



## **Upton Cricket Club**

**The minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

**Held in the Pavilion on Thursday 6th December 2019**

**Present: There were 31 members present of which 29 were eligible to vote:**

R Simcox	JC Lamb
J Scragg	ND Sharrock
PDA Clark	KL Barrett
JR Lamb	I Bruce
T Woods	J Winder
A Cunningham	C Stowell-Smith
A Ali	D Pennell
R Battersby	M Owen
P Owen	T Marsland
R Kalitkin	I Sharrock
A Green	P Green
S. Lee	B Shenton
M Ward	S McGowan
G McGowan	G Keenan

R Chapman, Sec

**1. Apologies for Absence**

A Roberts, S McCormick, T Maguire, B Burns.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

Read and accepted. Proposed: P Owens Seconded: K Barrett

**3. Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.

**4. Chairman's Annual Report:**

**Chairman's Annual Report to Members**

**Introduction**

There's absolutely no point trying to ignore the fact that 2019 has been a challenging year for Upton Cricket Club with both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> XI's suffering relegation, and yes we need to address that, but let's look around you at what WE have as a Club and tell me that this isn't still a splendid Club to be a member of.

Over the last 119 years this Club has suffered a variety of ups & downs and there's those in the room tonight who've been around longer than I have to witness them, but I make this commitment to you now:

- Your committee will do everything in their powers to provide the best possible infrastructure
- I personally will do everything I can to support those efforts

This does however come with a "but"...

That effort must be reciprocated.

I'd like to ask you a question – who's heard of Charles Plumb?

Charles Plumb was an American Navy fighter pilot and after 75 combat missions his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent six years in a communist Vietnamese prison.

So, what has Charles Plumb got to do with Upton Cricket Club?

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, *"You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!"* "How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb.

*"I packed your parachute,"* the man replied.

Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, *"I guess it worked!"*

Plumb assured him, *"It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."*

Following the meeting Plumb kept thinking about the guy he'd met, how many times she must have walked past him and never even said "Good morning, how are you?" or anything because he was a fighter pilot and the other man was just a sailor."

Nowadays, Plumb is engaged as a motivational speaker and at this juncture he asks his audience - *"Who's packing your parachute?"*

As a Club, there are many people 'packing our parachutes' that go unnoticed. Sometimes with so much going on we fail to recognise what's gone on behind the scenes and can take things for granted. As we head into next season and the preparation that goes into it, take the time to recognize those who 'packed your parachute', or even better, be the person who 'packs someone else's parachute'.

Right, back on terra firma we'll take a brief look at each section of the club but before I do that I would like to offer my sincerest thanks to all those who give up their time to serve the club, or in keeping with the theme; 'pack the parachutes'. Your work is tireless and on behalf of the whole membership, thank you.

### Senior Cricket

There's no beating around the bush here, this year has been a pretty rubbish one for the 1's and 2's. It isn't bad luck we saw both teams relegated, a 22-game season doesn't lie - we simply weren't good enough. This time last year we conducted quite an extensive survey and we listened to what you had to say, and in most cases responded. We provided you with a Senior Coach but you didn't turn up for training. That may seem harsh and may not necessarily be aimed at all those present in the room tonight but the simple fact is that we spent the Club's money providing something you asked for and you didn't utilise it to help improve your game. I don't propose to stand her dissecting every aspect of those two relegations as the key is to move forward as a Club and put right the wrongs of 2019 and ensure that you do everything within your powers to make 2020 a far better season. Both Tom Marsland & Tom Maguire put so much effort in and continue to do so and they deserve more from their players than has been shown. Sometimes, you might even have to pack your own parachute!

Onto more positive matters and a huge congratulations to Ian Sharrock and the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI. Winning any league title is a fantastic achievement but to win 'back to back' league titles is a tremendous feat. No doubting that next season will pose a different challenge as they go back into the Cheshire County Cricket League structure and play against mainly 2<sup>nd</sup> XI's just one league below our own 2's but having a 3<sup>rd</sup> XI competing at this level can only be good for our overall strength.

