

## NECL AGM 2020: Chairman's Report

First, I should like to thank Graham Pryke for helping us to set up this year's AGM via Zoom – the new way of conducting meetings in these unusual times. I extend a warm welcome to all member clubs, as well as Alex Youngs and Ivan Humm, whose proposals for a new NECL Youth Development league are outlined below.

As we all know, 2020 saw no league cricket because of the late start caused by the pandemic. However, once cricket was permitted, it was pleasing to see the initiative shown by clubs in arranging fixtures, and the enthusiasm that clearly still exists for the game, especially amongst young players. I commend all the league's clubs for 'getting the game on'. I should also like to thank Graham and the ECB for their constant flow of information, advice and support.

Hopefully, 2021 will see a full cricket season, allowing the normal programme of league and cup cricket to operate again, though I suspect that the new playing regulations put in place this year to cope with the virus will have to remain in force. As you may have noticed, the fixture template for next season now excludes Saturdays. Only one league fixture was scheduled for a Saturday in 2020. It is not our intention to totally exclude the possibility of Saturday fixtures, but, as so few clubs offer any Saturday availability, it seems best to leave this as a last resort, to be explored only if all other possibilities have failed. I ask clubs to ensure that their 2021 fixture template is completed and returned on time by 18<sup>th</sup> November.

The committee has continued to operate and, on occasion, meet (remotely, of course) during the course of the year, and I am grateful to all its members for their continued hard work and support. The lack of cricket has obviously affected our income, but, as you'll see from the accounts, thanks to support we've received from several quarters, for which we are most grateful, and the ingenuity of our Treasurer, Emma Harris, the league's finances remain sound.

As you will know, the 2020 ball distribution had to be cancelled, meaning that we (or rather, I) have been left holding the balls ordered by clubs a year ago. Several clubs have now collected their 2020 balls, but, at the time of writing, I still have balls belonging to Coggeshall, Frinton, Gt Totham, Halstead, Kelvedon, Real Oddies, Sudbury, West Bergholt, Witham and Wivenhoe. I'd be grateful if those clubs could arrange to pick up their balls from me as soon as possible. We fully understand that ball orders for next season will not be of the usual volume.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this report, we have received a proposal from Alex Youngs and Ivan Humm for a new format competition, which they have been instrumental in developing, to run under the auspices of the NECL, starting in 2021. This is to be a 30-over Youth Development league, for teams principally of young players, with perhaps just one or two adult participants per team to give guidance. The aim is to provide a form of cricket which will facilitate the transition from colts' cricket to the adult game. As I understand it, there are currently six clubs who have expressed an interest in entering a team into this league. The intention is to add a new dimension to what is offered by the NECL, which should not in any way detract from our 40-over league and T20 cup competitions. We hope that member clubs will see this as a positive addition to what we offer.

Once again, I should like to thank all the league's clubs for their hard work in making a success of the cricket which was played this year, and I extend to them my best wishes for 2021.