

## **Members' Representative Group – Meeting Minutes. 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024. Headingley Stadium.**

In attendance: Graeme Greenfield (Chair), Charlotte Evers, Howard Ray, Ian Townsend, Josh Wilmer (YCCC Customer and Member Liaison Officer).

Apologies – Pauline Beesley, Chris Woodthorpe

### **Ian Townsend Introduction.**

1. Ian Townsend (IT) introduced himself and reiterated that he was here to listen to how the MRG functions as it had been some time since he was last acquainted with the Members Committee/MRG. Anything he can do to improve the lot of members he will do.
2. Graeme Greenfield (GG) asked what IT thought the board saw his role as. IT said being on the MRG was one of them. IT's CV illustrates his background in finance and running a sporting club. IT to hit the ground running. Members are important, however, as without the members, there is no club. This was something IT learnt at Sheffield United – ignore it at your peril. The more fans/members you have, the more commercially appealing it is. IT said that he has been a member since his junior days with his son having played up to 2<sup>nd</sup> team level.
3. IT discussed how the pathways system has vastly improved with impressive levels of support available for those players who are coming through the system. The Club has done some great things about this and has not necessarily shouted about it.
4. Charlotte Evers (CE) thought that the changes that occurred due to previous issues at the Club have been extremely positive and have left us in a much stronger position.
5. IT said there were good people behind the scenes working extremely hard at the Club. A Customer and Member Liaison Officer is testament to the Club starting to change and work with the membership.
6. GG said that the Club has diligently engaged with the MRG in the recent past. IT asked if the MRG had achieved anything? CE stated that the changes to membership structure that were brought in for 2024 season were completed following consultation with the MRG which the group pushed for. Howard Ray (HR) stated that the MRG are a sounding board for changes made by the Club and the system works effectively.
7. GG believed that due to persistent firefighting at the Club meant that sometimes the MRG felt they were not a priority.
8. GG asked if there had been any update on the terms of reference for the group that had been ongoing for a year or so. JW confirmed that he had been given sight of this document but that due to other ongoing areas of concern being addressed by the board, this had not been actioned at that level. **JW to send a copy of the Terms of Reference to GG for view.**
9. CE stated that the MRG had been 2 or 3 members short for a couple of years. CE noted that Andrew Kilburn was still listed as a member of the group in the yearbook. HR said that was indicative of a lack of attention sometimes wrought by the Club.
10. IT said that the MRG may have to bear with for the time being due to roles needing to be filled at an executive level such as CEO, COO, CFO.

### **Club Update**

1. GG asked whether there was an update on where the Club was financially. IT said there was nothing that could be shared. There is a lot going on currently. Colin Graves is

working 7 days a week to help push the Club forward. There is a commitment to engage with the members on the future direction of the Club with CG available to speak with members directly.

2. JW said the biggest update was the Diamonds news which would be touched on later. Other items included 2025 memberships, which would be discussed in depth internally and then discussed with the MRG. Once Sam Gascoyne is back, we will look at what changes need to be made, if any.
3. GG asked how membership numbers were. JW confirmed that they were currently at 7800. CE asked how many of these were numbered day passes. JW confirmed there are complimentary memberships through pathways etc but the numbers were very positive with a lot of new members. JW confirmed that the numbered day passes were a real positive. JW said that the All-In membership was still the most popular by numbers - 1403. The 4-day passes were 1267 – proving extremely popular. County Championship only were at 400. All in + Hundred just less than 200. 1100 were u11 memberships therefore free of charge. HR asked if the Club thought the numbers would increase further. JW confirmed that the Club are hopeful that once the T20 Blast starts, numbers would increase, predominately the 4/8 day passes. Membership categories for next year as well as the schedule will be discussed with the MRG asap this season.
4. Internationals – JW confirmed that the WIT20 was at 8k with the men's IT20 being sold out. Aiming to be on a par with Edgbaston who had 12k last week. The weather looks good so hopefully nearer to the time the numbers may increase. Australia at the end of summer is sold out. 2025 priority tickets are on sale for the India – about 300 have taken this up but there has been no advertising on this. India tickets to start on sale in September (provisional date).
5. CE said it was important that the memberships were to be on sale in September at the last game of the season. JW confirmed that this was still the Club's intention. This was well-received last year so looking to build on this.
6. HR said that alterations made for the 2024 season were overwhelmingly positive and any changes for 2025 should be minimal. JW confirmed that the members survey would be going out tomorrow – chance for feedback to be garnered and make changes for 2025. JW said there might be no need for changes – we will not be changing elements for the sake of change. If there is valid feedback, we will act on it.
7. HR asked if those non-computer literate members would have access to the survey. JW confirmed that this was in hand and paper copies to be sent out.

### **Member Profiles**

1. GG asked if these had been received. JW confirmed that all but Pauline and Chris' profiles had been received.
2. PB to send once back from holiday. JW to chase CW on this.

### **Member Surgeries.**

1. GG asked whether this would be completed at one of the upcoming T20's.
2. IT asked what these surgeries were. GG confirmed that this was a scheme to ensure that the MRG are visible to the membership. To be run alongside the forums and allows the opportunity to speak with the MRG directly on a 1-2-1 basis.
3. CE said she was in the Long Room on each lunchtime at the last 4 day game to aid visibility but to also check on the catering. CE said she was also in there before each day's play 9.30/10.30.

