Minutes

Meeting	**Members' Forum**	Date	**26 October**
Location	**The Point**	Time	**6.30pm-8pm**
Attendees	Richard Kenyon, Mike Watkinson, John Abrahams, Paul Farbrace (via Teams) approximately x190 Members		
Apologies			

Introduction:
Mike Watkinson welcomed Members in attendance. He referenced the Member Engagement Review and the commitment to transparency. He introduced the panel which included the new Chief Executive, Richard Kenyon and Board member John Abrahams. He also confirmed that the newly appointed Director of Cricket, Paul Farbrace would be joining via Teams to provide an update. He outlined the format for the forum and introduced Richard.

Richard Kenyon introduction:
Richard Kenyon thanked Members in attendance. He also expressed gratitude for the comments and advice that he had received so far. He stated that he looked forward to continuing these conversations as he moved forward. He shared his background and vision for the Club, despite only being in his third week in the role. He spoke about his personal connection to Lancashire Cricket, recalling his first experience of watching the team in a professional match in 1984 at Trafalgar Road, home of Southport and Birkdale Cricket Club, when Lancashire played the touring West Indies team. He explained that this was the moment he became hooked on cricket and still has a photograph of himself on the square, with Paul Allott bowling during his warm-up. He commented that Mike Watkinson had reminded him that this was the match in which he scored his first first-class century. He described it as the point at which he fell in love with cricket and the red rose, saying that he keeps the photograph on his desk at Emirates Old Trafford Cricket Ground to remind him what a privilege it is to work here.

He also spoke about his time at Everton FC and his wider career, which had been spent in sport in various capacities. He outlined his experience across a range of sporting organisations, including The Open, the Jockey Club, the Grand National and England Netball, as well as several Championship football clubs. He described his 13 seasons at Everton as challenging but considered the development of the new stadium to be a significant achievement and something he was proud to have played a role in from concept to completion. He stated that when he worked at Everton an important part of family life was visiting Emirates Old Trafford Cricket Ground to watch men's and women's games and international fixtures. Although only enjoying a short spell at Nottinghamshire Cricket Club, he commented on benefiting from working with Peter Moores and Mick Newell as well as others at the Club.

However, he described the opportunity to work at his home county of Lancashire as an unmissable one. He suggested that despite inheriting a lengthy to-do list, not least addressing the poor performances of the men's red ball team, it was an amazing Club with underlying strengths. He emphasised that the Club had promising young players across the men's and women's squads, committed Members, and hardworking staff. He described the Club as having unrivalled facilities at Emirates Old Trafford Cricket Ground and at AO Farington Cricket Ground. He also discussed the scale and reach across the county in terms of the numbers of young people playing the game and the great work of the Lancashire Cricket Foundation.

He reported that he was delighted with the appointment of Paul Farbrace, highlighting his credentials, capabilities and character. He referred to Paul's success at Sussex, noting that this demonstrated his ability to build strong environments and cultures, as well as an understanding of what it takes to win. He emphasised the importance of this, given that Lancashire's on-field performances needed to improve. He expressed confidence that Paul Farbrace could help the teams return to where they should be, competing in the top tier. He explained that despite

being on holiday, Paul would be joining the meeting remotely to outline some of the key points for his vision for the Club, particularly with the men's red ball ambition, as well as addressing the decision around Sir James Anderson. He added that we all appreciate what a legend Jimmy is of the game globally, not just on a club and country level. He described it as an incredibly difficult decision to take and expressed hope that the Club can maintain a close association with Jimmy moving forward.

Finally, he commented on his mission to make Members, supporters and the people of the county proud of their Club. He suggested that the greatest way to make people proud of their Club was through success on the field. He stated that this was what he was there to deliver across all formats for both the men's and women's teams. He reiterated the clear short-term commitment to securing promotion for the men's team, with the aim of challenging for the Division One title within three to four years. He stated that the Club would need to be run on sound business principles but asserted that the emphasis was that it was a Club not a business. He acknowledged that commercial success was necessary because it helps the Club to invest in cricket but viewed it as a means to an end, and that end was about winning. He committed to building positive, productive relationships with all stakeholders, particularly dedicated Members, as well as listening, communicating and engaging.

