**CEO Annual Report**

**Activities and Achievements**

Each of the projects and programmes delivered by the Foundation in 2023 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***

The work and dedication that has been put in has been recognised by the ECB, who during the recent annual Performance Review Process, informed the Foundation that it was a leading organisation in more areas than any other county across the country, leading in the areas of Equity Diversity & Inclusion, Governance, Schools Activity, Women and Girls Participation and the Disability Pathway.

This also resulted in the Foundation over indexing by a greater amount than any other county in the country, and by some way (79%). This is judged on the results of the recreational games 5 greatest priorities for that year, which in 2023 were:

1. Total number of children in National Programmes
2. Number of girls on National Programmes
3. Number of clubs with a girls’ section
4. Number of junior teams to be playing and registered on play cricket
5. Number of trained female Activators and Coaches

***Workforce Development***

2023 was ‘the year of the volunteer’ for the Foundation and quickly became the number one priority area, and what a year it was! As well as the normal significant offering of courses within Coach Development, Officiating Development, Groundsmanship, Safeguarding, Committee Workshops, the Foundation felt the need to develop a brand new scheme of work, targeting the support and development of Young People. As a result, ‘Get into Cricket’ was born (GiC).

The ambition of GiC was to develop a new army of young volunteers that could help and support club and community cricket settings, so supporting the pressure on the game. The programme consisted of 6 modules available for the young people:

* First Aid certification
* Cricket Activators certification (Coaching)
* Introduction to Umpiring
* Introduction to Scoring
* The Grounds Management Association workshop
* Nutrition and Health workshop.

The take up was incredible and in a 2 month period, 81 young people registered for the free programme, which resulted in 1500+ hours of volunteering being given. To support the young people and to encourage them to log their hours of volunteering, on completion of 20 hours the young person received a Gray Nicolls GiC t-shirt, and for 40 hours, a GiC hoodie.

Many of the young people got involved in countywide Foundation initiatives and have continued to be a big part of the ‘Foundation’s family’ when it comes to volunteering and possible work opportunities. This scheme will be further enhanced in 2024 and we look forward to developing more young people.

In addition to this new initiative, our Workforce Development Officer led ‘Volunteer of the Month Awards’, with recipients receiving Cote Brasserie vouchers, and ‘Young Volunteer of the Month Awards’ (New for 2023), where award winners received Amazon vouchers. The climax of an incredible year of developing, supporting and thanking volunteers, came in the form of the Cricket Collective Awards Day at the County Ground at a Gloucestershire CCC, where we paid tribute to over 150 volunteers who do so much for the game.

***Participation Pathway***

Whilst being the 14th ‘biggest’ county in the country, the Foundation’s work over indexed in all priority areas. As in 2022, 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 (1318) and 5th highest overall total number of children participating across the programmes (4202) - something that when you think of the size of counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Wales, Warwickshire, Surrey etc, you realise what incredible results they were.

One measure of whether or not a pathway is being successful is the number of teams that play in competitions, as well as the number of adult teams that play annually in leagues (due to the throughput of young people into senior cricket). 2023 saw a significant spike in the number of junior teams playing in organised activity, where there was growth from 419 teams to 503 teams. The Foundation’s belief is that this comes down to three main factors:

1. The impact of the launch of All Stars Cricket in 2018 and that now 5/6 years later we are seeing the 5-year-olds still playing and now being U11.
2. The impact of positive competition and structured activity, in all areas of the county, from U5 to U19.
3. The incredible work of cricket clubs and their volunteers, opening their doors more often across the whole 12 months, so cricket is always on the players and parents’ minds.

The day to day work of school’s delivery continued to be at the heart of our recreational offering and for many young children, provided the first contact with the sport. The school’s work was delivered across the programmes of GCF Active Futures, Bristol Sport ‘Forever Sport’, Chance to Shine primary and secondary, ACE schools programme, Table Cricket and SEND programmes, and Lords Taverners Wicketz. All in all, this saw the Foundation deliver to:

* + Delivering in 187 schools (176 in 2022)
  + Delivering to 18846 young children (16075 in 2022)
  + Delivering across 3909 hours of activity (3494 in 2022)

***Club and League Development***

Clubs continue to be the priority for the Foundation as it is very much understood that without a strong, robust, and developmental set of clubs, much of the progress in key work areas would not be possible. The game has never asked 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. The support for club volunteers came through workshops on specific ‘hot topics’ and general day to day help from the Club Development Manager.

