



CLUB FOUNDED 1839



SUSSEX CRICKET BOARD

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Consultation Document

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BACKGROUND

1) History

Sussex County Cricket Club is believed to have been formed in 1839, making it probably the oldest known professional sports club in the world. The Club had 3 headquarters locally before settling in to the current location at The County Ground in 1871, with the first match being played in June 1872 against Gloucestershire.

Up until winning the first Gillette Cup Final in 1963, the Club had never won any trophy of any kind. Whilst adding three further one day titles in 1964, 1978 and 1986, it was to take until 2003 before Sussex would claim their first County Championship. Despite this relative lack of success on the field of play, Sussex has a legacy of producing players of historical significance who have helped shape the modern game. Such luminaries include Ranjitsinhji, Duleepsinhji and the Nawab of Pataudi (together "The Three Princes"); Arthur Gilligan; "Lord" Ted Dexter; and Tony Greig to name but a few.

Since 2003, when Sussex won their first County Championship to embark on their "Golden Decade", the County have become one of the leading lights in the domestic game winning further Championships in 2006 and 2007, the C&G Trophy in 2006 (to complete a double), Division 1 of the Pro40 League in 2008 and 2009, and the Twenty20 Cup in 2009 to secure another double and a trip to India for the inaugural Champions League in October of that year.

More recently, the Club have continued to challenge on all fronts and have consistently been one of the leading Counties when considering combined performances across all competitions. In addition, the Club has invested £8m in upgrading The County Ground, and begun a journey to fully integrate Sussex County Cricket Club with the Sussex Cricket Board, to become a single body of Sussex Cricket, within the next 3 to 5 years.

2) Governance

Sussex County Cricket Club ("SCCC" or "The Club") is an Industrial and Provident Society owned by the 3,500 senior members, and run by the Board under the jurisdiction of the Club Rules. The Board meet 6 times per annum and hold the Club AGM each March.

The Board comprises 9 elected Directors currently, plus the President, the Chief Executive and up to 3 co-opted directors (although the Club has just one currently). Each elected

Director serves a 3 year term before having to retire and seek re-election. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Treasurer (together “The Officers”) are elected by the Board annually. From 2013, the President is no longer a Board role (other than by invitation of the Board), and it is intended to reduce the number of elected Directors by one per annum until the number is reduced to 6 for the 2015 season. By stream-lining the non executive management of the Club, scope exists to supplement the elected members with additional co-optees without the Board becoming unwieldy, and to consider the formal unification with the Sussex Cricket Board (“SCB”) to create Sussex Cricket (“SC”).

On a day-to-day basis, the Club is run by the Chief Executive with the Executive Team. It should be noted that since 2009, the SCCC Chief Executive has also been Chief Executive of the SCB.

The SCB has its’ own corporate structure (a Company limited by guarantee) and Board of Directors which meets quarterly.

In addition, the Club has the 1839 Hospitality and Events brand (“1839”), named after the year of the Club’s formation, which leads on all non match day activity. All catering is run by the in-house team.

Sussex Cricket also has two closely aligned independent charities in Sussex Cricket in the Community Trust (“SCCT”) and Sussex Cricket World (“SCW”). SCCT is a fund raising organisation which generates funds for the development of junior cricketers in the County, with particular focus on funding the running costs of the Academy ground at Blackstone, and community projects with a priority on investment towards the growth of the game within disadvantaged and minority groups. SCW holds all the Club’s artefacts under trust, and is the fund raising and operational arm of the Museum.

Working together, the two Charities have a joint appeal in 2013 to raise £100,000 to fund capital works at Blackstone and in the Museum at The County Ground. With SCW protecting the Club’s history and heritage, whilst SCCT helps support the development of the game’s future, Sussex Cricket is fortunate to have two such supportive and complementary local charities.

3) Mission

The stated Mission of the Club - and indeed of Sussex Cricket – as laid out in Appendix A – is *“To win a one day trophy and compete in Division 1 of the County Championship”*. It is purposefully stated that way round as it is felt that once in Division 1, the Club have a

chance of winning what is a very tough and closely fought competition. The Club seeks to compete in all three competitions annually without priority.

