

## 2025 AGM Minutes

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Members of Lancashire County Cricket Club Limited Held in The Point at Emirates Old Trafford, Manchester (and via Zoom)**

Thursday 29 May

Time: 16:00-18:15

#### **PRESENT**

**Board & Secretary:** Andy Anson OBE (Chair), Dame Sarah Storey (President), Vic Stewart (Honorary Treasurer), John Abrahams (Board Member), Navin Singh (Board Member), Gaz Morris (Membership Secretary), Chris Peacock (Board Member), Sara Tomkins (Board Member)

**Executive Team:** Daniel Gidney (Chief Executive), Liz Cooper (Partnership Director), Mark Chilton (Director of Cricket Performance)

**Other:** Club's auditors from Hurst & Co, Tony Slater from Mi-Voice, Phil Johnston (Member Relations Manager), Freya Ryder (Minute taker), 178 Members

**Apologies:** Rachel Downey (Board Member), Bob Bennett (Senior Vice President)

#### **INTRODUCTION**

**THE SECRETARY** welcomed all Members in attendance as well as those attending via Zoom. He thanked them for taking the time to attend the Annual General Meeting and formally opened the meeting. It was declared as quorate in line with Clause 13.1 of the Club rules.

**THE SECRETARY** introduced Andy Anson, **THE CHAIR**, to run the meeting.

**THE CHAIR** thanked **THE SECRETARY**. Before beginning formal proceedings, he congratulated the Thunder team on their success in the Women's County Cup. The Chair invited everyone to give a round of applause to the team.

**THE CHAIR** put on record a special thanks to Dale Benkenstein. His tireless efforts on behalf of the Red Rose were commended. He affirmed that Dale departed with the Club's thanks and best wishes. The Chair welcomed the next chapter for the team as the Club moves forward with Steven Croft, describing him as someone who lives and breathes the Red Rose.

Since the last AGM, sadly, he reported a number of people who were very important to the Club had passed away. Former President of the Club for 10 years, Sir Howard Bernstein passed away last year. The Chair described him as someone who worked incredibly hard for the Club and will be sorely missed. In addition, the sad loss of three Vice Presidents: Stephen Edge, Keith Hayhurst and Ken Standing were noted. These individuals were referenced as contributing considerably to the Club. The audience were invited to observe a moment's silence to remember these people.

Moreover, special thanks were issued to James Sheridan who stepped down from the Board earlier in the year. The Chair described him as going above and beyond, especially on the recent Hundred process, but most significantly in his capacity as a legal advisor. The Chair took the opportunity to personally thank James. He confirmed that James Sheridan will be on The Hundred, Manchester Original's Board moving forward. The Chair expressed that he had been a great asset to the Lancashire Board and as his Senior Independent Director.

**THE CHAIR** invited **THE SECRETARY** to read the apologies.

#### **2024 AGM MINUTES (ITEM 2)**

**THE CHAIR** invited comments or questions on the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 30 May 2024.

**Member (David Lane)** stated that on page 6 of the 2024 AGM Minutes the Secretary confirmed that there were 6,500 Members eligible to vote in 2024. Yet it was noted that on point 17 in the Accounts that there were 5,022 Members as of 31 December. A request for confirmation on which figure was correct was made.

**THE CHAIR** asked if Angela Lowes was able to provide confirmation of which figure was correct.

**Angela Lowes** confirmed that it had been reported, and the matter was being investigated following a query on membership numbers. The correct figure will be reported following the AGM.

**Member (David Lane)** suggested the scale of the discrepancy was a concern. There was a request for assurance that only eligible Members received voting papers.

**THE CHAIR** confirmed that it was solely a reporting issue.

**Member (David Lane)** reiterated the scale of the discrepancy, noting that he raised the matter in a pre-submitted question ahead of the AGM.

**THE CHAIR** requested a return to the relevant agenda item. He reported that all Members are checked against a register of those eligible to vote to ensure that the process is accurate. Assurance was given that it would be reviewed, although there is confidence in the voting process.

**THE CHAIR** requested that any other matters arising from the 2024 AGM Minutes were raised.

**Member (Nick Evans)** suggested that there was a technical error at the last AGM when Members were invited to send their questions via text message. As a Member who submitted a question via text message, that was not addressed in the 2024 AGM, he requested that this was recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

**THE SECRETARY** commented that the Club were not aware of any technical issues. It was noted that the service provider would be contacted to ensure all questions that were submitted via text message had been received by the Club. It was referenced that any questions submitted by Members to AGMs, Forums and meetings are tracked and trends identified; therefore, questions are addressed as themes rather than individually. The Secretary offered his apologies if the item raised was not adequately addressed and offered to pick this up individually, if required.

**THE CHAIR** acknowledged that some Members did not feel their questions were sufficiently acknowledged or addressed during the 2024 AGM and this would be noted in the Minutes.

**A Member** commented that there was an error in the 2024 AGM Minutes. Reference was made to the bottom of page 7 and the top of page 8 where several lines have been interpolated from the previous year's minutes. The title of Vice Presidents was observed as leading into a description of the re-election of Sir Howard Bernstein, which applied to the previous year. It was mentioned that under the title election of Honorary Treasurer, the election of Vice Presidents then follows.

**THE SECRETARY** confirmed that there was an error in that two points were carried over from the 2023 AGM Minutes into the 2024 AGM Minutes due to a design and formatting issue. The first error was a sentence and the second was a heading that was mistakenly carried over. The Secretary assured Members that the correct version of the 2024 AGM Minutes were published on the Club's website and had been in circulation since September. It was noted that a correct copy of the 2024 AGM Minutes had been printed and was available on tables for Members to review.

**THE CHAIR** confirmed that the amendment will be made to ensure that the correct set of AGM Minutes is recorded. Subject to the amendment, the minutes would be approved. The Chair invited any one to raise their objections to this approach.

No objections were made; therefore the 2024 AGM Minutes were approved.

