



Report from the Chair - Charlie Bennett

IWCB AGM - Monday 20th January 2025

This marks my first report as Chairperson of the Isle of Wight Cricket Board (IOWCB), and it is a great pleasure to reflect on a year of significant progress and achievement. I would like to begin by expressing my sincere thanks to our outstanding staff – Nick, Alex, Ash, Martin, Sam, and Mark. Their dedication, resilience, and forward-thinking approach have been central to the positive direction cricket on the island has taken. Their efforts have been repeatedly recognised by the ECB, ensuring that reports, bids, and health checks have all been successful and a testament to the hard work that has gone into the last 12 months.

This year has seen us make remarkable strides forward. The continued support of the ECB has been invaluable, and we are delighted to have secured additional funding. This has allowed us to make vital improvements, including increasing the contracts of several key staff members, enabling them to move to full-time roles. This shift has been essential in delivering a more consistent level of coaching and service across the island.

Our commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) has been a key area of focus, and we have made significant progress in building strong relationships with charities, community groups, and local government partners. This has enabled us to extend cricket to a variety of groups, including the Youth Justice Service, Community Action IOW, South Wight Area Youth (SWAY), Men Only Charity, and the People Matter charity. As we look ahead to 2025, we are excited about potential projects such as working with Elected Home Educated Children and the development of Walking Cricket, which we hope will further expand cricket's reach within our local community.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the contributions of Directors Dave Cox, Mark Turtle, and Hugh Griffiths, who have stood down this year. We thank them for their dedicated service to the Cricket Board. In their place, we are pleased to welcome Chris Ryan to the team, and we look forward to his contributions in the coming year.

On the field, we had the pleasure of hosting the MCC Men's team on tour during the summer. The Island's First XI delivered a thrilling victory over the visitors at Shanklin CC, while the Under 21s faced a tough challenge at Newclose. However, a special mention must go to Under 13 player Harry, who scored an impressive century in that match.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are excited to welcome the MCC Ladies team to the island, and plans are already underway for their tour.

In youth cricket, our boys' teams made excellent progress in the Hampshire District competitions at U12, U14, and U16 levels. With competitive games and some memorable victories (each side winning at least one game), we are optimistic about building on this success in the coming season. We plan to extend the fixture list, adding more games against appropriate competition to further develop our players.

The U14s also travelled to Cornwall for a two-day tour in 2024, where they gained a thrilling eight-run victory on the first day, before bad weather saw them have to switch to indoor cricket on the second day. The U16s visited Herefordshire for their tour, where they lost out to our hosts after playing two days' tough cricket, though there were some individual performances of note.

The U18s competed in the U18 County Cup, losing to Dorset, before a brilliant victory over Wiltshire in the Plate. The U18s also took part in the ECB T20 competition as well as hosting Herefordshire and Cornwall for some two-day cricket and 100-ball matches. These games were all incredibly close matches and were a fantastic experience for our side.

Women & Girls' cricket on the Island also continues to grow - their programme in 2024 included a successful two-day Under 15 Girls trip to Herefordshire. Congratulations go to Jess, who hit a sensational 145 on the tour, as well as taking four wickets in the same game.

In Disability Cricket, we have delivered in the three dedicated SEND schools, with St George's and St Catherine's having delivery of Cricket PE Lessons. We also ran the first ever SEND Festival at Newclose with around 70 participants and the St George's young leaders running the stations. We now have two established Super 1's Hubs that run weekly, both having a good number of participants that attend regularly, which is now starting to feed the Disability County teams. Both County teams had successful seasons with the new D40 Pursuit side finishing top of the South West region and the Super 9's side finishing second in the South East division. For the 2024/25 Indoor season we now have two Disability teams - one playing in Division 1 and the other in Division 3.

In terms of individual achievements, we are proud to highlight the signing of Will Mew by Glamorgan. Will made several appearances for their U18 and 2nd teams during the summer, which is a fantastic accomplishment and a testament to the strength of our youth development programme.

In partnership with the IW Schools Cricket Association, we saw an impressive 33 schools enter the Primary competitions, with a mixture of outdoor and indoor

tournaments taking place. Thanks go to Arreton, Newclose and Ryde for hosting the Primary outdoor finals.

We also had nine schools enter the Secondary competitions, again with indoor and outdoor tournaments on offer - thanks go to Stu Johnson and Gareth Bricknell from The Bay for stepping up to run the Secondary competitions in 2024 and to Newclose for their support with hosting the Secondary outdoor finals.

Our funded summer schools for disadvantaged children were fully attended, providing an invaluable opportunity for many young people to engage with cricket. Furthermore, the free cricket sessions we provided for the majority of children have helped make the sport more accessible and inclusive during challenging times for many families. We are also pleased to report that community cricket has been introduced into both primary and secondary schools much earlier this year, with the aim of encouraging students to continue their cricket journey by joining local clubs.

A significant development this year has been the introduction of a coach who is now responsible for coaching the coaches. This move has laid the foundation for our succession planning, ensuring that we have a growing pool of qualified coaches to meet the increasing demand for cricket sessions.

We also have a Core Coach Course currently running, with seven people from Isle of Wight clubs beginning their coaching journey. We also had an impressive fifteen new umpires pass their Umpiring Course across 2024.

I would like to congratulate each of the winners of all the IOW competitions hosted in 2024, as well as thank all the clubs for continuing to support the IWCB by entering.

- IW Division 1 - Newport
- IW Division 2 - Newport II
- Senior Cup - Newport
- Fred Winter Cup - Newport II
- Indoor Division 1 - Ryde
- Indoor Division 2 - Island Bakeries A
- Indoor Division 3 - IW Prison Officers
- Indoor Cup - Ventnor A
- U12 Indoor League - Ryde Royals
- U12 Indoor Cup - Ventnor
- U14 Indoor League - Arreton Buzzards
- U14 Indoor Cup - Ventnor Hurricanes
- U15 Girls Indoor League - Ventnor
- U15 Girls Indoor Cup - Arreton Rebels
- U11 Girls League - Ryde
- U15 Girls League - Ventnor

- U11 Cup - East Cowes
- U11 Plate - Ryde Rockets
- U13 League - Newport
- U13 Cup - Newport
- U13 Plate - Shanklin & Godshill
- U15 League - Ventnor Hurricanes
- U15 Cup - Ventnor Hurricanes

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to the many clubs, volunteers, and supporters who continue to work tirelessly to ensure that cricket thrives at all levels, from juniors through to adults, both male and female. A special thank you also goes to the ACO, ECB, our sponsors, and the supporters who have all played a crucial part in our success.

I look forward to another year of progress and growth, as we continue to nurture and develop cricket on the Isle of Wight.