

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2024

2024 is my fourth year as Chairman & it is a pleasure to continue to serve this wonderful Club.

It was a standard Hythe & Dibden CC season with some highs & lows on & off the field. Sadly due to a league restructure the 1s have found themselves relegated to County 2 despite finishing above the traditional relegation spots. The 2s finished second in their league to the all conquering Sarisbury. The 3s & 4s battled bravely for their skippers but lack of numbers, illness, injuries & holidays prevented both Richie & Jamie rarely being able to field their strongest sides. My highs included a second successive appearance in the Presidents Cup final which had Lymington so worried they had to bring their first team bowlers on including Gareth Berg to bowl in the dark! We entered the Hampshire T20 Slam for the second time & made it to the semi finals. I believe this is a decent competition, yes it needs work especially the later stages but it is definitely worth entering. Please remember it is the Hampshire Slam not the Ten Miles from Hythe Slam! Lows were obviously the 1s dropping out of County 1 & the continued apathy that surrounds the club. The Colts were competitive in their leagues with reasonable numbers & it was great to see the continued development of these young players. There are several really good prospects coming through in various age groups. We have added to our qualified Coaches with Andy Woods returning to the club & James Page completed his coaching course.

### **CRICKET**

Matt Young continued as First XI Captain with James Page as Vice Captain. They did their best with a small squad but a league restructure meant splitting the leagues in two, sadly we didn't manage to finish on the right side of the split. It's fair to say the rub of the green didn't go our way with us narrowly losing several close league games but we were also hammered in a few games. The main reason for this was availability or lack of. The 1s also made the final of the New Forests President Cup in which we lost to Lymington in the dark. Next season we find ourselves in County 2B, the worst league I have ever seen 1 up 4 down along with two trips to the IOW! Staying up will be the main objective.

The 2s were again led by Tom Jones. It is fair to say that TJs second year as Captain was a vast improvement on his first having learnt some lessons he led his side to second in the league & promotion.

The 3s were run by Club legend Richie Froggett. The 3s had some good & bad results but managed to hold their own in their division. Fletch again led the 4s who again had good & bad results both the 3s & 4s finished mid/lower table.

All league sides suffered with lack of availability be it apathy, injuries, illness, holidays, days out, girlfriends, weddings, family days & call ups to higher teams. Sufficient numbers are not there & I have no idea how to reverse this...

Our colts showed real promise playing across our teams. We are producing some very good young players testament to Andy's setup. With older Colts Callum/Toby/Ewan when they are available playing in the 1s & 2s plus the likes of Harry Wakley cementing his place in the 2s & Billy Parry doing the same in the 3s. Dan Prentice & Drew Bennett also made their mark in senior Cricket. We need to push these lads coming through & in order to try & produce first team cricketers these lads need to be given prominent roles in sides & perceived with.

Chiv again ran the Sunday side with Fraser Captaining. Finding a full fixture list was no mean task as more & more clubs have stopped playing Sunday cricket. This again proved a good introduction into adult cricket for some of our Colts.

Running four league teams is a tough task but one we have managed well over the years. I am proud we have done this & don't want to lose the fourth team but the numbers aren't there & availability for whatever reason is worse than ever. This has been an ongoing problem for a number of years now & in my opinion things got a lot worse last season. We are losing players quicker than we can recruit new players. You can't run four teams with 35-40 players the Club needs to have a very serious discussion about continuing with four teams or dropping to three?.....

Please remember success isn't a given, promotion isn't assured. What success you get from this game comes from training, hard work & commitment. Sides that get promoted don't use 25 players!

Particular thanks goes to Jamie Fletcher whose efforts & enthusiasm made sure we still have four league teams. Without Jamie we wouldn't be running the fourth XI. Thanks also to Richie Froggett who steps down as third team captain. Anyone interested in replacing Richie please let us know?

## **COLTS**

The club again ran All Stars, Dynamoes, U9s,U11s,U13s & U15s. All Stars in particular has given numbers a huge boost & most of U9s have come from All Stars. Thanks to Dawn & her team for their efforts with All Stars. Andy Grave & Lucy Grave continued to run the colts section & have created a nice atmosphere & a professionally run section that is enjoyed by parents & colts alike. We give all our colts a chance & a game rather than concentrating on & letting the best players dominate. Next season we are looking to restart an U17 side this will be run by Dave Parry. Thanks to all the Managers & Coaches.

## **FINANCIAL**

The finances continue to be run by Jonjo Stovell. The club continues to operate within its means. After a good summer & steady winter we are in a 'reasonable' financial position with enough in the bank to cover running costs but with lots of money to be paid out for the ongoing club refurb (trades/furniture etc) & also money owed to individuals. Thanks to the Darts teams & Aztecs for their help over the winter keeping the club ticking over. The club's main earner is the fete which has been hugely successful the last two years. The Fete isn't a given if the weather doesn't play ball we will lose our main fundraiser. We are always on the lookout for grants & sponsorship opportunities if anyone has any leads please let us know? If anyone can land us some sponsorship we will look to repay you with reduced match fees/Membership. We aren't afraid to spend money but will only spend money when the circumstances are right & when we can improve the club with the right investment.

## **CLUB, GROUNDS & VOLUNTEERS**

We play on a public park so we aren't able to do everything we would like to but we have brought the ground up to SPL standard & Chiv continues to work miracles on the square & maintains one of the best wickets around. Chiv also maintains QE2 when doing his proper job. The QE2 has now become a great wicket. Hopefully we can field two teams to do it justice! Thanks also to Ian Prentice & family who have been busy collecting the leaves from the square while Chiv recovers from his operation. Ian Prentice, his colleague Ed & Chalky have completed the refurb of the kitchen area of the club. Ian & Sean Tongs who when their other commitments allow have worked on re-engineering the score box. Due to family illness Sean has only been seen sporadically at the ground over the last year or two. This has had a major knock on with work grinding to a halt on the electrical side. Fingers crossed this will be up & running for the start of the 2025 season. The club is an ageing building & needs constant maintenance. This, like everything, is generally done by volunteers & can be a slow process because we aren't tradesmen. The major refurb of the club that started last spring is ongoing & is being completed as fast as things allow by local businessman Danny Hosey. Danny is doing the majority of work out of his own pocket & in his own time. Please look at what we will gain when this project is completed, not what we have now. Sue Froggett has secured a grant for new carpets & air con to be fitted in the clubhouse.

The club is only as strong as its members & volunteers. Please remember that without these volunteers most of them are giving up their valuable time for nothing with no real reward. Thanks to our wonderful spectators. Our 'ultras' are there every week drinking & supporting the club & have a massive impact on bar revenue. Thanks to all these people from the bottom of my heart.

The biggest enemy of the club is apathy! If you can help, help! Don't leave it for someone else to do. Even if it only means paying your match fee/membership on time.

Wishing you all the best & hopefully a very successful 2025

Mike Bowman Chairman Hythe & Dibden CC