### **CHAIR'S STATEMENT (ITEM 3)**

**CLUB CHAIR, Andy Anson**, welcomed everyone to the AGM and thanked Members for their ongoing support.

There were four key areas that were discussed in the Chair's update:

- **Cricket performance:** he began with the disappointing men's cricket performance. He reiterated the sentiments of Mark Chilton and John Abraham's statement of apology. He acknowledged that the men's team performance was not the standard expected. It was noted that an immediate return to division one was targeted. The scale of the challenge of this in the second half of the season, based on the results achieved, was emphasised. Nevertheless, the optimism of heading into the Blast tournament with a strong squad and team was referenced. It was stated that Mark Chilton will work with the team to turn it around. Thanks were issued to Keaton Jennings. He suggested that Keaton felt that the captaincy was detracting from him being able to bat at his optimum level. He confirmed that it was Keaton's decision to step down and with Marcus Harris' willingness to step up meant that the team had a suitable candidate to carry the team forward in the interim. The Club's support for Keaton as one of the most experienced and strongest players was reiterated, especially with his long-term commitment to the Club. Following this, he stated that the transition to the Blast tournament would hopefully bring an immediate improvement in performances with a new coach that represents all that is good about the county. The opportunity for the team and coaching staff to get behind Steven Croft and work together to get results was discussed. He called upon the Members to support the team, as everyone is pulling together to improve things. It was noted that the results are not a reflection of a lack of effort and there was a collective commitment to improving. Moreover, the women's team were congratulated for their recent achievement. Last year, there was a real impetus going into the 2024 season, yet the results didn't materialise as hoped. However, winning 10 out of 12 matches this year is evidence of the turnaround that they've managed to achieve. Chris Read and his coaching team were described as a breath of fresh air. The mix of young, exciting players with experienced individuals was mentioned thus creating a very talented team. The additions of Eve Jones and Grace Potts were noted as strengthening the squad over the winter. The overseas signings of Katie Mack and Alana King, due to arrive soon, were referenced and there is keen optimism that the side will continue to move forward in the right vein.
- **The future of The Hundred:** he confirmed that the Club were delighted to enter a period of exclusivity with the RP-Sanjiv Goenka (RPSG) in February. RPSG were stated as in the process of completion for the purchase of 70% of the Manchester Originals team. The sale was described as important particularly as the funds allow for the investment in the cricket elements of the business. Firstly, reducing debt was identified as a very important focus. Other important initiatives were outlined including investment in the facilities of the Indoor Cricket Centre, the Farington project, and Members' facilities at Emirates Old Trafford. A review on the use of funds would be considered when the financial details are established. The intention for Farington to provide a unique second home, designed to ease the burden from Emirates Old Trafford, was stated. Providing a centre of excellence for women's cricket in the county, in addition to functioning as a community hub, was also identified. It was confirmed that the plan to play some cricket in 2026 is still in place. Maximising the fan and Member experience was identified as a focus.
- **Commercial and financial performance:** he confirmed that £34.1 million had been made in revenue with an operating profit of £4.7 million. Given the circumstances, it was not considered a good outcome overall. Context was provided with the loss of two major match days: the International T20 and the Roses T20 were washed-out games. It was observed that a Sri Lanka Test Match series doesn't tend to attract sell-out crowds which impacted the Club's top line revenue last year. Although in 2025, ticket sales for the India Test Match were

described as strong. A busy period at Emirates Old Trafford with the Vitality Blast as well as men's and women's international cricket is expected. Furthermore, the hotel extension, with its 250 bedrooms, was described as a success due to its significant contribution to the business of Lancashire Cricket. He recognised the contentious nature of the hotel extension but referenced the importance of adopting a mixed business model to fund the primary (cricket) elements of the Club. The combination of a sustainable business model alongside The Hundred investment money was described as providing a strong foundation that supports the men's, women's and youth set ups. It is hoped that this will help to drive improvement in cricket performance.

- **Membership and Member communication:** he stated that there are 9,600 Members across all categories. A sustainable growth in membership is targeted and there is a desire to enhance what is offered to Members. The Member consultation for The Hundred was described as a step in the right direction as the Club consulted Members on the process more than any other county in English cricket. He thanked the MRG suggesting that they communicate with the Executive team well. He stated that the MRG do an excellent job, ensuring that the agenda of Member issues is represented throughout Lancashire Cricket. However, he acknowledged that there is still further work to be done. He argued that The Hundred had placed the Club in a more sustainable position by providing a financial model for generations to come. He invited Chris Peacock to carry out a full review of membership engagement and build on the experience element at the Club. As part of the review, Chris will talk to existing, prospective and past Members to ensure there is two-way engagement process as the Club moves forward.

**The Chair** closed his opening statement.

**The Chair introduced a formal Q&A session to provide an opportunity for engagement. The Chair invited Hugh Ferris onto stage to host a Q&A session on cricket performance, Farington, and the Club's Finance Report (see appendix Item C).**

**THE CHAIR thanked Hugh and invited Members to ask any questions related to the topics in the Q&A session.**

A **Member** referenced an interview on LancsTV between The Chair and Paul Allott from autumn 2023, in which The Chair stated his intention to employ a "proven winner" for the Head Coach role. The Member challenged the outcome of the recruitment process.

**The CHAIR** responded noting that it is more challenging to recruit a full time Head Coach than in previous years due to the volume of coaching opportunities available around the world. He suggested that franchise roles are especially enticing as they tend to offer high salaries for short term commitment. He confirmed that Mark Chilton, John Abrahams and James Sheridan led the recruitment process for the Head Coach role. He stated that a shortlist of candidates was identified based on those considered to offer the county the best prospects of success. He acknowledged that despite Dale Benkenstein's poor run at Gloucester, he was considered a talented individual who was committed, and it was hoped that he would bring positive change. A culture change was considered necessary. The Chair re-iterated that although the results haven't been good, the decisions were made with the best intentions. Moving forward, he confirmed that the best possible candidate for the Head Coach role would be sought as the most important factor is bringing success to the men's and women's teams at Lancashire Cricket.

A **Member** queried whether any discussions had taken place between the Club and the authorities with regards to ensuring that Farington is accessible on public transport.

**Daniel Gidney** confirmed that the Club are in ongoing conversations with Farington as part of the mobilisation with the local authority. The creation of a green travel plan was noted as in development and before there are any games hosted at Farington, there will be further communication to Members.