I'd also like to thank both Ian Bruce, Phil Wood and Cath Williams for their sterling efforts in developing our younger players (and not forgetting those more "mature" players). This is truly invaluable as we progress forward, and you can see how the players they introduce are developing.

That is evident when you start to look at numbers and as you know I love a good stat and

- In total, 92 players played Senior cricket
- 73% of those players have played their junior cricket at the Club (64% in 2018)
- 78% of those were under the age of 40 (75% in 2018)

The more astute of you will have noticed that I referred to the Ladies XI a moment ago, and rather than have a specific section of this report about Ladies cricket I wanted to encapsulate them within Senior Cricket because that is where they sit. They are an integral part of that set up and the Senior Ladies XI is an important part of our player development as this area continues to grow.

Once again, Cath has guided the team with distinction and at one point they were also potentially looking at 'back to back' league titles. However they did come out victors in the T20 competition for the second consecutive season. This team will only get better and the standard of cricket being played is of the highest order.

In terms of looking ahead, clearly there's a lot of work to do over the Winter to ensure that all teams are primed and ready for next season and Tom Marsland and Nigel Sharrock are working tirelessly to try and bring some additional players in not only to boost the 1<sup>st</sup> XI but strengthen throughout the Club in true ONE CLUB style.

## Junior Cricket

There is no dispute that we have one of, if not the finest junior set ups around. The numbers of children we have on our 'books' is testament to that, and Matt and I share the same vision for our juniors which is twofold:

- To encourage participation, and continued participation
- To provide a pathway for our juniors into senior cricket

So, what does that mean in real terms? Taking those two points in turn then when you look at participation it boils down to a simple question – what can we do to make sure the child wants to come back the next week? Certainly with our younger members, our coaches have to make the sessions fun and anybody who has witnessed the swarms of Under 9's occupying the front pitch on a Friday evening will certainly vouch for the fact they are having fun. This isn't just thinly veiled babysitting though, there's real structure to what goes on and if you look at the individual talent then you can see the real potential out there.

This leads nicely on to the second point which is that pathway into Senior Cricket. For decades now we've been a club that has promoted our juniors and managed their transition into Senior Cricket. Undoubtedly some parents will always think their son or daughter should be playing at a different level but my message to them is to trust us, Matt and his team of coaches work closely with the Senior Captains to identify the players who are ready to step up.

I looked at the number of Junior players who represented the club at Senior level this year and it was a staggering 25 players (out of 92) which translates to 27% of all players. There's no doubt that we are offering that pathway and supported by the additional Winter nets which Matt has been running for a number of weeks now means that it's not only a numbers game, we are trying to produce the best cricketers possible as they are our future.

Now all of that's great and encouraging but maybe, just maybe we could do a little bit more. Each one of our coaches gives up a minimum of 75 hours in just coaching and running matches, let alone the work they do away from the club preparing the sessions. Just imagine what our Junior setup would look like if each of the 67 players who played senior cricket and weren't juniors gave up just a couple of hours each and volunteered to help out for just one Friday night session. Ask yourself, could you be that person who packs the parachute for one of our juniors to go on and fulfil their cricketing ambitions?

As Chairman, and also a parent of three juniors my sincerest thanks go out to Matt and all the coaches for the tremendous amount of time and effort that goes in to providing junior cricket at Upton CC.

## Facilities

At the risk of lumping a few areas under one title I'm going to reference the work that goes under the guise of 'House' & 'Grounds' together.

Once again, we've seen improvements in both our buildings and grounds but for me, the most important thing that happens in this space is the sense of community. Every Tuesday and Friday we have a team of volunteers who give up their time for your club. It's not necessarily about what they do but why they do it. They do it because they care, they do it for the sense of camaraderie and these guys really look out for each other. If somebody misses a couple of sessions, one of the other guys checks they are ok.

