

ESCC Report May 23

I am pleased to report that the club had a very successful season last year both on and off the pitch. With the challenges we faced the prior few years with our playing strength we bounced back with a much stronger squad and availability also improved significantly

With the relegations of both teams in the prior season, it helped us to reset at a level we were able to be competitive again and enjoy many victories. To finish 4th on a Saturday was a credible finish considering the strength of the top two teams, which included a South African professional with a 1st class average and another with two former Premier league players in their ranks.

I would like to thank Luke Edgar and Sam Fenning for captaining the teams and the players for their commitment.

The 2023 season is already underway but has been bit of a wash out so far. Out of the four games scheduled only one has been played away but we did enjoy our first victory. We are yet to start paying on Sundays as the season does not commence until the 14th May.

There is an ongoing debate around the size of the Saturday cricket leagues, with twelve teams in all divisions down to division seven means the season won't end until September 9th. That doesn't give any free weekends all season, and in my view, something that needs addressing quickly to help smaller clubs, like us, with availability and reduce the amount of traveling costs to away games each season.

The club continues to be in a stable position financially and I would like to thank Stephen Lewis for his continued work as Treasurer, keeping us in check and in the black. Our small bar is a vital source of income to the club as well as our Vice Presidents and Sponsors which we are extremely grateful for their support, many of which come from the local community. The club is very expensive to run with annual square renovations now costing over £1500 and fuel cost for the mowers exceeds £500 per annum.

That said each year we look to either improve our facilities or equipment and this year is no exception. We have managed to track down a replacement roller as ours was showing signs of age and it did break down a couple of times last season. A significant investment for the club but very worthwhile if we are to keep improving the playing surface. We also purchased a second-hand rotary with a rear roller to use on the square throughout the winter to make sure we keep the playing surface in as good condition as possible.

With the heavy rain in March and April it does highlight the fact that the playing field has very poor drainage which meant we had to cancel 2 of our early games and limits the use of the ground in winter for everyone as it becomes pretty much a bog. I know the Trustees have looked at options before and is hard to justify the cost of a better drainage system but it would help us keep the ground in much better shape 12 months per year if a solution could be found.

Finally, we are very pleased to have agreed an extension to our licence to play cricket on the playing field with the Trustees for an additional 7 years which not only gives us stability but will keep the playing field in great condition for all who use it over that time.

Simon Edgar – ESCC Hon Club Secretary & Vice Chairman.