

**Cricket is changing; the way  
it's played, where it's played  
and how the game engages  
with people and partners.**

**Find out how in the ECB  
Annual Review for 2016-17.**





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## ECB Chief Executive Officer Tom Harrison says the last 12 months has seen solid foundations laid to support cricket's future growth.

**Cricket has always shown its ability to adapt and confront new challenges without ever compromising its core values.** Sometimes it has taken time, but the game has consistently shown it has capacity to evolve, embrace the future and be relevant to another generation.

There are big challenges to be faced, including competition from other sports and forms of entertainment, driving participation, changing viewing habits, different working patterns and financial sustainability.

However, in 2016 and 2017 we came a long way within the game to addressing these challenges and laying the foundations for a more accessible, representative and diverse game; one with a very healthy future.

There has been great progress on a number of fronts; a new professional women's Kia Super League, a new shape to the 2017 County season, dynamic, successful and engaging England teams, new commercial partners at all levels, increased revenue, more funding to the Counties and a vital new entry-level participation programme in All Stars Cricket.

Just as important, we have been talking constructively within the game and been prepared to have the tough conversations. Our structure of togetherness is a huge asset. We know where we are heading and have a bold plan which will ensure cricket is flourishing for the next generation and beyond.

We are making progress through debate, discussion and building consensus, within our shared framework of Cricket Unleashed. Through this, the game has created for itself a fantastic opportunity to build a positive future for the whole game and all communities.

There is a buzz about our game, excitement about our matches, an understanding of what cricket can do for people and society and a desire to work with us. We can see a healthy future, from grassroots to the international game, with 18 thriving First Class Counties at its heart.

**Tom Harrison**  
Chief Executive Officer



## ECB Chairman Colin Graves reflects on a year which saw cricket continue to develop and evolve at every level across England and Wales.

**This is an exciting time for the sport we all know and love.** Cricket is changing fast. New ways to play, watch or support cricket are emerging all the time – whether it's by consuming bite-sized highlights on your mobile phone or watching Test cricket under floodlights.

As the National Governing body for the sport, ECB is leading the process of change and putting in place solid foundations for future growth. This year's Annual Review illustrates the changes we are making to grow the sport at every level – meeting the goals we first set out last year in our new strategic framework Cricket Unleashed.

It has become very clear to me over the last year that cricket is continuing to evolve as a sport – reaching out to new audiences, connecting with a broader mix of fans and promoting ways to play the grassroots game which help us retain and recruit players and volunteers.

In the coming year, we will develop our plans for future growth still further. We need to ensure the game is based around a robust, sustainable financial model – one which serves the needs of all our stakeholders. We must engage more closely with the South Asian communities who form such an important part of our existing and potential fan and playing base. It is also vital we capitalise fully on our hosting of three different ICC global events between now and 2019: this summer's ICC Champions Trophy and ICC Women's World Cup, and, in two years' time, the ICC Cricket World Cup.

All these challenges are exciting opportunities too. We must seize them if we are to make our game even bigger and better in the future – and fully harness the passion and enthusiasm for cricket which exists in so many different communities across England and Wales.

**Colin Graves**  
Chairman



That winning feeling: Toby Roland-Jones after completing the hat-trick that secured Middlesex the Specsavers County Championship in a thrilling season finale against Yorkshire



Change at the top: England women's coach Mark Robinson alongside new captain Heather Knight, who succeeded Charlotte Edwards in 2016



Priceless memory: Alastair Cook poses for a selfie after the Second Investec Test against Sri Lanka at Emirates Durham ICG, the match in which he passed 10,000 Test runs







Stars on show: Nat Sciver, of the Surrey Stars, with fans during the inaugural Kia Super League



Within reach: England Visually Impaired player Mo Khatri in the nets at Loughborough

Decider: Chris Woakes and Ben Stokes celebrate victory over Bangladesh in the Third One-Day International - and the series - at Chittagong





## REGIONAL STRENGTH

**Simon Brown took a wicket with the tenth ball of his single Test for England in 1996. Now, after more than a decade in the business world, the former Northamptonshire and Durham fast bowler is back in the game as Head of Regional Operations within the 82-strong Participation and Growth team.**

**I always wanted to get back involved with the game but I didn't know in what capacity.** But when I saw this job come up I just thought it was too good to be true. My last season with Durham was in 2002 and I have worked in banking and most recently in professional services for PricewaterhouseCoopers.

**You don't realise at the time but you pick up a lot of valuable, transferable skills as a cricketer.** That includes leadership, contributing to team cohesion and understanding people.

**I liken my role to that of a national sales manager.** I have seven regional heads who are effectively my regional sales managers. Each team has specific targets, whether that's attracting new players, creating efficiencies, generating revenue or building upon some of the great things which are already going on that supports development and growth in their region. As our Director of Participation and Growth, Matt Dwyer says, they are responsible for the holistic health of cricket in their region, so it's a broad remit.

**We achieved a lot in quite a short space of time.** We did a lot of recruitment quite quickly and now have the right people in the right roles with a nice mix of skills, experience in cricket but also from the business world.

**Participation and growth go hand in hand.** We know that someone who buys a ticket to a match has probably played the game at some stage. So if we can get more people on the field playing then we will attract more spectators and people with a genuine interest in the game.

**There is a huge opportunity to take cricket to new markets.** I don't think we've ever really focused on five to eight-year-olds before which is why All Stars Cricket is so important. It also gives us an opportunity to reach a new family audience.

