

CEO REPORT

Activities and Achievements

Each of the projects and programmes delivered by the Foundation between October 2023 and September 2024 directly contributed to at least one of the pillars of the strategy and had a clearly defined and measurable outcome and series of ambitions. Much like the previous 12 month period, the Foundation once again had an incredible year both on and off the pitch.

The charity performs such a wide range of activities to achieve its objectives ranging from delivery in schools, to the running of junior and senior leagues, to the development of volunteers, to providing hot meals for children during holiday periods.

ECB Priorities

Much like 2023, the work and dedication that has been put in by the Foundation has been recognised by the ECB, who during the recent annual Performance Review Process (Dec 4), informed the Foundation that it was once again a leading organisation in more areas than any other county across the country, leading in the areas of Equity Diversity & Inclusion, Governance, Cricket Workforce, Women and Girls Participation, Facilities operations and the Disability Pathway. No county has ever been a 'Leading Organisation' in 6 areas of the ECB's work, and so the team can be rightly proud of their achievements.

Our work on the ECB KPI's – sadly the last year of these being in place – has once again been hugely positive and whilst we see a small financial reduction on the previous year, the achievement by the team has once again been staggering.

To 'be on par' 2.4% is our market share score, the percentage the ECB expect us to be at if we were to work in line with the 'size' of our county. Again though, we have overachieved in all 5 areas, and this year we see:

- Further growth from 4.4% to 4.5% of market share in total National Programme numbers
- Further increase in Girls' National Programme numbers from 4.8% to 4.9%. Huge praise must go to Chris and the delivery team for making this happen.....again!
- Maintaining our marketshare in Trained Female Coaches at 3.8%
- Maintaining the number of Junior Teams we have across the county, at 3%
- A small decrease in Girls Sections, seeing us at an incredible 4.6%. Whilst the market share decreased the total number of clubs with girls' sections actually increased.

All in all, it sees Gloucestershire have a national market share of 4.2%, meaning that for the four years of the KPI's being in place, we have come out on top each year in, with again a 75% over indexing. An incredible achievement over the 4 year life span of our strategy.

AREAS OF WORK TO LOOK BACK AT WITH PRIDE FROM 2024

National Programmes

Whilst being the 14th 'biggest' county in the country, the Foundation's work over indexed in all priority areas. As in 2023, the numbers of sign-ups to the National Programmes of All Stars and

Dynamos Cricket was once again considerable, with Gloucestershire ending up with the 4th greatest overall number of female sign-ups (1480) and 4th highest overall total number of children participating across the programmes (4562) - something that when you think of the size of counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Wales, Warwickshire, Surrey etc, you realise what incredible results they were.

The National Programme figures included delivery at 81 cricket clubs, but also a growing number of community programmes, often in holiday periods, aiming to give free bursary places to young people from low socio-economic groups and those on free school meals. Reaching children who do not normally get the chance is such an important area of our work, and our hope is that by giving great experiences to the young people, that they may choose cricket in the future but more than that, they may see that physical activity can reward them with so much that they continue to be active.

National Programmes at clubs and community settings were heavily supported by the often unseen, day to day work in primary and secondary schools. Lazy journalism often states that cricket is dead in state schools but through delivery across the programmes of GCF Active Futures, Bristol Sport 'Forever Sport', Chance to Shine primary and secondary, ACE schools programme, Table Cricket, SEND programmes, and Lords Taverners Wicketz, 2024 saw the Foundation deliver to:

- Delivery in 239 schools (187 in 2023)
- Delivery to 21,687 young children (18846 in 2023)
- Delivering across 4670 hours of activity (3909 in 2023)

Cricket Collective

The Foundation's work to support volunteers continued in 2024 with the second iteration of Get into Cricket, a scheme targeting 14 to 18 year olds, with the ambition to develop the next army of volunteers. Great learnings were taken from the inaugural project, with these leading to the design of an 8 module programme that enabled young people to learn skills across the game and wider:

- Digital Marketing Course – New for 2024 and delivered by Hartpury University
- Groundskeeping Course
- Health and Nutrition Course
- Cricket Activators Course
- Cricket Scoring Course
- Cricket Umpiring Course
- First Aid Course
- Safeguarding Course – New for 2024

The years' offering saw 62 young people register and has had a significant impact on cricket clubs across the county, with extra hands making light work. Young volunteers have got involved with coach support at their club, with standing and scoring in junior games, with supporting the grounds team, whilst some have even been doing the clubs socials to enable clubs to market their clubs better and to communicate more effectively with their membership.

