**Chairman’s Report 2022**

2022 has been a challenging year for many reasons. Sadly, we have lost several past and current members this summer and I’d like to acknowledge them in my report today.

March – Mike Chastney (VP) 1st team bowler and junior cricket committee member

June – Rod Macfarlane, a long serving player and life member

June – Terry Harris, long standing club member

July – Peter Blackburn, VP and 3rd team cricketer

July – Paul Taylor, 1st team batsman/wicket keeper in the 90’s

October – Mike Hammond, life member and 1st team leg spinner

I’m sure you all join me in sending our sympathies to their families.

As we are all aware we also lost Peter ‘Chipper’ Bryant, our beloved President on the 3rd of July this year, the day that was earmarked as Presidents Day. Chipper was a huge character and much loved by all who knew him. He loved our club, enjoyed his role and was an active member of the committee. He was a wonderful man who will be sorely missed. Chipper’s position as President needed to be filled and I am delighted to say that Dave Letch has agreed to take this on. Dave is one of our longest serving members and has been a player, coach and supporter of the club for as long as I can remember. I can’t think of anyone better suited to the job and I wish him all the best in the coming years.

Post pandemic I hoped that the new season would be successful, stress free and fun. Although there were some highs throughout the year it has proved to be a very difficult season for most. I believe that the Covid hangover has a big part to play in many clubs struggles and ours is no different.

At the start of my role as Chairman the committee put plans in place which would have moved the club forward, unfortunately those plans were stifled, and we have found ourselves in the situation we are in now. It is time to rebuild with a new plan, fresh ideas and a focus on what is important. Hopefully with a new enthusiasm and direction will see us move towards our long-term goals in 2023. I have been aware of a lot of criticism aimed at teams, captains, individuals the committee over the past season and I would like to reiterate that everyone at the club is a volunteer. We are here to do our best for the club and try to make things better for all. Captains and players don’t go out to perform badly, teams don’t go out to lose, and committees don’t make decisions just to upset the members. I ask you all to please consider the situation and as a club be more positive next year, supporting each other and building a warm friendly atmosphere for all to enjoy.

It has been a very tough year for the teams generally. The captains have done a sterling job with what they’ve had available. The availability this year has been the worst I have known and that has been reflected on the performance of many teams. Unfortunately, the 1’s and 2’s both got relegated, but I’d like to thank Chris and Dave for all their hard work in difficult circumstances. The Third team needed to win the last few games to stay up, fortunately they managed to secure the results they needed and stayed in their division. So well done to Mike and his team for a hard-fought season. I’d also like to thank Larry for his work with the Fifth team and the Sunday team. It’s a thankless task but yet again he has produced sides amidst poor availability and difficult times. Well done all.

There were two shining lights this season, firstly the Fourth team, they had a great year and managed to get promotion! So, I’d like to say well done to Reece and his boys and girls on a hugely successful year. Finally, a big well done and thank you to Craig for reintroducing the ladies’ team back to Wickford. He has made great strides in getting a team together and getting them to play matches. It was an impressive first season, with the Ladies going unbeaten and I’m sure they will go from strength-to-strength next year.

We are fortunate at Wickford to be blessed with some talented individuals. I want to wish Ronnie all the best on his Australian adventure, I’m sure he will return a stronger and more rounded player after a season with those friendly Aussies! It’s also great to see Shaggy finally realising his potential and playing a major role in his England tour to the West Indies. It’s a fantastic achievement and we wish him all the best on his journey.

I will close by thanking everyone on the committee for their efforts this year, and everyone who has given their time to volunteer and help where they can. The ground staff, scorers and tea ladies, the social committee, the work behind the bar, the work on the pavilion and all the behind-the-scenes administration that must be done. Without you the club could not function, and we would not be in a position to try to move forward and grow next year.

Regards

Andy