If a five-year-old is brought down to a club then hopefully the parents and siblings will get involved too. It's almost a 'halo effect' with new volunteers getting involved and new revenue streams opening up.

**We want to get parents and primary school teachers involved.** The skills required for the activators who will deliver this programme to a younger group can be quite different to that of a traditional cricket coach who may be used to older players. There's quite a lot of pastoral care and nurturing involved, and the fun element is crucial.

**It's about breaking the coaching environment down.** Kids can step up to competitive games when they're ready but let's give them some grounding and core skills first. This may look quite different with specially designed equipment being used to assist development. It's about a change of perception with a massive emphasis on fun as much as anything.

**We're also looking at where we can help efficiency across the regions.** We work with 39 counties who face similar challenges and address these in their own way. Each regional head has on average five counties in their portfolio and we've already seen how taking a view across a region can deliver efficiencies which improve the way we operate.

**There are lots of people doing some really great things but for various reasons they have tended to be a bit in isolation.** A big part of the regional head's role is to ensure that all the initiatives and programmes we're running tie together as well as sharing best practice so we can all learn from each other. We don't want to be having lots of disjointed conversations with county boards about the various propositions and initiatives being worked on, we want to pull it all together and work as one aligned delivery team.





## GENERATION NEXT

**All Stars Cricket aims to have thousands of kids aged between five and eight hooked on the game by the end of the summer by breaking the game down into fun and accessible sessions.**

A backpack delivered to the door, with a personalised shirt and emailed video messages from England players. Just some of the elements that make All Stars Cricket a kids' programme unlike any other.

All Stars Cricket is the new ECB initiative aiming to reach thousands of five to eight-year-olds in its first summer. The programme has been almost two years in the making since Matt Dwyer joined ECB as Director of Participation and Growth in the summer of 2015, having successfully delivered a similar programme in his native Australia as part of a wider strategy to inspire an entire generation of youngsters to pick up a bat and ball.

"We doubled the number of kids playing junior cricket and cricket went from fifth to first among Australians' favourite sports," says Dwyer. "But I've been mindful of not just picking up and replanting the Australian model."

Dwyer and his team have spent 18 months assessing the lie of the cricketing land in England and Wales and working out the most efficient ways of reaching their target audience.

A specialist consultancy, Kids Industries, was used to establish "what the brand should be called, the colours, what parents are looking for, who the key decision-makers are."

Dwyer adds: "We did a lot of work with Mumsnet and other bloggers to communicate messages such as - do you know that cricket develops more of the fundamental movement skills than other sport? That our values are written into our rules in the form of the spirit of cricket; that there is so much cricket can offer your child - teamwork, perseverance, resilience."

The goal is not just to inspire the next generation of kids but also the next generation of volunteers. It is hoped that parents will take their kids to All Stars Cricket at their local club and then get involved themselves.



All Stars Cricket is an eight-week programme - though it can be extended - delivered by clubs and their 'activators', not coaches as such. Dwyer "was blown away" by the initial response with 2,000 clubs signing up.

"It's not about putting pads on and going out and playing traditional cricket," says Dwyer. The programme begins with skill-based games across the three cricket disciplines - batting, bowling and fielding - designed in conjunction with ECB's Director, England Cricket, Andrew Strauss.

Kids can earn badges each week, as they might in swimming or karate. Nick Pryde, ECB's Senior Manager - Youth Participation Pathway, says: "Kids love to be rewarded and recognised - not necessarily for being the best in class but for making their own improvements and achievements."

All Stars Cricket kids will have the chance to play on the outfield during Test matches and also to be present at England team training sessions.

These money-can't-buy-experiences form part of a three-pronged Kids' Strategy. Dwyer explains: "There is the battle for the playground; the appropriate pathway; and then the connection to the elite."

"All Stars Cricket is the first stage of what we're proposing to be the new participation pathway for cricket. It's an age-and-stage progression. First you learn skills in isolation then game awareness (such as pairs cricket) then you play in pads on shortened pitches; then you graduate to a full-length pitch.

"In Australia over four years we doubled the number of under-12s playing cricket but halved the number of extras bowled in those games - so we had the numbers coming through and the quality was better. The point was that when you get to ten or 11, you're better prepared to play a proper game of cricket.

"It's all about inspiring the next generation of players, fans and followers - and that's why it's so important that we have the right strategy in place for the future of the game."

# 7,000

Players involved in the NatWest Club U19 T20 competition in 2016

# 97%

Of recreational players who describe themselves as cricket 'followers'

# 2,000

Clubs signed up to participate in new All Stars Cricket programme

## TEAM GAME

**Joe Root reflects on his journey from cricket-mad kid in Sheffield to England Test captain and pays tribute to the many people and opportunities that have helped shape his career.**

**I fell in love with the game from a really young age.** My brother Billy and I would go and watch Dad play for Sheffield Collegiate at the weekend and we'd be bothering anyone who was around – grandparents, players or other kids – to help us knock a ball around by the boundary. We'd play until it got dark.

**I learned the game properly by playing men's cricket quite young.** We played all around the Peak District at some lovely grounds – with proper cricket teas! I learned what it was like to be part of a team and also the structure of the game, going from 20 overs into 50 overs. You learn what it's like to get out early and then field all day. I learned some of the hard truths of cricket – it was very rewarding when you won and not so much fun when you lost.

**Kevin Sharp, then the Yorkshire batting coach who is now at Worcester, saw me in the under-12s and liked what he saw.** I got on a scholarship scheme with the Yorkshire Academy and I would have one-on-one sessions with him – he was very influential.