4) *The Three Pillars*

The success of the Club – and indeed of Sussex Cricket – is based upon three key principles. They are :

Cricketing Excellence – at all levels of the game from club cricket to community cricket to SCCC and for all groups of people regardless of age, sex, ethnicity or any disability, excellence is not just about the quality of performance, but also the quality of the experience, and covers all those involved in cricket from players, to coaches and support staff, to officials, and all other volunteers.

Financial Sustainability – the model in place is set up to create a long term foundation for the sport in the county of Sussex. All revenues earned are re-invested back into the game with the sole purpose of improving the cricketing experience for everyone in Sussex. The Club's aim is to generate sufficient profitability (before depreciation) in the short term to fund attritional capital expenditure annually, and in the medium term to start building new funds towards future development requirements. As such, we view ourselves as a “not-for-profit” organisation in most regards, albeit a highly competitive organisation in all regards.

Legal Compliance – as a high profile institution, it is vital that the Club and Sussex Cricket not only do all the right things, but do them in a correct and appropriate manner. Our sport should be safe for all parties to participate in, whether as a player, an official, or a spectator.

5) *Values*

Delivering the three pillars is vital to achieve our Mission. However, equally important to the Club and Sussex Cricket are the “Sussex Family Values” .The Sussex Family is something held very dear within the County and is seen by many as a key component in how a mid-sized Club can continue to compete so effectively with much better-resourced Counties. It is therefore important that all parts of the Club – from cricketers to administrators to the Board to the Stewards and part time catering staff – conduct themselves in such a way that lines up with the agreed Values.

CURRENT STATUS

The Club has just completed a four year development cycle from 2009 to 2012. During that time, it set itself the following objectives with the results as noted :

❖ *To win trophies and compete on the cricket field*

- 2009 – Twenty20 Cup Winners, Pro40 Division 1 Winners, NatWest Trophy Runners Up, went to India to take part in the inaugural Champions League
- 2010 – County Championship Division 2 Champions, T20 Quarter Finalists
- 2011 – 5th County Championship Division 1, T20 Quarter Finalists, CB40 Semi Finalists
- 2012 – 4th County Championship Division 1, T20 Semi Finalists, CB40 Semi Finalists
- In addition, a number of cricketers have been developed (or re-developed) for England including Matthew Prior, arguably the World's best wicketkeeper-batsman; Luke Wright and Michael Yardy, T20 World Cup Winners in 2010; and Monty Panesar, playing with renewed confidence after a difficult 2009 after which he joined Sussex to go from strength to strength.

❖ *To undertake a Ground Development program*

Between March 2009 and September 2011, the Club invested £8.50m to redevelop The County Ground. The project came in on time, on budget, and without any disruption to the cricket calendar. During that period, the Club :

- Refurbished the Spen Cama Pavilion to create an improved Board Room, a new Long Room, and a new Dining Room, with a new Museum in lower level.
- Built a new 1,700 seat South West Stand with a Club Reception, a Shop, a large food and beverage outlet, and additional toilets in the undercroft.
- Built a new Media Centre with integrated facilities for TV, Radio and the Press plus facilities for Ground Safety (Control Room and First Aid Centre), and rentable space for a Physiotherapy business and office accommodation.
- Created a new Hospitality facility of three buildings comprising The Boundary Rooms (seating for dinner for up to 300), The Executive Club, and The Players Club.
- Installed new floodlights to international standards, part funded by the ECB
- Relocated the Groundstaff to a purpose built set of units to the North end of the ground

- Built a new food and beverage outlet to the North End of the ground, with additional toilet facilities nearby
- Replaced the gymnasium with a new state of the art facility incorporating a hydro-therapy pool. This extension also includes female changing for the adjoining Indoor School, and additional public toilets
- Stripped out and replaced the floor, netting and lighting in the Indoor School
- Renovated the Administration Offices

The Ground Development program has created a County Ground which mixes the history and tradition of the wonderful seaside location, with a sympathetic blend of new builds which offers benefits to players, members, spectators, staff, sponsors and the media.

As a result, The County Ground now has one of the best suites of players' facilities in the Country especially when taking into the quality of the separate outdoor net facility; a 7,000 capacity ground with modern facilities; an excellent award-winning food and beverage offering, with a large number of public amenities; a growing reputation for offering a great atmosphere for cricket; and a charming atmosphere for non-cricket events from concerts to conferences to celebrations.

