



THE RIDGEBEAR NEWSLETTER

February, 2025

Chair Bear Round up - Dave Wells

Reflecting on 2024, it's been a privilege to serve as Chair of BRCC, a club we can all take pride in for its community spirit, values, and contributions to cricket.

2024 Highlights:

Our year began with outstanding volunteer efforts during winter preparations, well-attended groundworking sessions, and successful winter nets. A special addition was Martina Ward's Clubhouse Café.

On the field, highlights included excellent membership engagement, the introduction of a Vice Presidents Day, and a successful juniors-to-seniors pathway. We debuted a new senior squad kit, embraced Play Cricket for scoring, and introduced live-streamed games via FrogBox. The girls' teams excelled, with Tilly Fellows and Molly Carter earning representative honours. Two fantastic Six-A-Side tournaments and a vibrant ground, maintained by Charlie Carter and team, added to our success.

Off the field, we saw significant progress. Programmes like All Aboard and the 200 Club grew, membership income hit an all-time high, and the Café thrived, opening four days a week. The bar and BBQ enjoyed a stellar year, and thanks to the tireless work of volunteers, led by Humphrey Grimmett and Martin Forsyth, we made vital investments including new gazebos.

Looking Ahead to 2025:

The big news is our new 3rd XI, playing in the Cherwell League with a ground share at West Wycombe CC. This will strengthen our squad depth and junior pathway. We also welcome Joeley Heeps as our new Safeguarding Officer. Off-field plans include car park improvements, new ground machinery, and our major 'Ridge Bears Nets Generation' project, aiming to raise £50,000 for upgraded nets by spring 2026.



We the RidgeBears are a family, so I do want to mention the sudden and sad passing of our dear friend, and Vice President, Caroline Bird. It has come as a shock to us all and I know our thoughts and support are with Dave and the family at this difficult time. Our thoughts are also with Shakey (Rik Dryden) whose father, former Ridge Bear player, and Vice President, Tony Dryden, recently passed.

Note from the editor...

I am excited to introduce myself officially as the editor of the Newsletter as well as the club's Social Media Manager. If you don't know me already, my name is Erin and I have been running the BRCC socials for nearly a year now. I look forward to continuing to share our updates, highlights, events etc, and continuing to connect with BRCC members.

Please feel free to contact me with any social media requests/queries or pieces for our quarterly newsletter!

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Senior Cricket Update from Sam Rolfe (1st Team Captain)

After a largely positive 2024 playing season, 2025 looks to be the most exciting year yet for the RidgeBears with the introduction of our 3rd Team into the Cherwell league, who will play home matches down the road at West Wycombe.

This is a huge step for the club and means that everyone looking to play league cricket will have the chance to do so - and provides an ever-improving pathway from junior cricket to adult league matches.

The 1st team had an improved but inconsistent campaign, characterised by wins against higher-ranked teams and losses to the bottom two.

The Youth Policy saw Mo Amin, Nevin Korala and Mal Shard break their way into the team as regulars on merit and we look forward to seeing them continue to progress this year. Senior players (Winson, Dakin, Brightwell, Perry, Heath, etc) all made major contributions and captain Sam Rolfe kept his place in the side with excellent bowling figures, by repeatedly bringing himself on to bowl against the opposition's tail end. It was no surprise that Player of the Season, Shaun Dryden, was the side's most consistent performer.

With local hero RAJ returning from the wilderness, and other new and returning bodies expected, our squad is improving and our goal for the season is promotion back to Division 3, which is where this club deserves to be.

My Big Ask for the playing squad is availability. If we could get 2-3 more games out of everyone available next season, we will be really competitive - not just in the 1st team but across all three league sides.



Fun cricket, competition for places, a pumping social calendar, Clubhouse Cafe, bar & BBQ... what's not to like?!
Bring on the Summer...Go Bears!



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The Clubhouse Café

Wow, a whole year has passed since the 'save our café' campaign re-opened our doors for Friday coffee and cake. The love and support from club and community has been amazing, enabling the café, now under the ownership of Martina, to thrive.

We are open year-round, now with a full menu – available Wednesday through to Saturday, 10am-4pm. At the heart of our all-day offering is:

- great, locally roasted coffee
- a changing selection of delicious home baked cakes
- freshly prepared, tasty and fulfilling brunch and lunch dishes.

We also serve a lovely, informal, tailored-to-your-taste afternoon / party tea (minimum 48 hours notice required) with bottomless hot or cold drinks and a bring-your-own fizz option for special occasions. We can open on non-scheduled days for group bookings by prior arrangement.

