

## **Watsonian Cricket Club AGM**

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019 – 6.30pm Myreside Pavilion**

### **Present:**

**Committee** – John Reid (President), Robert Baltzer (Secretary, minutes), Simon Counsell (Treasurer), Stewart Oliver (Membership Secretary), Mike Teall (Youth Convenor), Michael Carson (Club Captain), Kenneth Rae (2<sup>nd</sup> XI Captain), Alan Borthwick (4<sup>th</sup> XI co-captain), Ewan Robertson (4<sup>th</sup> XI co-captain), Sally Brian (acting Ladies Convenor), Andrew Chalmers (Social Secretary)

**Members** – Tony Brian, Pete Maksimczyk, Jonathan Moore, Stewart Robertson, Matt Burgess, Jeffrey Burton, James Bryce, Tom Cullen, Ken Scott, Devon Vehlow

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were noted from Peter Lothian, Julian Fontana and Jake Amis.

### **2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

A minute of the previous AGM was provided to those present without further comment.

### **3. President's Welcome and Report**

Before we begin the review of the season and discuss our future plans, I would like start with the event that overshadowed the entire season, namely the very sad and untimely death of our head groundsman, former professional, and GWC coach, Willie Morton.

Willie had an outstanding career for Scotland, representing his country on 16 occasions, which would have been more, but of course he spent 3 successful years with Warwickshire at the peak of his career. He joined us as our professional in 1987 and, during the next 6 years, took 277 wickets at the truly astonishing average of 16.7. He also scored almost 3,500 runs at an average just shy of 30, which was more than a useful contribution.

After retiring from the game, Willie remained our head groundsman for 30 years, producing wickets for representative matches, but equally as importantly, he prepared wickets and rugby pitches week in week out for the school and the clubs. Whilst I would not go so far as to say that Willie always had a smile on his face when asked to produce wickets at ridiculously short notice, he never let us down.

Willie was also a hugely effective coach, latterly at the school. The boys under his charge all responded to his simple, direct, and hugely authoritative coaching.

Given Willie's enormous contribution to the club, the committee wished to mark Willie's passing in a fitting way and so we have decided upon the following:

- Firstly, as a permanent memorial, we will present to Cricket Scotland a trophy to be named after Willie to be presented to the man of the match at the end of season game between the winners of the Western Union and the Eastern Premiership. Given that Willie commenced his career in the West with Stirling County, a trophy which will be for the whole of Scotland, seems appropriate.
- Secondly, along with the school, we will organise a 6 a side tournament at Myreside to be played in late April as a curtain raiser for the new season.

Willie was a great servant of the club and will be sorely missed.

Mike will give you his run-down on the performance of the 1<sup>st</sup> XI during 2019. Before I discuss the performance of the other senior men's sides, I would like to record my own thanks for the hard work and input of Andrew Hislop (or Shaka) over the years. Andy played every Premiership match last season and was a hugely infectious character around the club. We wish him well both for his impending marriage, but also for the final phase of his career as he rejoins his former club, Clydesdale, in Glasgow.

For the other three senior men's sides, it was a pretty disappointing season on the field. In the league, the 2nds won 2 out of 13 matches and the 3rds and 4ths won only one each. It is fair to say that all three sides were on the wrong end of a few very close matches, which if they had swung our way, would have resulted in a better league position. However, all three were relegated at the end of the season.

However, there were some notable performances for the 2nds which augur well for the future:

- Fraser Sands averaged over 45 and would have scored more if he had not sustained a nasty hand injury which kept him out of a number of matches;
- Alexander Abbey, who was still in his 3<sup>rd</sup> year at GWC, took 19 wickets at an average of 15, showing great promise;
- Gregour Carr took 8 wickets at 11.7, including a 5 wicket haul against Gala, to earn him promotion to the 1sts; and
- Skipper Kenny Rae had a solid season with the bat and took 5 wickets for 5 runs in one spell, when he finally brought himself on to bowl!

The 3s also had a number of close matches and whilst the bowling was generally up to standard, the batting suffered from a lack of consistency, with only Geoff Mawdsley turning in regular high scores.

However, we continued to blood many youngsters in these three teams, particularly the 3rds and 4ths and over 120 individual players turned out for the four teams, demonstrating that the club is highly successful from a participatory and recreational aspect.

Looking forward, the club's biggest challenge is player recruitment and retention. We have the great advantage of a continuous stream of talent from the school and the hard work of Mike, Rob, Julien and the other members of the junior committee are hugely appreciated in assisting to introduce the youngsters to the club. However, we do experience a significant attrition of our younger members when they leave school. I do understand that other clubs experience similar problems, which is compounded in our case by the propensity of GWC pupils to move away from Edinburgh to study and/or work.

To arrest and reverse this trend, the committee is currently considering the appointment of a full time Director of Cricket to professionalise our coaching and selection and we are reviewing potential candidates. A more organised and professional training regime should also help to attract senior players to the club.

In addition, we are organising recent school leavers into peer groups with a leader appointed to each both to drum up enthusiasm within the group but also to be a spokesperson for the group to ensure that its views and interests are heard.