❖ ***To improve the commercial position by growing revenue and creating a more dynamic culture***

A decent foundation has been built at the Club, particularly on Corporate and Non-Match, though there is still work to be done on improving our Spectator activity and Hospitality performance.

Corporate income has more than doubled since 2009, driven by :

- A significant shirt sponsorship deal
- Ground Naming rights secured from 2011
- Increased naming rights on ground infrastructure
- The introduction of The Boundary Club, now Brighton's largest and best informal networking event with over 100 members paying over £1,000 per annum
- The key challenge is to maintain these investment levels, particularly in the current economic climate

Non Match income has quadrupled since 2009 on the back of :

- the investment in The Spence Pavilion and The Boundary Rooms

- a reputation for great food and great value culminating in being crowned winner of “The Best Place to Entertain” Award at the Sussex Business Awards in 2012
- a growing reputation for being able to stage concerts efficiently and with skilled local resource leading to a third event in 2013, to follow Sir Elton John in 2011 and JLS in 2012, as Sir Cliff Richard performs
- the Club seeks to grow Non Match activity by 25% per annum to achieve sales of £1m in 2015

Ticketing, Membership, Hospitality and Match Day Catering revenues – when removing special events such as Tourists or KO Matches – are broadly flat and offer the Club significant growth opportunity

❖ ***To continue the process of integration the activity of SCCC and the SCB which had been begun by the “Building Partnerships Group”***

In 2008, Sussex formed a “Building Partnerships Group” to consider how best to get SCCC and SCB working together with a view to one day having an over-arching body for Sussex Cricket. Appointing one Chief Executive to cover both bodies in 2009 was the first manifestation of this strategy, and significant progress has been made over the last four years to the benefit of both organisations. Some examples include :

- Head of Cricket Development is part of the Executive Management Team
- Cricket Development Team sit alongside the Commercial Team in one open plan office
- All County and Area Squad cricketers (boys and girls) are members of SCCC
- Hospitality space is used at County Championship matches to run “Reward Days” for League Cricketers who score hundreds or take 5 wickets, for Clubs that perform well on a national level, and for social events for groups such as Groundsmen, Officials, and Sussex Over 50’s
- CB40 ticket offers to Clubs, especially for Floodlit matches
- Under 10 tournaments at County grounds prior to one day fixtures in the afternoon
- Access to Hove to stage Finals Days for the major Local League events
- An annual Disability Cricket Day attended by over 300 cricketers representing all four disability groups
- The integration of Guernsey into the Area cricket program

- Player attendance at Awards Nights, Dinners, open days

The list could go on as whilst the interface needs continual attention and monitoring to ensure the balance is appropriate, the communication between Cricket Development, Pro Cricket and Commercial now makes many events seamless.

There is still much more to do particularly with regards to direct player communication, ensuring the journey of falling in love with the sport from an early age has the opportunity to appreciate the watching as well as the participating, and making further inroads into the less well represented groups in society who still see cricket as an elite sport.

Whilst the activity is probably never ending, the Club are committed to creating the opportunity to form Sussex Cricket from 2016 by formally merging the two bodies.

❖ **Summary**

Cricket in Sussex is in a healthy state. The foundations laid on the Cricket side since the famous “coup” of 1997 have created a team which is able to consistently punch above it’s weight and compete on the field of play with many bigger Clubs with greater resources.

Off the field, the Spen Cama legacy funds have been well invested to create a strong foundation at The County Ground on which to build further, and the vision of the Board has created an environment where SCCC and SCB are able to work towards formal integration.

Challenges remain and genuine sustainability can now be achieved, though it does remain to be achieved. The financial goals of the Club are to continue to grow our revenues so that :

- We can achieve an underlying profit in a “standard year”, excluding any exceptional matches, of £100k to cover the attritional capital expenditure program
- The Club can invest further sums into cricket at all levels, and in all aspects, to further improve the playing fortunes of Sussex CCC, it’s player pathways, the recreational clubs and the local community.
- To reduce the level of dependence on central funding and create robustness in the event that central funding had to be cut significantly
- To ensure the Club can weather an adverse summer &/or season commercially
- To fund the development of the Club’s support structure to offer visitors to the ground the best and safest experience that is practically possible, every day of the year.
- To generate a fund for any major new &/or replacement investment

- Our people can be proud of their achievements and motivated to continue striving for even greater achievement

The funding available in the 2014 to 2017 MoU cycle offers the Club the opportunity to accelerate this progression.

