

CEO REPORT

2024-2025 was all about the production of a new strategy – Inspiring Gloucestershire 2025-2029 – providing future direction for The Foundation and its work. Each of the projects and programmes delivered by the Foundation in the last twelve months directly contributed to at least one of the pillars of the strategy, listed below, and had a clearly defined and measurable outcome and a 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, to providing walking cricket for the elderly.

AREAS OF WORK TO LOOK BACK AT WITH PRIDE FROM 2025

SUPERCHARGE OUR ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT

Much like 2024, the work and dedication that has been put in by the Foundation has been recognised by the ECB, informing the Foundation that it was once again the leading organisation in more areas than any other county across the country. 2025 saw the Foundation specifically achieve:

- County Governance Gold Accreditation
- Ready to Invest status
- Game Changer Funding
- Cricket Cities Funding
- EDI Strategic Funding
- Approved Countywide Strategic Plan and 4-year budget

The work in the first half of the year, where the Foundation developed its new strategy, following extensive consultation, was particularly important. This approved strategy, along with a CPA self-assessment that showed all areas were either 'leading' or 'on track', and through meeting all Governance Framework needs, meant the Foundation was in a position to attract Strategic ECB funding that very few others were.

The Foundation took advantage of this opportunity and was rewarded with grants to support:

- Diversifying the income streams of the Foundation (Game Changer Fund)
- Taking cricket to more ethnically diverse people in Bristol (Cricket Cities Fund)
- Growing the Women's and Girls' game (EDI Distribution Fund)

Staffing levels increased from 16 members of staff at the beginning of the year to 22 at the end, including 9 new staff members. For any organisation of the Foundation's size, that number of recruitment campaigns, robust interview processes, appointments of great people and inductions would come as a challenge. Then layer that with the production of a new strategy, a team being constructed to meet the ambitions of the strategy, and all done in a way that would give each individual the time and attention they needed and deserved, would challenge the very best.

The result of the work means the Foundation now has the strongest and most robust team it

has ever had, which is enabling greater dedication of time to specific work areas, whilst resourcing new areas that have previously been out of reach.

One of the priorities for 2025 was to make cricket more visible across Gloucestershire. To enable this, the Foundation employed a Marketing and Communications Manager, which has led to more stories being told, more visibility across social channels, and an improved and professional approach to marketing. This has seen the Foundation's social media following grow.

ENGAGE MORE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Once again, our work in the area of All Stars and Dynamos was incredible, growing the number of children who accessed the programmes from 4529 to 4767. Whilst being the 14th 'biggest' county in the country, the Foundation's work over-indexed and once again saw us gain the greatest market share, relevant to the size of the county. This is not something that the Foundation saw as achievable back in October 2024, but through strategic thinking and a slightly different delivery model, the numbers once again grew. These results are testament to Chris and his delivery team in taking cricket to all corners of the county and giving as many children as possible an opportunity to play the game.

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 we hope that by giving great experiences to the young people, 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 in 2025 saw the Foundation deliver:

- Engagement with 218 primary schools (53% of total schools)
- Engagement with 68 secondary schools (81% of total schools)
- 4252 hours of cricket coaching in total in schools

2025 also saw work start on the formation of the new Gloucestershire Youth Cricket League (North), which will see the previous four district associations of Stroud, Cotswolds, Leadon Vale and Cheltenham & Gloucester become obsolete, and replaced with a Foundation-managed and administered new league set up, led by the newly appointed League & Competitions Officer. The ambition of this work was twofold:

- To support and help an area that is reliant on a dwindling number of volunteers.
- Provide opportunities so all young cricketers can access meaningful, competitive, organised open cricket in all corners of the county.

DEVELOP A THRIVING, SUSTAINABLE, SAFE AND INCLUSIVE, RECREATIONAL GAME

The Foundation's work to support volunteers continued in 2025 with the third 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
- Groundskeeping Course
- Health and Nutrition Course
- Cricket Activators Course
- Cricket Scoring Course
- Cricket Umpiring Course
- First Aid Course
- Safeguarding Course

The year's offering saw 64 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 club's socials to enable clubs to market their clubs better and to communicate more effectively with their membership.

Away from the juniors, the year's climax was a fantastic celebratory Cricket Collective event at the Seat Unique Stadium, for over 100 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 following 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.

Young Coach of the Year	Fuzael Ahmed, Golden Hill CC
Rising Star (11-16)	Freddie Bennett-Cheater, Churchdown CC
Game Changer (17-25)	Shravani Philpot & Liara Hampton, Super 1's
Cricket Innovator	Lesley Slack, Quedgeley & Hardwicke CC
Inspired to Play	Alison Spurrell, GCF Dynamos Schools Competitions
Growing the Game	Neil Stacey, Kingswood Village CC
Volunteers Grounds Team	Quedgeley & Hardwicke CC
Coach of the Year	Robin Munson, Quedgeley & Hardwicke CC
Metro Bank Champion of Girls' Cricket	Harry Brownless, Cirencester CC
Safe Hands	Jackie Orr, Downend CC
Tackling Climate Change	Xeena Cooper, The Next Test
Connecting Communities	Derek Singleton, Cheltenham Walking Cricket
Unsung Hero	Jo Hulin, Downend CC

Outstanding Contribution Services to Coaching	Craig Burden, Down Hatherley CC
Lifetime Achiever	Brian Woodcock, Cirencester CC

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, throughout 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 2025 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 into developing 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 67 previously accredited clubs regain their accreditation for 2025, but a further 4 clubs gained the accreditation for the first time. The new clubs were Arcadians Nine Elms CC, Bradley Stoke & Almondsbury CC, Stinchcombe Stragglers CC and Witcombe CC.

