

## **Bangor Cricket Club – Annual General Meeting Report = Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

### **Chairperson Review of 2021 Cricket Season**

I am delighted to report that the Cricket Section is in very good health. The committee is vibrant and good management structures are firmly in place. Jonny Parker has been engaged as Director of Coaching for next year and his enthusiasm, diligence and knowledge will drive playing standards upwards. We fielded four adult teams this season but our greatest achievement was the performance and attendance at under age level, along with the development of girls and ladies cricket. Peter McIlwaine deserves particular mention, along with his dedicated youth coaching team for the superb numbers attending youth cricket. Our Summer Scheme this year was extremely well attended and was enjoyed by dozens of boys and girls.

I would like to thank the hard working committee members and team captains for their commitment throughout the year. While our 1st team struggled at times for results, our junior teams were very competitive with our 3rd team winning their league. I have confidence that with a proper coaching structure now in place for next year that our 1st team will be much more competitive.

One of the hurdles we will face with our growing numbers is ground availability and is hoped that current negotiations with the Council will see cricket return to Ward Park. One further challenge is the reduction in cricket being played in post primary schools. Our conveyor belt of talent from traditional sources, sadly no longer exists and hence our future reliance on club grown talent.

I would like to thank Stephen Burns for his tireless work in providing a beautiful surface at Uprichard Park. The management of the ground requires many man-hours weekly and one further development will be the establishment of a Grounds Team to assist Stephen. I would hope that when the call comes, we will have a number of volunteers willing to give a little time each week.

“Bangor CC is coming up the hill”.

### **Jeremy Stewart - Chairperson of Bangor Cricket Club**

#### **1st XI Report**

With another season marred by COVID-19 I think the club can once again be immensely proud of all that it has achieved. A massive congratulations to both our 2ndXI and 3rdXI who gained promotion following very successful seasons and it is well deserved for captains Andrew Pyper and Paul Houston.

The achievement of a thriving junior section is also to be applauded, Peter McIlwaine and Mark English have put so much time in and it shows with ever increasing numbers. Thanks must also go to the parents who give up their time to help with coaching. Peter was also instrumental in the introduction of women's cricket this year to Bangor, and I wish the ladies every success.

The 1stXI had a difficult season with consistency the main culprit as we gained our spot back to Section 1. The first half of the season was played as T20s due to COVID restrictions and the second half as normal 50 over matches. A number of performances were worthy of one of the top spots in the league, but unfortunately these were few and far between and we fell short of the wins in even the tight games. There were some stand out performances from young players like Chris Pyper and Chris Walton, but again the lack of consistency with the bat was our downfall on most occasions.

I am very positive for next year as we have secured the coaching might of Jonny Parker and I have no doubt his experience will be felt throughout the club, I wish him every success in this position. A big thank you must now go to the committee, this year was similar to last season with a lot of work going on behind the scenes, from health and safety procedures to the organisation of meetings

and fixtures. Finally to Stephen Burns, with special mention to Jeremy Stewart, and anyone else who took time out to help with groundwork. Barney has produced some excellent wickets and it makes it even more enjoyable turning up to UP with the sun shining and seeing the ground look as immaculate as it deserves. Off season work has already commenced with very positive results already showing. Lets hope that whatever next season brings, we as a club can show our determination and willingness to improve and compete at a high level.

**Adam McCusker - 1<sup>st</sup> XI Captain**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> XI Report**

The 2XI had a hugely successful 2021 season, which culminated in securing a 2nd place finish in Junior League 3 and subsequent promotion for next year. The season started off with a few frustrating losses to strong Woodvale and Cregagh teams and a poor performance in a midweek T20 at Templepatrick. However, the team were not deterred by these losses and proceeded to go on significant winning run, in order to get the season back on track. One of the most notable performances came when we bowled out the eventual league champions, Woodvale III, for 68 at Upritchard Park. Several more impressive wins followed against Templepatrick, Muckamore, Instonians and also two more wins against CSNI. Most of these victories were the result of impressive bowling and fielding performances by a young and energetic bowling attack, backed up by well-measured run chases.

By this point of the season the prospect of promotion had become an attainable goal for the team. However, a loss against a stacked Cregagh team kept the season in check. Despite this, the team managed two wins in two important games against Laurelvale and Muckamore to keep the hopes of promotion alive. A win against Instonians in a Friday night t20 would have secured promotion, however, a close 17 run loss in the darkness meant it was taken out of our hands. Fortunately, the next day Muckamore beat Cregagh which confirmed promotion for Bangor.

