

CAMDEN CRICKET CLUB



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Dear Members and Vice-presidents,

For a third time I have the privilege of writing to you as your president. I have just re-read the letter I sent in the middle of last season, not without some concern at the edge of desperation in the words I wrote. Many of you doubtless hope the situation has improved, especially as the fixture card is emerging before the season start. If it has, with a very few exceptions, it is not because of you. This season we, your committee, have shuffled some jobs: Will Sutton, our excellent and incredibly hard-working secretary is becoming the seconds' skipper. As a result he will be unable to co-ordinate the colts, a job I will have to take over. I will not be organising the Casuals, Nick Austin has volunteered to take on that role and I hope you will support him and turn out whenever you can, in my opinion casual cricket is still the most consistently entertaining cricket to be had. The head coach of the juniors, Keith Vincent has relatively recently indicated that he won't be returning, so I will be taking that job on with the assistance of Nick and Ali, his son, and running a much restricted service, of which more later. Otherwise the committee remains largely unchanged.

I understand that the membership of the club is a large expense (although actually favourable when compared to other sport), but this doesn't mean that members can just assume someone will do all the jobs and they do not need to be involved. I am also acutely aware that I am once again using this as an opportunity to do what many may see as complain about the position we are in, for a second year. However as I said last year, this can only continue for so long; the committee have too much to do to keep you playing and keep the club alive – more of you must join us.

One vital area we must make a decision about and which will be on the agenda at the AGM in January is the junior section. For many years one or two individuals have soldiered on with this, increasingly the duty had fallen to our overseas "pro". As many of you have heard me say if all those who had helped out had all helped out at once they all still would be because as with any club job many hands make light work. As it is, a long list of members has given time to keeping it going bit by bit. This summer, as a result of KV's absence, a shortage of coaches and my commitments elsewhere we will only be running the Under 11s. The idea is to keep a foundation should we be able to continue. The junior section needs at least one

coach per age group and ideally a sub-coach to assist with games. It is two commitments per week, fewer with more people obviously.

The matter for debate is this: Do we want to continue to run a junior section? We have done so for a variety of reasons to do with tradition, ECB funding, continuing and instilling love of the game, introducing our own offspring to the game, bringing players into and on with the club. We currently boast four or so playing members who actually came up “through the ranks” (two of whom are currently skippers of our five regular teams it should be noted) and often we benefit more from other clubs juniors (and in turn other clubs presumably benefit from us). The club has also had a tradition of recruiting from the University, especially with our college links. If we wish to continue a junior section we need to decide: are you, as members prepared to have £10 extra on your subscription to pay for a regular coach or can we find from within our ranks five volunteers to revitalise it? I think five is the minimum if they aren't to feel overworked, put-upon and will stick with it. Training would clearly be made available, but without five and/or extra money for professionals I cannot see how it would be sustained. I would welcome your comments, alternative suggestions or better still your wholehearted volunteering! Talk to me during the season, e-mail me, send me an old-fashioned letter, give me an impression of what you think the club should do and what you are prepared to do to achieve it.

Unfortunately I've made it onto a second page before I can turn to the genuinely and wholehearted positives! As I've said I'm hugely grateful, as you should be, to the whole committee, please make their jobs as easy as possible; pay up to Martin ASAP, bring your mates to nets (Tuesday nights at Pembroke, 6pm, the first week was great; I even held on to a catch in fielding practice!), let the captains know your availability before they have to come after you, all the usual things really. Get out there and play; we've had a few years without any kind of shields; if we're going to pay for CCA membership let's take something out of it! Most of all enjoy the sunshine (!) on your back, the breeze in your face and the look of horror on the oppositions' faces...

At present I have fewer “events” than usual to advertise, I'm hoping Ali, relieved of the second team responsibility will be coming up with inventive new social ideas. The end-of-season curry and the VPs' reception are both advertised in the fixture card, please do come along (otherwise I have to drink all the wine myself). Please dip into your pockets for the 100 club which helps club funds greatly. Do come and watch, even if you're not playing Pembroke, King's and Queen's are all easy to find and you'll be welcomed. Above all, have a good season!

Yours sincerely

David Mitchell