He concluded that pride would be delivered by successful, winning Lancashire Cricket teams, and that he looked forward to working with everyone. Then he introduced Paul Farbrace via video link to the meeting.

Paul Farbrace
He thanked Richard for the introduction and recognised the emotion and strength of character that would be felt in the room. He began discussing the history and tradition of Lancashire Cricket Club and referenced his first visit to Emirates Old Trafford Cricket Ground as an 18-year-old playing for Kent Second XI. He described the ground as one of the best cricket grounds in the world. He claimed that the Director of Cricket role was an unmissable opportunity for him.

He stated that the aim was success and that he did not need time to assess the situation, as he felt it was already clear. He said that finishing second bottom of Division Two of the County Championship was not good enough. However, he was keen not to point blame at players or staff, recognising that everyone involved in the game worked exceptionally hard. He saw a significant opportunity to harness the passion and energy of the membership and channel this into an expectation of winning. He referred to his arrival at Sussex four years earlier, when the team had been second bottom of Division Two and had won just one match per season for the previous three years. He reported that Sussex had finished third in the County Championship that year, attributing this progress to the establishment of a winning expectation. He emphasised that success required the right people in the right positions, with every decision made in the best interests of Lancashire County Cricket Club and nothing else.

He suggested that he was still learning as a coach and Director of Cricket, especially about bringing out the best in young people. He emphasised the importance of everyone working towards a common goal and purpose, explaining that clear direction and unity gave the Club a much greater chance of success. He referred to conversations with players and staff, which had focused on what needed to be done to win and how to create a Club culture that supported success. He acknowledged that some refinements would be needed as this work progressed. He also stated his intention to remain at the Club for at least four or five years, helping Lancashire Cricket move forward and achieve success.

He described Sir Jimmy as undoubtedly one of the greatest cricketers that Lancashire and England have ever produced with his record reflecting this. He stated that the decision not to renew his contract for 2027 was not taken lightly. He claimed that the focus was on building a team for the next three or four years that could win the County Championship. He expressed belief that the decision offered Lancashire the best chance of achieving this. He took responsibility for the decision, and he described himself as a passionate cricket fan therefore he welcomed feedback as they embarked on the journey. He confirmed that he was happy to answer questions from Members.

Mike Watkinson thanked Paul for his comments and explained that some of the pre-submitted questions would be addressed in the first instance.

A Member asked if four-day cricket was a priority for the Director of Cricket next season, and how he planned to get Lancashire Cricket back playing in Division One again and winning one day trophies. And if young players will get a chance next season.
Paul Farbrace confirmed that County Championship cricket was the priority. He stated that it was his ambition to win the County Championship with Lancashire Cricket in the next four years. He insisted that there needed to be an expectation to win, rather than merely compete. He suggested that there wasn't much difference between Division One and Two and the first objective was to get out of Division Two. In addition, he stated that he expected the team to qualify for the quarter finals of the T20 Blast every year. In terms of young players, ensuring they have opportunities was noted as key with their passion and enthusiasm. He suggested the Club want a spine of homegrown players to form the team, particularly that the Members can associate with. He also discussed developing players so that they are capable of playing international cricket, arguing that individuals playing for England should be something that Members and supporters should be proud of.
He used the example of James Cole at Sussex who had attracted media attention through his Hundred contract. He described him as a player that he had inherited at Sussex who they'd exposed at an early age and who was now in the England squad. Similarly, he suggested that Lancashire had some fantastic young talent. He added that young players are the way forward for any club.

Mike Watkinson thanked Paul for his comments. He acknowledged some pre-submitted questions on the topic of Jimmy Anderson but suggested that these had been addressed as part of Paul Farbrace's statement. He invited questions from the floor.

A Member asked to what extent Paul saw new recruits being part of the equation or working with existing players at the Club. They asked what the balance between those two things would be.

