**East of Scotland Cricket Association**

**AGM 2017 – Tuesday 14th November**

**President’s Report**

The previous 12 months could certainly be described as interesting and challenging! We are all well versed in the challenges facing Cricket and the pressures across all Clubs.

The recent ESCA Survey certainly bears this out and we are very grateful to all (c450) who completed the Survey – a fantastic response. This was followed up by an excellent Clubs Meeting which will allow us to take forward some new ideas / initiatives. Particular thanks are due to Neil Granger for the enormous amount of work done in putting together the Survey and the very many hours of detailed analysis that we see in the final report.

Before going on to cover a number of highlights over the season, we must again highlight the issue of Discipline – something which also featured in a number of Survey responses. Whilst the vast majority of matches are played in excellent spirits, there are still far too many incidents of poor behaviour and indiscipline.

The number of complaints received and poor Fairplay scores are too high and frankly unacceptable. A number of Survey respondents cited poor discipline as a factor in being less enthusiastic about playing.

Clubs and Captains must take responsibility for actions / behaviours of their players and it may be that accountability of Captains is something we need to look at more closely - we are all playing recreational cricket.

On to more positive matters from the season just finished. We have just held our Annual Awards presentation and congratulations to all League winners and those individuals winning Batting and Bowling prizes. We should also congratulate RH Corstorphine on their promotion to Eastern Premier League after an excellent victory over Stoneywod Dyce in the Play-Off Final. The Eastern Premier League will again feature 7 ESCA Clubs in 2018.

The Masterton Trophy saw a major revamp in 2017 with a League based format allowing all Clubs to play more matches. The top 4 sides qualified for the Semi-Finals with Watsonians beating Heriots in a tremendous final at Grange Loan. Particular thanks to Fraser Watts, Kevin MacLaren and the new Masterton Committee for all their hard work in developing the new format and in running a very successful competition.

Umpires & Scorers – particular thanks are also due to all of our Umpires and Scorers across the region for all their commitment and hard work which is vital to the success of our game. We are really keen to support initiatives to increase Umpire numbers and I know Ian Ramage would be very keen to see former and current players get involved in Umpiring – am sure all would be very welcome.

Junior Cricket – clearly a critical area in terms of securing and growing long-term future of the game and again thanks to the large number involved in Coaching, organising, managing, umpiring, etc, whether it be at Representative level or the absolutely vital grassroots of the game.

These are challenging, but also exciting times with new Representative Pathways being put in place by Gordon Drummond at Cricket Scotland, whilst in grassroots Club Junior Cricket, Ian Sandbrook is looking to develop and launch new / revised formats (built on a new Cricket Australia programme) aimed at improving the experience for our young cricketers – smaller pitches / boundaries, more balls to hit, greater involvement, etc.

We have seen the launch of All Stars Cricket – a new UK-wide programme introducing 5-8 year olds to the game. A good number of Clubs in Scotland (and in the ESCA area) ran All Stars programmes with 931 boys & girls registered on the programme. In Scotland, this year. With the ECB / CS announcing Year 2 roll-out we will hopefully see more Clubs and more juniors taking part in 2018.

The focus, interest and activity levels in Girls & Womens Cricket continues to grow, now being driven forward by Nic Wilson at Cricket Scotland. The past season saw a new (Hardball) East Development League, featuring 6 local Clubs, being added to support the existing Womens Premier League. The recent appointment of Madison Garland as Development Officer for Female Cricket in the East can only help to try to drive the game forward.

We must also thank Baillie Gifford for their fantastic continued sponsorship of ESCA Cricket. This is hugely appreciated and is absolutely vital to the development, growth and playing of grassroots Cricket in the region.

Finally, I must thank all the hard-working ESCA Committee members / Office-bearers. All are volunteers who give up huge amounts of their time to the running of recreational Cricket in the East. We are always looking for help and if Club members would like to get involved on the Committee or just taking on some specific areas / using their expertise please do let us know – very welcome.

As I said at the start, these are very challenging times for Cricket (and indeed all sports) and unlikely to get easier. It is vital that we all seek to work together, help each other, ensure high standards of behaviour / sportsmanship and seek to promote / develop interest in the game.

Best wishes to all Clubs for 2018.

David Gibson – ESCA President

November 2017