The club has been very active socially this season and great credit must be given to Andrew Chalmers for organising many of the events. Given Andrew's commitments to Super 6 rugby currently, it is intended that the baton is passed to Chris Bowness – just as soon as we tell him!

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the committee, and other volunteers, for their hard work throughout the year, without which the club would simply not function. On behalf of the club, many thanks for all your efforts.

#### **4. Captains' reports**

##### **Michael Carson, Club Captain**

2019 was always likely to be a challenging season for the 1st XI, having lost a number of key players including E Chalmers, D Nel, B O'Connell and G Munsey from the previous season. This proved to be the case with an 8th-placed finish in the league, winning 5 out of 13 completed matches.

There was also a 1st-round defeat in the Scottish Cup and the side was unable to progress past the group stage of the Masterton trophy.

There were a number of important positives from the season: our first-choice bowling attack would compete with any other in the league; there were strong performances from a number of new recruits (most notably Z Place with over 400 runs and J Stinson with 20 wickets) and younger players, (including J Amis and G Carr) were given good opportunities to develop and learn in the 1st XI. However, the key problem was the struggle to field a consistent team, using more players (31) than any other club in the Eastern Premier League.

Highlights of the season were two close victories where we defended low scores: 108 vs Corstorphine in our first win of the season and 79 vs Aberdeenshire towards the end of the season – both demonstrating the strength in the bowling unit. As well as that, the atmosphere within the team has been great throughout the season, showing how welcoming the club can be for new players.

I'd like to thank the committee for all their support for the past season, in particular: the work from a number of committee members to secure Malusi Siboto as professional for the season; A Hislop as vice-captain has been a great help in team selection, organisation and standing in for games when I have been unavailable; captains of other teams have been very accommodating of late 1st XI team changes; and R Baltzer has been invaluable as secretary. I would also like to thank A Fair and S Oliver for scoring throughout the season.

##### **Kenneth Rae, 2<sup>nd</sup> XI captain**

Played 12 games, won 3, losing 9, 9<sup>th</sup> place finish, got relegated, will play in East League 2. Played three games with 10 players this season. Took until 3<sup>rd</sup> August to register first win, away at Livingston. Featured 9 former GWC pupils. Beat SMCC. Last game beat Clackmannanshire. F Sands 57 and 2-29. Abbey performed well too.

Penultimate game, away at Gala. One player taken away (to 1<sup>st</sup> XI). Gave league winners a good game but lost. Summed up the season!

There have been positives. Strong players: Farhan, Xander, Gregour Carr, Oli Robertson, George Baltzer.

At ESCA AGM there was a breakoff meeting for Championship clubs. They're not better cricketers, they have a better process in place for moving players between teams.

Where does the club see the 2s? Do we want to have a natural progression through the teams? Hopefully we can rise to that challenge in the future.

##### **Simon Counsell, 3<sup>rd</sup> XI captain**

We wanted to maintain the same gap to the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI so we got relegated too.

### **Ewan Robertson, 4<sup>th</sup> XI co-captain**

4<sup>th</sup> XI also relegated. Won one game. Quite a few close games.

**Follow up from John Reid:** Our principal problems have been with batting and consistency of selection. We continue to 'blood' a lot of youngsters. Over 120 players played for the four teams. From the point of view of participation and recreational cricket, we tick that box!

### **Sally Brian, acting Ladies Convenor**

First year we've participated in WPL. Raising 11-a-side from a small squad is a significant challenge. We conceded one match, one was conceded to us, one cancellation. Played 4, L3, W1. Credit to Victoria Gadd. In Cup, lost to GWCGCC in first round.

We've been entering the Wee Bash. One of only 3 teams to play all 21 events.

Alternative Fridays training working. Appreciate the clarity and provision from the Club.

Don't want to understate challenge of low core numbers. Big question marks about the future of the section. Need regular flow of new players, like the boys/men.

GWCGCC playing in competition with WCC in senior league makes life very difficult. We cannot afford to leave that issue unresolved.

John: school are committed to promoting cricket, for boys and girls. We hope that the relationship between club and school will continue to strengthen and communication improve. Very helpful that the new Head of Sport at GWC, Mike Leonard, is an experienced cricketer and enthusiast. It is notable that schoolgirls cricket is deepening.

Stewart Robertson: from Watsonian Women's Rugby Club founder's perspective, we started with a nucleus of good players from Edinburgh University. Getting six players at training or fourteen players on the pitch was quite an achievement! We were near collapse at several points but now, twenty years on, we are one of the strongest women's clubs in the country. You need to stick at it! Women make a fantastic contribution to the wider club, very important to get them in.

## **5. Youth Convenor's report**

Moved forward as a section, again. Last year was good in the sun. This year we had more teams playing than ever before. 1 U16, 2 U14, 4 U12, regular Kwik Cricket. Biggest in Scotland. Great WCC Festival on another sunny day in an often disappointing year for weather. Great on participation.