Paul Farbrace explained that he was keen to understand the characters of the team, as he was already in possession of the statistics. He argued that teams were built around high-quality characters. He stated that he needed to assess what sort of people the players were; for instance, when the team needs another 20 runs to win do they want to get 10 runs and get out. He suggested that if they need to recruit the odd player to boost the team, then they would. Although he claimed that there should be enough quality within the squad and it was a case of building confidence and self-belief. He asserted that he needed to identify which players were comfortable with the expectation of winning and the way of determining this will be spending time with them.

A Member asked if Paul would be part of the cricket review and if he saw this as dictating his strategy.

Paul Farbrace confirmed that he had been involved in the cricket review, which was why he had taken an active role in discussions with Richard Kenyon. He was keen to contribute to the process and help ensure that the right people were in the right positions. He explained that the cricket strategy depended on the quality of the players and the pitches on which they played. He described the pitches at Emirates Old Trafford Cricket Ground as magnificent and emphasised that the team should be playing on the best pitches possible. He suggested that pitches offering good bounce brought everyone into the game. He reiterated that the strategy would be focused on winning, with the aim of taking every match into its final day and giving the team the best possible opportunity to win games and, ultimately, trophies. He added that learning to play on good pitches helped players develop their skills for the international level, and praised Head Groundsman Matt Merchant's ability to produce them.

A Member expressed difficulty understanding the decision not to renew Jimmy Anderson's contract, noting that he had shown no signs of declining performance and had taken 50 wickets during the 2026 season. They questioned the decision from a performance perspective and felt that the way it had been handled was disrespectful. They added that, given Jimmy's contribution to Lancashire Cricket, he deserved a better departure from the Club.

Paul Farbrace accepted full responsibility for the decision, explaining that he and Richard had told Jimmy that they felt it was the right time to move on and build a team for the next three or four years. He stated that he did not envisage Jimmy being part of that team in three or four years' time.
He emphasised that he held Jimmy in the highest regard, having witnessed his efforts for England, and confirmed that he had spoken to him face to face. He apologised if Members felt the decision had been disrespectful, stressing that this had never been his intention and that he had not sought to cause harm.

While recognising Members' disappointment at the way Jimmy's Lancashire career had ended, he maintained that the decision was not intended to be brutal and noted that players did not always receive the opportunity to bring their careers to an end with a sunset finish.
He expressed hope that, once the disappointment and anger had subsided, Jimmy would continue to be part of Lancashire Cricket's future.

A Member stated that they had several points to make. Firstly, they suggested that the Club could have informed Jimmy, as the leader of the group, that it was considering dispensing with his services but, given the phenomenal year that he had enjoyed, offered him a further year. If his performance subsequently declined, the Club could then have addressed the situation. They described the decision to dispense with the team's best bowler from the previous year as disgraceful.

Secondly, they referenced Paul Farbrace's comments that pride, guts and determination were prerequisites for playing for Lancashire, alongside his stated ambition to develop a "spine of home-grown players" who were passionate about representing the Club. They argued that both principles epitomised Jimmy Anderson and questioned how the decision aligned with them.

They described the decision as an act of age discrimination, noting that ageism was prohibited under the Equality Act 2010, and characterised the decision as both disgusting and potentially illegal. They questioned whether other players in the team would still be at the Club in four years' time and argued that Jimmy should have been allowed to lead the new plan, with the opportunity to step down when he felt he was no longer contributing. They stated that they would have trusted Jimmy to make that decision at the appropriate time. Finally, they argued that the decision was another example of senior Club officials antagonising Members and supporters, questioning why this appeared to be the case.

Paul Farbrace insisted that it was not his intention to antagonise or alienate Members. He stated that his decisions would be made in the best interests of the Club rather than to benefit any individual. In response to the concerns raised regarding age discrimination, he acknowledged that his understanding of the relevant legislation might be incorrect and apologised if this was the case. He reiterated that he did not envisage Jimmy playing a leading role in the team over the next four years. He acknowledged Members' passion for the Club and expressed his gratitude for their engagement.

