



NatWest
**CRICKET
FORCE
2008**



NatWest CricketForce 2008 was incredibly successful. 1,375 clubs signed up to the scheme (225 more than last year), attracting 85,000 volunteers (5,000 more than last year) and £35-40million was invested into community club cricket, confirming its status as the biggest volunteering initiative in British sport.

Its purpose is to improve cricket club facilities by involving and motivating existing members and their friends and families, the local community, local businesses and other supporters in a team building exercise to help undertake significant renovation or new build which helps everybody feel proud of their achievements. Improved facilities means a higher standard of cricket and a more welcoming environment for all.

Although the emphasis remains on the initiative and planning coming from clubs themselves, the ECB provides funding, support and organisation which drives the development work forward. The scheme is just one of the ECB's many grassroots initiatives which are aimed at ensuring the best possible future for cricket throughout England and Wales.

If it hasn't been already, why should your club get involved?

- Unrivalled assistance with renovation and improved facilities to build a foundation for future growth
- The profile raised helps to attract and maintain a wider membership base and increased income
- Working through the community builds vital partnerships for years to come, for example with local schools, councils and businesses
- The potential of media attention and publicity that comes with ECB involvement can only be a good thing as your club strives to move forward

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NatWest CricketForce 2008 – Showcase Clubs

April 4-6

Kirby Muxloe Cricket Club

Even before the main weekend kicked off, the ECB organised a special one-off event on January 4. Last year, Leicestershire's Kirby Muxloe C.C. had their £2,700 bowling machine stolen from their outdated, rotting pavilion. Club leaders decided the solution was to build a replacement, and thus enlisted the help of NatWest CricketForce.

“The impact of an event like this demonstrates what can be achieved when people come together for a common cause – it’s extremely powerful”

Paul Bedford

263 volunteers worked alongside the England U19 team, Leicestershire players, ECB Managing Director of Cricket Partnerships Mike Gatting, ECB Head of Operations for Non First-Class Cricket Paul Bedford and many NatWest employees to erect a top-class new pavilion and complete much needed renovation work around the ground.



The NatWest team look forward to some hard work

“If we all put a little bit of effort in within our county or within our community, we can improve standards – not just for us, but for our kids,” said Bedford. “The impact of an event like this demonstrates what can be achieved when people come together for a common cause – it’s extremely powerful”.

England U19 Captain Alex Wakely was delighted that his charges were invited to take part: “An event like this trying to help the community – it’s fantastic.”

Membership and revenue has increased, and new U11 and U17 teams have been created. The club has also attained ECB Clubmark Accreditation and five Leicestershire Young Cricketers games have since been hosted at a ground which has never previously been considered.



What a difference a weekend makes – above: Kirby Muxloe's old pavilion, below: the new building



Hambleton Cricket Club

The Hampshire club was hit by an electrical fire in September 2007 which devastated the pavilion, leaving only the changing rooms in a useable condition. Rebuilding was a must – including a new exterior, kitchen, changing rooms and patio. A number of projects around the ground were undertaken simultaneously: renovating the sightscreens, erecting fences and clearing hedges and trees.



A youngster takes some advice from England star Dimitri Mascarenhas as part of the ECB roadshow which visits all showcase clubs

“It’s a great initiative and it’s brilliant to be able to give something back”

Dimitri Mascarenhas

400 volunteers turned up, putting in 2000 hours of free labour, while £20,000 of materials and services were donated. The workforce included England stars Dimitri Mascarenhas and Ebony Rainford-Brent, the Hampshire squad, Paul Bedford and ECB Head of Development Pete Ackerley. Mascarenhas was glad to help at grassroots level: “It’s a great initiative and it’s brilliant to be able to give something back.

All of us started off at a club like this. It’s nice to see all of these people helping out and it’s great that mums and dads, family and friends all come down to help their local club.”

Rainford-Brent took a break from her hard work to add: “There’s lots of good work going on. It’s really exciting to see the local community coming together”.



Dimitri Mascarenhas and Ebony Rainford-Brent join the Hambledon team to prepare the ground

The weekend was a great success. The publicity of the event resulted in a new pavilion, a lease for a second ground, increased youth recruitment, links with the local community, companies and service providers and stronger partnerships with the Hampshire Cricket Board and Hampshire Cricket.

Lisvane Cricket Club

Welsh club Lisvane had been searching for a ground in Cardiff for over 30 years. And after finally securing an agreement with Cardiff YMCA they found an ideal location, which enabled them to use their St. Mellons facility. The disadvantage was that this ground desperately required renovation as it had not been used for over six years.

The square needed upgrading, the buildings all needed to be modernised and refurbished, while improved access to the ground was urgently required. A new cricket infrastructure was a priority, including a two-bay net facility and artificial pitch for junior members.

