

Report of the Youth League and Performance Development Group 2021

All Youth Leagues within the County, an overview of the Boys County Performance Age Groups, Boys 'Zonal' age groups, together with Youth work in the Community and Schools, come within the remit of the Group. We comprise representatives of each of the six Youth Leagues (Glos Youth Cricket League, Bristol, Cheltenham & Gloucester, Cotswold, Leaden Vale and Stroud). The GCF is represented by Scott Tremaine, Eric Woodmason, and this year, Gareth Dawson has linked up as 'Workforce Development' is such an integral element of developing youth cricket. We oversee the Gloucestershire Youth League, the County Rounds of the Vitality National U13 & U15 KO Cup Competitions, and the NatWest U16 & U19 T/20 Gloucestershire Competitions.

Thank you to everyone involved with the Group, and the GCF Staff, who work tirelessly across the County, and those who have been co-opted to look after the various activities mentioned. This past year saw Pete Boorman step back from his role as Cheltenham & Gloucester League Rep, to be replaced by Caroline Carter. We thank Pete for his contribution over the years, and welcome Caroline. Thank you also to everyone involved in so many areas with youth cricket across the County, where hundreds of matches and training sessions run through the summer, week in, week out, taking place largely through the commitment of (often unsung) volunteers.

2021 was a season where, despite an uncertain start with lockdown eased literally just before the outdoor season commenced, the momentum and desire to play cricket took hold in every part of the County, and Leagues and National Programmes blossomed. Record numbers of Clubs and Children took part in All Stars and Dynamos, and Leagues generally recovered well in terms of numbers of teams entering, compared with the 2019 Season. Some Leagues were able to use the 'truncated season' experiences of 2020 to develop new, more positive ways to engage children. The National Cup Competitions returned, and a number of Clubs took the opportunity to give their players valuable experience, matching their skills against sides from other Counties.

The Under 10 Leagues Festival ran at Beaudesert School, Minchinhampton in July, generously supported by Martin Berrill Sports. Despite some 'iffy' weather and unfortunate 'isolation' requirements for one of the competing Teams, the Festival provided some excellent opportunities for lots of young players to gain experience playing against challenging opposition. And thanks to excellent cooperation with GACO, the opportunity was also used with appropriate mentoring, to help some young Umpires and Scorers to gain valuable experience.

Jim Donaldson

February 2022