**Cricket Wales AGM – October 1st 2017**

**CEO Report**

**Introduction**

1. This AGM and report covers the period April 2016 to March 2017 and therefore incorporates the 2016 season. Subsequent information relating to the 2017 season has been added where available.
2. The 2016 and 2017 seasons were busy and successful but the game continues to have challenges. In March 2017 the game lost one of its true giants when John Derrick our Performance Manager passed away following his battle with cancer. The reaction and tributes from the recreational and professional game within Wales and further afield demonstrated the enormous levels of affection and respect that everyone had for John and his presence is undoubtedly being missed within our talent pathway and many other aspects of Welsh cricket.
3. The introduction of All Stars Cricket for 5 to 8 years olds has been a great success in Wales and recruitment of primary age children to cricket remains strong. Retention of 15-24’s remains a major challenge and is affecting many senior club teams. The pathway that feeds Glamorgan and England continues to produce some very talented players, both male and female.
4. Off the field the last twelve months has seen major change with a skills-based Board of Directors and a new staffing team both being recruited. This has developed our governance and leadership and enabled us to provide closer support to member clubs, leagues, regions and associations.

**Cricket Wales Strategy – ‘Clearing the Boundaries’**

1. Seasons 2016 and 2017 saw good progress in delivering years two and three of the Cricket Wales strategy ‘Clearing the Boundaries’, which looks to embrace all forms of cricket without losing its focus on our community clubs which form the bed-rock of our game. The Cricket Wales strategy has the same priorities as the ECB strategy ‘Cricket Unleashed’. Collectively the clubs, leagues and associations that make up Cricket Wales have identified what can be achieved in the strategy and developed our vision of **‘Cricket thriving in the heart** **of Welsh communities’**. Progress is being made in many areas of the strategy but challenges still exist for the game throughout Wales (and indeed England)
2. ‘Clearing the Boundaries’ measures our progress against the following five Outcomes:

* More young people, adults and families are involved and retained within cricket (Growth);
* Cricket is easily accessible to everyone in Wales (Accessibility);
* People have a fun, positive and enjoyable experience in cricket (Quality);
* People (i.e. players, coaches, officials, ground-staff, club volunteers etc), have the opportunity to be the best they can (Quality);
* Financial sustainability

1. 2016 data collected against each of these Outcomes leads to the following observations:

* Primary age cricket in clubs continues to grow. The junior game is in decline from the age of 13 onwards;
* Losing players from 15 to 24 is impacting on some senior 4th 3rd and 2nd teams, particularly in more deprived areas of Wales;
* Those involved in cricket perceive the sport as accessible but there exists opportunity for growth within Women and Girls, Disability Groups and Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities;
* Most of those involved in cricket have a positive experience compared to their experience in other sports. However, there is room for improvement;
* Most involved in cricket recognise the opportunities that they have (had) to improve particularly young players, their parents and coaches in general.

1. Season 2017 data is in the process of being analysed but it is expected to show similar trends and attitudes to the above. Early signs are that the increased focus on BME communities is having a sustainable impact and that the higher profile of the women’s game is leading to a steady growth in numbers. Data from our annual Club Audit is not as robust as it needs to be so a renewed push is needed on our individual membership programme in partnership with Glamorgan.
2. During the summers of 2016 and 2017 players from across Wales again completed the ECB National Cricket Playing Survey (NCPS), and gave their views on the game. On the back of this information member senior leagues have made further changes aimed at retaining more players. Earlier start times, earlier finish times, reduced overs and less travel are common themes particularly within the lower divisions. The impact of these changes on the numbers playing the game in 2017 will be analysed in the coming weeks and months with further work then being undertaken with member senior leagues in the run-up to the Autumn 2017 ‘AGM season’. The member senior leagues in Wales are to be congratulated on the changes they have introduced to date but there will be an ongoing need for everyone in the game to continue to challenge ourselves to ensure that cricket is relevant to modern society particularly the younger generations.

