

Cricket Wales AGM – September 30th 2018

CEO Report

Introduction

- 1 This AGM and report covers the period April 2017 to March 2018 and therefore incorporates the 2017 season. Subsequent information relating to the 2018 season has been added where available.
- 2 The 2017 and 2018 seasons were busy and successful but the game continues to have challenges. The second year of All Stars Cricket for 5 to 8 years olds has been a great success in Wales and recruitment of primary age children to cricket remains strong. Retention of 15-24's remains a major challenge and is affecting many senior club teams. A new Talent Programme Manager Matt Thompson has been recruited and is planning the implementation of the 2017 Pathway Review agreed by CW and Glamorgan Cricket. Congratulations to the Wales Women's T20 team on their promotion to the top division of the ECB T20 for the very first time. 2018 saw over 1000 unique Women and Girl Softball participants, one of the highest numbers within the ECB structure. Our Child Welfare function under the leadership of Ieuan Watkins continues to be the envy of Welsh sport and English County Cricket Boards
- 3 Off the field the last twelve months has seen our Independent Directors becoming embedded within our governance structure and the new staffing team increasing their leadership and influence across the cricket network. This is enabling us to provide closer support to member clubs, leagues, regions and associations. Cricket Wales Area Boards have become more established but there is further work to do.

Cricket Wales Strategy – 'Clearing the Boundaries' and new Joint Strategy with Glamorgan Cricket

- 4 Seasons 2017 and 2018 saw good progress in delivering years three and four of the Cricket Wales strategy 'Clearing the Boundaries', which looks to embrace all forms of cricket without losing its focus on our community clubs which form the bed-rock of our game. The Cricket Wales strategy has the same priorities as the ECB strategy 'Cricket Unleashed'.
- 5 'Clearing the Boundaries' measures our progress against the following five Outcomes:
 - More young people, adults and families are involved and retained within cricket (Growth);
 - Cricket is easily accessible to everyone in Wales (Accessibility);
 - People have a fun, positive and enjoyable experience in cricket (Quality);
 - People (i.e. players, coaches, officials, ground-staff, club volunteers etc), have the opportunity to be the best they can (Quality);
 - Financial sustainability

- 6 2017 and 2018 data collected against each of these Outcomes leads to the following observations:
- All Stars has been a great success attracting over 3500 new children to cricket. Proportionately more clubs have signed up in Wales than anywhere else.
 - Primary age cricket in clubs continues to grow. However, the junior game is in decline from the age of 13 onwards;
 - Losing players from 15 to 24 is impacting on some senior 4th 3rd and 2nd teams, particularly in more deprived areas of Wales;
 - Women and Girls Softball has been bigger than expected – again one of the strongest areas within the ECB structure;
 - The disability programme is expanding through the efforts of Les Randall and the team around him;
 - Barriers continue to be broken down between BME communities and the ‘system’ .
- 7 2018 has seen the development of our first Joint Strategy with Glamorgan Cricket in response to the ECB’s Cricket Unleashed 2.0 and County Partnership Agreement (CPA). The ambitious Joint Strategy will span 2019-2024 and will seek to unlock increased resource from the ECB and Sport Wales, on the back of the new ECB TV deal from 2020.

Initiatives delivered by Cricket Wales and its member organisations

Staffing Team

- 8 2018 has been the second year of the new staffing structure with network relationships becoming closer all the time. The community team in each of the three Areas has been rationalised into fewer posts with more hours, and part-time Women and Girls Officers introduced. The community operational partnership with Glamorgan is strong. Steve Watkins and Huw Darling have co-ordinated competitions with an increased number of finals at Sophia Gardens.
- 9 Matt Thompson was recruited from Millfield School in April 2018 as Talent Programme Manager, and has spent the summer talking to many people prior to the implementation of the 2017 Pathway Review from November 2018 onwards. This involves new Regional Performance Centres (RPC’s) led by Darren Thomas, Mike Clayden, Colin Grindley and Ali Waldren, changes to Wales Age Groups and modifications to regional junior cricket. Matt works closely with Richard Almond from Glamorgan. Look out for Pathway Roadshows in October to explain all the changes. Aimee Rees continues to show remarkable commitment and expertise in developing the women and girls squads which culminated in T20 promotion for Wales Women and narrowly missing promotion in the 50 over competition. We continue to be well represented within the Western Storm programme.
- 10 As part of Systems Development Gavin Chilton is leading on GDPR and will also support the safeguarding function from October onwards. Greater use is being made of ECB platforms such as Play Cricket and Cvent but there is more work to be done.