“Facilities are important, they make a difference to the club experience”

Mike Gatting

With an outlay of £25,000, much of which came from other sources, the club estimate that they achieved £250,000 worth of development to complete all jobs and provide the only cricket facility in East Cardiff. The club is now a much more pleasant and vibrant place to attend, with increased membership and first-class facilities.



Volunteers from Lisvane come together to work on the newly acquired ground

Some of the famous faces who turned out included ECB Chairman Giles Clarke, ECB Chief Executive David Collier and Mike Gatting, as well as Robert Croft, Mike Powell and Mark Wallace from Glamorgan.

Gatting said: “Facilities are important, they make a difference to the club experience. Therefore it’s important to get a conveyor belt of volunteers.”



Robert Croft joins in the fun

Hertford Cricket Club

Outdated facilities were not keeping pace with four thriving Saturday teams and roughly 200 colts members. Showcase status represented an opportunity to make the club a nicer place to play cricket and socialise and become a focal point of the community.

Put into practice, this meant a large number of improvements, including a complete re-tiling, building an electronic scoreboard, installing new entertainment systems in the clubhouse, a brand new kitchen, redoing and extending paving, putting up a new cage net system and building new sightscreens.

350 volunteers pitched in, including England international Ravi Bopara, England women's captain Charlotte Edwards, David Collier and Mike Gatting.

Commenting on the day Charlotte Edwards said: "It's great to see everyone here and enjoying themselves. This is what good clubs are made of – lots of people coming down and helping out."



The Mayor of Hertfordshire gets in on the action



Ravi Bopara and Charlotte Edwards put the finishing touches on a new sightscreen

England star Bopara was pleased at the youthful turn-out: "It's nice to be involved – the best thing is seeing all of the children having a good time."

"It's great to see everyone here and enjoying themselves. This is what good clubs are made of – lots of people coming down and helping out."

Charlotte Edwards

£30,000 worth of donations and skilled labour was provided and 23 companies got involved. All tasks were completed and the unprecedented amount of local media coverage helped put the club on the map: membership has increased to such an extent that the club are now operating a 5th XI.

St. James Montefiore Cricket Club

St. James Montefiore C.C., based in Ditchling, Sussex, has a proud legacy of hosting cricket since 1858 and as such is vibrant, with 5 Saturday sides, 2 Sunday sides and some 120 juniors aged between 8 and 16, including a girls' team.

Improvements were needed at the newly-acquired second ground. The clubhouse was completely redecorated, new fencing was erected around the second ground, on which an all-weather pitch was also laid, new paved patios were built for both grounds, pipe work was laid for surface ditches



Sussex's Sharky comes under attack from some of the younger volunteers

and the nets, boundary boards and score boards were renovated.

The weekend helped the club to obtain a new sponsor, which, alongside the thriving junior section and publicity created, will ensure sustainability for the future. England international Luke Wright was overwhelmed to see the amount of people supporting community cricket: "This is a great event, it's brilliant to see how hard people are working for their local club."

His enthusiasm was seconded by Sussex captain Chris Adams, who reflected on the importance of the event for the local area and for the future of the game: "This event brings the whole community together. Clubs like this are the future of cricket, so it's great to see the children out and having some fun."

The England Women's set-up really chipped in, with Sussex-based players Rosalie Birch, Laura Marsh, Holly Colvin and Charlotte Russell all involved.

"This is a great event, it's brilliant to see how hard people are working for their local club."

Luke Wright



Luke Wright, Chris Adams and Holly Colvin take a well-deserved lunch break

Farsley Cricket Club

Yorkshire-based Farsley's strong junior set-up and a development plan geared towards player progression, which has produced first-class and even international cricketers like Raymond Illingworth, was in danger of being undermined by outdated facilities.

"It's great to help clubs that are struggling – and fun too."

Anthony McGrath

NatWest CricketForce addressed this problem. The structure of the clubhouse, which used to leak when it rained, was strengthened and a temporary roof put in place until a new one can be built after this season. The bar and kitchen were rebuilt, arrangements were put in place for new doors and windows to be fitted in September, a new artificial pitch was laid as well as new mobile nets and a drainage system. By the time all development is completed, around £150,000 worth of work will have been done for just £20,000 outlay.

Former England international and Yorkshire regular Anthony McGrath said: "It's great to help clubs that are struggling – and fun too."



Adil Rashid gets a helping hand from a few of the Farsley volunteers

McGrath was joined by his team mate Adil Rashid, Yorkshire Chief Executive Stewart Regan, England Women's stars Katherine Brunt and Sarah Taylor and Mike Gatting.

The new-found media interest and local impetus led to increased membership and improved performances on the pitch – the first team are on course to win the Bradford League 2nd Division.



Katherine Brunt and Sarah Taylor show off their DIY skills

NatWest CricketForce 2008: Highlights from across the country

NatWest CricketForce is not just about the showcase clubs. There are a large number of clubs around the country that participate as well, and below are a few examples of how these other clubs have benefitted:

Tavistock Cricket Club (Devon) – A founder member of the Devon League, Tavistock wanted to improve their junior recruitment and family membership due to their rural location. To achieve this, the clubhouse was renovated, new nets and new fencing were erected and the score box fixed. As a result, the colts section has grown with the intention of having a 4th side next season.