A **Member** commented that there are seven buses an hour that run from outside Preston train station to nearby the Farington site, therefore suggesting that public transport will be readily available. Nevertheless, the bowling performance of the men's cricket team was questioned as he considered it as the most disappointing element of season so far. He argued that this put extra pressure on the batters. He requested further information on what coaching the men's team have in place for bowling and how it might be improved.

**Mark Chilton** referred to two senior players in attendance (Tom Bailey and Will Williams) who have been great players for Lancashire. He referenced Tom (Bailey)'s 400<sup>th</sup> first-class wicket in the last game and offered his congratulations to him. The effort which they invest and the quality that they are capable of was highlighted with 2023 noted as an exceptional season for both players. Re-iterating some of the comments he'd already made, and his experience as a player for 15 years, he argued that the key factors in playing cricket at a professional level are confidence and belief. He suggested that this is what separates the best players. It was commented upon that an individual must manage their mindset, which is challenging, and is susceptible to being derailed. Coaching was identified as one element but there are many other factors that impact how a player feels and ultimately performs. He observed a decline in confidence from individuals and a team. He explained that part of a coach's role is to instil belief in players and focus on their strengths. This will be the object of attention. He also reiterated his belief in the individuals at the Club.

A **Member** recalled a table of attendance that was published, illustrating that County games held at out grounds were better attended than those at Emirates Old Trafford. He requested clarification on whether it was the intention to hold County Championship fixtures at Farington rather than Emirates Old Trafford.

**Daniel Gidney** confirmed that the model for Farington is a work in progress. He stated that crowds at Emirates Old Trafford for County Championship games have been very poor in recent years. The best crowds for County Championship games have been recorded at Southport, Blackpool and even Sedbergh. The results suggest that there is a proportion of people who have an appetite for watching County Championship in an intimate environment. The current trend suggests this shift, although he argued the direction of travel should be set by Members and customers rather than determined by the Club. As a result, Emirates Old Trafford, Farington and out grounds will continue to be available. The cricket department annually assess the best way of winning games. But it was noted that from a commercial perspective, the evidence suggests that the use of out grounds, particularly for County Championship fixtures, attract a higher number of spectators. Ultimately, the Club will work with the MRG and Chris Peacock as it will require consultations with Members on the subject. Nevertheless, the Club remain open.

A **Member** enquired whether there were car parking spaces available at Farington.

**Daniel Gidney** confirmed that there are car parking spaces at Farington.

A **Member** asked if there were any discussions taking place for developing the square at Emirates Old Trafford to create a better balance between bat and ball, describing the pitch as flat of late.

**Mark Chilton** acknowledged that some of the pitches have been tired and lacked a bit of life this year. Determining why this is the case was described as one of the areas of focus and a priority for the cricket management group. He noted that more grass has been left on the wicket than ever before; for instance, the Derbyshire pitch had 20mm of grass on it. Achieving more even coverage was described as a challenge. He affirmed that the team have been pro-active and experimental in working to achieve a better balance between bat and ball. Altering the level of rolling was used as an example. The weather was also referenced as critical for the preparation of the pitch. The abnormally dry weather in April and May was described as having an impact, although the results of this are difficult to measure. Nonetheless, a key priority is ensuring that the pitch provides home advantage.

A **Member** requested an initial estimate on the likely consequential cost to the Club of Manchester United's failure to secure European competition.

**Daniel Gidney** affirmed that the Club have built a diverse and robust Conference & Events business that is not reliant on Manchester United, therefore he does not expect a material impact on the Club's revenue.

**TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD AND ACCOUNTS OF THE CLUB FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2024 TOGETHER WITH THE REPORT OF THE AUDITORS ON THOSE ACCOUNTS (ITEM 6)**

**THE CHAIR** requested clarification from the Treasurer regarding whether the Member numbers were incorrectly published in the document.

**THE TREASURER** confirmed that this was the case.

**THE CHAIR** assured Members that the discrepancy in the reports on the number of Members as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 would be addressed and corrected.

**THE CHAIR** introduced **THE SECRETARY** to explain the voting process and how the proxy votes and the online votes would be amalgamated.

A **Member** raised a minor error in the report on the Accounts, suggesting that only five Board meetings were held last year plus an 'away day' as opposed to monthly meetings as stated in the Accounts.

**THE CHAIR** confirmed that this would be noted and corrected. He then re-introduced **THE SECRETARY**.

**THE SECRETARY** noted that this was the second year the Club had used Mi-Voice for the distribution of electronic AGM papers and to facilitate with proxy voting. Thanks were issued to Tony Slater and the Mi-Voice team for support with the process. The Secretary confirmed that there were 5,926 Members eligible to vote. He stated that 427 Members voted in total with 3.4% Members opting to vote by post. It was confirmed that 346 Members voted by proxy and 81 Members had pre-registered to attend the AGM and vote in person. It was outlined that Members would be invited to vote on resolutions in the following section of the meeting.

The voting process for those in the room was explained. Members with voting cards were asked to raise these in the air so that votes could be counted, following which the results of the proxy vote would be read. The results would be combined to determine the outcome. If there was any doubt over the outcome, then a poll would be conducted. The Secretary also thanked the external auditors, Hurst, who were in attendance to oversee and facilitate the process. The resolutions were noted as requiring a simple majority vote. It was confirmed that there would be no vote available in the room for the Non- Executive Director (NED) role for the Board or the MRG position. Instead, the results of the votes which were cast in advance would be read.

**THE CHAIR** thanked **THE SECRETARY** and introduced **THE TREASURER** to propose the approval of the accounts.

**THE TREASURER** extended her thanks to Hurst for their continued work with the Club. She then formally proposed that the report of the Board and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024, together with the auditor's report on those accounts, was adopted.

**Sara Tomkins** seconded the proposal.

**THE CHAIR** put it to the floor. He acknowledged that there were some votes against the approval and stated that these would be noted and the amendments made.

**THE SECRETARY** confirmed that 94% voted in favour. This, combined with the majority in the room, resulted in the motion being passed.

