

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Sponsorship and Fundraising

By Chris Knowles

The vast majority of Clarence's sponsorship emanates from local businesses around Emley and the surrounding villages. Over the years, welcome contributions have been received from neighbouring takeaways and restaurants - the acquisition of these stemming literally from a 'knock-on-door' request!

The funds that are injected into Clarence from external businesses are often given in goodwill; there is a notion of donation as opposed to the hunt for a return on the investment. Nevertheless, these businesses are given the opportunity to promote their products or reputation through advertising and word-of-mouth at the club. The money provided is used to fund the running of the club throughout the year, with a large percentage contributing to the funding of a professional overseas player.



The ground today

Pakistan international Bilal Khilji was last year's overseas luminary. The 32-year-old set the Drakes League alight with fantastically-reliable performances and was clearly one of the best players in the division. However, the cost of an overseas starlet such as Bilal is astronomical without the aid of local sponsorship and structured fundraising events.

I spoke to long-standing Emley batsman Will Appleyard about the conflicting interests of attracting overseas talent and financing the move. He said: 'Bilal was a fantastic player. We couldn't really afford to keep him. The club who have secured him for next season have offered him £9,000. There's no chance of us being able to afford that, especially after paying the amount we did last year.' Emley disbursed a figure close

to £6,500 to bring Bilal to the club and while the left-handed batsman may have justified this fee, it is an expense which could not be afforded regularly.

Aside from that, in the very near future Emley hope to orchestrate the planning and construction of a new clubhouse in order to improve facilities at the ground. This mammoth expense has obvious financial ramifications and one of the fundamental problems could well be the lack of investment.

It is projected that the new clubhouse at the ground will cost the club in the region of £30,000. Although daunting, this isn't a figure which is unrealistic, especially with the help of sponsorship, fundraisers and external funding. Emley juniors chairman Tim Sykes explains: 'We've submitted an application for some more funding to help us build the clubhouse. It's important because it will allow us to start making money from our own facilities.'

The clubhouse, along with a newly-fitted bar, will be the foundation of Emley's independent-funding source and, although financially overwhelming at this point, it will hopefully develop to be a worthwhile investment. However, if Emley are to maintain their success in the near future, it is clear that fundraising and sponsorship will play a significant part.