**That's when it started to get serious and when I thought it was a possible career after school.** I'd go to sessions with Kevin and before me would be some of the Yorkshire players like Anthony McGrath and Darren Lehmann. I was so in awe of them and I would ask Kevin if I could have the same session they had just had, just so I could go back and tell my dad, brother and grandad that I'd been doing the same training as the pros.

**I was starting to learn some of the intricacies of batting.** The Bunbury Festival is a huge thing for the under-15 age group and I was very fortunate to do well there in 2006. That led to an invitation for me and three other guys to spend a week at Loughborough training with the Lions squad when they toured Bangladesh.

**It was a big week in my development.** I came away realising the intensity required and that I needed to up my game. It was inspiring and some of the guys – like Matt Prior, Stuart Broad and Tim Bresnan – I eventually ended up playing with for England!

**In 2009 I toured Bangladesh with England Under-19s which was a brilliant experience.** It gave me a great understanding of how different cricket can be in other parts of the world. It was all completely new to me and to be exposed to those conditions at such a young age was crucial. I've been on three tours to Bangladesh now and I'm always banking knowledge.

**I was chucked in at the deep end when I first played for England Lions in 2011.** My performances for Yorkshire didn't warrant selection but Graham Thorpe saw something in me.

**Just over a year later I was making my Test debut in Nagpur.** It was so helpful to have already played a lot in Asia, experiencing the heat and the challenges of facing a lot of spin bowling. I was also fortunate to have a great group of senior players who guided me along. I didn't know any of them well but they were happy for me to pick their brains.

**It's important to ask questions and I'll continue to do it.** You've never mastered this game so you always need to keep improving.

**I'm very grateful for all the help I've had along the way from so many different people.** I'm very fortunate to have a family who have given up so much of their time for me. It's always nice to go back to Sheffield Collegiate and offer a little bit back to the guys who helped me and the young guys coming through so they get the opportunities I did.





### ROOT TO SUCCESS

**From Sheffield Collegiate CC through the Yorkshire age-group sides, the Bunbury Festival, the Yorkshire Academy, England Under-19s, Lions and finally the senior international side, this is the journey to the top made by England's new Test captain.**



2010



2011



2012

2004

2006

2007

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

Captains Yorkshire U13s to victory over Lancashire U13s

Plays alongside Ben Stokes for the North U15s in the famous Bunbury ESCA Festival

Plays for Yorkshire Academy

Plays for ECB U16s v Australia Schoolboys U16s

Plays for ECB North U17s in Regional Festival at Loughborough

Captains ECB U17s v Combined Services

Yorkshire 1st XI debut in Pro40 v Essex, top-scoring with 63

Debut for England U19s in Bangladesh

Plays in ICC Under-19s World Cup

First-class debut for Yorkshire v Loughborough MCCU

County Championship debut for Yorkshire

Debut for England Lions

Maiden first-class double century, 222 for Yorkshire v Hampshire

Test debut for England, v India at Nagpur. Scores 73 in maiden innings

One-day international debut for England v India at Kochi

Maiden Test hundred, 104 v New Zealand at Headingley

Maiden ODI hundred, 107 v West Indies in Antigua

First Test double century, 200 not out v Sri Lanka at Lord's

Scores 1,358 Test runs in calendar year (only Michael Vaughan had ever made more for England in a year)

Scores Test career best 254 v Pakistan at Emirates Old Trafford

Named Test captain, replacing Alastair Cook

2013



2014



2015



2016





## JOINING THE DOTS

### ECB Performance Director David Parsons explains the thinking behind the recent changes in structure and personnel at the National Cricket Performance Centre at Loughborough.

Ever since the National Cricket Performance Centre opened as the new ECB National Academy at Loughborough University in 2003, there has always been a need to adapt to the changing requirements of England's various national teams.

But following England's disappointing showing in the 2015 ICC Cricket World Cup and the changes at the top of the ECB management structure, there has been an even more substantial analysis of what the Performance Centre and the Player Pathway must deliver.

"We've had 18 months or so of change," says David Parsons, ECB Performance Director. "It felt like the time was right for us to have a good look at what we do. We have made some changes to our strategy and adapted our focus."

One of the outcomes of the review was the desire for greater collaboration between those based at Loughborough and the 18 First Class Counties. "There was a feeling of separation between ourselves and the counties, a sense that we were even working against each other on occasions," says Parsons.

"Rather than us having a parallel pathway to that of the counties it should be much more collaborative, with us working together to develop great players for both county cricket and international cricket," he says. "We're now working much more closely with the counties, seeing the players' development as a whole and recognising the role that county cricket plays."

It also emerged, through interviews with many current and former England players and coaches, that there is still a gap between county and international cricket; skill levels, pressure, scrutiny and physical conditions were all factors identified as being different in international cricket and these provide a focus as the Pathway seeks to 'bridge the gap'.



Change of focus: Performance Director David Parsons; players in training; (top right) Mark Ramprakash, England batting coach

### The new structure of the Pathway is underpinned by five pillars:

#### 01. Find

Identifying and selecting the right quantity and quality of players. **Mo Bobat, Operations Manager for England Under-19s**, has been appointed to oversee player identification.

#### 02. Grow

Building the foundations for elite cricket. The recent appointment of **Alun Powell** from the Rugby Football Union as **National Talent Manager** to oversee County talent programmes will create one joined up pathway. He will be supported by **David Graveney, ECB National Performance Manager**.

#### 03. Develop

Introducing young players to international cricket. Lead: **Andy Hurry, Head Coach of the Young Lions**.