### **RE-ELECTIONS TO THE BOARD (ITEM 7)**

**THE CHAIR** introduced Chris Peacock to formally propose the re-election of Rachel Downey to be approved by Members.

**Chris Peacock** formally proposed the re-election of Rachel Downey to the Board to be approved by Members.

**A Member (Christopher O'Brien)** challenged the re-election of Rachel Downey arguing that the process hadn't been carried out in accordance with Club rules. He noted that the 2025 AGM papers indicate that three male Members applied to join the Board. He referenced Club rule 17.5.2 suggesting that the Nominations Committee are required to interview all applicants. Following a pre-submitted question on the matter, he requested clarity on whether all the candidates had been interviewed and inferred that it was breach of Club rules if some hadn't been.

**THE SECRETARY** thanked the Member for his comments. He referenced the line contained within Club rule 17.5 which outlines that the Nominations Committee's role is to identify, interview and recommend. He clarified that candidates are identified for interview with the Nominations Committee shortlisting candidates, based on the selection criteria, to go forward to the interview phase.

**THE CHAIR** affirmed that the Club hadn't breached Club rules, and the recruitment process was run in accordance with the skills matrix and ECB's EDI requirements.

**Chris Peacock** formally proposed the re-election of Rachel Downey.

**John Abrahams** seconded the proposal.

**THE CHAIR** requested a vote on the re-election of Rachel Downey. He confirmed that there was a clear majority in the room.

**THE SECRETARY** confirmed that 78% of proxies were in favour. Combined with the vote in the room the motion was passed.

**THE CHAIR** invited Vic Stewart to formally propose the re-election of Navin Singh.

**THE TREASURER** formally proposed the re-election of Navin Singh.

**John Abrahams** seconded the proposal.

**THE CHAIR** put the proposition to the floor.

**THE SECRETARY** reported that with the majority in the room and the 79% proxy vote in favour, the motion was passed.

### **ELECTION OF A MEMBER TO THE BOARD FOR THE NEW NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION FOR FAN EXPERIENCE AND VENUE SAFETY (ITEM 8)**

**THE CHAIR** requested that **THE SECRETARY** reported the results of the Member vote.

**THE SECRETARY** reported that there were three candidates for Members to vote from following the rigorous recruitment process. With 44% of the Member vote, Gillian Singh was elected to the Board as the NED for Fan Experience and Venue Safety.

**THE CHAIR** congratulated Gillian Singh and welcomed her to the Board as a Member representative. He also referenced the strength of the candidates that were interviewed for the role.

### **ELECTIONS OF MEMBERS TO THE MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE GROUP (ITEM 9)**

**THE SECRETARY** explained that there were two vacancies on the MRG with four Members shortlisted for the Member vote. All voting was conducted in advance of the meeting. It was reported that Damian Owen received 32% of the vote and Chris Blackburn, 31%. As the two Members with the most votes, Damian and Chris were appointed to the MRG.

**THE CHAIR** offered his congratulations and welcomed them to the MRG. He also thanked all candidates who had put themselves forward.

#### **ELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENTS (ITEM 10)**

**THE CHAIR** introduced Item 10 which is the election of Vice Presidents. Previously this role has been exclusively open for officers of the Club, but this has since been extended so that very important Members of the Club can be formally proposed for election.

**Chris Peacock** commented on it being a proud moment to formally propose the election of Sue Grainger as Vice President of the Club. He described her as a super Member who travels across the country to support Lancashire Cricket over many years.

**Sara Tomkins** seconded the proposal.

**THE CHAIR** put the proposal to the floor.

**THE SECRETARY** reported that the result of the proxy was 90% and the votes in the room were unanimously in favour, so the motion was passed.

**THE CHAIR** issued congratulations to Sue, suggesting that it was very well deserved. Secondly, he introduced the proposal for a dear friend of the Club and Lancashire Cricket Foundation, Michael Moore, to be elected as a Vice President of the Club. He referenced his recent attendance at a charity event in Morecambe which Michael had organised and emphasised his worthiness of the accolade.

**THE TREASURER** formally proposed the election of Michael Moore as a Vice President of the Club.

**Sara Tomkins** seconded the proposal.

**THE CHAIR** put the proposal to the floor.

**THE SECRETARY** reported that the proxy vote was 80% and with the clear majority in the room as well, the motion was passed.

**THE CHAIR** issued congratulations to Michael.

#### **RE-APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS (ITEM 11)**

**THE TREASURER** formally proposed Hurst & Co as auditors of the Club until the conclusion of the general meeting, which considers their report on the annual accounts of the Club for the year ended 31 December 2025.

**Navin Singh** seconded the proposal.

**THE CHAIR** put the proposal to the floor.

**THE SECRETARY** confirmed that the proxy vote was 96% in favour with vote in the room also unanimous, therefore Hurst & Co were reappointed as auditors of the Club.

#### **MEMBER PETITIONED RESOLUTION (ITEM 12)**

**THE CHAIR** introduced Chris Peacock and the Chair of the MRG, Jo Dibben, to answer questions on the Member Service Report and to discuss the Member petitioned resolution.

**Chris Peacock** proudly announced that this was the first Member Service Report that will become an annual publication. He thanked the 163 Members who had submitted resolutions this year. He provided an explanation as to why all four Member Resolutions submitted had not been formally included in the AGM papers. One of the resolutions related to James Sheridan and as he had since stepped down from his role on the Board, the resolution could not be carried forward. It was confirmed that two further resolutions were reviewed to assess their validity and their implications in terms of the Club rule changes required for these requests. He reported that external legal advice was sought to determine if the resolutions met the requirements. The Member Service Report is designed to progress to a place whereby resolutions are discussed openly, and issues are resolved throughout the

year so that petitioned resolutions become obsolete. He invited any Members with concerns to contact him and the MRG. The significance of communicating with Members, particularly surrounding their concerns, was described as important and something that himself and the MRG were focused on. The Member petitioned resolution was described as prompting the creation of the Member Services Report to illustrate how the Club responds to issues raised. He suggested communication with Members will improve through the provision of a helpful tool which documents progress made and is available to the membership. He stated that most of the issues raised in the named appendix, which forms part of the petition, are included in the Member Services Report except for a few items that contained confidential information therefore were not deemed appropriate to include.