We wanted to hold our own against Grange and Carlton, particularly in Cup matches. Great run in ECB U15 Cup. Great QF in Falkland. Emphatic SF win against Aberdeenshire. Came up against Carlton in the Final. They fielded a very strong team. They batted first, Murray Johnston got 50. We played without Xander and Farhan. G Baltzer top scored with 38. Great performances from Zach Talbot, Lowry Fernando and Daniel Bryen. We lost by just 4 runs in a nail-biting match of very high standard.

We regularly win games. Good U16 performances, U14 and U12 too.

Representation: we get frustrated that Carlton and Grange populate the Eastern Knights squads so heavily. Alexander Abbey, Salaar Ali and Daniel Bryen were all in the U16 squad. Farhan Khan and Ben Hogg in U14.

Challenges: strong participation S4 to P7. Fewer in P5 and P6. All Stars a great success but not converting into P3.

Matt Lancashire, a very enthusiastic and skilled coach for All Stars. >50 kids in 2019.

Some uncertainty in coaching position. David Hinchliffe is taking up a position at Loretto as Director of Cricket so we need to find a coach from January onwards.

Very Grateful to parents for their help. Managing teams, helping on Monday nights, organizing Kwik Cricket tournaments.

Tony Brian: post All Stars fall off is a wider phenomenon. ECB are formulating a follow-on program.

## **6. Treasurer's report**

Easier to talk about than the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI!

In our first year post 619 Coaching, see a big difference in expenses. Less on coaching, higher costs for professional.

This year we made a ~£4,400 profit before our gain on investments, compared to a loss on the same basis of ~£3,500 loss last year.

The Youth Section underpins the finances of the club, contributing ~£24k in income, roughly two thirds of our non-investment income. Massive thanks to Mike, Rob, Julien and the other parents who have made this such a strong part of the club.

Two very successful weeks of cricket coaching. ~£3,500 surplus on those. Thanks to Andrew Chalmers.

We are very grateful for £3,300 of contributions for match sponsorships including from some of those in the room this evening.

Senior subs held up. ~£9,000. Very valuable.

2018: paid £28k to 619. 2019: paid £19.5k between our coach and our professional.

Galleon costs are up a lot (hire of sports hall for indoor coaching).

Dividend income flat.

Property: flattish, net. Munsey out. Expense to put it in good order. Currently rented out to a Super 6 player.

Clothing sales: Beanie purchases. Club ties. Lots of costs! Not enough corresponding income.

Some one-off costs for website maintenance.

Balance sheet. Didn't have to touch investments this year. Cash ~£9k. Investments at £69k.

## **7. Look forward**

Challenges: organization of selection and coaching

- Player recruitment and retention

We have a very strong base in the junior section. Hopefully they become senior players. We lose a lot aged 15-17. Common to other clubs and sports.

Considering appointing a full time Director of Cricket appointment. Live debate. Honestly, we won't be able to pay in full from current revenue. WIP. Main agenda point for our next meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> December.

We need to professionalise coaching and selection.

SC: Feels we're a bit back at the point before 619 came. We had numbers to choose from but need to work on quality. We have talent but need to do better at nurturing it, bringing it on.

JR: Positive about input and interaction with the school.

We need to take the opportunity. Judicious, focused investment required.

Stewart Robertson: essential that Club 1<sup>st</sup> XI has a coach in attendance on match days. To succeed they need high profile in the club that players can identify with. Coach is essential. Malusi took a while to find his feet. Played well as the season went on. Being quiet, his coaching status was diminished.

JR: agree that attendance at matches is important, perhaps not just for 1<sup>st</sup> XI. We should be investing in coaching, not relying on professionals. But we have to be realistic too especially with gaps in 1<sup>st</sup> XI.

Pete M: joined the club this season. Played in Scotland for 15 years, 10 years at small Edinburgh club. Very impressive club looking in. You need strong role models at the club. Honoured to play in the 1<sup>st</sup> XI. Crying out for someone to grab hold of the club. To bring energy. There are so many people who could be doing that in Scotland. No club in Scotland in last ten years has been successful without their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> XI being strong. So many clubs are jealous of your infrastructure. You just need the role model. Mentoring by senior players is really valuable for younger players. Even Jake Amis or Gregour Carr, for example, could play a useful role here.

KR: echo Pete. Need energy, confidence, enthusiasm in the Director of Cricket role. Create buzz, momentum. Not just the technical nous.

JR also congratulated Watsonians Katherine and Sarah Bryce for their huge success with the Scottish national team.

## **8. Election of office bearers**

With the exception of Andrew Hislop (Vice Captain, moving to Glasgow and Clydesdale) and Andrew Chalmers (Social Secretary, rugby commitments), the remaining committee members are happy to stand for re-election. We know we have a number of moving parts ahead of next season so it was agreed that team captains would be nominated closer to the start of the season. In the meantime, the following office bearers were re-elected:

President – John Reid

Secretary – Robert Baltzer

Treasurer – Simon Counsell

Youth Convenor – Mike Teall

Development Officer / school liaison – Brendan O'Connell

Membership Secretary – Stewart Oliver

## **9. AOB**

Jeffrey Burton gave a vote of thanks to and confidence in the President.