

Hi Joe, please accept profuse apologies for the delay in getting back to you.

I enjoyed seeing the University's cricket and sports pitches at Cryfield and it was great to meet so many committed cricketers joining us on the tour party.

With me was Dick Chase, the WCB Pitch Advisor, whose area of expertise is in squares and pitches rather than facilities. Without doing any detailed examination, he commented that both squares looked in very good condition: excellent and uniform coverage of grass, absence of the grass poa annua (which in cricket squares is regarded as a weed), good colour, very few weeds and worm casts. In other words, squares which in all probability would produce good cricket pitches. This is usually the hardest thing to get right with cricket grounds so it is most encouraging to see this situation.

In general I was struck by the excellent space and upkeep of the grounds.

Coventry has a real issue with the lack of cricket grounds (I have quite a large paper on that if you'd like to see it) so the two good grounds that the University has our precious assets.

It was, therefore, disappointing to witness the lack of back up facilities for the two grounds. I noted that the single net was in a complete state of disrepair, there was no running water, toilets or electricity in the huts, insufficient covers, overly heavy sightcreens and that the main pavilion was a fair distance from the cricket grounds. The lack of infrastructure is clearly detracting from the overall cricket-playing experience. It said it all that the University First Team hire Leamington CC, approximately 10 miles away for their home BUCS matches.

The cricketers, who represented various departmental and inter-mural teams, were clearly very frustrated with the situation and have a lot of energy and desire to see things put right. Whilst finance is clearly an issue I'm sure there can be ways and means to make the necessary investments especially if the players are given an audience and be allowed to put forward some ideas. I will also be happy to explore any potential grant-aid options although WCB itself does not give grant aid.

If there is anything that be done I think it could be of huge benefit to the game of cricket and to the University and its good numbers of cricketers.

If the University would like to explore ways of helping local schools, groups and clubs access the grounds once the facilities are up to scratch I would also be more than happy to assist with this.

The ECB National Coaches Conference is at the University of Warwick on 31st Jan/1st February and the top coaches and administrators from English cricket will be present on site. Clearly the University is benefitting financially from this and also gaining massive profile within Cricket. If the outdoor facilities could match up too I'm sure there could be further hires, partnerships and developments that could benefit all parties.

So if the University wants to take its cricket and cricketers more seriously I would be delighted to meet up and help start the process.

Yours faithfully

Ed McCabe

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