There was no better example of this than this year's winner of the Harry Cowley award; Bernie Parker. Most members won't know who Bernie is but here we have a man with no previous affinity to the club but living just over the road had seen what had been going on each week and popped over and offered his services and in the three or four years he has been helping out has 'packed more parachutes' than members who have been around for a lot longer.

Taking a look at what has been achieved this year, outside of the general maintenance that goes on to keep the buildings in the best possible conditions we've seen speedbumps installed, parts of the car park & driveway repaired, replaced all the fascia boards around the top of the pavilion, the tearoom has been painted and we've had a new roof put on the lounge area. When you consider that all of this must be done around the 52 weeks of the year utilisation of our buildings from the likes of the Wirral Table Tennis League, Slimming World and Brixmania it's not a bad effort really!

From a ground's perspective, the team have been as busy as ever battling one of the wettest summer's we've had for a while but have maintained the pitches to an extremely high standard as well as installing some new benches to improve our spectator facilities which are fast becoming the envy of many clubs. Earlier this year we benefitted from an ECB inspector providing a report on our outfield which has given the team a vision of the areas we can improve on, with some of those being acted on already. Looking forward, there will be further improvements on the outfield, and we have also sought external support of the highest calibre with a view to improving the squares.

My deepest thanks to everybody involved in making our facilities a real credit to Upton Cricket Club, you guys are true heroes and as a club we are indebted to you.

## Bar/Social

Ian, in his own unique style continues to run an efficient and effective bar and we should not take this for granted. To run the bar the way Ian does as a volunteer is no mean feat and I could guarantee is better than most bigger establishments are run.

Like other areas of the club, we are continuing to invest in our bar facilities and whilst it will go unnoticed to many, we had a new chiller unit installed as the other one had seen better days. Looking further ahead, myself and Ian have been discussing further improvements and our aim is to make the bar more efficient which may involve knocking a few walls down and re-jigging things a bit. No firm plans yet, just some ideas we are floating around.

I reported last year as to how busy we had been as a club and quoted a figure of 32 'external' bookings and 79 requests we'd had to turn down. This year, that figure has risen to 40 bookings and 90 rejections. Whilst this is great from a revenue perspective, it does put more strain on both Ian, the bar staff and of course Rob Chapman who handles all the booking requests.

Looking at the social aspect of the club, we listened to what you said in last year's survey and put on a series of functions throughout the year. Some were well attended, others less so. I appreciate not everybody can afford to attend every function, but all we ask is you support wherever you can as the volunteers that give up their time to put these functions on thrive on them being a success and well supported. My personal thanks go out to all of those who have helped with the events this year as it has made my life so much easier and let's go into 2020 with a full social calendar that's attractive right across our membership.

## Finance

Richie will elaborate far more eloquently than I can in his native Black Country tongue the annual accounts but despite the weather it's fair to say we've had another positive year and our accounts would be the envy of most clubs throughout the land.

Touching on a few key points it's important to recognise the importance of our sponsors across all the different aspects, whether they be on the playing shirts, advertising around the ground or through player sponsorship. We try to build relationships with these organisations and make it less 'transactional'. This is a significant part of how we operate financially, and my thanks go out to these businesses.

The other key fact that sets us apart from many amateur sports club is we can operate on a sound financial footing and this is demonstrated when we need to do such things as repairs to the roof and we have enough money to do such things.

Your committee manages the club's finances extremely well and you can have confidence that under the stewardship of Richie they are in safe hands.

## Community

### Mayor visit

Our community links are something that really sets us apart and we are firmly rooted in the heart of the community. I think that's evident as our support base has grown considerably and there can't be many clubs that can boast the kind of attendances we get. Granted, not everyone in attendance fully understands what's going on (and in some cases that's true of our players – joke!) but to offer a place where the community can come together and relax and enjoy themselves is important.