Away from the juniors, the years climax was a fantastic celebratory event at the Seat Unique Stadium, for over 150 volunteers, where the Foundation got to say thank you to all of those

people who do so much for the game. The event saw the below list of people presented with awards, but perhaps more importantly, the event gave the opportunity to say thank you to so many more people who give their time to the game selflessly.

Inspired to Play Award	Russell Fry (Golden Hill)
Rising Star Award	Leni-Rae Readman (Bristol United Banks)
Safe Hands Award	Katie Medhurst (Woodmancote)
Game Changer Award	Seb Vamplew (Winterbourne)
Grounds Management Team Award	Chipping Sodbury CC
Tackling Climate Change Award	Down Hatherley CC
Unsung Hero Award	Guy Stirling Lee (Dumbleton)
Metro Bank Champion of Girls Award	Paul Maggs (Quedgeley & Hardwicke)
Lifetime Achiever Award	Len Attard (Apperley & Glos Seniors)
Cricket Innovators Award	Alistair Andrews (Cirencester)
Growing the Game Award	Graham Wilcox (Cam)

Club Development and Support

Clubs continue to be the heartbeat of the game and the Foundation has looked to support the 184 affiliated clubs, as best we can across the year. The game has never asked for as much from Cricket Club volunteers so it is imperative that we do all that we can to help and support them, and to make all processes as easy as possible – when often they are not.

Ensuring cricket is safe and that all clubs are covered with at least the bare minimum of fully qualified and certified safeguarding Officers, is no mean feat. However, this was again managed in advance of the 2024 season by the Foundation’s work in offering bespoke, localised, courses and working with leagues closely.

The safety of the recreational game was also enhanced by more great work going in to develop an increased number of Clubmark Accredited Clubs - Clubmark is an accreditation scheme for cricket clubs which shows that a club is sustainable, well run and provides the right environment for its members. Not only did all 61 previously accredited clubs regain their accreditation for 2024, but a further 8 clubs gained the accreditation for the first time. The new clubs were Adlestrop, Daylesford & Oddington CC, Ashton Keynes CC, Birdlip & Brimpsfield CC, Bristol Pakistani’s CC, Frampton on Severn CC, Highnam Court CC, Ruardean Hill CC and Sherston Magna CC.

The work across the year also saw the development team support clubs with facility projects through the county grant fund. An initial budget of £114,000 soon went and due to impressive performance from the team the ECB supported Gloucestershire and its clubs with the opportunity for more financial support. This saw an additional £80,000 support clubs across Gloucestershire to improve facilities for women and girls, for creating a more welcoming environment and for environmentally sustainable projects.

This money and a whole lot more, is required to improve and raise the standards of the pool of facilities that the sport currently uses across the County. This was evidenced in the production of a County Facility Strategy that looked at all grass pitches, practice facilities and indoor centres where cricket is currently played. The conclusion to the strategy is that a significant amount of investment is required to support new activity and to raise the standards of current facilities.

Women & Girls' Performance Pathway

2024 saw the Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation deliver the Women's & Girls Performance Pathway for the last time. This is an area of operations where much success has been achieved, being a national leader in the development of the Women's & Girls game. A testimony of the efforts of work in this space over many years. However, the ECB strategy for this area of the game stated that Female Pathway Cricket will come under the ownership of the professional organisation (or club). Due to the perceived issues existing in the local professional club, GCF supported by its Board made strong representation to ECB suggesting that it remain with GCF all be it for a short time. ECB were empathetic to the approach by GCF but stated there would be no deviation from national policy. GCF accepted the decision with a degree of disappointment but have been very collaborative in the migration of Women's & Girls Cricket to GCCC.

The year started with a very successful tour to Sri Lanka, where our girls did us proud with 5 wins from 5. The Sri Lanka tour was a resounding success, offering the girls a wealth of opportunities to develop their skills on the pitch and grow personally off it. From thrilling matches to once-in-a-lifetime experiences, the tour was a true testament to the talent and dedication of the squad.

The girl's county age group sides were again extremely successful too, confirming the depth and quality of the girl's participation pathway across the county. We very much look forward to seeing players come through the Gloucestershire County Cricket Club pathway from 2025 onwards, and we hope that the number of Gloucestershire girls that go on to become professional cricketers, and on 1st class Academies continues to be a high number.

