

## 'A FRIENDLY AND SPORTING CLUB'

### AGM 2007

By Paul Rai

On a dark cold December evening, club officials, players and committee members among others braved the wintry conditions to congregate in the ABCC clubhouse for the 2007 Annual General Meeting. Despite the cold outside, an open bar indoors meant beverages ranging from cold fizzy drinks to fine wines were on the agenda. At 8.15 pm on 4 December 2007 the yearly meeting designed to inform members about previous and future activities commenced. Club secretary John Bunch kicked off the meeting with apologies for those who could not attend, followed by the minutes of the previous year's meeting.



Andy Hill, club chairman, distributed documentation on Armitage Bridge's balance sheet and went through the club's accounts for the year ending 31 October 2007. Details of the club's income and expenditure were also available to all those in attendance. Income from bar sales, grants and sponsorship were all up on the previous year, playing an integral part in keeping the club running. Expenditure on ground materials, equipment hire, machine repairs, equipment, and light, heat and water all increased considerably leading to a deficit of £1,066 over the year compared to a surplus of £2,809 in 2006.

Reflecting on what can be deemed as a successful year on the playing side, John Bunch opened his report as secretary by saying that 'for the first time in a number of years, I find myself in the happy position of being able to begin my report without using sombre words about the performance of the senior sides'. Under the leadership of Rick Lunn, the 1<sup>st</sup> XI dispersed the gloom of previous seasons by finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in the Frank Platt Conference with a total of 54 points. Secretary Bunch highlighted the reasons why performances on the field of play have improved: 'a positive approach to both batting and bowling and, most noticeably, to a greater sharpness in the field where many runs were saved which might have been conceded in recent seasons. A blend of some new faces and some longer-established players coming good provided some exhilarating victories and some close finishes to keep the supporters happy.'

Establishment of the Patrons Fund has provided a new stream of income for the club which allowed the playing and coaching sides to be strengthened. Funding is vital in keeping any sporting club alive and the club secretary went on to say in his report: 'there is clearly a need to refine and extend this arrangement further to give thought to how sponsors are to be encouraged and properly thanked for their support. The continuing support of Maurice Mosley with his generous sponsorship must once again be acknowledged.'

Bunch continued his report and moved on to the state of the square: 'an extensive autumn programme seems to have arrested any further decline and at the moment gives promise of a better surface for 2008. The care of this surface on a weekly basis is being taken back "in-house" for next season and the club is indebted to Mark Roberts for volunteering his services to do this. However, he will need strong support if the rest of the ground is to match his efforts in the middle. Last season saw the use of outside labour to cut the field and surroundings when the club's machines all chose to go sick together. More important than machines, however, is the human labour to go with them. Not too long ago a Friday in the season would see four or five people working on different aspects of the club and ground, with another two or three regulars working on most other days of the week. Now that number has dwindled basically to Ralph Beaumont trying to do it all on his own. Ways must be found of helping and supporting him.'

Moving on, Bunch also recognised the problems with teas: 'again, the circle of volunteers has dwindled and last season was got through only with difficulty and an over-reliance on just a handful of people.' Volunteers to help with teas will be needed for the season ahead.

Socially, the club is a place of friendship and laughter. In writing to seek a transfer back to Scholes CC, Paul Hertzberg wrote: 'Having played against ABCC many times in the past my impression was always of a friendly and sporting club. This impression has been confirmed over the last few months.' The ABCC secretary went onto to say: 'I believe that this is adequate testimony to the good fellowship that flows with the ale and wine on a Saturday evening throughout the season.'

Bunch ended his report: 'thus, at the end of the year, although some of the old problems are still evident, so are many encouraging and hopeful ingredients. One, as ever, is the devotion of the members of the committee, whose contribution I would like to recognise here. I am confident that with adequate reinforcement and support, the club will again provide us in 2008 with a summer to enjoy.'

After the secretary's report came the election of officers and the following nominations were received.

President: A.Sugden  
Chairman: A.Hill  
Treasurer: A.Hill  
Secretary: J.Bunch  
League Representative: R.Pearce  
Trustees: R.Beaumont; R.Moorhouse; L.Duncalf

Then to end proceedings, the election of captains took place. Rick Lunn continues as First XI captain and Mark Roberts takes charge of the Second XI.