Our strength within the community has been recognised with the awarding of a grant to provide new benches which went hand in hand with a visit from the Mayor of Wirral; Councillor Tony Smith. The Mayor was extremely impressed by what he saw on a busy Friday night and it was a pleasure to show him and the Lady Mayoress around the club.

The Tour of Britain passing by the club was a great chance for us to present ourselves on both a local and national level, and whilst the 'land art' created on the pitch missed out on the national award, a great day was had by all with thanks especially from Overchurch Infant & Junior Schools for allowing their pupils to watch the cyclists passing by.

Our charity links continue to be of significance and following on from the heart screening we held with Vital Signs Foundation at the start of the year, we are in discussions to host a further screening just ahead of next season starting. We've also been privileged to help out with a range of other charities including Radio City Cash for Kids, Our Lady of Pity School, NEO Catering, Hooves for Healing, the Foodbank and the Square Pegs dyslexia charity.

We will continue to work within the local community and charities and develop these relationships further.

## Strategic Planning

I would have liked to have been able to present to you what version 3 of the club's Strategic Plan looked like however timings have been slightly delayed due to a meeting with Leverhulme Estates a couple of weeks ago.

As you will know, the lease on this land expires in September 2020 and I would love to be in a position to stand here and update you with a definitive statement however I'm not in a position to do so I'm afraid. In the meeting with Leverhulme Estates they reiterated the position with regards to Wirral Borough Council and the fact that they are yet to produce their 'local plan' and until this is finalised they will not make any decisions on any of their land on the Wirral (us included). There was clear frustration on their part because as you can imagine when you own a significant portion of the land on the Wirral (12.5%) there is a lot of people/organisations affected.

They understood completely our position and had sympathy with our desire to move things forward but aren't in a position to do anything for the reasons stated above.

Timescale wise, WBC are scheduled to release an iteration of their plan in January 2020, however the reality is that it will be a very 'soft' plan and may be subject to modification during the course of 2020. The reality is that we may still be a year on from now (given previous experience of WBC's timescales) before we have any certainty over what is going on.

So, what happens in September 2020 when our lease expires? Well, the lease will just continue to roll on under its current terms. Granted that isn't great but there was no indication from the meeting to suggest otherwise.

As I said, not the message I wanted to deliver but please rest assured we are doing everything possible and have the best available external support during this process.

Despite this position we will continue to push ahead and develop the club in the most prudent manner and the next iteration of the Strategic Plan will take all of the above into consideration, just like it has for the last two years.

## Conclusion

So, in conclusion – despite the troubles on the pitch for some of the sides we continue to be a truly GREAT club we can all be proud of. That comes with a 'but' however – we can be even GREATER and that comes down to our membership. We all have differing amounts of time and effort we can put in but please remember that we are all equal. Those who already do so much pay their membership fees like everyone else and just imagine what we could achieve with that little bit of extra effort from everybody.

I'll close with something that really touched me during a conversation the other week. This person had only started playing cricket this year but had previously had a career as a professional sportsman but had to retire after having a serious knee injury. They played their first game of cricket in a tour match and enjoyed

it so much they made themselves available for the second half of season. What that has led to was giving them the confidence and self-belief to start playing football, albeit at an amateur level, again. Isn't it great that this sport and us as a club have provided that platform for him to regain his confidence and take to the field again.

Upton Cricket club has certainly 'packed that person's parachute', ask yourself what you can do to 'pack someone's parachute' and let's take this club onto even greater things.

## 5 Treasurers Report and Accounts

Separate copies of the accounts were made available with notes.

### 2019 TREASURER'S REPORT

RS reported that:

#### Income and Expenditure

##### Income

- Surplus this year of £5k against £15k last year
- The Gross Margin on the bar increased from 41% to 48% due to a mixture of good pricing and good purchasing
- Membership and playing income down probably due to a reduction in Match Fees due to poor weather and matches cancelled.
- Fundraising for the year down by £3k
- Small increase in Sundry income

##### Expenditure

- Cricket expenses are up due to purchase of balls, League Fees and fines. Also new kit purchased with sponsors name on. Overseas accommodation and Coaching costs are also included
- Buildings expenditure is up due to repair of main roof, decoration of Tea Room and provision of new facias.
- Grounds and equipment reduction due to less time charged by Groundsman, and a reduction in supplies and charges for servicing machinery. Also last year included a charge for a repair to the driveway.