In 2024 our work saw almost half of the Western Storm Squad, Western Storm Academy and Western Storm EPP programmes, filled with players that had played for Gloucestershire. This has been an area of work we can be rightly proud of and it is great to see Danielle Gibson playing across the world for England and in T20 franchise competitions, and our new rising talent of Katie Jones, playing for England U19's. Both players started in local club cricket, which goes to show what the impact of having a great start in your cricketing career can have on you, well done to Dumbleton in your part on developing both.

Make Cricket Accessible

It was an ambition of 2024 to attempt to take cricket to more communities through localised delivery, whilst also looking to diversify the income for the Foundation. This was very much achieved through the delivery of a significantly increased school holiday offering and the introduction of a new scheme of Saturday morning coaching, Breaking Boundaries.

Both programmes worked in terms of reaching more children, whilst also supporting the Foundations work. Holiday camp numbers rose from 650 participants to 1,121, whilst Breaking Boundaries saw 160 children sign up in year one. Both schemes of work will be learnt from and developed for 2025.

Improving our Urban Offer

The ECB want to ensure that all people who do not normally have access to cricket, can access the game in one way or another. This does not need to come in the form of cricket through a club but instead, the ability to take part in cricket activity in a local community setting, a multi-use games area, an indoor sports hall or in fact, any space where activity can take place.

The Foundation continued to grow its community offering and specific thanks must go to our charity partners, Lords Taverners, Chance to Shine and ACE Charity, who all increased their support for cricket in the county. This enabled programmes to reach new and additional people, whilst also seeing our urban community offer, reach additional urban towns, rather than previously, Bristol alone.

The ACE (Afro-Caribbean Engagement) programme expanded its offering in 2024 also, with more hubs and a greater number of players in the ACE Academy. As a consequence of the success of the programme, the Foundation has been awarded a further three year contract to continue the great work and we welcomed a new team member to lead this work in November.

One of the strengths of the Foundation is the way in which our community programmes work together to support one another and to provide young people with additional opportunities. This was again visible in 2024 when we saw the launch of our new Community Indoor Cricket League. This saw our community programmes of Wicketz, ACE, Street and Super1s, come together to form teams, where weekly games could be played against one another. This collaboration is the first of its kind across England & Wales and saw us beautifully positioned in one of the England Mens Test Match programmes.

In the last 12 months this wider community activity saw us deliver:

- 8 weekly Wicketz hubs (growth from 6 in 2023)
- 6 weekly Super1s hubs (growth from 5 in 2023)
- 8 weekly Chance to Shine Street hubs
- 3 ACE hubs
- An ACE Academy with now 53 scholars (growth from 43 in 2023)
- 6 Walking Cricket hubs (targeting 50+, growth from 5 in 2023)
- 25 free Urban Community National Programmes that saw 907 5-11 year olds engaged
- 15 days of cricket, supported by hot meals, as part of the Bristol City Council granted Holiday Activity Fund – targeted at areas of the city with a high percentage of free school meals. This saw 144-young people physically activity across both the Easter and Summer holidays.

With the continued ambition to listen more and to give young people a voice, Wicketz Bristol held its summer showcase event on in July, which saw 18 participants travel to Exmouth beach for the day alongside the Wicketz Cardiff and Plymouth programmes.

The trip came about as a consequence of the inaugural Youth Voice committee which was set up in early 2024. 3 members from each of Wicketz Bristol, Cardiff and Plymouth met online to share their ideas and design the Summer Showcase event. The committee would feedback ideas that they had gathered from their hub sessions and build on ideas discussed.

The result was 18 members, with representation from each of our 5 Bristol hubs, caught the coach down to Exmouth Beach. The day began with a tour of the RNL Lifeboat station, where they learnt about the important work that the volunteers there do. They were able to have a look at the state-of-the-art lifeboats they use, and even try out some of their equipment. This was followed by a traditional trip to the chippy. After lunch, they got stuck into some beach sports, with a couple of games of cricket and football all taking place on the Jurassic Coastline.

Following their sports, everyone was able to cool off with a paddle in the sea and an ice cream before the return to Bristol. This one-off day truly showed the impact that cricket can have on a young persons life.