**Initiatives delivered by Cricket Wales and its member organisations**

Staffing Team

1. 2016 and 2017 has seen a major staffing re-structure at Cricket Wales with three new Area teams being created one in each of North Wales, South West Wales and South East Wales. The purpose of the re-structure was for Cricket Wales staff to provide closer support and guidance to our member organisations and for us to work closely with the Glamorgan community team. Feedback from the game has been positive but I ask everyone to complete our short Stakeholder Perception Survey to enable us to know what we are doing well and what needs to be improved. We are in the process of looking at the next stage of the Staffing Review which will involve the community team and also hope to be able to appoint a part-time Women and Girls Co-ordinator in each of our three Areas. In the past 12 months Cricket Wales has engaged with Steve Watkins for the effective delivery of competitions throughout Wales. Thanks also go to Ted Tipper for co-ordinating the U13 and U15 Cricket Wales Cup Competitions
2. Needless to say it has been a particularly difficult time for everyone involved in our NDC and Wales age-group structure given John Derrick’s tragic passing away, but my thanks go to Mark Walton for playing an important covering role over the past twelve months and to all the Coaches and Managers for their commitment and support. Aimee Rees continues to show remarkable commitment and expertise in developing the women and girls squads.
3. Gavin Chilton was appointed our Systems Development Officer in February 2017 and also continues to support a number of cricket development initiatives. This season Gavin’s focus has been on ensuring that all Cricket Wales activity is on Play Cricket together with the development of a central database, a new on-line payment system called Cvent, the Club Audit and the individual membership programme.
4. I am confident that the new structure and personnel will continue to provide greater leadership and support to clubs, leagues, regions and associations throughout Wales as we seek to deliver the targets set within ‘Clearing the Boundaries’.

All Stars Cricket

1. 2017 saw the highly successful launch of the ECB’s All Stars Cricket for 5 to 8 year olds with Cricket Wales having the second highest number of accredited centres within England and Wales (behind Yorkshire), and the highest number as a proportion of our clubs. The programme ran in 93 Welsh clubs and involved over 2300 children. In addition to offering the first opportunity of cricket to the very young, the programme is aimed at bringing new volunteers into our clubs and attracting non-cricket families. My thanks go to Mark Frost, the three Area Managers, the three Workforce Administrators and all the club volunteers who worked tirelessly to make year one such a success. Further expansion is planned in 2018!

Community Coaches/Chance to Shine

1. Cricket Wales employs a team of part-time Community Coaches throughout Wales funded by Chance to Shine and Sport Wales. This team is contributing to the growth we are seeing at primary age level. More girls, individuals from BME communities and those with a disability are being introduced to the game, and teachers/schools are generally very enthusiastic about the programme. Initial migration to clubs is good but far more work needs to be done with clubs in advance of them receiving the children, to ensure as many young people as possible are retained.

Facility Developments

1. During 2016 and 2017 ECB/Sport Wales facility grants again supported a small number of capital development projects. The ECB Small Grant Scheme provided £70,000 to help small capital equipment projects notably covers to help ‘Get the Game on’. This fund was heavily over-subscribed. The SWALEC Development Fund supported clubs entering the ECB U19T20 competition with coloured clothing and other items of kit.

Club Competition

**17** The 2017 senior league winners around Wales were:

* South Wales Premier Cricket League – Cardiff Cricket Club
* North Wales Premier League – to be confirmed
* South Wales Cricket Association – Llanelli Cricket Club
* South East Wales Cricket League – Malpas Cricket Club
* Pembroke County Cricket Club – Carew Cricket Club
* West Wales Clubs Conference – Aberystwyth Cricket Club

1. As I write the actions of Carew Cricket Club are the subject of an investigation by the Pembroke County Cricket Club. Without wishing to prejudice the outcome of this investigation all clubs are reminded to play the game within ‘the spirit of cricket’

19 Cardiff Cricket Club won the Cricket Wales Welsh Cup defeating Colwyn Bay Cricket Club in the final at The Gnoll.

**Regional Junior Cricket**

**20** In 2016 and 2017 Boys regional junior cricket was again played in graded pools with the stronger regions playing against each whenever possible. Fixture completion was again challenging within the older age groups particularly when regions travelled from south to north Wales. The U10 Aberystwyth Festival was rain-affected but again provided a good first experience for our youngest regional cricketers. Thanks go to Aberystwyth CC and Aberystwyth University for hosting, and for all our hard-working regional volunteers.