There has been a wide range of players who have turned out for the 2XI this year, all of whom have contributed at some point. To highlight a few, Paddy McMillan was consistently outstanding both with the bat and behind the stumps. Michael Skelly has continued to develop and capped off a brilliant season by winning the bowling cup. Kris King put in game winning performances with the bat. Younger players such as Sam McMillan, Ben Escott, Callum McDaid and Josh Walker have all made key contributions at different points of the seasons.

On a personal note, it has been a pleasure to captain the team this year. There has been a great culture and camaraderie within the squad no matter who has been playing and it has been an enjoyable experience to be part of a successful league campaign and I can't wait to see how we can compete in Junior League 2 next year!

**Andy Pyper - 2<sup>nd</sup> XI Captain**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> XI Report**

In a season of many close matches the thirds came out victorious in most of them to see us crowned Junior League 5 section champions and achieve promotion to Junior League 4. It seemed that all the players who fielded made a contribution either batting, bowling or fielding, with the combination of team and individual performances, getting us over the line more times than not. The league proved to be highly competitive and without many of the close finishes going our way we could easily have seen ourselves towards the bottom of the table. We'll need similar contributions next

year and, whilst we expect movement of some of this year's youth into the seconds, there is a string of young talented players to follow their footsteps.

### **For those of you who want to continue reading**

The season started under the shortened T20 format as we continued to play under COVID return to protocols through until the middle of June. The first game of the season saw a Sunday away trip to Carrickfergus III's where we suffered a comprehensive defeat, to one of only two teams we'd lose to across the course of the season. Looking back, the green shots of youth performance were on display in that match in the 35 run eighth wicket partnership between Morgan Paulin and Josh Walker to at least post a credible score after the senior side of the team failed to capitalise on good starts.

Throughout the course of the season many of the youth players made contributions to individual games which proved to be the perfect foil for the senior section resulting in a well balanced team who excelled over the season.

The first round Lyndsay Cup victory against Instonians IV saw one of the highlights of the season as Iain Chapman (81 runs) and Paddy McMillan (34 runs) posted 122 in 11.1 overs in the highest first wicket partnership of our season. For those of us there it was a pleasure to watch on a rare occasion where Paddy McMillan took a back seat.

On his way to the 2021 batting cup Paddy was involved in the two other 100 run plus partnerships seen in the season. I'm sure Paddy wrestles between them in terms of enjoyment. The first against Lurgan II saw, son, Sam McMillan join Paddy at the crease with only 2 runs on the board to record a 134 run partnership and establish the platform for victory in the first senior match in which they had batted together. The second saw Thomas Boyd join Paddy when two wickets down for 59 chasing 222 in a 30 over match against Lisburn III. At this stage Lisburn III were top of the league having beaten us earlier in the season, in another close match, which prematurely ended Mark Montgomery's (Monty) return to the club as he incurred an eye injury which we hope for a full recovery from. Thomas (54) and Paddy put on 128 runs to bring the score to 187 before Paddy finished off the job carrying his bat for 97 not out.

There were no five wicket hauls seen in the season but all the bowlers held their own and contributed to the multiple victories over the season. Stephen Skeely proved the pick of bowlers and secured the best bowling performance in the season (5-1-15-3) against Donacloney. A Stu Johnston cameo against Instonians saw figures returned of 2-0-11-3 to propel him to top of the averages based on a single performance. Matt Pitts and Ross Garrett provided the bulk of the rest of the senior bowling with Stephen Cumper injured for periods of the season. The regular youth bowlers (Josh Walker, Morgan Paulin, Jack Irwin, Sam McMillan) all progressed well whilst learning their trade in tight matches. Morgan's switch to pace halfway through the season caused some confusion, especially for keeper Ian Fletcher, but does look to be a threat for next season. Josh rounded off the season with both batting and bowling displays in the thirds, and other teams, to receive the young player of the year award narrowly pipping Morgan Paulin and Sam MacMillan for the title.

The final two games summed up the season and reinforced the platform we have for next year. Having secured promotion, we needed two victories to secure the league title, and with back-to-back matches on the first weekend in September, availability for selection was lower than normal.

This saw us bring in 5 'fringe' players in the guise of Tom Irwin, Adam Hill, Max Escott, James Nuthall and Carter McCormick (and this was without the promising Ben Law being available). Tom displayed power hitting, associated with modern game, coming in at number 8 to join Matt Pitts in forcing Bangor over the winning line with an over to spare against Donaghadee and pushing his credentials for automatic inclusion next season.