INVESTMENT PROGRAM

As previously noted, the Club has Three Pillars which will aid Sussex Cricket in achieving it's Mission. The investment program has been broken down into three groups to align with those pillars, though it should be noted that :

- All pillars are interdependent and what directly benefits one creates indirect benefits for the other two
- A number of investment projects will directly aid more than one pillar, though for ease each project is attributed to one pillar only
- In some cases, the benefit to be accrued is harder to quantify as it may prevent cost increases, protect current revenues or be softer and much more subjective. Where this is the case, it will be stated as such

❖ *Cricketing Excellence*

With a population of just 1.4m people, and surrounded by the sea and other First Class Counties, it is vital that the County seeks innovative ways in which to grow it's talent pool and that once that talent is identified, it is given the very best opportunity to make the best use of those talents with excellent coaching, sport-leading facilities, strong support programs, and the chance to play cricket on good grounds offering as much protection from the weather as practical, and in a competitive environment.

Our investment program under this Pillar contains :

▪ *EPP & Academy Program*

The Club plans to increase its investment from September 2013 through :

- Extend and expand the local programs in Sussex to increase the number of talented individuals eligible for the program and extend the contact time with those players
- Further developing it's overseas partnerships with Guernsey, and in other territories, to identify talent early
- Creating a partnership with a Minor County to add a first class layer to their player pathway

This will be managed by the Academy Director, supported by the Pro Cricket Coaching team

- *The Sutton Winson Academy Ground at Blackstone*

The Club has a facility, believed to be unique in the domestic game, situated 10 miles north of Hove, with a two-square ground primarily for the use of Age Group cricket. The ground also hosts our Visually Impaired side and a number of the Girls County matches, as well as local community clubs.

Due to increased use, and to ensure that our talented players have the opportunity to play and practise in the best facilities possible, a capital investment program is required to continue the development of the facility.

In addition, the Sussex Cricket Community Trust are seeking to raise funds through grant applications and taking a 50% share in the 2013 Joint Charities Appeal being held in Sussex alongside Sussex Cricket World to raise a further £50k to replace aging equipment and to offer an improved community offering at the Ground.

This will be managed by the Operations Manager, supported by the Head Groundsman and Academy Director

- *2nd XI grounds*

The next step for our talented cricketers from the EPP and Academy is to the 2nd XI. The Club has a program of focussing its' 2nd XI fixtures on 4 grounds around the County, although the Club will continue to offer encouragement and support to other clubs which would wish to host such fixtures. The door is very much open

Of these 4 grounds, two are also utilised for Festival cricket – the survival of which is vital to ensure the Club still reaches all 1.4m inhabitants by taking the game to them, as well as asking them to come to Hove. One issue which investment in HQ creates, is the gap between HQ and Festival and 2nd XI grounds can grow offering the perception that those Festival grounds are no longer as good.

To continue the development of these cricketers, the Club intends to invest in pitch renovations, and suitable wet weather protection measures to create the best opportunity for 2nd XI cricket to proceed on good facilities.

This will be managed by the Head Groundsman, supported by the Operations Manager and Professional Cricket Manager

▪ ***The County Ground, Hove***

Since the close season of 2009/10, the Club have been gradually re-laying the Hove square to create pitches with better pace, bounce and carry. This program will continue until at least 2015, though the benefits are already coming through with Hove being awarded the “Best HQ One Day Ground Award” in 2012. By the time the project is completed, £150k will have been invested by the Club from its’ own annual resources.

As the square improves, and following all the changes to the ground over the last 3 years, action is required on the outfield to improve the irrigation and aid the natural drainage in certain areas, particularly around the square as this can become elevated.

In normal weather conditions, Hove can become very dry creating conditions where the outfield grass can be killed off. If this is followed by very wet weather, mud and poor drying can follow. And in wet weather conditions, the ground can compact and hold the water creating a risk to fixtures being staged.

