashire Cricket response** - Once testing is complete and process for entry is confirmed we will send details out to Members.
- **MRG question:** Will the middle balcony upgrade be on offer this season?
- **Lancashire Cricket response** - The middle balcony upgrade will be available for County Championship and Metro Bank One Day Cup games at a cost of £5 per day.
- **MRG question** - Will this option also be loaded onto the card so that access can be membership card rather than ticket?
- **Lancashire Cricket response** – To be confirmed after testing.
- **MRG Question:** What was the issue regarding the visibility of the Middle Balcony on the website last season? Issues were reported last season with Middle Balcony availability on the website, have these been resolved?
- **Lancashire Cricket response** - We weren't aware that there were any issues online with regards to the Middle Balcony upgrade. This is the first time that the matter had been raised. but we will ensure it is available for 2024.
- **MRG Question:** Will there be scope for any unused or cancelled days to be reallocated automatically for Flexi Members so that they don't need to call or email the ticket office?
- **Lancashire Cricket response** - Unfortunately, the software is currently unable to recognise non-used days and reallocate automatically so Members should continue to contact the ticket office should they not be able to attend a match that has been booked. We have this on our wish list with our provider to scope out for future use.

7.7

Actions: Communication to Members relating to the card/ membership entry

Future fixtures at Liverpool Cricket Club

- 7.8
- Met with Liverpool. Started dialogue and visiting the ground at the end of the month. Liverpool are unable to host any cricket during the weekend. They host tennis matches and erect marquees on the ground at weekends which limits cricket opportunities.
 - Second XI fixture is scheduled in 2024. Further need to assess facilities. Potential for a 2025 First XI fixture
 - JP confirmed the Second XI news has been shared with members as well as news that the discussions have begun. News was received positively overall.
 - CP - conversation ongoing. Laid the foundation with JP's correspondence. Need to have the right infrastructure and facilities in place to secure a 2025 First XI fixture.

Action: Continue dialogue with Liverpool. Site visit planned.

T20 seating for 2024

- 7.9
- We have changed the Blast from all reserved seats to unreserved seats by stand tickets for 2024. In the last couple of years, we have seen a reduction in the number of Blast ticket sales. It has created an opportunity to trial the sale of unreserved seats by stand tickets. This makes the booking process easier for Members and ticket buyers. The Yorkshire T20 will continue to be reserved seating as this is a fixture that historically sells out and we must maximise our capacity.
 - **MRG response** - Questioned the change without any narrative or consultation.
 - Why were Members not given advanced warning of the changes? Why were the MRG not consulted on the change either?
 - **Lancashire response** - We will consult with MRG on comms to explain improvement to ticket process which we believe is step forward and will be well received from Members following the feedback provided in 2023.
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- Action:** Members comms to be drafted and sent to MRG for feedback.
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Heritage Centre update

- 7.10
- Wider consultation has been completed to see what our target audience would like to see from our overall heritage offering. The following groups had input to this - local community, ethnically diverse families/adults and recreational cricket clubs. Alongside this an e-survey was circulated to Members (778 responses received) and the wider community (220 responses received).
 - There are a number of other things being worked on to enhance the wider Heritage offering as well as the Hub. To include: - Enhanced displays within the Pavilion. -Enhanced displays within the P&M (to improve the current education talks). - Upgrade to the existing library. - Enhanced heritage features around the concourse areas. - Enhanced outreach programme to include a mobile hub solution.
 - The Development Stage application will be submitted to the National Heritage Lottery Fund on the 29th February, should the application be successful we plan to engage in more details with the MRG.
 - If successful, MRG input will be required. SM will update at the next meeting.
 - MRG - Heritage Hub proposed as a Members' Forum item.
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- **Lancashire Cricket response** - dates confirmed for the forums on variety of fixtures/days to allow better Member engagement. Themes/ subjects for the forums to be agreed and communicated which will include Heritage themed forum.

The future direction of the Hundred

- **Lancashire Cricket response**
 - No formal update from the ECB. Once this has been received, Members will be informed.
 - Club remains committed to the County Championship.
 - Whatever happens with the Hundred won't impact the 14 CC games.
 - The club aren't supportive of the expansion of the Hundred at the moment, if it extends the Hundred fixture period.
 - We are a Members Club. We are not selling our shares of Lancashire Cricket nor ownership of Emirates Old Trafford. This applies to now and in the future.
 - Regardless of opinion, the Hundred successfully attracts a diverse audience.
 - LC suggests we need to create a space for the Members to confidently voice and share their opinion of the Hundred.
 - CP reinforces our need to be as inclusive as possible. Democratically elected MRG members have an active role to play in discussions and engage in these issues. Members need to be correctly informed and referred to the challenges of social media (miscommunication danger).
 - Leaks of ECB information is also a challenge. CP- pro-active in communication with Members, forum dates and topics, report of the forum etc.
 - **MRG request** - suggestion for the club to more actively engage with Members who use their allocation for the Hundred fixtures.
 - Request for figures of the number of Members who use their allocation for the Hundred.
- Lancashire Cricket response** – As an example last season we had 3434 standard Members which allowed access to 5 days domestic cricket, of which 210 used part of their allocation to book tickets for the Hundred which is 6.5% of this Membership category.

AOB

- **Women's ticket allocation in Membership**
 - **Question from MRG:** why has there been a change to the women's ticket allocation for Members? Change to women's ticket allocation in the membership. No consultation or explanation of narrative to members?
- 7.12
- **Lancashire Cricket response** - Authorised this change as part of the strategy to attribute more value to tickets for the women's games. Thunder attendance has been ok. However, as we strive to sell at least 10,000 tickets then we need to move away from it as a free add-on. The rationale is to attribute more value to the women's fixture and hopefully return some investment for our commercial partners too.
 - **Action** - Club to arrange for communications on this subject.

Minute Ref	SUMMARY OF ACTIONS	
5.10	Membership guide (Handbook) – Club to review with MRG and ensure all relevant membership information is captured in one place	JN/GM
5.13	Coaches for away games - Survey ready to go to 2024 Members to gauge interest	GM
6.10	Access to pitch for spectators – Review with other departments to see if can improve access to pitch at lunch break Meeting arranged with relevant department prior to start of season.	MC
5.15	Phone issues during the season –Wider Guest Experience staff to receive basic training on the Ticketing System. Club to identify the queries/issues ahead of time and provide appropriate communications to Members to reduce phone calls	GM
6.11	Food prices in the Edge – Arrange meeting to discuss and invite MRG rep (SN)	PJ
6.13	New Member Event Follow Up – Arrange survey to attendees around first year as Member to gain feedback	CM
6.15	Platinum Members wall – Club to look at missing names and arrange new artwork for next season to be installed	GM
7.6	Stand opening 2024 – Keep reviewing stewarding operations and review options to open parts of both stands A & E as overflow adjacent to Members pavilion.	MH
7.7	Flexi members – use of Membership cards for entry – Once testing is complete communication will be sent out to Members to update them on the ticket and entry process for 2024	JN
7.8	Future fixtures at Aigburth (Liverpool) - Continue dialogue with Liverpool and site visit to Aigburth planned.	MC
7.9	T20 ticket process for 2024 - Members comms to be drafted and send to MRG for feedback.	JP
7.12	Women's ticket allocation in Membership - Club to arrange for communications on this subject.	JP

Should Members wish to contact the MRG about any of these items or if there is anything that they would like to be raised at a future meeting, please use the email address mrglancsc@gmail.com

Green background	Action complete – item to be removed, following approval of minutes.
Yellow background	On-going action.
White background	A new action from the most current minutes
Turquoise background	Action postponed to a later date