Future Plans

As one Strategy finishes another will begin and so the priority for early 2025 is to finalise and publish '*Inspiring Gloucestershire 2025-2029*'. This will be achieved by Easter to meet ECB key deadlines and will then put us in a position to receive further strategic investment from the ECB, through the '*Game Changer Fund*'.

The Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation remains committed to growing the game of cricket in Gloucestershire across all areas. It aims to use the power of cricket to deliver accessible and enjoyable opportunities that grow the sport, tackle inequalities, improve health and well-being and enable people to fulfil their potential across the county.

The previous strategy was strong and so much has been achieved as a consequence, and so much like the ECB Inspiring Generations Strategy for the same period, a rewrite rather than a total overhaul is needed.

The new strategy will have 6 clear strategic pillars, which will each have a great number of tactics and activities underpinning them (working titles). The aims being to:

- Ensure cricket is diverse, welcoming, inclusive and accessible
- Amplify the Women and Girls' game
- Support communities through cricket
- Engage more children and young people
- Have a thriving, sustainable, safe and inclusive, recreational game
- Set ourselves up for future growth

One way in which the Foundation will *ensure cricket is diverse, welcoming, inclusive and accessible* is through the employment of an Urban Development Officer (or similar), in early 2025. This comes off the back of a successful application to the Ethnically Diverse Communities Fund, which will enable the Foundation to employ an Officer to lead new work in Bristol for a minimum of three years.

It's a great start but there is going to be so much to achieve during the next strategy term. Opportunities will be exciting and will enable the development of the team both in current roles and new roles. It's hoped that significant Game Changer projects will be supported by funders, along with possible funds being received through the sales of the Hundred.

It's imperative that the strategy is ambitious enough for the game in Gloucestershire as this could be a once in generation opportunity to make real change and improvements across so many areas, due to the financial resource that is soon to be available to the recreational game.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Fundraising

The Foundation generated £42,750 from direct sponsorship in 2024. In most cases this support came from local or regional businesses who supported the aspirations of the Foundation in specific work areas. This is an area where the Foundation needs to continue to grow, as by bringing in partners to support areas of work, it enables normally tied up money to be utilised elsewhere to grow the game.

It was the intention of the Foundation to develop its fundraising efforts through campaigns across the JustGiving site and also through the Friends of the Foundation Lottery. Both still exist, and both still bring in an annual amount of money, but tactics changed during the year, and it was decided to go after grants from Local Authorities, Charities and other grant funders instead, as the financial return was often faster paced and enabled new activity to be delivered quicker. Both Campaigns and the Lottery Scheme remain priorities for the Foundation and more work will go in to them being a success in 2025.

All funding received/ raised is utilised to employ staff to develop and deliver projects, programmes and events that directly impact on the charity's strategic aims.

Financial Review

The ambition of the Foundation is to have a break even on management accounts, whilst utilising Restricted Funds in the most efficient and effective way possible.

The financial statements reveal a surplus for the year of £41,065 on income of £1,112,278. Of the surplus £36,734 was unrestricted and £4,331 restricted for use on specific projects. The year ended with net assets of £488,411 of which £403,835 were unrestricted, whilst £84,576 were restricted.

Our unrestricted reserves at 30th September 2024 now stand at £403,835. This includes a necessary £41,653 held as potential redundancy costs and ideally a further £352,571 designated in case of shut down – as per our reserves policy below.

The current balance is £9,611 in excess of the Foundation's unrestricted reserves target.

The financial position represents a strong and stable position allowing the Trustees to deliver on the charitable objectives.

Grants

We are eternally grateful that our funders continue to support us, especially the England and Wales Cricket Board/ Trust with £386,422, Chance to Shine with £150,929, ACE charity with £45,000 as well as the Lords Taverners with £110,023 and many other significant supporters.

Finance Director

During the year the current Finance Director Phil Carter stated his decision to stand down from the role, after 29 years of incredible service. Phil started back in 1996 when 'ECB' first engaged with counties and was part of the team that set up the then Gloucestershire Cricket Association. Phil was then an integral part of the professionalisation of the recreational game, with the forming of Gloucestershire Cricket Board, a Company Limited by Guarantee, and was

also involved in moving to its present structure, of a Charitable Company. This has instigated the process to recruit a replacement Finance Director, with a suitable appointment being made during the timeline of the next year 2024/25.

Plans for future periods

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