Furthermore, he provided some context to his journey as a Member who had never met anyone on the Board or Executive team to navigating how the Club works and engages with its Members, as he enters his third year as a Board member and fulfils the Chair's request to conduct a Member Engagement Review. In the last twelve months he suggested that he'd worked closely with the MRG to strengthen their position and effectively represent Member views. He issued thanks to Andy for asking him to review Member engagement. Although the strategy was still being devised, he declared his commitment to engaging with all Members and stakeholders to improve Member engagement. He reported that a series of recommendations would be made to the Board as a product of the review. The annual service report was described as one step in the Member engagement journey. He acknowledged that there may be Members who feel a disconnect with the Club. He thanked Jo and the MRG for their work over the last 12 months, reiterating that they robustly challenge the Club in the Members' interests. He thanked Members who had engaged with the MRG. He invited Jo to discuss the Member Service Report.

**Jo Dibben** introduced herself as the elected Chair of the MRG. She described Chris as fantastic and someone who is approachable and acts on feedback to ensure that changes are implemented. She invited Members to email the MRG with any issues so that these can be reviewed. She acknowledged that some Members may not be aware of the work of the MRG and the Report helps to showcase this. She also noted that the MRG have an X account, and they hold drop-in sessions at various points during the season so that Members can actively engage with them. The next drop-in session was confirmed as the 31 May between the two games.

**Chris Peacock** expressed hope that the Report marked a new level of transparency and accountability. He issued an open invitation to Members to contact himself and the MRG. He then asked Member, Stephen Cooper to discuss the Member petitioned resolution.

**Member (Stephen Cooper)** thanked Chris, the Chair and the Board. He stated that 163 Members had submitted four resolutions to the 2025 AGM in accordance with Club rule 11.1.2.6. Speaking on behalf of the 163 Members, he accepted that resolution four relating to James Sheridan was no longer relevant. Nevertheless, he requested that the minutes of the meeting highlight the dissatisfaction felt among the 163 Members who submitted the resolutions, alleging that the Board have sought to stifle and control the debate by managing what information and which resolutions are presented at the AGM. He summarised that Resolution 1 seeks to hold the Board to account for the way that it has dealt with numerous issues. He argued that there was a lack of transparency in their approach and encouraged Members to reject the Board's response suggesting evidence illustrating how the Board acted correctly had not been shared with Members. He described Resolution 2 as a vote of no confidence in the Nominations Committee, recommending actions to restore confidence in its operation. He suggested that Resolution 3 requests that the Board complies with Club rules, most notably rule 11.1.2.6, and present any Member petitioned resolution to the AGM without editing. He stated that the Board have deemed that Resolution 2 and 3 require changes to the Club rules, following the Club's seeking of legal advice, therefore have been excluded as they have been considered invalid. Consequently, he considered that as these resolutions had not been put forward to the membership, debate had been denied to Members. He argued that these resolutions had been submitted to the AGM to save costs and avoid the Special General Meeting route which would've required the Board to consider the business as drafted. He proposed that Members should be allowed the opportunity to discuss and debate the two resolutions at the AGM. If the Board allowed a vote, he acknowledged that an ordinary resolution would not be recognised as a binding instruction although

he expressed a desire for the Board to listen to Member recommendations. He requested that if the Board were not willing to carry the two resolutions forward, then the AGM minutes should record the reason for their refusal. He issued a reminder that an SGM can be called with only 100 Member signatures, although the Board have discouraged Members from pursuing this avenue due to the costs involved. He suggested that the Board were stifling debate and moderating the information that is shared with Members, arguing that this confines disgruntled Members to using the SGM procedure. Finally, he thanked the Chair and Secretary for allowing him to present.

**THE CHAIR** thanked Stephen for his presentation and his conduct. He invited Chris to respond on some of the issues raised.

**Chris Peacock** thanked Stephen for his clear communication. He discussed the challenge presented when resolutions are submitted that are not compliant with the rules. Whilst he appreciated Stephen's viewpoint, independent legal advice was sought to ensure that the Club operates within the constraints of the rules. He challenged the accusation that debate had been stifled, suggesting that the Club were open to conducting these discussions with Members. With regards to the lack of information shared with Members on resolutions, he insisted that it is not within the rules to share appendices. As a Board member elected for Member Services and Communications, he expressed frustration that a reciprocal approach to the formulation of the resolutions may have resulted in them being written in such a way that they could have been submitted and considered. He encouraged positive dialogue with the Member Engagement Review designed to address these issues. He publicly offered Stephen an opportunity to discuss, on a one-to-one basis, the resolutions that have not satisfied the rules so that they can be included as part of the Member Engagement Review. He wished to draw a line under previous issues and present constructive ways that promote Member engagement. Over the coming months, he stated his intention to communicate with Members and other stake holders on the shape of the Member Engagement Review. By the 2026 AGM, he expressed hopes of presenting recommendations based on the work of the Review.

**THE CHAIR** thanked Chris Peacock and Stephen Cooper then moved to a vote on whether the Members' deem the Board's response to service issues raised in the document presented, some of which could not be shared, as adequate in response to Member Resolution 1. He clarified that Members voting in favour would be deeming the Board's response and Chris' presentation as adequate. Whereas those voting against the resolution consider the Board and Chris' response as inadequate.

**THE CHAIR** requested a count of all those in favour.

**THE SECRETARY** asked Tony Slater and Hurst & Co to conduct a count.

**Hurst & Co** reported that 33 Members had voted in favour of the resolution.

**THE CHAIR** requested a count of all those against.

**Tony Slater** confirmed that 59 Members had voted against the resolution.

**THE SECRETARY** reported that the proxy in favour of the resolution was 224, and against the resolution was 111. As a percentage, this was confirmed as 66% in favour of the resolution.

**THE CHAIR** highlighted the significance of the proxy vote in favour of the resolution compared to the vote in the room. He clarified that the motion was passed, and the Board's response was considered adequate.

A Member challenged the result.