#### 04. Prepare

Preparing players for the step into international cricket. Lead: **Andy Flower, Head Coach of the Lions**.

#### 05. Innovate

Developing and sharing knowledge that can benefit the whole game, led by **Raph Brandon, ECB Head of Science, Medicine and Innovation**.





# 63

The number of players on ECB's International Pathway programmes in 2016-17 (Lions 20, Pace Programme 9, Young Lions 25, Overseas Placements 9)

In addition to the restructuring, the international element of the Pathway has rebranded its four player programmes "to give them a sharper focus", according to Parsons, and clarify some of the terminology used.

The Lions programme is about preparing players for international cricket while the Young Lions programme replaces the England Development Programme and encompasses England under-19s, the regional under-17 Super-4s competition and the under-15 Bunbury Festival.

The Pace Programme, which runs throughout the winter, takes six to eight of the most talented fast bowlers and puts them through a programme that is "designed to enhance their physical and technical robustness", according to Parsons. The bowlers train first at the Performance Centre before travelling to South Africa's High Performance Institute of Sport in Potchefstroom.



Then there are the Overseas Placements. "We send around eight players each year somewhere in the world to develop their cricket skills but also to develop their own independence in what is hopefully a challenging cricket environment," explains Parsons. Over the course of last winter, five batsmen and four spinners spent time in Perth, Sydney, Adelaide and Wellington.

An outstanding example of the merits of this programme is Mason Crane, the Hampshire leg-spinner. Crane, 20, made his mark for Gordon CC in Sydney, taking 63 wickets in all competitions for the club including seven-wicket hauls in three successive first-grade matches at the start of the year.

His performances earned him a call-up to New South Wales' Sheffield Shield side, making him the first overseas player to appear for NSW since Imran Khan in 1984-85. Crane received his cap from Stuart MacGill, the former NSW and Australia leg-spinner with whom he had worked through the winter.

"I'd always wanted to play a winter in Australia and I really enjoyed my time out there," says Crane. "I'm an only child so spending that time away on my own was a massive learning curve but I needed to do it. Stuey [MacGill] was absolutely awesome. He's got an unbelievable cricket mind, and to be able to tap into that for five months was invaluable."

Peter Such, ECB Lead Spin Bowling Coach, adds: "Mason is a very talented spin bowler, has worked very hard and had some tremendous success. I'm delighted for him. Hampshire need to take a lot of credit for this as well because they've managed him and developed him. He's repaying that time and faith. He has delivered beyond expectations and done brilliantly."

Overall, Parsons believes the changes within the Pathway mean "a much clearer sense of collaboration across all areas." Reductions in budgets and staffing numbers have allowed a more flexible allocation of coaching resource resulting, for example, in someone like Mark Ramprakash, the England batting coach, being involved with the under-19 side as well as the seniors.

The sense of collaboration extends to engaging coaches from the counties, such as Jon Lewis, from Sussex, who has worked with the under-19s and Essex head coach Chris Silverwood who has worked with the Lions.

"What we deliver to players in terms of the experiences and expertise we offer should be unique," says Parsons, "so that we are adding value to the counties' programmes."

"Following the review we are exploring ways to better measure and monitor our effectiveness. Many people play a part in the process of developing a great England cricketer, right from a parent introducing the child to a bat aged four or five, through a county's age-group and Academy set-up, the county first team, the International Pathway out of Loughborough and beyond. We are just one part of that International Pathway."



The hard yards: Alastair Cook (far left) and James Anderson in training at Loughborough; Toby Roland-Jones (top) and Tom Westley (above) with the Lions

# 10

The number of First Class County staff directly involved in supporting ECB's International Pathway programmes – (Lions 4, Pace Programme 2, Young Lions 4)





## RISING STAR

**22-year old left-arm spinner Linsey Smith was one of the success stories of the inaugural Kia Super League. Called into the Southern Vipers squad as an injury replacement, she took 4 for 10 in her second game and overall contributed eight wickets to the Vipers' title success.**

**Playing in the Kia Super League was an amazing opportunity and one that I wanted to take with both hands.** I was disappointed not to be in the Southern Vipers' original squad so when I did get a chance because of injury, I wanted to prove a point. I was picked to play against Lancashire Thunder and performed well so was added to the squad for the rest of the tournament.

**Then we played Yorkshire Diamonds at home which was an amazing experience - it was the biggest crowd I'd ever played in front of.** There must have been about 2,000 people at the Ageas Bowl.

**I have to say I was a bit nervous and when we walked out on to the pitch it was a bit overwhelming.** Beforehand I hadn't really thought about the crowd, only how I wanted to bowl. I had to pinch myself a bit.

**Everything went by in a bit of a blur but it was an amazing day.** Thankfully I got off to a good start and took a wicket with my second ball. That got me really pumped and then in my third over I got a caught and bowled to dismiss Australia's Alex Blackwell. The ball came back pretty quick and I didn't have to time to think about it. I just put my hands there - that got the adrenaline going!

**Reaching Finals Day was really exciting.** We were already through to the final so we could watch the play-off match and take everything in.

**For the Kia Super League to get such big crowds in its first year shows just how much the women's game is moving forward.** We'll have live television coverage in the second season from Sky Sports too which demonstrates what a success the competition has been.

**I learned so much and being captained by Charlotte Edwards was an unforgettable experience.** I've only been a spin bowler for two seasons. I was a seam bowler for most of my career since taking up the game when I was about 11. My dad encouraged me to start and I've played a lot of boys' and men's cricket at Aston Rowant CC in Oxfordshire.