He acknowledged that he needed to earn Members' trust, suggesting that the best way to achieve this was to perform well in his role and help the team succeed. He spoke of his desire for players to enjoy representing Lancashire Cricket and to respond positively to the expectation of winning. He stood by his decision regarding Jimmy Anderson, while acknowledging that only time would tell whether it had been the right one.

Mike Watkinson thanked Paul Farbrace for answering Members' questions openly and invited those present to raise questions on a wider range of topics.

A Member asked how Paul intended to address the team's batting weaknesses and whether the appointment of a batting coach was necessary.

Paul Farbrace suggested that it was easy to play the blame game but stressed the importance of reviewing the facts. He recognised that the batting required attention, particularly in rebuilding the confidence of the batting unit. He highlighted the importance of playing and practising on good pitches and adopting a more positive approach to batting. He clarified that he was not advocating a "Bazball" approach but rather ensuring that the team scored enough runs to give the bowlers a realistic opportunity to dismiss the opposition twice. He suggested that scoring 350–400 runs in the first innings was important to avoid chasing the game. He emphasised the need to return to the basics of batting, including judging line and length and playing straight, with the aim of rebuilding confidence throughout the batting unit.

A Member suggested that the Club had weakened its bowling attack by releasing its best bowler, Jimmy Anderson, and asked how the gap would be addressed.

Paul Farbrace argued that addressing the gap required contributions from players across the team rather than relying on one individual. He emphasised that success depended on a collective effort from both batters and bowlers. While acknowledging that individuals could have bad days, he noted that too many players had underperformed at the same time. He reiterated the importance of having the right people in the right positions and building confidence across all areas of the team, including batting, bowling, fielding and wicketkeeping. He added that the team needed a clear playing approach and maintained that there was sufficient quality within the squad. He also emphasised the importance of character and personality.

A Member commented that Paul's explanation sounded more akin to that of a Head Coach than a Director of Cricket. Referring to Paul's role at Sussex, they questioned whether there was potential for an overlap between his responsibilities as Director of Cricket and Steven Croft's role.

Paul Farbrace acknowledged that he had previously made this mistake, explaining that when he became Director of Cricket at Warwickshire, he had not fully understood the requirements of the role. He described his first year as challenging but stated that he now had a clear understanding of his responsibilities and insisted that there would be no overlap with the Head Coach's role. He explained that his responsibilities included appointing the right coaching and support staff, building the right squad, and leading strategic planning and recruitment to ensure the Club remained focused on its long-term objectives. He clarified that the Head Coach would be responsible for the day-to-day running of the team and selecting the side, with Paul working alongside the coaches to ensure effective recruitment.

He described his role as acting as a link between the dressing room and Richard, as Chief Executive, ensuring that everything was in place to give Lancashire Cricket the best possible chance of success. He confirmed that he had enjoyed positive discussions with Steven Croft but noted that a wider cricket review was ongoing. He concluded that his responsibility as Director of Cricket was to ensure that the cricket staff had everything they needed to succeed, both immediately and sustainably over the longer term.

A Member referenced the discussions around success in three to four years but asked what Paul's interim goals were.

Paul Farbrace stated that the objective for the first season was to secure promotion to Division One. He suggested that, given the quality of the squad and the Club's facilities, there was no reason why this should not be achievable. Following promotion, the aim would be to finish in the top four of Division One in the first season, with the longer-term ambition of winning the County Championship in the third or fourth year.

Mike Watkinson thanked Paul Farbrace for his time. He stated that there had been some questions pre-submitted via email.

A Member noted that both the Men's and Women's Directors of Cricket had been released ahead of the winter. Given the success achieved by David Thorley and the Women's team during the previous season, they questioned the rationale behind the decisions and requested further clarification.

Lancashire response: it was confirmed that a review of the structure had been undertaken, with a preference for one person to oversee cricket performance as a whole. As a result, the roles were merged. Thanks were formally recorded to Mark Chilton and David Thorley for their significant service to the Club.