**THE CHAIR** confirmed that the gap was well over 100 in the proxy vote, therefore a recount was not necessary. He also reiterated that the independent auditors conducted the count in the room. He noted that any concerns raised will be addressed in the manner that Chris Peacock outlined earlier in the meeting.

Before **THE CHAIR** moved to Item 13, Jo Dibben added that due to comments surrounding Farington, she encouraged Members to contact the MRG with any concerns or feedback. She confirmed that a Farington subcommittee was being formed and a Frequently Asked Question document was being compiled.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS (ITEM 13)**

**THE CHAIR** asked if there was any other business to raise.

**A Member** noted the appropriate opening of the meeting, in which respects were paid to Board members who had sadly passed away in the last 12 months. He requested that these were extended to Peter Lever, who he described as a true Lancashire legend.

**THE CHAIR** acknowledged the oversight and recognised Peter Lever as a Lancashire legend. He referenced growing up near Peter and attending school alongside his son. Then later watching some of him play in the early 1970s.

**A Member (David Lane)** requested a correction following the Chair's comments on the election of Vice Presidents who had not been officials of the Club. He recognised Sue Grainger as a valuable committee member for many years. She was described as doing a wonderful job and wished to have this acknowledged.

He then went on to ask his question which related to hosting concerts at the venue. He referenced allegations that were reported in the press of health and safety breaches. He requested clarity on the position of those and the possible consequences, particularly in terms of whether it impacts the Club's ability to host concerts at the venue in the future, as well as any financial implications.

**THE CHAIR** admitted that there had been health and safety issues, although constructive discussions were taking place with the council to address these concerns. A positive dialogue with the promoters was also noted as required. He expressed desire for the Club to host concerts again in the future. From a financial perspective, it was reported that the impact would be lessened by The Hundred investment. Nevertheless, the prospect of hosting concerts on an occasional basis remains an objective. Due to the sensitivities surrounding the legal case, he requested that respect was shown to matters that should not be discussed at this stage. He recognised the importance of the Club's health and safety responsibilities, hence a Board member with a health and safety focus is sought. He assured Members that discussions were in a good place, but legal details cannot be disclosed.

**A Member** noted the good work of LancsTV but as a Member that frequently watches the game, he stated that when replays are shown on the screen, they are displayed on the screen to the right of The Point which is not visible to Members who are seated on the Pavilion Terrace. He requested that highlights were shown on both screens.

**THE CHAIR** acknowledged the request and said that it can be investigated.

**A Member** asked how many Members voted in the election of the new Board member.

**THE SECRETARY** confirmed that Gillian Singh received 203 votes.

**THE CHAIR** clarified that 461 Members in total voted in the election of the new Board member.

**A Member** asked if there were any contingency plans in place for the India series given the decision to truncate the last tour which impacted the match at Emirates Old Trafford and was outside the Club's control?

**Daniel Gidney** confirmed that there were no contingency plans in place as there was an expectation that the series will be played in full, describing the set of circumstances in 2021 as extreme. He reminded Members that the Club provided full refunds, including hospitality bookings, following the series in 2021.

**A Member** questioned whether there will be access to LancsTV for non-Members following the Club's journey to improve the platform which now requires a login. He asked whether it was the intention of the Club to make it a Lancashire Members' only platform.

**Daniel Gidney** confirmed that non-Members would be able to access the platform but the Club were exploring ways in which the platform can be improved. It is an Over-The-Top (OTT) platform but the intention is to provide an enhanced service to Members. He confirmed there will be a limited service available on YouTube.

**Vice President (Malcolm Lorimer)** noted the re-development plans being discussed for Manchester United. He expressed hope that the Club would be involved in any redevelopment plans.

**THE CHAIR** confirmed that he'd had a meeting with Lord Coe who is chairing the redevelopment. He assured Members that Lord Coe was aware of the Club's concerns surrounding the plans. He referenced Daniel's strong relationship with Manchester United's Chief Operating Officer Collette Roche; therefore, he confirmed that work will be done to ensure a good outcome for the Club too.

**A Member** questioned how the Board ensured fair treatment for the presentation of county caps which are awarded at the Board's discretion. George Balderson, who has made significant contributions in the four day game over the last few years, was used as an example of a player worthy of consideration.

**THE CHAIR** clarified that although county caps are awarded at the discretion of the Board, no recommendations have been put forward. He called on the Cricket Department for further comment.

**Mark Chilton** acknowledged that it was a good observation. He highlighted that overseas players tend to be international players that have a significant impact on the team in a short period of time. The presentation of a county cap can foster the inclusion of an overseas player with the Club. He acknowledged the points surrounding George Balderson, suggesting that these needed to be discussed. He implied that a review on how the process could be tightened could be considered at Board and Executive level.

**THE CHAIR** offered to the floor a final question, but encouraged Members to get in touch should they have any other questions.

No further questions were asked. **THE CHAIR** closed the meeting. He issued thanks to Members for their attendance and their input during the meeting.

## Appendix

### Item A

#### Statement of correction:

- Under point 17 (Share Capital), page 40, in the Annual Accounts for the year ended 2024 the correct figure was confirmed as follows: *“Allotted, called up and fully paid Ordinary 5p shares allotted to 6609 (2023: 8604)”*.
- Following a point raised by a Member at the 2025 AGM, it was clarified that the Board had five formal meetings plus one Broad Strategy Day in 2024 as stated on page 21 in the Annual Accounts for the year ended 2024

### Item B

#### Apologies:

THE CHAIR apologised for the oversight in the obituaries. Peter Lever, former Lancashire and England cricketer, passed away in March and 2025 and is recognised as a Lancashire Legend. He was inducted onto the Lancashire Hall of Fame in 2021.

### Item C

#### Formal Q&A session to update Members on the topics of cricket performance, Farington, and the Club’s Finance Report.

**Hugh Ferris** invited the President Dame Sarah Storey, Director of Cricket Mark Chilton and Director of Women’s Cricket David Thorley to the stage for a Q&A.