**As a kid I dreamed of putting on an England shirt.** To be getting closer to that by winning a place in England Women's Senior Academy squad for the winter was amazing.



## INNOVATION AND INSPIRATION

### The inaugural Kia Super League broke new ground, not just for women's cricket but the game as a whole.



Success story: Surrey Stars' Nat Sciver hits out (top); Heather Knight effects a run-out for Western Storm; and Charlotte Edwards (far right) and her Southern Vipers team with the KSL trophy

The 2016 season will go down in the history of the women's game alongside 1973 as a landmark year of innovation.

Forty-four years ago the late Rachael Heyhoe Flint's drive and determination created a Women's World Cup two years before the men's version appeared.

Last year the ambition and dedication of Clare Connor, Jo Kirk and a host of colleagues at ECB delivered the inaugural Kia Super League in the space of eight months from tender process to competition. Featuring six completely new teams and the best players from around the world, the competition "exceeded all of our expectations", according to Kirk, the KSL General Manager.

The KSL drew an average of more than 1,000 spectators per game during the group stage – double the average attendance for its nearest footballing equivalent, the FA Women's Super League when it launched in 2011. A welcome trend was the diverse mix of spectators – 42 per cent of fans came with families.

One of the KSL's many innovative elements was the collaboration between different First Class Counties and the involvement of consortia not directly connected to the First-Class game.

From a competitive tender process that yielded 28 expressions of interest and ten firm bids, six host teams were ultimately chosen. Three of these – Lancashire Thunder, Yorkshire Diamonds and Surrey Stars – were born out of traditional Test match counties.

But Loughborough Lightning were based at the university and headquarters of the ECB's National Cricket Performance Centre; Southern Vipers was an eight-strong consortium comprising two First Class Counties – Hampshire and Sussex plus five non First Class Counties; Berkshire, Dorset, Oxfordshire, Isle of Wight and Wiltshire together with Southampton Solent University. Western Storm was another joint venture – a collaboration between Somerset, Gloucestershire and the University of Exeter.

"We had a blank canvas and we weren't threatening any existing structures," says Connor, ECB's Director of England Women's Cricket. "There's been lots of positive feedback that the KSL has shown how cricket can do things differently, that cricket can change.

"It can find ways to thrive, be relevant and reach a new audience. The women's game was crying out for a premier domestic competition. We created something that is modern, dynamic and aspirational and will hopefully continue to grow."

The spirit of collaboration was matched internally at ECB. "As we got further down the line more people got involved. We had a project group with people from across the organisation which is a lovely way of working: marketing, communications, participation and growth, First Class cricket operations, commercial. It's a completely new way of working and has been held up as an example – it can't just be a 'cricket thing'."

There are KSL success stories on and off the field. Kirk says: "We always hoped to attract a new audience and capture people's imagination by doing something vibrant that would appeal to families and to girls. It was great to see so many kids – boys and girls, but particularly girls.



"The match-day experience at Loughborough was brilliant with a load of pink deckchairs around the pitch. They were just trying to do something different for cricket. Southern Vipers were very bold with their bright orange kit and their creative badge design. Out in the west, Western Storm had Little Stormers camps appealing to the next generation."

For players, the KSL helped bridge the growing gap between international and domestic cricket. Feedback from the overseas stars was positive and they rated the standard of cricket just below that of the international game.

Young English players, trying to break into the senior squad, benefited hugely. Kirk says: "It gave a platform to the likes of Georgia Adams and Linsey Smith, from the England senior academy, who hadn't had the opportunity before."

Smith was a late addition to the Southern Vipers squad but emerged as a match-winner as Charlotte Edwards' side took the trophy.

Connor adds: "There is now a visible pathway. With the help of Sport England talent funding, we have established regional development centres that sit under those KSL teams. The best players in the region, aged between about 14 and 18, will be invited to those centres to participate in a well-resourced training and learning environment."

In 2017, eight matches will be broadcast live on Sky Sports as part of double-headers with NatWest T20 Blast matches. The KSL will also enjoy enhanced BBC radio coverage. "It was a great adventure," Connor says of the inaugural competition. The adventure continues.

# 1,031

The average attendance per group stage game in last year's Kia Super League

# 10

Number of bids to be one of the six Kia Super League hosts

# 28%

Percentage of the female population who are cricket followers in the UK



## DRIVING A VIBRANT BUSINESS

**Somerset nearly landed the Specsavers County Championship title last year but they picked up a hat-trick of off-the-field honours at the Business of Cricket Awards. Their chief executive, Guy Lavender, explains how they did it.**



Crowd pleasers: Somerset CEO Guy Lavender at Taunton where the fans flock to see the likes of Chris Gayle (right)

Success on the field does not always go hand in hand with success off it but Somerset have been a shining example on the scoreboard and the balance sheet.

The Cidermen's remarkable late-season surge in the Specsavers County Championship, in which they won their last three matches, almost brought them a maiden title and touched the hearts of many neutral followers of the game.

While Chris Rogers' team just missed out on the ultimate prize, the county triumphed in three categories at the 2016 Business of Cricket Awards (BOCA).

They won the County Recognition Award for delivering record revenues and record attendances; the Marketing and Communications Award (Category B/C Grounds) for their 2016 membership campaign and their successful promotion of the NatWest T20 Blast; and the Commercial Partnerships Award for their work with locally-based business, the Real Shaving Company, who are their NatWest T20 Blast partner.

"We had a phenomenally successful year on and off the pitch," says chief executive Guy Lavender, "and those commercial results reflect an enormous amount of hard work by our commercial team and demonstrate clearly how the club has developed in the last decade."