The final match saw the blend of youth and seniors working in tandem with Iain Chapman, Sam McMillan and Josh Walker scoring the bulk of the runs. The bowling attack were all under 18 with the exception of Stephen Skelly. With Bangor having posted a competitive 165 in 20 overs CSNI came out strongly and were looking favourite at 123 for 2 after 12 overs. James Nutall, Adam Hill (2 wkts) and Max Escott (1 wkt) bowled very economically. With a run out effected by Max Excott and a towering shot catch by James Nuthall to remove one of the danger men we had restricted CSNI to 150 for 5 in eighteen overs. Josh Walker's final over saw another wicket leaving Stephen Skeely to defend the last over which came down to the final delivery. Requiring one to win, the batsman pulled the final delivery to mid-wicket with Carter McCormick taking the catch and sealing the title.

No. of games	Players	Leading Run Scorers		Highest Batting Average		Leading Wicket Takers		Best Bowling Average	
1-2	10	1. PADDY McMILLAN	336	1. PADDY McMILLAN	67.2	1. STEPHEN SKELLY	21	1. STUART JOHNSTONE	3.67
3-5	5	2. IAIN CHAPMAN	247	2. MORGAN PAULIN	48.0	2. MORGAN PAULIN	11	2. ADAM HILL	12.00
6-10	9	3. SAM McMILLAN	244	3. STEPHEN SKELLY	37.0	3. JOSH WALKER	10	3. JASON BEATTIE	12.67
11-14	6	4. ROSS GARRETT	130	4. MATTHEW PITTS	34.3	4. JACK IRWIN	9	4. ANDY HARE	13.75
Total Players	30	5. PAUL HOUSTOUN	112	5. ROSS GARRETT	32.5	4. MATTHEW PITTS	9	5. STEPHEN SKELLY	14.86
		6. MATTHEW PITTS	103	6. SAM McMILLAN	30.5	6. MICHAEL SKELLY	8	6. JACK IRWIN	15.89
		7. THOMAS BOYD	96	7. MOAZZAM MUHAMMED	27.3	7. THOMAS BOYD	4	7. MICHAEL SKELLY	16.38
		7. MORGAN PAULIN	96	8. CALLUM HOUSTOUN	24.5	7. ANDY HARE	4	8. IAIN CHAPMAN	17.00
		9. JOSH WALKER	84	9. THOMAS BOYD	24.0	9. JASON BEATTIE	3	9. THOMAS BOYD	22.00
		10. MOAZZAM MUHAMMED	82	10. PAUL HOUSTOUN	22.4	9. IAIN CHAPMAN	3	10. MATTHEW PITTS	23.44

### Paul Houstoun – 3rd XI Captain

#### 4<sup>th</sup> XI Report

The return of the fourths in 2021 has been a huge plus for the club, with many young players getting the opportunity to get stuck into senior cricket and show their talents. A season with mixed results for the team, but throughout they were competitive and there were plenty of highlights to take encouragement from. From minute one Tom Irwin should his quality with the gloves taking some truly excellent catches and when the opportunity came some thunderous ball striking, which only added to the power hitting alongside Muhammad Moazzam. Jack Irwin continued his transformation wicket keeper to all round seamer with consistent wicket taking. Owen Aicken likewise also making a big change to opening batsman, helping the team get off to solid starts which proved invaluable to posting good totals across the season. Spin bowling stocks also grew with Max Escott showing patience and skill that will get the reward he deserves in good time. To add to the young names, James Nuttall with his left arm swing delivered every improving returns as the season went on and Carter McCormack distinguished himself in the outfield regularly with his rocket arm and some outstanding catching. The return of Neil Bates to active play was warmly welcomed to the experienced players who are so vital to the development of juniors as the progress into adult cricket.

All in all a positive season with the icing on the cake a superb derby victory over a strong North Down side with notable contributions throughout the team! Thanks must go to senior players Stephen Cumper and Paul Houstoun for their support in re-establishing the fourth XI and fulfilling our fixtures.

#### Andy Hare – 4<sup>th</sup> XI Captain

## **Bangor CC Youth Season Overview**

Mercifully, given the level of disruption to normal life over the past year, we were able to complete a relatively normal season of junior cricket. I'm glad to report, too that it was a very successful and enjoyable season, with competitive teams on the field and very encouraging numbers attending our training evenings. The foundation of the success of the season was the number of coaches and helpers giving their time to run the training sessions and take the matches each week. Also to run the summer scheme. So a big thanks to all do them.

