

COMING SOON: ADVERTISING BOARDS

Grants and Sponsorship by Sam Smith

Achieving the Clubmark accreditation from the English Cricket Board has been the key to Blackley CC winning cash grants towards the development of facilities. Since gaining the status three years ago, the club has been able to finance new £10,000 practice nets and ground-maintenance machinery at a cost of £1,500.

“The hard work we put in to get Clubmark has made us a better community club but there have been many other benefits – not least the opportunity to apply for grants towards the cost of projects and equipment,” said treasurer Steve Williams. “The most notable example is the practice nets which we simply would not have been able to afford without grant aid.”



The all-weather nets – a tremendous boon to the club – were paid for at the start of last season with the help of a £5,000 grant from Sport For All and £3,000 from Calderdale Council. In addition, Blackley applied for a machinery grant from the Yorkshire Cricket Board and were awarded 75 per cent towards the £1,500 they needed to buy equipment for ground maintenance. This included a new mower, “a super soaker upper”, a chainharrow and a weedkiller spraying machine.

Blackley were the 20th cricket club in the Calderdale area to receive the Clubmark accreditation. They had more than 50 standards to achieve in covering activities such as developing of junior cricket (including duty of care and safeguarding children), coaching and links with local schools. They also had to show their future plans to develop facilities at the club.

A spin-off from their work has been the mutually beneficial association with the nearby Brooksbank Specialist Sports College. The school and the club share

facilities and equipment, most notably a bowling machine. “We use Brooksbank for indoor nets in the winter and they use our ground,” said Steve.

“We also get involved with local primary schools by organising coaching sessions and hosting cricket competitions. This is good for the future of cricket. We are encouraging youngsters to play the game and we will hopefully reap the fruit of that down the line.”

Besides grants, another source of financial support the club are looking to develop is sponsorship. At present, there is a ball sponsor for every game (which brings in £25 a match) to cover the cost of balls and other overheads. For their money, the sponsors are special guests at the club for the day and receive free teas – and are allowed to erect an advertisement at Lindley Road.

This year the club is aiming to expand its sponsorship income with the installation of 6ft-long advertisement boards around the ground. They are looking to sell these for £150 a season or £400 for three years.

“It’s a new venture but we think there are local businesses who will want to be associated with the club and will support us with advertising,” said Steve. “It is just another way, along with the increasing number of social events and grants, that we are improving the finances of the club.”