Somerset sold out all seven of their NatWest T20 Blast matches and their Royal London One-Day Cup quarter-final against Worcestershire.

Lavender explains: "We've invested a lot of time and effort in our digital communications and we have more than 300,000 people following Somerset across various digital channels.

"And we invested a lot in database management, which enabled us to better target different groups of individuals, whether that be ticket holders or people new to the ground.

"Cricket's been very good at talking to its existing audience but we tried to talk to a new audience. We focused on finding people who perhaps hadn't been to the ground before and using some good solid data management and marketing techniques to make sure they had an opportunity to come to the ground.

"It's about attracting families. We have associated entertainment around the ground and provide family/no alcohol stands so we can give them the best possible match-day experience.

"Signing high-quality players like Chris Gayle definitely helps and we have a sensible sales strategy. We can just about sell out the ground and we can then drive demand. If you sell out your early matches that's really helpful."

Regarding their award-winning partnership with Wellington-based Real Shaving Company, Lavender says: "We have taken the approach that commercial partnerships are much more than just doing a financial deal.

"We work with our partners to work out what they want to achieve. It's about being flexible and innovative, helping them to activate things in the ground for spectators.

"The players really bought into what the Real Shaving Company were trying to do. They did haircuts and shaves with the players, which provided us with great content that we used on the big screen. There were also great opportunities for giveaways



in the ground. That gave them a very strong presence on match-day. Then there is also the chance to access other commercial partners for networking opportunities at the ground."

Last season was also the first for the club's new £3.8m pavilion which was unveiled in late 2015 and was a major milestone towards this summer's staging of an England men's international for the first time since 1983. Somerset are also a group-stage venue for the ICC Women's World Cup in June and July.

"The pavilion has made a big difference," says Lavender. "It's completed that side of the ground and there is some really magnificent seating on the top floor. We have a café bistro that does really good business on match-days and non-match-days alike.

"Hosting the NatWest International T20 against South Africa in June is the result of a decade of development to get the ground up to the required technical specifications. It's an enormously significant year for the club.

"There are lessons to be learned across the game about how you get yourself up to the required specifications to host international cricket. Our approach has been to use temporary facilities and modular seating to increase our capacity. We also have dual-use facilities such as the pavilion which will be a media centre for the international fixtures.

"We have focused on delivering great match-day experiences for domestic cricket and we're able to stretch that for internationals. It's not an easy balance. But the NatWest IT20 sold out very quickly and we think we can make it a great success. The future will be interesting – it wouldn't surprise me if a ground like ours was used to host Test matches involving less popular nations in the future."

# 2,312,395

People who watched domestic or international cricket in England and Wales last season – the second highest total since the ECB was formed in 1997

# 12%

Increase in attendances for the Specsavers County Championship in 2016 from 513,693 to 576,641

# 1.8m

New followers for ECB's social media channels in 2016 – a rise from 3.7 million to 5.5 million



## BETTER TOGETHER

### Leicestershire chief executive Wasim Khan explains the rationale behind the merger of the professional and recreational arms of the club, the benefits of floodlights and a turnaround in commercial fortunes.

**Having previously run Chance to Shine I'd been acutely aware of the slightly disjointed nature of the relationship between professional clubs and their recreational boards.** It made no sense to have two separate entities, both based at our ground, essentially trying to do the same thing – which is, to get more men and women, boys and girls playing cricket in the county, and having some level of social impact across our diverse communities.

**We went through the legal process of merging in 2016 and made assurances that the voice of the recreational game would continue to be heard.** We created a new tier of membership called an Organisational Member, which means the recreational game can vote every three years for the person they want to represent them on



Let there be lights: the ICC-standard floodlights at the Fischer County Ground at Grace Road

the main Club board with full voting rights. It was important to make clear that this wasn't a takeover. It was a merger with the right intentions – to drive the game forward from top to bottom in Leicestershire and Rutland.

**Apart from Worcestershire, we were the only First Class County without floodlights.** Our research suggested that the 5.30 starts for our NatWest T20 Blast games didn't work for the majority of people coming from work but 6.30 starts made complete sense, hence the need for lights. There was a grant available from ECB that allowed us to accelerate the process and we were able to install the highest-spec ICC-standard floodlights. This year we will also have use of the lights for Specsavers County Championship matches as well when the light is bad.

**There was some push back from local residents but most understood the need for us to get into the 21st century.** They understood the future viability of the club was at stake. We have one of the most densely-populated areas around a county ground. When I arrived in 2015 we were struggling to engage with the local community but support for cricket is growing now.

**Being a group-stage venue for the ICC Women's World Cup is a huge coup for us and shows the progress we have made over the last two years.** Prior to 2015 we had made cumulative losses for three years of £550,000. In 2016 we had a net surplus of just over £8,000 – up from a net surplus of £4,500 in 2015, and we're hoping for profit this year to be close to £100,000. Last year we held an Elton John concert which brought 17,000 to the ground.

**We're trying to increase our fan engagement and improve people's experience when they come to the ground.** We're installing a huge replay screen and launching a Leicestershire app. This year we're introducing a multi-faith Prayer Box at the ground which will be especially useful when matches take place during Ramadan, for example. We're trying to make the ground as welcoming and accessible as possible for all supporters.





## DRY RUN

**Giving visiting captains the option to do away with the toss in the Specsavers County Championship was a radical move. But even after one season the experiment has yielded tangible benefits.**

In 2015 fewer overs of spin were bowled in the County Championship than at any time in the competition's 125-year history. That is the stark estimate from Peter Such, ECB's Lead Spin Bowling Coach.