In addition we will address the issue of TV camera locations in respect to Sky televised games.

This will be managed by the Head Groundsman, supported by the Operations Manager and Professional Cricket Manager

❖ ***Financial Sustainability***

A key part of financial sustainability for any County Cricket Club, is to be good at cricket. It is our core business and what we become known for and a major part of building our reputation locally and nationally. We therefore make no apology for wanting to invest in that part of our business as it drives so many positive behaviours.

However, it is equally the case that good cricket alone does not sort the world. People need to know when to come along, and when they do come along they need to have a great time so they are encouraged to come back. We also want our customers sharing their good stories making thousands of ambassadors. Of course, there are relatively few match days so non match day activity becomes equally important and requiring a similar experience of pleasure to be derived.

And arching over all of this is a desire for relevance particularly locally. We want the County population to know about us for sport, as a venue, and as part of their lives. Without the annual / bi-annual event of International cricket, this process requires continual innovation, refreshment and challenge to ensure we are reaching all parts of the community all around the County in some way, shape or form.

To contribute towards those aspirations, our investment program under this Pillar contains :

▪ ***Customer Relationship Management***

The Club has 38,000 customer records but less than 10% are complete with email, address, date of birth and postal address meaning communication cannot be targeted other than by form of transaction.

Of these numbers, we believe 90% of Members live within 15 miles of Brighton and over 80% of ticket buyers are in the same area. The County has a radius roughly 4 times that size.

We believe that 2 in 3 of our customers do not buy a ticket again (though they may come on tickets bought by others), and those customers come less than twice per season.

Our objective :

- Reduce the lapse rate to 50%
- Increase frequency of attendance to 2.00 from 1.8 times per annum
- Maintain new customers at 3,000 per annum
- Timescale – by 2015

The “Come Along” action plan :

- Create an incentive based marketing program to encourage customers to give you their full data, offering “money can’t buy prizes” with great external value but minimal cost to the Club.
- Categorise and analyse the different populations
 - Age related
 - Gender
 - Format of cricket preferred (and / or non match)
 - Location
 - Socio-economic group
- Create specific marketing plans by group

- Focus investment on the Current buyers to come more often and with other people, and the Lapsed buyers to return
- Develop cross-selling opportunities from Match to Non Match and vice versa
- Develop a general and efficient marketing message, across all relevant media, to capture the eye of the new customers whilst making it easy for them to find you (e.g online search, website)
- Use activity to reach out to those communities who are least likely to attend due to pre-conceptions over the game
- Ensure new data records cannot be created which are incomplete
 - Staff training
 - Investment in management systems
- Keep collecting, keep analysing, keep messaging, and keep finding ways to measure the effectiveness of each measure
- Develop the model on members, ticket buyers and ticket buyers and then widen the reach to include non match visitors, corporate customers, and hospitality
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❖ **Legal Compliance**

Sussex Cricket is committed to ensuring that all our visitors, from all our stakeholders, have a pleasant and fun experience when they come to Hove. It is equally important that they all have a safe experience too. As the investment measures take effect, the ground will become busier with more people on site every day, with more vehicles on site every day, and more wear and tear for the facilities. Compliance measures rarely generate direct financial benefit although they play a major part in cost prevention, and ensuring the best possible chance of maintaining an excellent reputation.

Our investment program under this Pillar contains :

- *Staff training program*

This is not legal compliance in the normal sense of the term although the Club intend to make it a Sussex promise that everyone should have a good experience with any and every Sussex person they come into contact with.

Ground Safety measures

We intend to invest as necessary in order to enhance our ground safety requirements

Staff investment

As the site activity increases, additional investment will be required to maintain a safe environment. We will therefore look to invest in the areas of maintenance provision and match day safety officer duties and responsibilities

SUMMARY

Valuing the benefits of an investment program is not an exact science. The future is tricky to forecast as there are many other factors which affect our sport and business. Some of these we control (i.e the schedule), others have control over us (i.e the weather), and others have a major influence on us though we can mitigate to varying degrees (i.e the economy).

We welcome comments from our members and stakeholders as we prepare the business improvement plan to put to the ECB to access a grant of £1,000,000.

Please send any comments by email to BIP@sussexcricket.co.uk