A Member had also written in to ask about the recruitment and homegrown players to represent Lancashire.

Lancashire response: the importance of local pathways and development systems was discussed as part of the Club's cricket strategy, which was published in the summer. Emphasis was placed on the role of leagues, clubs, schools and Lancashire Cricket's pathway in developing players capable of winning matches for the Club and progressing to represent England. Recruitment was described as a luxury rather than a necessity, with the development of homegrown Lancastrian talent identified as a key priority. The importance of striking the right balance was highlighted, particularly in supporting players' transition from the upper levels of the pathway into the first team and their professional career. Mike Watkinson's experience working in a school and his close connections with clubs and leagues were also highlighted.

A Member asked if Richard Kenyon foresaw any strategic changes over the next three years.

Richard Kenyon stated that securing the right appointment for the Director of Cricket role had been one of the first key priorities and expressed confidence in Paul's appointment, citing his demonstrable credentials. He added that ensuring both teams had the necessary resources and support was another priority, describing the Club as brilliant in terms of its scale, revenue and facilities.

He also emphasised the importance of completing the cricket review promptly. He explained that almost 90% of his time was currently focused on performance-related matters, which he regarded as the Club's most important priority, and confirmed that changes would be implemented quickly.

A Member asked for an assessment of the success of this year's overseas signings and what lessons had been learned to inform overseas recruitment for both red-ball and white-ball cricket next season.

Lancashire response: it was reiterated that the cricket review was ongoing, and it was acknowledged that some overseas signings had not made the anticipated impact. Noman Ali, who is ranked in the ICC's top ten, was cited as an example. He had been recruited in anticipation of drier pitches towards the end of the season, when spinners were expected to enjoy greater success. However, the team's lack of runs had limited his opportunities to make an impact. It was indicated that next season the team was likely to be comprised of a strong core of local players, supplemented by overseas signings where required to strengthen the squad.

A Member asked if it was possible for the Club to arrange a pre-season match against one of the university sides to give the men's first team match practice in English conditions.

Lancashire response: it was confirmed that the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) determines the fixture schedule. Reference was made to a practice match organised by Mark Chilton at Essex ahead of the 2026 season, which did not take place due to the weather. It was nevertheless emphasised that opportunities for outdoor practice were sought whenever possible.

A Member described the 2026 season as very disappointing and asked whether the Board would commit to delivering an improved performance next summer.

Lancashire response: Board representatives confirmed their commitment to improving. They acknowledged that significant investment was being made despite disappointing results and agreed that this needed to change. They confirmed that improving performance was a clear priority.

A Member asked for the Club's response to the report that the ECB no longer applies the Rooney Rule to coaching appointments in the national teams and sought clarification on Lancashire Cricket's position on the matter.

Lancashire response: it was stated that the Club remained committed to improving diversity across its workforce and within the game. Paul Farbrace's appointment was described as a targeted recruitment process, and it was confirmed that the Rooney Rule had not been applied. It was suggested that the approach could be reviewed in the future, while reiterating the Club's ongoing commitment to diversity.

A Member asked for Richard Kenyon's response to the concerns raised by Members regarding comments made by Daniel Gidney, which had been reported to the Cricket Regulator but were deemed not to meet the threshold for a formal investigation.

Richard Kenyon responded that it was not for him to comment on the matter, as the decision rested with the Cricket Regulator. He expressed a desire to draw a line under the past and focus on moving the Club forward. He credited Daniel's work in building facilities and infrastructure. He stated his intention of building a positive relationship with Members, citing his experience working in membership organisations over a prolonged period of time.

A Member enquired whether the Terms of Reference for the cricket review and the Governance Review were available.
Lancashire's response: the cricket review was described as an ongoing process, with updates on progress expected to be shared as work progressed. It was emphasised that taking action was the priority, rather than producing a lengthy report. Paul Farbrace's appointment was confirmed as the first step in the review. Regarding the Governance Review, it was confirmed that an independent third-party organisation had been appointed to lead the process and that communication would be sent to Members shortly, explaining how they could engage with the review. The scope of the review would be published, with opportunities for Members to contribute and help shape its direction as the process progressed.