Something needed to be done – and it was. The 2016 Specsavers County Championship included the radical regulation that allowed the visiting captain to decide whether he wished to bowl first. If he did, then the traditional coin toss would not take place. If he did not, then the toss took place as normal.

"To compete successfully at international level we need to make our game more reflective of international cricket," says Such. "Too many Championship games were dominated by medium-pace seam bowling and spin bowling was the thing that had been marginalised the most by that. Likewise, batting in those seam-friendly conditions is a different skill to batting in Mumbai on a turner or in Perth on a fast bouncy one. Helping spin bowling was part of the rationale behind the change but it wasn't all of it."

Inevitably, there was some opposition to such a radical change. "When you change something that's been part of the fabric of cricket since the game was invented – it will always generate a debate and discussion," Such adds. "But we always said we'd give it a go then evaluate and comment after it had a chance to have an impact."

And that impact was considerable. Drier pitches led to more opportunities for spinners, batsmen and to longer matches.

For the first time since 2009, two spinners – Somerset's Jack Leach and Warwickshire's Jeetan Patel – led the wicket-taking table in Division One. There were more than 10,000 overs of spin bowled – the most since 2011.

More matches went into the final day and although there were more draws than in previous years, Such believes the longevity of matches is an important development.



Star turn: Somerset's Jack Leach took 65 wickets in the 2016 Specsavers County Championship



Spin doctor: ECB's Lead Spin Bowling coach Peter Such

"We had the highest number of four-day finishes since 2009 and that's a real positive," he says. "If wins are harder to come by, things get tighter which means the title and promotion and relegation aren't settled until late on in the campaign."

It was not only spinners who benefited. Twenty-three double centuries were scored across the two divisions in 2016 (ten of them before the end of May), compared to 16 in 2015 and only ten in 2014.

"That shows batsmen were getting opportunities to bat for long periods, which is required for international cricket," says Such.

Chris Rogers, the Australian batsman who captained Somerset to second place in Division One in 2016, said at the end of the season: "How to captain spin is quite a skill in itself. I felt my captaincy got better the more we played on those wickets. Everybody's learning, which is great."

"I've never been a great player of spin, I found it really hard, but to get two hundreds in the last game, on a wicket that was turning – I think I was getting better and better, even at this late stage of my career, and that's a good thing as well."

"It's going to help the younger guys when they go to some of the Asian countries and play there, it's going to be so hard but at least they'll have a little bit of experience."

The ECB's Cricket Committee voted to retain the 'no toss' regulation for the 2017 Specsavers County Championship and, for Such, this is just the beginning. "In Test cricket throughout the world 46% of overs are bowled by spinners but we're down in the 20s in our domestic game," he says. "We've seen a bounce but that bounce needs to be turned into a trend."

# 10,094

Overs of spin bowled in the 2016 Specsavers County Championship – the highest since 2011

# 85%

Of matches went into the fourth day – the highest since 2009

# 343

The average total for the second innings of a match, up from 290 in 2015 and the highest for five years





## THE NEXT LEVEL

**The women's game has enjoyed exceptional success on and off the field. Clare Connor, the ECB's Director of England Women's Cricket, looks back on a year of change and innovation, and the challenges ahead.**



Immeasurable contribution: Rachael Heyhoe Flint

**Rachael Heyhoe Flint's contribution to women's cricket is immeasurable.** Her passing in January is made even more poignant because she won't be here to see us host the ICC Women's World Cup, a tournament she was instrumental in establishing back in 1973, two years before the men's event.

**Quite simply, the sport wouldn't be in such a healthy position without her energy and dedication at all levels of the game.** She became one of the ECB's first female board members in 2010 and she was still integral to change in the twilight years of her life, in particular with regard to England women's professional contracts. She was still at the centre of really important decisions. She was always there to support, advise and offer good counsel.

**It has been an amazing period of change in the women's game.** England have a new captain in Heather Knight; our first high-profile coach from the men's game, Mark Robinson; and we witnessed the inaugural year of the Kia Super League.

**Heather is going to be an exceptional captain.** To follow Charlotte Edwards, who led the team for ten years to such success was always going to be challenging, but it hasn't seemed difficult for her. She's very well respected for her work ethic and for leading from the front. She's straight talking and very fair. As with any new, young captain she will have much to learn tactically but she is a quick learner and has grown up with cricket all around her.

**In the past two years, the England team's performances have been more scrutinised than ever before.** That's to be embraced because it shows that we're operating in a world where people care enough to have an opinion. That is a new challenge for the players but on the whole they are handling it really well.

**A lot of our language right now is about being 'in the arena' and handling the pressure.** The players have come from an amateur age where they were like a tight-knit family who simply loved the game, into a harsher, more judgemental world. The talent system needs to be supportive and challenging in equal measure to prepare players for that. Mark Robinson is talking to them about being comfortable to be tougher on each other, about giving each other clean feedback and raising that bar of expectation all the time.

**We should be really proud of what we've achieved at the elite end of the game.** We have some unbelievable talent on the International Pathway. We have also attracted some brilliant coaches and science and medical staff who are highly dedicated in supporting the players to be the best they can be - it's a highly motivating environment at the moment.

**Our challenge now is underpinning that talent.** We must invest energy and resource more strategically into participation and growth. We're inspiring lots of girls to play through Chance to Shine, in particular, but we need to pay more attention to the club game.