2023 saw support provided to:

* 177 primary affiliated cricket clubs
* 94 clubs with junior sections
* 61 clubs retaining or gaining Clubmark accreditation

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 £95,000 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 Cricket***

This was one of two high priority areas of work for the Foundation in 2023 and as a consequence Gloucestershire saw significant growth, none more so than the growth in the number of clubs offering girl’s cricket, which saw an increase from 23 to 47 clubs with girl’s sections.

2023 also saw the inaugural year of the Women’s WEPL; an exciting venture with three teams represented from Gloucestershire (Golden Hill, Frenchay, and Dumbleton), plus a further three from Somerset and two from Wiltshire. It was a success and goes a big way to improving the standard of the women’s club game across our region. This is only the second official premier league of its kind behind East Anglia.

The tables below show the growth in our Girls & Women’s competitions in the last 3 years.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Girls** | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| U9 |  |  | 1 League 32 Teams |
| U11 | 2 x Leagues 14 Teams | 2 x Leagues 17 Teams | 4 Leagues 22 Teams |
| U13 | 3 x Leagues 18 Teams | 3 x Leagues 16 Teams | 4 x Leagues 20 Teams |
| U15 | 9 Teams | 2 x Leagues 9 Teams | 2 x Leagues 13 Teams |
| **Total Teams** | **41** | **42** | **87** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Women** | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| WEPL |  |  | 3 x Glos 3 x Som 2 x Wilts |
| 35 Over (HB) |  | 6 Teams | 8 Teams |
| T20 (HB) | 2 x Leagues 11 Teams | 2 x Leagues 10 Teams | 3 x Leagues 18 Teams |
| Soft Ball | 4 x Leagues 24 Teams | 5 x Leagues 30 Teams | 7 x Leagues 38 Teams |
| Indoor | 5 x Leagues 29 Teams | 6 x Leagues 36 Teams | 6 x Leagues 40 Teams |
| 100 Cup SB/HB |  | 22 Teams | 28 Teams |
| **Total Teams** | **35** | **68** | **135** |

The girl’s county age group sides were hugely successful too, confirming the depth and quality of the girl’s participation pathway across the county. This was further enhanced with new schools’ competitions for girls and new club competitions for females at both junior and senior level.

To further support this growth area the Foundation put significant time and energy into the upskilling and development of female role models. Across the year the Foundation trained 91 new women into cricket coaching, through either the Cricket Activators Course, the Foundation Coach, or the Core Coach courses.

***Make Cricket Accessible***

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 i’s community offering and specific thanks must go Lords Taverners who supported our application for further funds. This enabled the Foundation to employ a second officer to work specifically on the Wicketz programme, meaning the Wicketz offer could be delivered in other urban area of the county, rather than in Bristol alone.

The Lords Taverners also supported our Disability work area with additional resource, meaning more Disability work could take place in local community hubs, SEND schools and, as a consequence of more activity, a greater number of teams and games were played in the performance squads at D40 and S9.

The ACE (Afro-Caribbean Engagement) programme expanded its offering in 2023 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.

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

* 6 weekly Wicketz hubs (growth from 4 in 2022)
* 5 weekly Super1s hubs (growth from 4 in 2022)
* 9 weekly Chance to Shine Street hubs (growth from 7 in 2022)
* 3 ACE hubs (growth from 2 in 2022)
* An ACE Academy with now 43 scholars
* 5 Walking Cricket hubs (targeting 50+, growth from 4 in 2022)
* 21 free Urban Community National Programmes that saw 772 5-11 year olds engaged
* 18 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 120+ young people physically activity across both the Easter and Summer holidays.
* A South Asian Muslim girl’s programme in Easton, Bristol, which saw over 100 five to eleven year olds get involved in cricket for the very first time.
* Partnership work with Hub Box, a female refugee charity, which enabled female refugees to be taken to Clifton College to receive a free 12 week programme of physical activity and cricket sessions.