- **Hugh Ferris** asked Mark Chilton for his perspective on the changes and the reason behind the decision for Dale (Benkenstein)’s departure.
- **Mark Chilton** reiterated Andy’s comments on Dale. He related that it had been a challenging few days for the Club. He described Dale as a good human being who’d worked very hard with the group. He gave context to the difficult decision he made with the disappointing results, that are often felt most by the players. He detailed observing a team that was collectively and individually losing confidence. He appreciated that it wasn’t the product of a lack of effort. Ultimately, the collective performance was deemed as not satisfactory. A much-improved performance across the four-day game against Derbyshire was referenced, although he described the failure to secure a win as disappointing particularly as it had the potential to lift the team. Following another weak performance and a disappointing post-match interview from Dale, he recognised the need for change. He reiterated that a coach’s job is to instil confidence in a team and support individuals. He asserted that every person in the dressing room has earned the right to be there. Nonetheless, he accepted the importance of recruitment. He confirmed that over the last 24 months the Club have tried to recruit in a targeted manner to strengthen the squad. He suggested that a change in format comes at a good time as the team seek to be more positive and generate some momentum.
- **Hugh Ferris** enquired about the inspiring effect that Steven Croft may have on the players.
- **Mark Chilton** argued that Steven epitomises everything that is good about Lancashire Cricket over the last 20 years. When discussing the identity of a strong Lancashire team it included showing fight, being tough and competitive with a dose of edge; elements that were described as lacking on the pitch recently. He suggested that Steven embodies all these qualities, therefore it is hoped that he will transfer this attitude to the group. He recognised that it would be a challenge, and he’d require support. The strength of the overseas characters, such as Chris Green and Ashton Turner, to bolster the Blast team was referenced.
- **Hugh Ferris** he asked David how proud he was of the team following their victory.

- **David Thorley** remarked how proud the Club were of the group, highlighting that reaching Finals Day was in itself an achievement and to win a trophy so early in the season was impressive. He stated that it was testament to the hard work that players do in the Indoor Cricket Centre over the winter with the long sessions in the cold. He also referenced the behind-the-scenes work of teams including sports science, medical, coaching and nutritionists.
- **Hugh Ferris** introduced a video that showed the Lancashire Thunder County cup win and invited a round of applause for the success at Taunton.
- **Hugh Ferris** asked what impact of Chris Read had in the last 18 months and what the achievement means for the women's teams progress and development.
- **David Thorley** complimented the work done by Chris as well as his coaching predecessors, including Paul Shaw, who were part of the initial journey. He suggested that players had clarity in their roles and that belief has taken some time to build. He considered, in 2020, when the journey to professionalising the women's, domestic game started with the England Cricket Board (ECB) that there was a lot of ground to make up, and evolution had been gradual. He suggested that the challenge is to be sustainable in our success but the result against Surrey showed that the team can beat anyone. He highlighted the support received by the Club to enhance the squad. For instance, Eve Jones, Grace Potts and Darcey Carter have been complimented with overseas signings. Commercial partners, such as Hilton, were described as key. The pathway was flagged as a major area to strengthen. Tilly Kesteven, as winner of the player of the match in the final, was described as testament to the pathway's importance.
- **Hugh Ferris** asked Dame Sarah to share her thoughts on what it feels like to win and how it can impact future games and competitions.
- **Dame Sarah Storey** emphasised the power of winning games in terms of experience that players can draw on in future games. Referencing the pressure that the Lancashire Women were under pressure towards the end of the Thunder Cup final, yet their ability to never lose belief. Despite Surrey's acceleration in run rate during a passage of play, the Lancashire Women were able to remain buoyant.
- **Hugh Ferris** suggested that it was great that players, particularly Kate Cross, the captain Ellie Threlkeld, and Sophie Ecclestone, were able to enjoy the success and had been rewarded for their years of service with a trophy.
- **Dame Sarah Storey** affirmed that it was amazing to watch great players perform well. She suggested that it was possible to identify each player's contribution and throughout the tournament from everyone in the squad. The entire squad was described as part of the trophy. She suggested that this why the group is special because they're pulling together and there is a blend of youth and experience. She referenced the depth in the squad with every player knowing their role. She highlighted that the fielding was exceptional, suggesting that it is exciting to observe how this has evolved particularly in the last year or so.
- **Hugh Ferris** argued that the Thunder Cup provided a solid foundation for the T20s. He asked how excited the team were for the T20s.
- **David Thorley** agreed the County Cup win serves as a wonderful warm up for the Blast campaign. He stated that team are in a good place. He confirmed there will be slight changes to all teams as some players are lost to England duty so there will be a different dynamic.
- **Hugh Ferris** asked Mark to share a few words on Keaton's decision to step down as captain in the four-day game and to outline what Marcus Harris will bring as the interim captain.
- **Mark Chilton** suggested that it was clear in conversations with Keaton that he wasn't enjoying the captaincy; he'd expressed his simple desire to win games of cricket. He suggested that Marcus brings a level of confidence and freshness to the role that will hopefully help the team moving forward. He described Keaton as a wonderful human being and thanked him for his contribution in that format. He asserted that he believes that he's the

right person to lead the team in the Blast. He confirmed that the team lose six players for the first few games, but there are some strong white ball specialists and key overseas players.

- **Hugh Ferris** thanked the panel and invited a round of applause.

#### **Hugh Ferris introduced Jen Barden, Managing Director of the Lancashire Cricket Foundation.**

- **Hugh Ferris** asked Jen for an update on what the Farington site looks like.
- **Jen Barden** commented on the impressive scale with the two ovals referenced as the most overwhelming feature of the site. She confirmed the grass is growing, the squares are in, and the pavilion is taking shape. She suggested that the site is particularly exciting from a community angle.
- **Hugh Ferris** asked for further insight on how Farington might be used at a community and youth level, as well as by the women's teams.
- **Jen Barden** stated that the size of the site presents many opportunities with the potential for schools to play on the outfield with mini competitions and All Stars sessions. The scope of programmes that could be run from there was discussed; for instance, the Street Cricket competition held at Bolton Tennis Centre could be hosted at Farington in the future. It was presented as an example of utilising the space for other groups that wouldn't normally play on a pitch. The aim will be to get local communities to engage in various forms of cricket. Expansion outside of cricket with Sporting Memories and Education without Boundaries to inspire the next generation was also discussed.
- **Hugh Ferris** questioned why it matters that it is in the heart of Lancashire.
- **Jen Barden** explained that as a youngster in the player pathway, training times often presented challenges due to travelling from Burnley to Manchester. She argued that the M65 corridor is a huge hotbed of cricketing talent, which is opened with easier access to a high-performance venue. In this way, she suggested that it mitigates the impact of travel obstacles for those in the player pathway. She added that it is well placed to serve local communities, situated just off the M6 junction, and near retail parks that will foster a community vibe.
- **Hugh Ferris** thanked **Jen Barden**.