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.

SUPPORT COMMUNITIES THROUGH DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE CRICKET.

Despite the growth of several new community programmes, we know there's so much more that we can do, and many communities remain underserved.

In 2020, we ran 9 free Chance to Shine Street and the Lord's Taverners Wicketz programmes in Bristol. By the end of 2025, that had grown to 27 hubs, including 11 outside Bristol, alongside new programmes like Super 1s and the African Caribbean Engagement Programme (ACE), all of which increased access by 200%.

The ACE (Afro-Caribbean Engagement) programme expanded its offering in 2025, 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 our community programmes work together to support one another and to provide young people with additional opportunities. This was

again visible in 2025 when we saw the continuation of the 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.

The newly appointed Diverse Communities Manager has already seen much success in the start-up and ongoing support for Tapeball Cricket in Bristol. Two teams represented Gloucestershire in a national competition in September, and we now see weekly Tapeball sessions for both men and women run locally. This is a fast-growing sport, and we very much look forward to the next 12 months' work when we hope to be running Tapeball leagues. Other work that has taken place included a targeted schools programme in the six highest ethnically diverse populated wards in Bristol and supporting ethnically diverse clubs to develop junior sections.

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 continued to support 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.

ACCELERATE CHANGE IN WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' CRICKET

The women's and girls' game has come a long way in the last four years, following significant ambition and investment from the national governing body, along with localised delivery across counties.

In 2019, there were 36 clubs with Women's and/or Girls sections. By 2025, this number had increased to 63 (36%), showing a brilliant rise in the number of our clubs investing in this exciting part of the game. While acknowledging what we've already reached, we recognise there is still much more room for growth, and we have significant plans to increase activity further over the next four years, as there are only 28 clubs offering girls' cricket, and 48 offering women's cricket.

A real focus for us is to help clubs increase the number of female resources at the club level - volunteers, coaches, officials - as well as improving female facilities. To drive this growth, the Foundation recruited an additional member of staff, so we are able to put more bats and balls into more Women's and Girls' hands and give them a cricket offering that meets their needs. Thanks to the support from Metro Bank and their partnership with the ECB, female-only coaching and officiating courses took place in 2025.

One ambition for 2025 was to bring in a new Secondary School Outdoor Competition for girls, following feedback and ambition through the growing winter competitions from school teachers. Localised festivals and finals days were organised, and 29 schools got involved in summer cricket for the first time.

DELIVER SOCIAL IMPACT THROUGH THE POWER OF CRICKET

Improving physical and mental well-being is a headline priority for the ever-increasing Community Development Team at the Foundation. Studies show that physical activity plays a crucial role in countering the pressures of an ageing population by improving health outcomes, reducing healthcare costs, and enhancing overall quality of life. For young people,

studies show sport reduces stress and anxiety, builds confidence and encourages social connection while offering opportunities into employment and education.

This is where the Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation can utilise the power of cricket to deliver social good. Over the next four years, we want to collaborate further with councils, local health services, community organisations, and cricket clubs to increase our offer and build bespoke programmes that will enable all people to flourish. This will be done by growing the Community Team of the Foundation and delivering meaningful programmes that have a real impact.

Our Community Engagement Officer has begun this work. The role has developed the Walking Cricket offer so this now takes place out of Bristol, Cheltenham, Gloucester and Cirencester, and at the end of 2025, funding was secured to open programmes in both Tetbury and Stow-on-the-Wold. In addition, the role prioritises offers to support health rehabilitation through work with NHS Primary Care Trusts and creates and delivers a Mental Wellbeing Programme across the county.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

2025 has seen a great start to meeting the ambitions of Inspiring Gloucestershire, 2025-2029, but there is still so much to achieve, and the next operational year looks like a key one with a full complement of staff. 2025 was all about positioning the Foundation for the final three years of the strategy, and so 2026 and beyond is very much about operational delivery and growing numbers and programmes across all aspects of the game.

Some key priorities for 2026 will include:

- Growing the number of corporate sponsors and partners, enabling the Foundation to put more bats and balls into people's hands
- Developing a facility steering group so the dream of a 'Dome' and other improved cricket facilities becomes a reality.
- Launch the GYCL North league for all clubs and deliver it in-house.
- Take back the leadership and responsibility of the women's and girls' leagues.
- Utilising the pull from the Women's T20 World Cup to grow the women's and girls' game, including growing the number of clubs that offer girls' cricket.
- Increasing the number of clubs that have junior sections or run National Programmes.
- Providing significant opportunities for children to watch T20 and One Day Cricket at the County Ground and Cheltenham for free, along with a much-improved activation area, so children get a great experience and want to return for future matches.
- Maximising opportunities made available by the ECB to the Foundation, to secure additional project funds through the EDI distribution fund and the Game Changer Fund.