A Member referred to the final sentence of the Club's official statement regarding Jimmy Anderson's contract, interpreting it as a message of thanks and farewell. They asked whether Members would be given an opportunity to thank Jimmy and say goodbye to him in person.

Lancashire response: it was expressed that the Club hoped to make this possible and wished to maintain a long-term association with Jimmy Anderson.

A Member noted that the Club held a minority shareholding in Manchester Super Giants and asked whether the two current representatives, Daniel Gidney and James Sheridan, would remain on the Board or whether this representation would change.

Lancashire response: this will be followed up in due course.

A Member asked what the broader strategy for the out grounds would be and if more games could be played at Liverpool Cricket Club.

Lancashire response: it was confirmed that out grounds would form part of the review. It was acknowledged that the Club's relationship with Liverpool Cricket Club had been challenging at times, with responsibility on both sides. The importance of the Club's outgrounds was recognised, including the introduction of AO Farington Cricket Ground. It was confirmed that the position would be assessed once the fixture schedule had been finalised.

A Member asked how the Board intended to ensure that the level of detail and focus David Thorley had given to the women's team would be maintained, highlighting the team's recent success in winning trophies.

Lancashire response: it was reported that the job description had been refined to remove some of the peripheral responsibilities previously undertaken by other Directors. It was confirmed that this work would be picked up by an assistant or Club executive, allowing the Director to focus on the cricketing aspects of both the men's and women's teams.

A Member emphasised the importance of investing time and resources in junior cricket, particularly at under 10s, under 11s and under 12s level across Lancashire. They asked how the Club intended to prioritise this age group so that it could produce future Lancashire legends.

Lancashire response: Mike Watkinson discussed his experience working in a school with young cricketers at various age groups, which has enabled him to develop a close connection with the pathway. Ensuring opportunities to participate in different formats of the game remained accessible was noted as an area for improvement. He explained that the pathway will form part of the cricket review process. He stated that talent identification was key, particularly as 25% of recreational cricket in the country was played in Lancashire and Yorkshire.

A Member referred to the Club's acquisition of the former B&Q site and the plans to upgrade the academy. They asked about the anticipated timescale for the work and how it would be funded. They also expressed concern that Lancashire Cricket could become a development pathway for players who may ultimately go on to represent other counties.

Lancashire response: it was reported that the Club was preparing to submit a planning application to Trafford Council to transform the site into a practice area, alongside improvements to the Indoor Cricket Centre. The

importance of identifying talented young players and supporting their development through high-quality coaching was discussed, with the hope that the plans would help accelerate their learning and progression.
It was reiterated that the planning application was the first step, with the proposals subject to review by the Council before the Club could seek planning permission. Reference was also made to the forthcoming Members' Forum on 17 November at UA92, where the plans would be discussed in more detail.

A Member questioned why the Club continued to employ players who featured infrequently in the team, while taking the decision to release Jimmy Anderson.

Lancashire response: it was stated that the named players were on ECB contracts and therefore did not cost the Club anything.

The Member responded by asking about morale, indicating that the players received other benefits in terms of business support and training facilities.

Lancashire response: the Member's frustrations were acknowledged. It was explained that players on ECB contracts are managed by the ECB, which determines aspects of their playing commitments, including when they are available to play for their county. However, it was emphasised that the Club's cricket strategy remained focused on four-day cricket and that many of the players referred to by the Member were white-ball specialists.

A Member welcomed Richard's comments that Lancashire Cricket was a cricket club rather than a business and asked whether he felt this balance had shifted in the wrong direction over recent years.

Richard Kenyon acknowledged that this had been the perception and recognised the importance of generating revenue to enable investment in cricket. He commented that having strong revenues was positive but emphasised that the Club's primary objective was to achieve success on the pitch. He added that every member of staff had a role to play in supporting this objective and, therefore, there was no straightforward yes or no answer to the question.

Mike Watkinson thanked the panel and Members for attending.