

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023

I am now into my third year as Chairman & it is a pleasure to serve this wonderful Club.

It was a standard Hythe & Dibden CC season with some highs & lows on & off the field. One day I'll get to write my book 'Tantrums & tears a summer with Hythe & Dibden CC'! My highs included appearances in the Presidents Cup final which included a memorable spanking of New Milton at Hythe in the Semi-Final. We entered the Hampshire T20 Slam for the first time & made it to finals day at the Ageas Bowl, the highlight of this run was the quarter finals day at Hythe. A glorious day with two big Hythe wins. Lots of support in & even Peter Knight was heard singing Sweet Caroline! Great to see the Colts win a league & the continued development of these young players. There are several really good prospects coming through in various age groups. Sadly the club lost long time servant Ann Howe to a short illness. Ann who along with her Husband Gary & children Becky & Matt were part of the club for years. Ann served us in a variety of rolls over the years & will be sadly missed by all.

### **CRICKET**

Matt Young continued as First XI Matt & new Vice Captain James Page did their best with a small squad & a fall down the league saw us go into the last game needing a win to stay up. However to matt & James credit they galvanised their troops & the boys held their nerve & managed to win a rain effected last game of the season to retain our County 1 status. It's fair to say the rub of the green didn't go our way with us narrowly losing several close league games. The 1s also made the final of the New Forests President Cup in which we lost to Lymington in a low scoring thriller. I will forever blame Tom Huxley's son for this defeat as his third birthday party prevented Gatesy from playing! Next season with some decent recruitment & better availability the aim will be to look to push for promotion back to the SPL. The 2s were led by Tom Jones. It is fair to say that this was a baptism of fire for TJ mainly due to call ups to the 1s & dreadful availability. TJ slowly grew into the role & once he realised it wasn't friendly cricket performance & he didn't have to give everyone a game or be nice things slowly improved. Sadly this wasn't enough to keep the 2s up. TJ also lead the club to the Hampshire Slam finals day at the Ageas bowl sadly we lost out in the semi-finals which for me was the biggest disappointment of the summer. The 3s were run by London based Hipster Ryan O'Connor. 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-table. All league sides suffered with lack of availability & call ups to higher teams. Our colts showed real promise playing across all four teams. We are producing some very good young players testament to Andy's setup. With older Colts Ben/Callum playing in the 1s & 2s plus the likes of Billy Parry & Harry Wakley also making their debuts in the 2s. Drew, James & Ewan also made their debuts in senior Cricket. Chiv again ran the Sunday side playing friendly cricket with Dan Duell as captain

(despite Chiv firing him twice, resigning once & TJ & Fletch captaining half the games). Dan kept everyone amused with his WhatsApp comments! 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.

**BREAKING NEWS** As I write this the Indoor B team led by Jamie Fletcher have won Division 3 of the South Hampshire Indoor League. The Indoor 1's are currently top of their league & are looking to repeat the 2s success. Congratulations Jamie Fletcher & hopefully Dan Taylor

Running four league teams is a tough task but one we have managed well over the years the main issues are lack of numbers & availability this has been a problem since the Covid. Some faces retired during covid & others still haven't returned or found other things to do on a Saturday. We picked up some players over the summer (Dean etc) & Matt & James have been working hard on recruiting first team standard players & it looks like we may have picked up some hidden gems from Southampton Travellers now sadly no more. Hopefully availability will be better for the 2024 season with a number of new recruits across all the teams plus more colts coming into the sides.

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 Ryan O'Connor who steps down as third team captain anyone interested in replacing Ryan please let us know?

## **COLTS**

The club again ran All Stars,U9s,U11s,U13s & U15s. We don't run U17s or U19s as most colts are already playing Sunday or League cricket by those ages. 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 Addleton continued to run the colts section & has created a nice atmosphere & a professionally run section that is enjoyed by parents & colts & gives all colts a chance & a game rather than concentrating on & letting the best players dominate. Andy sadly steps down after numerous years running the Colts section & will be sadly missed in this role although he will still be involved in coaching the U9s. Andy Grave has stepped up to run the section with his wife Lucy taking over as Colts secretary. As a nice thank you to Andy the U13s won their league convincingly with some great performances from young stars Drew Bennett and Ewan Whittaker. Dawn was nominated and won the Cricket Collective award in Hampshire for Safe Hands. This was awarded to

Dawn as recognition for her part in creating a positive and inclusive environment for young people to enjoy the game.

## **FINANCIAL**

The finances continue to be run by Jonjo Stovell. The club continues to operate within its means. After a poor winter we are in a 'reasonable' financial position with enough in the bank to cover running costs but any unforeseen disasters will have major issues on the Clubs finances. We took measures to cut costs over the winter including cancelling Sky. Thanks to the Darts teams & Aztecs for their help over the winter. Without the revenue from the darts & football things would be looking bleak. The clubs 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 fund raiser. 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 supply some players to do it justice! However Chiv is looking to stand down as groundsman due to the commitment involved. If anyone knows anyone suitable for the role please let us know? Thanks also to Ian Prentice & family who have been overseeing the refurb of the umpires/store room which is nearly complete. 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. 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 2024 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. We have some exciting developments in the planning stage for the building in 2024.

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. Particular thanks here to Sue Froggett who did most of the Saturday bar shifts in Dawn's injury absence. 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 2024

Mike Bowman Chairman Hythe & Dibden CC