This year's plans include:

- a menu re-fresh
- launch of platters, grazing boxes and cakes to order
- 'Tasty Talk' events, combining interesting talks, demonstrations or activities with delicious clubhouse food and drink (suggestions welcome for future topics)
- full integration of our rehoming / recycling scheme (for clothes, unwanted beauty / pampering items, and hard-to-recycle plastic waste).

Your continued and regular support for this fantastic facility is greatly appreciated and really helps us to be here for the long term. From popping in for a quick takeaway cuppa - to introducing a friend who hasn't been before - to convening a leisurely brunch or lunch gathering - to ordering work or party food platters. Thanks for your love and see you soon!

Martina, Gemma, Jo, Ruth, Eva & Sasha xxx





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Juniors Update

Dates for 2025:

Junior winter nets at Princes Risborough School go from Sunday 16th Feb to 30th March, just turn up:

4-5pm for Years 6, 7, and 8 - U11, U12, U13 - £18 all sessions or £4 a session.

5-7pm for Years 9 and up - U14 and up -
£35 for all sessions or £8 a session.

Junior Friday nights will start on Friday 25th April and run through to Friday 18th July.

Details for Wednesday evening training for U14 and U15 will be communicated soon.

To keep up to date with all comms about junior cricket join this WhatsApp group



Bledlow Ridge Junior Cricket

WhatsApp group





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3rd XI -

In November a Zoom meeting was held to gauge potential support for a 3rd XI if a ground became available and the overwhelming feedback was that the club should take such an opportunity.

After numerous unsuccessful efforts to obtain use of a second ground, West Wycombe's ground became available at the eleventh hour (well thirteenth actually!) and as a result we will be fielding a 3rd XI in the Cherwell League Division 9A in 2025, playing there on nine Saturdays. High Wycombe CC whose 4th XI play on the alternative Saturdays will maintain the ground on the understanding there will be voluntary assistance from ourselves.

Now is the right time to take this big step forward but it should be noted that it will put some strain – albeit welcome – on our resources; as well as availability, this includes umpiring and scoring. This team will create a bridge between the junior section and league cricket in the higher divisions, while also providing Saturday cricket for those players who have not always got a game in previous seasons. If we get the balance of seniors and juniors right and if we have supporters available to score and to umpire (rather than the players themselves) we will be able to bring younger players on and teach them the game without the pressures of relegation.

On match days it will be down to us to open up and to carry out all pre-match duties from moving sight screens into place, to putting out stumps and markers, prepping refreshments etc - there will be no one else there to do it for us! It is worth emphasising that we should treat this ground as if it were our own which means that all players will be responsible for leaving the ground and facilities as West Wycombe CC will expect to find it for their Sunday match the next day.

If I have delivered a slightly stern message, I should add for those who have never been to WWCC, it is in a beautiful location within the West Wycombe Estate and we are lucky that we will now have two great grounds. There can be added excitement when the electric wire behind the boundary railings is on and from experience, my advice when collecting the ball from beyond the boundary is not to get caught on the railings... or leave it to someone else. Sniff will attest to this also!

Half of the matches will be played away of course and we have to get players there - the good news is that a number of these away fixtures are local at Bradenham, Frieth, Watlington, Tiddington and Chinnor, while Aylesbury, Chearsley, Ivinghoe and Waddesdon are all nice trips and much better when you get there than drum & bass at Bletchley!



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An Interview with Charlie Carter

Robin Baker ("Slices") has prepared all the pitches at The Ridge for several years, however he has decided to take on a new role at Wormsley meaning we need a replacement.

Charlie Carter is the obvious choice to take over because in addition to all his work on the outfield and surrounds in recent years he has also accumulated expertise on creating pitches and on managing a cricket square. We took the opportunity of asking him a few questions about his work at the club and about a day he spent at Lords last summer.

- if you had one particular aim for the season as our groundsman what would it be?

My aim for the season is to try and produce the best pitch and condition of the square within my ability depending on the weather conditions. Making the square/pitch presentable but also playing well.

- how do you see the square might be further improved?

The square is in a very good condition for what it is worth with a lot of credit going to Slices in recent years and past groundsmen! Without ripping up the square and laying it from scratch there would be very little to improve, apart from the saddle at the 'Radnage Road End'. We have a very good square that has been worked on for many years.

- ... and the outfield?

The outfield has improved from previous years thanks to the overseeding a season or two ago. With the rolling undulating nature of our ground it would be hard to get it flatter without ripping it up and starting from scratch. However, some may argue this is what makes it look beautiful. One issue we do struggle with is worm casts! This is a constant battle in trying to limit the amount of damage they do in the wetter months of early and later season.