**Girls National Development Centres**

**21** Again in 2016 and 2017 girls NDC’s were held during the winter months throughout Wales with development fixtures staged during the summer months. The number of girls playing at grass roots level will receive an increased push through the new All Stars Cricket programme and the proposed Women and Girls Co-ordinators.

**Welsh Age-Group Teams and further Representative Honours**

1. 2017 Wales age group boys and girls teams again competed well in over 150 fixtures against English County Board opposition despite the obviously difficult circumstances. Season 2017 highlights included the Wales girls U17’s reaching the ECB finals and the boys U15’s reaching the ECB quarter finals. Sam Jardine, Tegid Phillips and Morgan Bevans represented Wales and the South West at the Bunbury U15 festival. The girls on the Glamorgan Academy continue to progress well and are contributing to the success of our U17 and Senior Women’s squads. Congratulations to Claire Nicholas and Lauren Parfitt on being part of the winning Western Storm T20 Super League Squad.
2. Sincere thanks to John Prickett and Graham Burgess who are both retiring from the Wales Age Groups Coaches and Managers team after many years of distinguished service

**BME Communities**

24 The BME project ‘Cricket Beyond Boundaries’ has been expanded to Swansea and Newport and a new competition The Cohesion Cup has been established in a new partnership with the South Wales Police

**Disability Cricket**

**25** Les Randall the Cricket Wales Disability Officer has made good progress in expanding the number of disability hubs across Wales and raising the profile of disability cricket generally. The Wales disability team reached the final of the ECB softball competition losing to Essex in a rain-affected game. Congratulations to this young team and to all involved in supporting them.

**Governance**

**26 A** new Board of Directors which includes strong links to all parts of the recreational game in Wales, commercial skills, some independence and greater diversity has settled well into its role under the leadership of its Chair Rod Jones. These changes are all part of a movement within Welsh sport to modernise the governance of NGB’s to meet future needs. The calibre of individuals involved on the new Board is extremely high. Members are asked to support the recommendations from the Nominations Panel for the new Board Directors to commence in October 2017. Sincere thanks to Roger Morris who is retiring from the Board after twenty years service which includes a period as Chair during which he led significant change and governance modernisation.

27 2017 has seen further development of our Safeguarding function under the expert leadership of Ieuan Watkins. Ieuan’s team of League and Club Welfare Officers continues to become stronger as we strive to ensure our game is as safe as possible for young people to play in. Ieuan’s commitment to Cricket Wales and indeed Glamorgan is extraordinary and we are enormously grateful to have his expertise and experience available to us

1. The work of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Group has consolidated the achievement of the Intermediate Level of the Equality Standard for Sport and turned its attention to the Advanced Level. 2017 saw increases in BME, disability, women and girls cricket. Cricket Wales, the South Wales Premier League and Glamorgan supported Stonewall’s Rainbow Laces campaign for the first time. Our partnership with the Welsh Language Commissioner also continues.
2. During 2017 Cricket Wales North, Cricket Wales South West and Cricket Wales South East were established to improve communication and support the work of the new Area Managers. It is hoped that the three Area Boards can become more fully established during 2017/18 thereby connecting all cricket organisations within their area and further improving communication between staff and the voluntary network
3. 2017 Cricket Wales OSCAs (Outstanding Service to Cricket Awards) were presented to Malcolm Price (Lifetime Achiever), Phil Leeds, Dolgellau Cricket Club (Heartbeat of the Club), Robert Franklin, Newport Fugitives Cricket Club (Get the Game On), Jonathan Wellington, SEWCL (Leagues and Boards), and Ben Wellington, Newbridge Cricket Club (Young Volunteer).

**Thanks**

1. Thanks go to Glamorgan Cricket for their support for the recreational game in Wales and also to Sport Wales, the ECB and Chance to Shine, for their financial support, without which the recreational game in Wales would not develop.

1. Despite challenges facing the game further progress was made in 2017 due to the fantastic commitment of volunteers, staff, parents and players throughout Wales. Many thanks to everyone for their significant contribution to cricket in Wales.

**Peter Hybart**

**Chief Executive Officer, Cricket Wales**