

Bradninch Cricket Club AGM – Sunday 25th October 2020

Chairman's Address

Thank you for attending this evening and I am sorry that I cannot be with you. We have worked hard to prepare for the meeting and I went through many emotions, in recording all responsibilities and relationships, in what is now more of a Club handbook than a Job Description.

With over 50 years as a playing member, Bradninch Cricket Club has been a huge part of my life, having made many close friends and sadly lost some along the way. It is 30 years since I took up the position of Chairman from Michael Birley in our centenary year, when both our 1st and 2nd XI won their respective 'B' Divisions.

The following year, John Freeman and I opened the batting, as we played 'A' Division cricket for the first time and we felt privileged to be playing for Bradninch at that level.

Leading the club over such a long period has also been a privilege and I have been very fortunate to have two hugely capable and dedicated Vice-Chairmen alongside me. Paul Nott covering the last 15 years and Mark Stanbury the first 15 years, less one, when he stepped in as Chairman.

This continuity and commitment has achieved so much and creating an environment where the club and its members can enjoy the highest level of cricket, has been paramount.

We have been fortunate to work with many hard working colleagues and hugely talented cricketers, who have given their all to making our cricket club one of the most respected in the county, spending most of the last decade playing in the Premier Division and finishing runners up in 2017.

This time last year, we had just completed the all important ECB Clubmark re-accreditation, a DCL ground & facilities inspection and a surprise HMRC audit, but there is never time to relax and the last 12 months have been just as challenging.

Firstly, closing to deliver an extensive internal refurbishment. Then reopening, only to have to close again within two days, cancelling all planned events and three parts of the cricket season; all of which were needed to start to recover the investment.

The fact that we are still here and the club is flourishing, pays tribute to those that have given their time to seeing it through, despite all the setbacks and uncertainty. Quite extraordinary devotion, when we remember it is mostly voluntary, with personal lives and earning a living, continuing alongside.

To keep everything together, while making the most of the wonderful new clubhouse facility, we need to expand the Committee and the proposed new roles of Assistant Treasurer and ECB Clubmark Officer, are key to providing support for two of our busiest and hardest working officers, in Simon and Natalie.

My thanks to all the Committee for your support, especially those who gave time during lockdown keeping the facilities maintained and those involved in getting the clubhouse, ground and cricket up and running in late summer.

For those stepping down, a personal big thank you to Paul for always being there to share the vision, workload and inevitable problems that arise, when you are continually moving forward and striving for success.

Thank you to Robert for stepping in as Secretary in 2018, and for keeping an eye on our projects and being patient when everything did not quite go to plan.

Thank you to Roy for his dedication and lending his many decades of experience, in helping to steer the club as President for the last 18 years.

Thank you to Allan, who has retired as groundsman after several year's commitment to maintaining our high standards of pitch preparation.

We should also all take a moment to say a huge thank you to Edward, for all those years of giving and being there across many generations of cricketers, supporters and social members. He has been greatly missed already and will be for some time to come.

Throughout all the ups and downs, we have retained the spirit and togetherness, that makes our club so special and it is testament to this that we have some longstanding members keen to step in and take on the running of the club.

Looking back, I would have done some things differently, but I have done my best and know that those that follow will do the same. I wish you all well and will be there to provide further support on hand over where needed.