- 11 I am confident that the staffing team will continue to provide greater leadership and support to clubs, leagues, regions and associations throughout Wales as we seek to deliver our targets. As in previous years please complete our short Stakeholder Perception Survey to let us know our strengths and weaknesses. In 2018 our focus has been on increasing communication within the Pathway as this was regarded as a major weakness in the 2017 survey.

All Stars Cricket

- 12 2018 saw the second year of ECB's All Stars Cricket for 5 to 8 year olds with Cricket Wales having over 3500 registrations. In addition to offering the first opportunity of cricket to the very young, the programme is aimed at bringing new volunteers into our clubs and attracting non-cricket families. My thanks go to Mark Frost, the three Area Managers, the three Workforce Administrators and all the club volunteers who worked tirelessly to make 2018 such a success. Further expansion is planned in 2019!

Community Coaches/Chance to Shine

- 13 Cricket Wales employs a team of part-time Community Coaches throughout Wales funded by Chance to Shine and Sport Wales. This team is contributing to the growth we are seeing at primary age level. More girls, individuals from BME communities and those with a disability are being introduced to the game, and teachers/schools are generally very enthusiastic about the programme. Initial migration to clubs is good but far more work needs to be done with clubs in advance of them receiving the children, to ensure as many young people as possible are retained. 2018 saw cricket delivered to over 70000 school children, our record year to date. Millie May from Port Talbot became Chance to Shine's four millionth child!

Facility Developments

- 14 During 2017 and 2018 ECB/Sport Wales facility grants again supported a small number of capital development projects. The ECB Small Grant Scheme provided increased support of £103,000 to help small capital equipment projects notably covers to help 'Get the Game on'. The fund was again heavily over-subscribed..

Club Competition

- 17 The 2018 senior league winners around Wales were:
- South Wales Premier Cricket League – Newport Cricket Club
 - North Wales Premier League – to be confirmed
 - South Wales Cricket Association – Gorseinon Cricket Club
 - South East Wales Cricket League – Newbridge Cricket Club
 - Pembroke County Cricket Club – to be confirmed
 - West Wales Clubs Conference – to be confirmed

- 18 Ammanford Cricket Club won an updated Cricket Wales Welsh Cup defeating Neyland Cricket Club in the final which returned to Sophia Gardens. Neyland were Pembrokeshire's first representatives in the final for many years and had a wonderful run!

Regional Junior Cricket

- 20 In 2017 and 2018 Boys regional junior cricket was again played in graded pools with the stronger regions playing against each other whenever possible. Fixture completion was again challenging within the older age groups particularly when regions travelled from south to north Wales. This will be changed for 2019. The U10 Aberystwyth Festival again provided a great first experience for our youngest regional cricketers and was enthusiastically received by those new to it.. Thanks go to Aberystwyth CC and Aberystwyth University for hosting, and for all our hard-working regional volunteers.

Girls National Development Centres

- 21 Again in 2017 and 2018 girls NDC's were held during the winter months throughout Wales with development fixtures staged during the summer months. In the new Pathway Wales girls will be integrated into the new RPC's, and Girls Hubs will be established as exit routes from All Stars.