#### **Commercial and financial performance: the Chief Financial Officer, Angela Lowes and the Honorary Treasurer, Vic Stewart were invited onto stage.**

- **Hugh Ferris** asked Angela to describe the financial results.
- **Angela Lowes** stated that the Club are pleased with the performance. She reported that the Club had generated its highest income for a non-Ashes year, at £34 million. She noted that the Club planned to host a Sri Lanka Test Match and an Australia International T20. The financial results for domestic cricket were reported as similar to the previous year. The positive impact of three sell-out concerts was also noted. She suggested that one of the most positive results is the increase observed in the Conference, Events, and hotel sector. The generation of almost £13 million in revenue, an increase of £2 million from 2023, was highlighted. Overall, a profit of £4.7million was reported.
- **Hugh Ferris** asked how significant the impact of the weather for the two key events (Australia IT20 and the Roses T20) were.
- **Angela Lowes** responded that it was disappointing for everyone with everything set up to deliver a fantastic match day experience. Despite having insurance protection, she stated that it never compensates for holding the event. The loss of opportunity in terms of food, beverage and retail match day sales was outlined.
- **Hugh Ferris** asked Vic Stewart what the expectations for 2025 were.
- **Vic Stewart** shared that from an international perspective, weather permitting, the outlook is positive with an India series scheduled and strong ticket sales for the event. Domestically the financial results are expected to be similar to last year. She suggested that The Hundred investment will be transformational for the Club's finances. Although she mentioned that any

elements that will make a big difference to the Club's financial performance are still to come so there are a few unknown factors.

- **Hugh Ferris** asked what guidelines the ECB have put in place and the Club's plans for the investment.
- **Vic Stewart** explained that the ECB have set guardrails around the use of funds. She outlined that the ECB would like clubs to develop cash reserves, for funds to be used for debt repayment, as well as investment. She confirmed that the ECB are seeking to encourage counties to remain financially sustainable, therefore discouraging any increase in operating costs. She reported that the ECB have expressed a desire to work with the Club to understand our priorities. She outlined two main priorities: securing the Club's long-term future and ensuring that Lancashire Cricket is the best for cricket performance and Member/fan experience. From a financial sustainability perspective, she mentioned the importance of a "rainy day" fund. Debt repayment was also referenced as important. Other areas identified include player training facilities and Farington. She expressed gratitude to Members for their feedback on the subject which is being reviewed, although the Club are at the planning stage.
- **Hugh Ferris** stated that it was the first year that all 250 rooms in the hotel have been open. He asked Angela what impact this has had and its long-term importance.
- **Angela Lowes** referenced the vital nature of generating year-round funds from the venue and explained that this why investment was made in the Conference and Events business, and the hotel. The original 150-bedroom hotel was reported as a success, which enabled a robust business plan for the extension to be built. This funded an extra 100 hotel bedrooms and in the first full year of trade; she suggested that the Club are already ahead of where we expected with occupancy reported as just under 80%. She stated the challenge is to sustain this. She highlighted that the hotel is open year-round, which provides regular and consistent cash flow.
- **Hugh Ferris** thanked Angela Lowes and Vic Stewart for the update.

**Hugh Ferris invited Mark Chilton onto stage to answer some questions pre-submitted by Members.**

- **Hugh Ferris** asked why there were no concerts scheduled.
- **Daniel Gidney** confirmed that there was a focus on cricket in 2025. Similarly to 2019 when there was a World Cup and an Ashes series, cricket was described at the forefront in 2025.
- **Hugh Ferris** questioned what formats of cricket will be played at Farington and if this would impact the amount of cricket played at Emirates Old Trafford and out grounds.
- **Mark Chilton** reported that across both programmes, he expects all formats to be played at Farington. He suggested that pressure on Emirates Old Trafford needs to be alleviated in terms of the schedule and facilities. He highlighted that the net facility currently serves two professional teams with ever increasing demands which include international cricket, The Hundred and an increase in the women's cricket schedule. He suggested that Farington should enable us to manage the programme at Emirates Old Trafford better. Nevertheless, the importance of out grounds was noted.
- **Hugh Ferris** asked the Club to confirm the status of the men's salary cap and if it was available to spend.
- **Mark Chilton** affirmed that it was available to spend, and he'd never been prevented from spending money on a player. He confirmed that there was still some room left in the salary cap and that's not a bad place to be. He reiterated the challenges of recruitment over the last couple of years and suggested that there have been some very generous offers made to individuals. He asserted that he doesn't consider finance to be a restriction nor a reason for not being able to secure some of the players targeted. The 1<sup>st</sup> June was referenced as when the opportunity to approach players re-opens for those that are in their final year of their contract. He warned that despite having an open cheque book, it does not guarantee that

specific players can be secured. He expressed that he has the full support of the Executive team and the Board on recruitment.

- **Daniel Gidney** added that Surrey is the only county that are close to the salary cap yet even they haven't reached it. He stated that the salary cap is very large when considering the availability of players. He confirmed that there is no reduction in the salary cap, internally, from a cricket budget perspective. He asserted that in his thirteen-year tenure, every player that the cricket department has wanted to make an offer on has been conducted. He clarified there is in an issue in terms of availability of players. Securing an overseas player for the duration of a season was described as much more challenging compared to twenty years ago. It was also stated that the top domestic players are under contract, therefore long-term plans are required. He highlighted that an increased salary cap would not resolve the issue as the challenge surrounding the availability of players to spend money on remains.
- **Hugh Ferris** requested on behalf of a Member firm assurance that in future all Members will receive their membership cards well in advance of the season.
- **Daniel Gidney** affirmed that they would.