

## ***Chairman's Report 2019 AGM***

It would have been with great sadness that I intended writing to you for the final time as Chairman of this wonderful Cricket Club. However, despite our efforts in finding a replacement, we were unable to do so leaving me to carry on until a suitable alternative can be found. We will use the coming months to canvas a list of candidates who hopefully will ease into the role.

It wasn't in my plan to leave so early, but presiding over the relegation of three teams, four if you include the 4<sup>th</sup> X1 being withdrawn from the League, I was left with no choice than to let a fresh set of eyes and ideas take over.

After the 1<sup>st</sup> X1 were relegated with two games left I was very depressed as this would be the first time out of the top flight, but when we had to scratch our second team the following weekend, I felt a heartache I didn't think that I was capable of.

However, we must use this relegation as a positive way to start our rejuvenation and take a long hard look at where we fell short and make constructive inroads into our recovery.

As you can imagine there were precious few highlights throughout the year that I can describe, but attached to these papers are the captain's reports which will give a more detailed account of the season's achievements. However, we do have an amazing array of talent in the ranks which makes it even more baffling as to why we are in this situation. Inevitably there was a fair bit of soul searching at the end of the season, but in order to make this work we must all get behind the captains and players with the hope that their skills will get us back into higher divisions.

Our committee have looked at many areas we think need improving and are keen to involve as many members to help while not necessarily serving on the main administration. After chatting with many supporters, quite a few were keen to assist in areas such as PR, Social Media and Fund Raising to mention a selection of responsibilities.

At Horsham we always manage to develop players who go onto higher things. During the summer Tom Clark was selected to represent England at Under 19 level where they had a triangular tournament with India and Bangladesh. Tom has a busy few weeks ahead as he has trips to the Caribbean and South Africa before taking up his professional contract with Sussex.

One major problem we had during the season was that we had to send our overseas player home following the discovery of an irregularity in his visa. Jamie Brown was just beginning to settle, making friends and was finding his range and good things were expected from him for the remainder of the season. However, the ECB noticed that part of his visa had been inadvertently been filled in incorrectly and sadly he had to go back to New Zealand.

In contrast our Women had a marvellous season winning many of their matches and taking the County T20 title for the second consecutive year. Under Hannah's astute captaincy they have the perfect blend of youth and experience which should hold them in good stead for the future.

After a gap of five years I can announce that at last first class cricket is returning to Horsham next year with a Royal London 50 over game against Gloucester on August 9<sup>th</sup>. There is a good chance that all our home grown professionals will play in this game, which should boost the crowds.

Sponsorship and hospitality packages are available details of which can be obtained from the club office.

After the monumental World Cup success, Horsham can boast that at the final we had no less than four people who had been involved with the club over the years. The two guys who bowled the 'super over' both have been our overseas players at some stage. Jofra in 2017 and is still connected to the club and Matt Henry who was with us in 2011. The others are in the backroom staff. Shane Jurgensen here in 1999 is the now New Zealand bowling coach and Carl Hopkinson the England fielding coach.

When England won the Cup, we were subjected to Jofra-mania with local television and radio stations all wanting to know how he was before his super stardom. Fortunately when the cameras were rolling the club was shown off in its best state with the Gullick Cup Final in action, plenty of junior practice and one of the best weather evenings of the summer. It did not end here as again the cameras were back at the club when Jofra brought the World Cup to Horsham to a packed pavilion and took great delight in a Q & A session hosted by our very own Shaka.

After a period without an official groundsman, the Sports Club have appointed Ben Harwood who will take up his role in March next year with our own Lawrence in overseeing events in his inimitable way.

During the last few months we have had very sad events when our Life President, Hugh Thomas passed away after a short illness. Having been a stalwart in the truest sense of the word, the club has lost a true friend and gentleman who will be greatly missed. Fellow Trustee, Mike Parsons also passed away a few weeks ago and he too will be sorely missed with along with his unique sense of humour. Finally, Frank King succumbed to a short illness and we will deeply miss his company and fund raising skills.

Any club cannot exist without its volunteers and we have plenty of these. Yet again our Treasurer, Colin Mitcham was at the front and centre of most things and it is imperative that Mitch continues to look after us as only he can. Our committee always work hard and thanks to the unselfish dedication of people like Bob Daisley who has served in excess of 20 years. We have a couple of retirements to announce in that Clive Noblett is standing down as Fixtures Secretary and Ed Clark as Cricket Manager. Fortunately Ed will continue to bring his valued opinions on the committee.

Our fellow committee members deserve special mention and my thanks go to them for their work on our behalf. As Chairman, I work very closely with the club office where Polly, Clare and Lorraine give me invaluable help for which I'm eternally grateful.

Forgive me if the theme of this letter appears fairly morose, but I feel that I have let the club down. If my memory serves me right, I played my first game at Horsham as a junior in 1958 for Dr Dew's X1 vs The Vicar of Warnham's X1, and I have been in love with the place ever since. Members of my family will probably tell you that I've been at the ground every day since then as well!!

It probably will not have escaped your notice that I am very passionate about the club and sincerely hope that fortunes turn around and we can return to former glories.

***Richard Marshall***