Welsh Age-Group Teams and further Representative Honours

- 22 2018 Wales age group boys and girls teams again competed well in over 150 fixtures against English County Board opposition. Season 2018 highlights included the Wales Women gaining T20 promotion and narrowly missing out in the 50 over competition, and the Boys U15's reaching the ECB quarter finals. Alex Horton represented Wales and the South West at the Bunbury U15 festival, and was also part of the select team that beat West Indies U15's. The girls on the Glamorgan Academy continue to progress well and are part of the Western Storm development programme. Congratulations to Claire Nicholas, Lauren Parfitt, Rachel Priest and Danielle Gibson on being part of the Western Storm T20 Super League Squad which reached ECB finals day.
- 23 Sincere thanks to Peter Davies and Bob Miles who are both retiring as Wales Age Group Managers after almost thirty years of distinguished service. Many thanks also for the major contributions played by a number of other coaches who may not be part of the new structure but still have a very important role to play.

BME Communities

- 24 The BME project 'Cricket Beyond Boundaries' has been expanded to Newport and a new competition The Cohesion Cup has been established in a new partnership with the South Wales Police. ECB diversity funding has been secured to continue the project for the next three years.

Disability Cricket

- 25 Les Randall the Cricket Wales Disability Officer has made excellent progress in expanding the number of disability hubs across Wales and raising the profile of disability cricket generally. The Wales disability team played in ECB softball and hardball competition in 2018 and significantly increased their links with CW clubs. Disability Sport Wales Insport accreditation has been aligned with ECB Clubmark and Cricket Wales bids for NGB Insport Bronze in November

Governance

- 26 Members are asked to support the recommendations from the Nominations Panel for the new Board Directors to commence in October 2018. Sincere thanks to Ann-Marie Smale who is ineligible for re-appointment as an Independent to the Cricket Wales Board due to her appointment to the new Glamorgan Board. Ann-Marie would have liked to continue as an Independent with Cricket Wales as well as being on the Glamorgan Board.
- 27 2018 has seen further development of our Safeguarding function under the expert leadership of Ieuan Watkins. Ieuan's team of League and Club Welfare Officers continues to become stronger as we strive to ensure our game is as safe as possible for young people to play in. Ieuan's commitment to Cricket Wales and indeed Glamorgan is extraordinary and we are enormously grateful to him. From October 1st our Safeguarding lead will be played on a part-time consultancy basis with operational support from within the staffing team.
- 28 The work of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Group has consolidated the achievement of the Intermediate Level of the Equality Standard for Sport and turned its attention to the Advanced Level (March 2020 Panel). 2018 saw increases in BME, disability, women and girls cricket. Our partnership with the Welsh Language Commissioner also continues with 2018 seeing the introduction of a bi-lingual coaching resource. Many thanks to Aled Lewis for his voluntary role of Welsh Language Ambassador.
- 29 During 2018 Cricket Wales North and Cricket Wales South West became embedded. (further work is needed regarding Cricket Wales South East) to improve communication and support the work of the Area Managers. It is hoped that the three Area Boards can become more fully established during 2018/19 thereby connecting all cricket organisations within their area and further improving communication between staff and the voluntary network
- 30 2018 Cricket Wales OSCAs (Outstanding Service to Cricket Awards) were presented to Robin Varley (Lifetime Achiever), Ben Roberts Pontarddulais Cricket Club (Heartbeat of the Club), George Groves Northop Hall Cricket Club (Natwest Cricketforce), Ian Baber SWPCL (Leagues and Boards), John Jones Pontarddulais Cricket Club (Officials) and Lucy King Ebbw Vale Cricket Club (Young Volunteer).

Thanks

- 31 Thanks go to Glamorgan Cricket for their support for the recreational game in Wales and also to Sport Wales, the ECB and Chance to Shine, for their financial support, without which the recreational game in Wales would not develop.
- 32 Despite challenges facing the game further progress was made in 2018 due to the fantastic commitment of volunteers, staff, parents and players throughout Wales. Many thanks to everyone for their significant contribution to cricket in Wales.

Peter Hybart

Chief Executive Officer, Cricket Wales