

# Poole Town Cricket Club

## Chairman's Report – January 2024

It is safe to say that I have never missed three AFCB goals whilst writing my Chairman's Report before but it has happened this evening.

It is also safe to say that the Club is going through a period of change at the moment which is likely to continue for another year or two.

In terms of changes which have happened:

- Having not had access to outdoor nets at Poole Grammar School for two summers, the new nets are built and waiting for the sun to shine. The Club has contributed £10,000 towards the new nets, obtained a grant from the Dorset Cricket Board for a further £10,000 and helped to find a further £3,700 from sponsorship being provided by The Harbour Hospital (part of Circle Health Group), whilst the School has paid the remaining £20,000;
- In October we started to use the indoor cricket nets in the brand new sports hall at Poole Grammar School. The hall really is an excellent facility, boasting 4 nets, and being bigger than most sports halls around has enabled us to divide the hall into sections so that more than one group of juniors can train at the same time. This has enabled us to offer more cricket to our juniors;
- A year ago BCP Council announced that it would not be preparing cricket wickets at Branksome Recreation Ground in 2024. The committee felt that playing on a grass wicket was important and this season the 5<sup>th</sup> team will play its home games at Kings Park in Bournemouth. Whether this is a short, medium or long-term venue remains to be seen;
- With regular training sessions, through recruiting players by word of mouth and with some players returning we have seen the number of lady players increase very significantly recently and our Softball Ladies become more competitive. We also had great success in recruiting new girl players last summer.

In terms of future changes:

- The Council would like the Club to take over a lease of the Poole Park pavilion and square. We will be seeking the views of the club at the AGM as there would be a lot of work involved and realistically we would need a wider pool of volunteers than we have at the moment to take on such a commitment. This is a really exciting opportunity to take control of our future and improve our facilities. Having security of tenure would provide us with better access to funding than we currently have, which should help us to improve areas such as the square, security, storage, changing areas and our social facilities. But it is also a bit scary as it is likely that our costs would increase significantly. If it is the will of the Club that we should pursue this opportunity then the committee plans to send formal notification of our interest to the Council shortly after the AGM;
- Improving our facilities is important if we are to maximise the opportunities arising from the new Dorset Premier League which starts in 2024. We are one of 6 teams playing in the top division – for the first year there will be no promotion or relegation to allow clubs to focus on getting their facilities up to the required standards. We have some work to do on our square and our outfield to fully meet the criteria to be in the League (we meet the other 4 criteria). The new league will bring a different format of games and coloured clothing;
- We have decided to tweak our committee structure so that a slimmed down general committee will be responsible for strategic matters whilst the more day to day activities will be looked after by an increased number of sub-committees, each led by somebody who will represent that sub-committee on the general committee.
- We have lost four captains who stood last year (Kev, Craig, Henri and Jordan) and are in a position where we have to replace the considerable work that they have undertaken last season and in prior years. We need to rally around the new incumbents. It looks as though two positions will remain vacant after the AGM – if you would be interested in taking on one of these roles please contact me or Dave Miller.

The 2022 season was amazingly successful for both our adults and our juniors. It was always going to be difficult to achieve as much in 2023.

Most clubs in the County would be delighted if their 1<sup>st</sup> XI came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Dorset Premier League but for us it is a bit disappointing. The 2nds finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in Division 1, an amazing achievement. The 3rds had a more difficult season than in 2022 but still stayed up comfortably. The 4ths achieved promotion and the 5ths would also have gone up a division due to a restructuring of the league but we opted to stay in the lower division. The Wimborne Evening League side also stayed up relatively comfortably. Thank you to all of the captains and to Joe Wilson who is a brilliant club captain, plus all of the umpires and scorers who are so important to ensuring our games of cricket are a pleasant experience.

We continue to produce some amazing juniors and have a number in the wings waiting to gain their first taste of adult cricket. Thank you to the two Matts who have acted as Junior Chairmen, Head Coach Joey and all of the other managers and coaches who contribute so much. The All Star and Dynamo activities in Poole Park on a Friday evening, which last year were marshalled superbly by Dave Mutton, are fantastic, requiring an army of volunteers to be successful.

Thanks to Joe Wilson for organising another very well attended dinner and to those who spoke for finishing the speeches before the RNLI called time at the bar. Thanks also to Andy, Kelly, Caroline and others who have helped out, for serving behind the bar and cooking food on so many occasions during the last year.

No Chairman's Report would be complete without expressing my sincere gratitude for the key committee members who I have not thanked so far, to Dave (Vice Chairman), Andy (Secretary), Nick (Treasurer), Matt (Communications), John and Teresa (Welfare) and Craig (who stood down as Sponsorship Secretary at the last AGM but continued to keep things ticking along with our main sponsors, The Harbour Hospital, PKF Francis Clark and Patisserie Mark Bennett, before last season).

I think our success does mean that the Club and some members of the Club are unfortunately possibly carrying a target on their backs which perhaps means that any misdemeanours, however minor, are more likely to attract attention and/or be reported than would otherwise be the case. We are such a large club that situations are bound to arise which we would prefer had not happened. These situations are not very frequent but they are more frequent than they used to be. What I would ask is that our captains, managers, coaches and players try to minimise those rare occasions where another club is able to legitimately point the finger at PTCC.

Poole Town Cricket Club has a lot of members and continues to grow. This inevitably means that our members will have different opinions about a variety of topics and will occasionally fall out. This also seems to be happening a bit more often than it used to and is a trend which I would like to see reverse. I am not asking everybody to be shrinking violets but am making a plea for everybody to be a bit more tolerant of each other, treat everybody with respect and, if possible, to mend some bridges where they are currently broken and build some bridges if they don't currently exist but should.