***Performance Pathway***

With so much introductory activity taking place across the county there are players of all ages that get the desire and hunger to play at as high a standard as they possibly can. As a consequence, it is the responsibility of the Foundation to provide a pathway to enable people to be the very best that they can be and as such, the charity provides pathways in conjunction with other cricketing organisations.

Selection for teams is always a contentious piece of work but the Foundation pride themselves on a fully inclusive assessment process whereby people of all abilities and backgrounds can be put forward for free ‘trial’. These events are held over the period of a day so enabling players to relax as much as is possible.

For the boys’ game, the foundation works with the Gloucestershire County Cricket Club to enable children from 10 years up, to be involved in a county or zonal programme. For girls’ cricket, the Foundation provides a pathway for elite young players from under 11s through to under 18s, as well as a county women’s’ team.

For those with a disability, the foundation runs teams for the visually impaired and for those with learning and physical disabilities.

Finally, the county now also boasts three over 50’s teams, four over 60’s teams and one over 70’s team, all of which play a calendar of fixtures across the year.

In all of the performance pathways, those involved get comprehensive winter and summer training programmes as well as extensive match schedules. The results of such pathways has seen boys and girls go on to 1st class contracts and players selected for higher honours.

**Financial review**

***Fundraising***

The Foundation generated £50,443 from direct sponsorship in 2023 which was a 31% increase from that in 2022. In most cases this support came from local or regional businesses who supported the aspirations of the Foundation in specific work areas. A significant element of this increase came thanks to the extended partnership with UES, whereby a new 3 year deal was secured with the intention of supporting clubs getting Solar Panels and Water Efficient Systems, cheaper and at the highest possible quality.

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 2024.

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 deficit for the year of 39,715 on income of £944,716. Of the deficit £9,279 was unrestricted, with a larger amount of £30,436 restricted for us on specific projects. The year ended with net assets of £447,346, of which £367,101 were unrestricted, whilst £80,245 was restricted.

Our unrestricted reserves at 30th September 2023 now stand at £367,101. This includes a necessary £44,226 held as potential redundancy costs and ideally a further £343,106 designated in case of shut down – as per our reserves policy below.

The current balance is £20,231 short of the Foundation’s unrestricted reserves target, meaning work will take place in 2024 to address this deficit.

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

***Reserves Policy***

The Trustees have earmarked sufficient cash resources that they feel are prudent to meet the needs of the mitigation of adverse risks as identified by the risk register. Aside from retaining a prudent amount in reserves the majority of the charity’s funds are to be spent in the short term with no funds held for long term investments.

Before becoming a charity, the Gloucestershire Cricket Board agreed a Reserves Policy with Andorran (the chartered accountancy practice that examines the annual Financial Accounts). This stated that reserves should cover 2 to 6 months running costs, depending on the security of the organisation’s income streams. The reserves must be “Unrestricted Funds” i.e., Funds that the company is free to use as it sees fit.

Up until October 2021, the Board did not believe that it was necessary to set the policy at the top end of the range as suggested by Andorran; this was due to the secure nature of core funding from the ECB, Chance to Shine, Lords Taverners, etc. and so ‘Whichever is the greater of 3 months Running Costs plus Redundancy Costs or the Replacement Cost of Depreciated Assets’ was agreed upon.

This changed in 2022, and due to the unsettled nature of funds within sport, the impact of Covid, the Cost of Living rises, and other factors, the Board increased the period from 3 months to 6 months, to the wording of “Whichever is the greater of 6 months Running Costs plus Redundancy Costs or the Replacement Cost of Depreciated Assets”.

The stability of finance going in to 2023 still remains uncertain and a little unknown. Whilst the ECB have signed a new broadcasting deal for the period 2025 to 2029, it is believed that there may be tougher times ahead, especially due to the frequently used term by the ECB of ‘flat investment’, at a time when National Living Wage and all other costs are rising significantly. For this reason, the Finance, Risk & Audit Committee (FR&A) took the ‘Reserves Policy’ agenda item to the 19/10/2023 Board meeting, with a recommendation of continuing to a term of 6 months.