#### Balance Sheet

- Increase of £2k in Buildings due to purchase of new Chiller System
- Debtors brought down by £3k
- Reduction in Creditors
- Also to note that we only owe £2800 on the ECB loan for the Tearoom which will be paid off in 2020.

Overall the club is in a healthy financial position and made a surplus again this year.

## 6. Adoption of the 2019 Accounts

Accepted. Proposed: J Scragg    Seconded: P Owen

## 7. 2019 Subscriptions and Match Fees

It was advised that this years subscriptions would remain the same with the exception of the Ladies subscription which will rise to £40. If paid by the Friday before the first game of the season the rate for a full Playing member would be £100 and for a Full Playing member 18 yrs and over and bona fide full-time student £50. If paid after this date they would be £120 and £60 respectively. If players wished to pay by Standing Order between January to April this would be at the normal rate of either £100 or £50.

## 8. Election of Governing Committee

The following were nominated by P Owen and seconded by A Ali and unanimously agreed

Position	Candidate	Proposed	Seconded
Chairman (Gov)	Jez Lamb	Rob Chapman	Richie Simcox
Vice Chairman (Gov)	Pete Clark	Jez Lamb	Nigel Sharrock

<b>Secretary (Gov)</b>	Rob Chapman	John Scragg	Richie Simcox
<b>Treasurer (Gov)</b>	Richie Simcox	Rob Chapman	Jez Lamb
<b>Grounds Chairman (Gov)</b>	John Lamb	Jez Lamb	Ken Barratt
<b>Bar Chairman (Gov)</b>	Ian Sharrock	Jez Lamb	Tom Marsland
<b>House Chairman (Gov)</b>	Ken Barrett	Rob Chapman	Gavin Byrom
<b>Development Officer (Gov)</b>			
<b>General Committee Member (Gov)</b>	John Scragg	Rob Chapman	Richie Simcox
<b>General Committee Member (Gov)</b>	Madeleine Ward	Ian Sharrock	Gavin Byrom
<b>Communications Officer (Gov)</b>	Steve McCormick	Jez Lamb	Tom Marsland

The role of Development Officer received no nominations. As such the GC will look to fill the position during the year.

#### 9. Election of Other Officials

The following were nominated by T Marsland and seconded by N Sharrock and unanimously agreed

<b>Position</b>	<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Seconded</b>
<b>2nd XI Captain</b>	Tom Maguire	Nigel Sharrock	John Scragg
<b>3rd XI Captain</b>	Ian Sharrock	Rob Chapman	Nigel Sharrock
<b>4th XI Captain</b>	Ian Bruce	John Scragg	John Lamb
<b>Sun XI Captain</b>	Phil Wood	John Scragg	John Lamb

<b>Over 40s Captain</b>	Rob Kalitkin	Nigel Sharrock	Ian Bruce
<b>Selection Chairman</b>	Paul Owen	Nigel Sharrock	John Lamb
<b>Fixture Secretary</b>			
<b>League Representative</b>	Nigel Sharrock	John Lamb	John Scragg
<b>Subscription Secretary</b>			
<b>Ladies Captain</b>	CathWilliams	Matt Owen	John Lamb

The following were nominated on the evening and agreed unanimously:

Fixture Secretary: John Winder Proposed by N Sharrock and seconded by PDA Clarke

Subscription Secretary: R J Simcox Proposed by N Sharrock and seconded by Matt Owen.

10. GC Motion to be agreed.

To elect Jez Lamb as a Life Member of Upton CC in recognition of his services to the club.

The motion was unanimously agreed by all present.

**AGM closed at 9.00PM**