Worthing Cricket Club (Sussex) – With 4 senior teams and a large junior section, cricket is vibrant at Worthing C.C., but its social aspect needed attention. To that end, the Clubhouse was targeted. A ladies toilet was installed, the kitchen units redeveloped, a new floor was fitted in the main room which was also redecorated, while the bar and barbeque were given a much needed clean.



Ebony Rainford-Brent proves that she's just as adept with a brush as with a bat



An enthusiastic youngster shows off his skills learned at the Lisvane showcase event

St. Just Cricket Club (Cornwall) – In line with our Green theme, the club used an ECB grant to install solar panels on the roof of their clubhouse to help generate the power to run it.

Penn Cricket Club (Staffordshire) – In the club's centenary year, some much needed work was carried out on their two grounds. On the Gamesfield Green, in line with the ECB's Green theme, a composting area was created for pruned vegetation and bird boxes built to encourage wildlife diversity, while a new fence was erected, the driveway relaid and the changing rooms and sightscreens renovated. At the Mount Road ground, the perimeter fence was restored and the clubhouse repainted.

Old Wilsonians Cricket Club (Kent) – For the first club in Bromley to receive ECB clubmark accreditation, the weekend was about completing the little jobs that needed doing. Both sets of toilets were thoroughly cleaned, the score box garden cleared, cricket nets and roll on covers erected, new carpets laid in the bar area, a new electronic scoreboard fitted and four new TVs installed in the clubhouse. The thick snowfall on Sunday did not dampen spirits – the children even created a new club mascot out of it.

Looking ahead to 2009

April 3-5

A note from NatWest

NatWest is proud to continue its association with NatWest CricketForce and in 2009 they will continue to encourage NatWest employees to volunteer and offer support at their local clubs.



Mike Gatting looks on as the new pavilion is erected at Kirby Muxloe

The ECB and NatWest are already looking forward with eager anticipation to next year's instalment of the NatWest CricketForce programme, scheduled to take place between 3-5 April.



It's all smiles for Welsh club Lisvane

In line with the 2009 *Be Involved...* campaign, ECB Chief Executive David Collier said: "Our aim is to involve even more clubs and even more volunteers than we have managed in our recent record breaking years. The worth to cricket clubs of the effort produced by the tens of thousands of volunteers both young and old is measured in many millions."

NatWest CricketForce 2009 will see a continuation of the 2008 Green theme, and as such will carry on placing an emphasis on energy efficiency.

Earlier this year the ECB launched its Go Green Fund which is available to registered clubs from this year and applicants for next year. Clubs can be awarded up to £10,000 to go towards energy saving projects, while we have recently agreed a partnership with energy-saving company Carbon Aided who will perform free carbon

footprint assessment on ten cricket clubs across the country. This will hopefully provide a foundation for all clubs to be more proactive in using energy in the most efficient manner possible.

ECB Club Programmes Manager Dave Leighton explained: "The ECB are very keen for NatWest CricketForce to 'Go Green' and, as such, are promoting to all affiliated cricket clubs the concept of doing their little bit to help save energy."

"That could be ensuring that there is more energy efficiency, conservation of water, exploring ways of sustaining energy supplies – i.e. reduce, reuse, recycle and insulate. In this way, cricket will secure even more support from the government, the local authorities and the business world and be as seen as a really responsible and forward-looking sport."



Charlie Russell, Laura Marsh and Holly Colvin give the St. James Montefiore pavilion a new lick of paint



ECB ADVICE FOR CLUBS WHO WISH TO REGISTER:

Although the ECB will lend a helping hand with funding, organisation and sponsorship, the ethos of NatWest CricketForce always has been and shall continue to be that the main drive and planning has to come from within your club itself.

Here are a few tips on how to ensure that the programme is used to its full potential:

- Early and comprehensive planning, including a project plan and budget document
- Aim high and be ambitious – you can always down size with time
- Create a reliable leadership team with specific roles and responsibilities
- Appoint an enthusiastic and reliable project leader
- Delegation of individual roles and tasks
- Regular meetings and communication to ensure that everybody knows what is going on
- Try and recruit as much help as possible – local councillors, MPs, businesses, schools – never be afraid to ask for volunteers, discounts and services. If you don't ask, you don't get
- Try to enlist local media coverage to raise the profile of the event
- Pick up ideas from what other clubs have used the project to achieve
- Focus on team spirit and having fun to ensure that volunteers will come back for more
- Put plans in place to ensure legacy of achievements and long-term sustainability

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

If you are interested in getting your club or organisation involved in NatWest CricketForce or would like more information on the initiative please do not hesitate to contact us:

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From Playground to Test Arena

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