The Under 15 age group was the one area where, even though numbers were small we failed to provide the opportunities we would have liked, we hope to do better next year.

On the other hand, we were delighted to begin regular girls cricket, eventually playing several competitive all girl matches against other clubs and seeing numbers in excess of 20 girls at our Tuesday practices.

The mainstay of the youth section was the U13, U11 and U9 age groups. Each of these ages fielded A and B sides and competed well through the year, improving as the year progressed. The U11's were particularly competitive while the u13's improved very strongly and benefited from a number of players new to cricket performing very well. Congratulations go to Josh McMillan, Felix McMillan, Cruz Gomes and Jacob Campbell who were all selected for NCU teams.

Mark English also ran a successful U7 group on Sunday mornings which augurs well for the coming years. This, and the hugely successful summer scheme meant that all in all some 150 young people played cricket at our club this year. We look forward eagerly to 2022 with Jonny Parker engaged as coach and strength in depth across our youth section.

**Peter McIlwaine, Mark English & Tommy Speers – Youth Convenor**

## **Bangor Cricket Club – Grounds Report 2021**

It's been another very busy season for the grounds team. February saw the start of the serious business with a significant investment in a drainage upgrade on the problematic area between the square and Upritchard Court. The contract wasn't without its challenges in terms of weather and ground conditions (rock and electric cabling) but our main contractor Haffeys and our team of volunteers made sure the area was fit for the start of the season. This project couldn't have been completed without the grant support from Ards & North Down Council for which we are extremely thankful. Whilst the new drains struggled to mature during the playing season, I am pleased to report that with favourable growing conditions in recent weeks, following reseeding, we have seen strong growth and it augers well for next season. Preseason rolling commenced at the start of April with support of a small band of "rollers" and soon had 20+ hours clocked up on the square. One new process that has been introduced to our maintenance programme is regular (every 3/4 weeks) verticutting using the verticutter cassette on our Dennis mower. This serves to thin out the grass and helps remove thatch and unwanted particles. I think it is fair to say, the quality of our match and practice pitches throughout the year was right up there with the best in the NCU. This was again in evidence when hosting the Intermediate Cup Final at the beginning of August and following a week of heavy rain, Bangor was only 1 of 2 games that was played on the day. Despite everything the weather threw at us, Upritchard looked fantastic and was thoroughly enjoyed by both teams.

Due to the amount of sand following the drainage works, we were unable to use our Hayter cylinder mower to cut the outfield (the sand would have blunted the blades) but instead used the Major Rotary cutting deck throughout the season. Whilst the quality of cut isn't as fine as the Hayter, it

nevertheless did a great job with a ringed presentation looking the part. The last game of the season was the first weekend of the September so we were able to arrange end of season renovations on the square and also earthquaking and sanding of the outfield for mid September. Getting these important jobs done at an early date has proved extremely beneficial with fantastic growth achieved since. I certainly don't remember our square looking as well at this time of the year.

September also saw completion of the maintenance job on the Astro which was lifted, the base refurbished, stretched and relaid. Another enhancement of the facilities at Uprichard.

As I've said, it's been a busy year on the grounds but if we don't put the hours in, it simply won't happen by itself. Thanks to everyone who have helped throughout the season be it an hour on the roller, a cut of the square, putting the rope in & out, the list is endless. A special word of thanks however goes to Jeremy Stewart and Andy Cousins who were ever present, helping to make it all possible. I'm excited for the 2022 season but want to expand our team of grounds volunteers. Anyone who can spare a few hours a week and enjoys a bit of craic, please give me a shout, no experience required!

**Stephen Burns – Grounds Convenor**

### **Social Report 2021**

Following on from 2020 the social aspect of the club has continued to be affected by Covid-19. Thankfully though there is light at the end of the tunnel with many of the restrictions being reduced there has been some room for social events to occur. Most notably being the end of season pizza/awards night held at the club. With measures in place, it was refreshing to be able to finally sit down together and enjoy what was a successful season. The youth section growth has been fantastic to see and with small events throughout the year with fun days at 1<sup>st</sup> XI games the aim from 2020 of connecting the club top to bottom has definitely started. With now the 2022 season on the horizon a social calendar with a number of events will hopefully be in full swing. Finally, it must be noted the hosting of the intermediate cup final at Uprichard. With a tremendous effort by the club to have the match on and a day where both sides CIYMS and Woodvale had a great game and their supporters definitely took full advantage of the bar facilities. That event showed the quality of Bangor CC and what the potential we have as a club on and off the field.

**James M Griffin - Social Convenor**