- ... and what can we do about wormcasts?

Try and stay off the ground when it is too wet. Worms are good for aerating the outfield during the winter month and I use the dragmat/brush when the casts have dried.



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- *give us a brief summary of what is involved in a) prepping a strip and b) repairing a strip, roughly how many hours to produce one strip (including rolling)*

A cricket pitch is worked on from up to 14 days in advance of the date of the fixture. This process/hours for each activity changes from ground to ground and there is no one system that is suitable for everyone. In general, activities involve: cutting, verticutting, raking, brushing, wetting, rolling, more cutting/brushing, marking and repairing, in that order. At our club we tend to roll for 3 hours per pitch on top of many hours during pre-season. Repairing is important for further use of the pitch (if needed) and for the quality/presentation of the square.

- *if you could have say, a couple of assistants to work on a strip for perhaps half an hour at any point during the week, what difference could that make?*

Help is always appreciated! Whether it be on the pitch, square, outfield or surrounds. To keep this ground at the level we have all come to appreciate, takes many hours of care maintaining the place we all love and enjoy.

- *when we went to that evening event last summer at RT Machinery near Aylesbury you started chatting to the Lords Groundsman and he invited you to spend a day at Lords with his grounds team. Would you tell us about your day spent there, what you did and what were the particular takeaways?*

Firstly, I would like to say thank you to Karl McDermott for offering me the opportunity to go down to Lords for a day behind the scenes with him and his team prepping for the Sri Lanka Test Match. His team were all very welcoming and made me feel at home. It was very surreal to be allowed/trusted to run machines at Lords and get a close up view of standing on an International pitch/outfield. When I started the day the pitch still had a green tinge (roughly 3 days out from the start of the test) by the end of the day the pitch had turned white. Their attention to detail was fascinating, making sure every line was straight and the best it possibly could be. From taking the covers off the main/nursery ground, to brushing/cutting the pitch, outfield, square and helping mark out the test pitch it was a surreal day, one that I won't forget.

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NETS GENERATION
FUNDRAISING



**“Nets Generation”
Fundraising
Campaign for New
Outdoor Nets.
Help the club raise
£50,000.**

Our outdoor nets are now 18 years old. They are worn, torn and uneven in places, built with out-of-date methods and no longer of the standard that an aspiring club like ours, should be happy with. Our growing sections, especially the girls, ladies and the new senior 3rd XI means the facility is being used more and more.

A high quality two-lane replacement facility will cost in the region of £50,000. This is a substantial sum which we must raise ourselves together with any external funding for which we might qualify and without drawing on funds used for the day-to-day management of the club.

Auction of Pledges

Fundraising will kick off with an Auction of Pledges which we will run in parallel with the company George Grose works for, Sporting Superstars. Club members need to put up pledges of gifts and Superstars will add some of their own. These will be available on a Silent Auction to run from two weeks prior to an Auction Dinner at The Boot on Friday evening 4th April. At the Dinner additional items will be auctioned off by the one-and-only Taggart, while the Silent Auction continues in parallel until the dinner ends.

This arrangement means firstly that all pledges and gifts no matter how large or small can be part of the Silent Auction (everyone can bake a cake or gift some wine for example) and secondly that everyone can bid for items however large or small. In other words if you can't make the dinner and bid on a holiday cottage (for example), you can help the club by bidding for smaller items online. But please think big with your pledges, “experiences” such as a match day tour of the Lords Pavilion, or a round of golf somewhere special which can't be price-matched on google, are especially good at attracting large bids.

We need to fill The Boot on 4th April. By the time you read this you will know about the dinner and menu choices. It will be a good evening. Previous experience shows that bidding can get very competitive. Please support the first stage in this project. **Contact John Rolfe j.rolfe444@btinternet.com / 07873 516568**



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THE 200 CLUB

One of the BRCC objectives for 2025 is to continue to grow our 200 club!

First and foremost we would like to welcome and formally introduce Manoj Chandran who will be leading the 200 club from now on. A huge thank you to Manoj for volunteering for the role!

The 200 club gives members an opportunity to win up to £200 per month!

The main goal of the 200 club is to raise money monthly to support the club by funding new equipment etc ...

How it works

The full rules of the 200 club can be found on our website
<http://www.bledlowridgecricketclub.co.uk/200>
But the headlines are as follows.

- Pick a number between 1 and 200 (that no-one else has already picked).
- You pay £5 per month (by standing order to the club) or £60 (by bank transfer) for a year's membership.
- A draw will be held on the first Friday of every month
- The first number drawn wins the top prize
- Three more numbers will be drawn, all winners!