4. 6.30pm start for the game in question and the surgery will be publicized via email and pre match guides.
5. MRG to work out which rep would be on hand at these upcoming surgeries.
6. IT asked if the Club do a new members event so new members get to know the Club/those who run it, such as the MRG. JW confirmed that this had been discussed previously. CE said this was done at Essex with all new members being invited to a free lunch which was a good way to welcome new members. JW said he couldn't remember why this idea had not proceeded – iteration discussed included tour of the ground, introduction of key figures etc. JW confirmed this would be something picked up as part of new member offering for 2025.

### **Streaming**

1. IT noticed that the stream was free for all members, resulting in those members staying at home. JW noted that not all who watch the live stream may be fully fledged members, nor live in the UK.
2. IT asked the group if they thought the stream should be just for members. CE said that it had been raised before, but the Club could not charge over a commercial channel. A debate has been held on this with sentiment found to be in favour of charging.
3. JW advised that as a sport, charging for live streams is coming along, further down the line. JW confirmed that the Club were looking for a commercial partner in respect of the stream. GG advised he believed the stream should be free for members. If someone from abroad wants to watch it, they should be charged.
4. JW advised there are peaks and troughs in respect of the stream. Eg. when Harry brook and Joe Root are batting together, the stream numbers increase. When one of them gets out, the numbers go down. JW said that it was a case of trialing this eventually, but the stream needs to be at a certain level to be commensurate with something that is a paid service. IT said he believed that the YCCC stream is one of the best.
5. JW advised that a lot of it is down to staff numbers. Discussion had with Gloucestershire earlier in the season and they confirmed there was only 1 member of their staff working on their stream. Yorkshire have 5 so the ability and manpower is there for us to offer a great stream including replays and alternative camera angles.
6. CE said that it should be something the club can monetize but stay free for members. It would be a great benefit of membership for those who are abroad.

### **Forum**

1. GG said that the next forum is at Barnsley and asked who was going to be attending. JW said that the original intention was to have Darren Gough as he was local but that clearly had to change. IT asked what forums CG may attend. JW confirmed that this was all booked in in the month leading up to the forum. IT confirmed that CG was keen to engage with members through forums.
2. Scarborough forum to be held 23<sup>rd</sup> August. Attendees to be confirmed.
3. GG asked that the Barnsley forum does not become a non-event. Date may need to be changed with clash with Derbyshire game ongoing on same day at Chesterfield. GG said that Chesterfield is almost a home game for the South Yorkshire membership.
4. JW to take away and look at rescheduling.

## **Northern Diamonds**

1. GG said it was disappointing to hear. HR asked if it was likely to be a case that Yorkshire would fund a women's team next season. JW said the Club believes it is feasible that we may get tier 1 in 2026. IT confirmed that this is an active situation with a lot going on.
2. JW confirmed that Richard Gould from the ECB attending a recent board meeting and was party to feedback from the Board surrounding this decision.
3. IT confirmed that representations are being made as this is not a great situation for the Club to be in. The case is being put to rectify this asap.
4. JW said that the immediate concern was with respect to the players and their welfare, and a lot has been done by the Club to ensure that they are taken care of.

## **Publication of Minutes**

1. GG asked whether these would be published as well as the reorganization of the website to aid greater visibility of the group. JW confirmed this had not been done but is in the pipeline.
2. CE confirmed that this was still a good idea as the membership should know what the MRG are discussing. Agendas should be published.
3. GG confirmed that the MRG should be transparent as possible to all members.
4. JW said this initiative came from the same vein as providing a transcript of forums which was done at the first forum of the season.
5. JW confirmed that any minutes that are published will be signed off by the Club.

## **1863 Meeting with Board.**

1. IT confirmed that 1863 members, debenture holders to meet with CG and Board to engage on what they are happy/not happy with in respect of their memberships. Meeting to be held on 28<sup>th</sup>.
2. IT said that the value of the membership for cricket at Yorkshire is exceptionally good. There is an ageing membership profile, but younger people are starting to engage, however this is not necessarily being translated in hospitality areas/premium experiences.
3. The Pavilion is a great space that is owned by the Club, but it currently looks too much like a classroom (which it was previously used for). HR said it all comes back to finances.
4. IT said that there are ways to improve the facilities on offer for premium memberships and is something that is being discussed.

## **12<sup>th</sup> Men Announcements**

1. JW to take this away and ensure that the announcements are made by PA in respect of who this is at each game.
2. CE said this was frustrating as members care as to who represents the Club.

## **Catering**

1. GG advised it was in such a poor situation. CE said it is of such a poor quality.
2. JW advised there was a potential alternative offering being explored but could not confirm what this looks like currently as nothing had been agreed.

3. JW said that some members believed that the Rhinos food offering is slightly different in a positive way, which should not be the case if we are one stadium.
4. CE said there is a large problem with it being tepid, of a low quality, and extremely expensive.
5. JW believes members would pay a good amount of money if the food quality was commensurate with this.
6. CE asked whether the Club knew what was being served in the Long Room. JW confirmed he had tasted it firsthand but did not know if others were aware.
7. CE said that a number of things were agreed previously – menus to be provided and published for the whole 4 days of a game, an area set aside for those who wish to dine in the Long Room. None of these have materialized. Promises are given but nothing has happened.
8. GG aware that this is a constant refrain, but it has not improved in a few years. Supporters are aware of what the offering is like at away games and Headingley compares poorly to these grounds.
9. JW aware that there is no consistency, changes are enacted but then reverse to type later on in the season, maybe after the T20's.
10. IT asked if this had been included in the members survey. JW confirmed that this was on the 2023 survey but had not been included for 2024 as the Club were already aware of the issues that surrounded this topic.
11. JW to take away and speak with the hospitality team as to how this can be improved in the short term.

**Meeting Closed**