The logic is that if the Company is wound up, it does not need to replace assets and understanding that assets are considerably less that running costs, plus redundancy, the reserves policy is based on **6 months Running Costs plus Redundancy Costs.**

It believes that the policy needs to provide cover for:

1. Late payments
2. Any need to coherently wind up the company or find alternative sources of funding.
3. The exposure to redundancy costs

The FR&A Committee proposes that the Company requires Reserves (Unrestricted Funds) to cover:

* 1 and 2 above - 6 months running costs – Currently £343,106
* Redundancy Costs – Currently £44,226

Total = £387,332

The Reserves target will be reviewed annually as part of the budgeting process, with the budget set to ensure that Reserves are on track.

***Grants***

We are eternally grateful that our funders continue to support us, especially the England and Wales Cricket Board/Trust with £376,681, Chance to Shine with £153,237, ACE charity with £45,000 as well as the Lords Taverners with £81,000 and many other significant supporters.

**Future Plans**

The Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation is committed to growing the game of cricket in Gloucestershire across all areas, Women & Girls, Disability, junior sections within clubs as well as all junior and senior league structures. 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.

In line with Inspiring Gloucestershire, the county strategy for the period 2020-2024, the major aims continue to be:

* To support cricket clubs across the county so that they can provide their memberships with ever improving facilities and the very safest of environments
* To provide a participation pathway that enables cricketers of all ability levels to be able to access, play and enjoy the game
* To provide a performance pathway that enables the more elite players to be able to reach their targets through high quality practice and match-play programmes,
* To continue to resource the women & girls’ game so providing the same opportunities for females as we do males
* To develop people through a catalogue of ‘workforce’ courses so supporting volunteers in all aspects of the game
* To make cricket accessible to as many people as possible from all walks of life and from all backgrounds. Cricket can be played by all and the intention is to provide it for all.

There will be a great number of activities that will fall under each of the above headlines but there are also some specific priorities that the Foundation aims to achieve in 2024:

* Enhance and develop the Young Volunteering Programme, Get into Cricket
* Make 2024 a year where we prioritise developing female role models
* Take Wicketz across the county rather than being Bristol centric
* Develop a strategy for recreational cricket in Gloucestershire for the period 2025-2029
* Design and deliver a Coaches Conference to upskill volunteer coaches
* Design and deliver a new commercial cricket coaching programme

**Structure, Governance and Management**

Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation is a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, governed by its memorandum and articles of association dated and adopted, 31st March 2022. It is a registered charity with the Charity Commission.

The Trustees who have served during the year and since the year end are set out on Page 1. The Trustees meet at least seven times per year and on any other occasion as judged necessary in order to review progress and determine matters of strategy and policy.

Any decision necessary from the Trustees shall be determined by the majority of votes of the Trustees present and voting on the question.

All Trustees serve a three year term following which they can seek reappointments. The existing Trustees have the power to appoint further Trustees provided they have attained the age of 18 years and are not disqualified from taking office. The Trustees are not actively recruiting at present but have measures in place to consider potential applicants as they might arise.

For the recruitment of new Trustees, the charity has a nominations committee which is comprised of both Trustees and independent members. The committee’s ambition is to have a blend and mix of representatives from across the county, with at least 30% of each gender, as well as representation from across all demographics.

New Trustees undergo training and an induction to brief them on their legal obligations under Charity and Company Law, the content of the memorandum and articles of association, the committee and decision making processes of the Foundation, the strategy and recent financial performance of the charity. Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

The Board of Trustees is skills based and is of maximum 12 members in size. To support the full board a Finance, Risk & Audit Committee meets at least four times per year to review the budget, analyse the forecast, maintain an appropriate and comprehensive risk register, whilst also ensuring all audit and governance work is compliant (along with the Governance Committee).

The operational management of the charity is led by the Chief Executive, who is supported by the Operations Manager and the Community Development Manager. The performances of these positions and the charity itself are reviewed at Board Meetings and any decisions on remuneration of all staff members are ratified by the Trustees.

**ECB Governance**

The Foundation complies with the Charity Commission governance as well as at least the silver tier of the governance framework of our main funder. The County Partnership Agreement (CPA), which regulates the relationship between the Foundation and the ECB, is annually agreed and signed, and we are committed to continuing to meet the CPA standards and at least a minimum silver tier governance standard (currently Gold).