**Ten years ago there were 90 clubs in the country with women's and girls' sections - now there are more than 700.** But we're seeing lots of churn. Now, since the restructuring of the Participation and Growth team there is rightly going to be much more focus on that. It's a great area of potential, especially with the arrival of the All Stars Cricket programme. It's important that the club game is robust and that women's and girls' sections are really inclusive and welcoming places.



## PARK LIFE

**Bradford Park Avenue was one of Yorkshire and England's iconic grounds. Now, thanks to a planned £5.5m redevelopment project, cricket returns to the heart of this community in this great city.**

Nasa Hussain used to dream of playing for Yorkshire and although he fell short of that ambition he has achieved the next best thing – to work for the county of his birth.

Until last year, Hussain, 47, was a taxi driver but now, as groundsman at the revived Park Avenue ground in Bradford, he is an integral part of a hugely exciting, ambitious project that partners are determined will leave a long-lasting legacy of community cohesion and sporting excellence.

In late 2015, Yorkshire announced the plan to redevelop Park Avenue, a ground which hosted first-class matches for more than a century until 1996. It was also the home of the now defunct Bradford Park Avenue FC.

The £5.5 million planned project, which is due for completion by 2019, is a collaboration between ECB, Sport England, Yorkshire CCC and Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

The long-term plan is for Park Avenue to be transformed into a state-of-the-art new sports complex including a 3,000-seater stadium with the capability to host international women's and disability cricket as well as county matches.

Hussain was a good cricketer himself and his medium-pace swing bowling ("I've been described as a dibbly-dobbler") helped Undercliffe win the Bradford League back in the 1990s.

His enduring passion for the game led him to assist with the redevelopment of facilities at Karmand CC in inner-city Bradford. It was there that he established a connection with Richard Robinson, the former Yorkshire cricketer who is the groundsman for the Leeds/Bradford MCC University club. Robinson has become Hussain's mentor and opened the door for an unexpected second career.



High roller: Nasa Hussain has his dream job, working for Yorkshire



"I worked at Morrisons from 16 for about ten years and then got made redundant," Hussain says. "I was a taxi driver for almost the next 20 years. Now I'm employed full-time by the Yorkshire Foundation. I've said to Mark Arthur, the Yorkshire chief executive, that as a kid you dream of playing for Yorkshire, then you realise you're not good enough but now at the grand old age of 47 I've achieved a dream of sorts - to be employed by them!"

Hussain has even had the rare honour of playing at Park Avenue, for Bradford Schools and then later in a star-studded charity match. He recalls: "We got changed in the old pavilion where the likes of Geoffrey Boycott and Len Hutton had been before us, then we walked down the steps which the studs had grooved so much it was almost dangerous. All the terraced seating made it feel like there were thousands of people watching when in fact there was barely one man and his dog."

Park Avenue was where Boycott made his first-team debut for Yorkshire in 1962 against the touring Pakistan side and where Bradford-born Jim Laker took 8 for 2 in an England Test trial in 1950, skittling the Rest of England for only 27.

Hussain dreamed of playing for Yorkshire long before any player of Asian heritage had done so. "In them early days when I was 14 or 15 going for trials with Yorkshire Schools, it was difficult," he says. "My dad worked nights in the mill so it was difficult for him to come and watch. He didn't drive either so that was a problem. There was also the perception that Yorkshire was not accepting [of Asian players]. To be honest, though, there was never anything else other than Yorkshire for me."

While the Yorkshire side now regularly contains Asian players, Hussain feels the new Park Avenue facility will have a huge impact on the local communities. "Yorkshire has made huge strides already at Headingley with things like the multi-faith room, the no-alcohol areas and hosting the Quaid-e-Azam final. But the Park Avenue project shows that there are people in executive areas of cricket who care about the South Asian community."



The future: an artist's impression of how Bradford Park Avenue will look when completed

"It will be a flagship project and will be at the heart of a diverse community with the mosque providing an amazing backdrop."

The project has been backed by ECB board member Lord Patel of Bradford, who has also played at Park Avenue. He says: "Critically, it will offer cheap and affordable access to sport in an area where low incomes and lack of facilities have deterred participation in the past, and also help bridge religious divides within local South Asian communities."

Andrew Watson, executive director of the Yorkshire Cricket Board, adds: "The redevelopment is a great opportunity to develop a fantastic community sporting complex in the heart of Bradford. It will be a focal point within the community and encourage mass participation by all, in a fully inclusive environment."

Yorkshire CCC CEO Mark Arthur says: "We're proud to have played our part in winning local authority approval for this initiative which is also supported by the Yorkshire Cricket Foundation. Everyone at Yorkshire recognises what an important role this project can play in helping us build stronger connections with the local South Asian community in Bradford and creating a very special sporting facility in an area where there is a long-established cricketing tradition."

Hussain's thoughts are turning now to the sort of pitches he wants to produce at Park Avenue. "I like to see fast bowlers getting the ball through and batsmen get value for their shots," he says. "So I'd like a nice fast outfield and nice quick pitch - though it's not easy to make!"

"We used to laugh at groundsmen who would get angry and protective about their pitches. Well, that's me now! 'You don't need to be walking on there ... you don't need to be playing football on there.' I understand now because I know how many hours it takes to stripe the outfield or make the pitch good. But there's great satisfaction in it."

# 82%

Of recreational cricketers from South Asian communities in England and Wales would like to play more cricket

# 30%

Of recreational cricketers in England and Wales are from South Asian communities







The England Players' Reunion dinner was held at Lord's in February 2017 and was attended by more than 200 past and present players from the men's, women's and disability squads.



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