“Meet Your MP” 2015

A joint initiative by the League Cricket Conference, and the National Cricket Conference.

Clubs are struggling around the country, not just financially, but also in terms of the administrative burdens imposed on hard working volunteers. As unincorporated bodies club officials are in a particularly vulnerable position and help is desperately needed to keep the clubs afloat. Its not all bad news however, tremendous progress has been made in recent years, we have more coaches than ever, we have more youngsters enjoying club life than ever, and clubs provide a valuable community service, particularly in taking cricket into the local schools, but help is needed if this is to be maintained.

A clear case exists within communities which identifies sport and recreation as socially beneficial in that children are less likely to get involved in anti-social behaviour if they are actively involved in sport, and they remain healthier.

Clubs need to promote themselves within their community, telling the community what they do and how they do it. They need to explain the vital role they play in the welfare of the community, and make friends with the community decision-makers.

We propose therefore that cricket clubs should invite their local MP, councillors and press to join them on a match day to hear at first hand what problems clubs face and what benefits they provide to the community.

Invitations to local MP’s will be issued by clubs, ideally two in every constituency, one large and one small.

The event will be co-ordinated by the Conferences who after the event will produce a summary of its achievements.

We recognise that not every constituency in England and Wales may have a cricket club within its boundaries, nevertheless the target will be to ensure that the majority of MP’s in England and Wales attend at least one club on that day.

 If I were a Club Chairman

If I were a Club Chairman what would I want to be discussing with my MP.

We have our own local coaches, we have a strong junior section and take an active role in developing cricket within our local schools. We aspire to be the hub of the local community, providing youngsters with a safe and secure sporting environment, developing within our junior membership, not just a love of the game of cricket, but an understanding of the ethos and spirit of cricket.

In financial terms clubs are struggling to survive . The Small Charitable Donations Act (assuming the club is a CASC club) will be beneficial, and for that we are grateful.

We need to look at our expenditure, with utility costs increasing, how do we control them? Should the club be more environmentally sustainable, with greater control of water usage, etc? What help can politicians provide to improve the prospects for clubs?

Why does the club need a Performing Rights Society licence when it only has a TV for the benefit of members?

We are closely involved with our local schools, if we send coaches to the schools, should the local authority offer some form of rate rebate? Discretionary Rate Relief enjoyed by some clubs is now under threat from local authorities as they seek to revise their budgets due to imposed cuts.

We survive on the back of volunteers, what additional help can be given to assist us to recruit and maintain our volunteer base?

As the club is an unincorporated body, if I make a wrong decision I could lose my house. Is there an alternative to protect me from the consequences of my decisions?

The above are general issues, but each club will have its own specific problems, so we see this as a positive opportunity for the club to showcase its activities, and promote itself within the local community. The General Election is looming with the prospect of a large proportion of local MP’s changing on May 7th. This is your opportunity to make an impact, we would encourage you to seize it with both hands.

DRAFT INVITATION LETTER

Dear

Congratulations on your recent success in being elected our local Member of Parliament. …………. Cricket Club is a significant community asset, and we would like to take this opportunity to invite you to the club in order to gain a greater insight into what services we provide to the community as a whole and hear first hand the challenges we face in providing a safe sporting environment of the younger members of our community.

We would therefore cordially invite you to attend the club on a match day of your choice and see for yourself, why the club is such an important social and well being element of the community.

If you could email or ring me with a date suitable to yourself during the summer, I’m sure you will find the time well spent.

I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Yours sincerely,

Club Chairman

FEEDBACK FORM

To assist us in evaluating the exercise we would be grateful if you could complete this short report form and email it back to the email address provided.

CLUB:

COUNTY:

NAME OF YOUR MP:

CONSTITUENCY:

DID THE MP RESPOND:

IF YOU GAINED A POSITIVE RESPONSE, WHAT WAS THE DATE OF THE VISIT:

HOW DO YOU RATE THE SUCCESS OF THE VISIT:

ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WISH TO MAKE:

Please email the form when completed to the Secretary of the League Cricket Conference, Neil Edwards – neil@edwardn.plus.com

A full summary of the initiative will be published in the autumn.