**Chair’s Report 2023**

Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation continues to perform at an exceptionally high level. In the past year, GCF has delivered a wide range of cricket programmes in both the ‘Cricket for Good’ arena and in grassroots coaching at clubs, schools and communities.

We have a terrific team at GCF. All our staff strive for excellence and show commitment and passion in everything they do. They work at full capacity and deliver scores of activities in a variety of settings. At the start of my report, I would like to say a heartfelt thank you for their hard work.

The GCF is using cricket to improve people’s lives. Our game is full of enjoyment, fun, care and respect for our players, clubs, officials leagues and volunteers.

I’m particularly proud that we are providing more sessions in disability cricket and ‘Walking Cricket’ is expanding across our county.

I’m also proud to report that we exceed targets in five key areas set out by the ECB. The GCF continues to excel with a determined focus on women and girls’ cricket. This includes children and girls in national programmes, clubs with a girls’ section, junior teams, female activators and coaches.

The GCF places a high priority on our people. The team has recently undertaken personal development reviews. Again, commitment, passion and the desire to improve came across strongly in the results. This was evident at every level in the organisational structure of GCF. People are any organisation’s greatest asset.

GCF is supported by a conscientious team of Trustees who support us; and challenge us on where to improve our performance and how to map our future direction.

The GCF can be rightly proud of its achievements but we are mindful that the report from the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) will be released shortly. It is likely to be tough reading and will provide a stark assessment of unacceptable behaviour in our national game.

Racism, sexism and discrimination of any kind has no place in our game. And we are determined at GCF to do all we can to make cricket a game for everyone.

We support the new ECB chair, Richard Thompson in his objective to make cricket the most inclusive sport in the country and for cricket to be a benchmark for others to follow.

It is fair to say that the commencement of the ICEC report investigations and extracts being fed back are being used as a vehicle to drive change. At a national level, I’ve been pleased to see a much more diverse set of people around the table at ECB meetings. This is an improvement but we still have much more to do.

At the GCF, we have worked hard on fulfilling and improving our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy which is a key part of the requirements of our

County Partnership Agreement (CPA).

Our EDI sub-committee of employees and Trustees has spoken to many stakeholders to improve our knowledge of EDI, both within and outside cricket. We are determined to set a high standard in EDI in our game and I am happy to report that clubs and leagues are backing us in our desire for recreational cricket in Gloucestershire to be ‘a game for everyone.’

Again, we have more work to do but our GCF EDI plan is in place and at the start of last season we launched our GRACE campaign. This clearly sets out five key goals and has been praised at a national level. We produced a set of posters for pavilions and dressing rooms and we will build on this during the year. Please have a look at this on our website: <https://gloucestershirecricketfoundation.org/introducing-grace-our-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-edi-plan-2022/>

Safeguarding is also being built into everything we do at GCF. A safe and welcoming environment is at the heart of our recreational game in Gloucestershire. We all have a role to play in safeguarding and I would urge you all to make this a priority at your clubs and leagues.

The GCF is extremely grateful to the EDI team for their commitment and enthusiasm in driving forward our EDI plan. I’m also grateful and recognise the commitment of our people engaged in safeguarding, governance, finance and risk management as part of the CPA compliance. A separate and positive report on GCF’s compliance to the CPA is attached as an addendum to this report.

Moving forward, the GCF is heavily involved in the creation of a facilities strategy in order to sustain and grow the game. We have reviewed the current state of cricket facilities and will report shortly on the requirements for the future and how these will be delivered.

The GCF finances are in a good state of health and this will be detailed more comprehensively in the financial report. We’re living through tough economic times and we are planning to investigate how we can improve our sponsorship and commercial activity to help finance our key activities. It is important for us to consider how we can reduce our reliance on ECB funding.

I want to say thank you to all of you who work in cricket across Gloucestershire. I particularly want to thank all our volunteers. Your enthusiasm, drive, commitment and all those hours are hugely appreciated. Again - thank you.

Finally, I’d like to re-emphasise the importance of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in our recreational game here in Gloucestershire. This is the most important job of our cricketing era. If you see that changes need to be made at your club or league, please make them.

It is my promise as Chair, that the Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation will work tirelessly to ensure that everyone is welcome in our game and that everyone will be respected.

The 2023 season approaches, please take on board the key messages in our GRACE campaign and enjoy your cricket.