

Cricket Club looking forward to a full season and continued success.

We were thrilled and relieved when it was confirmed that the 2021 season would start on time after the truncated 2020 season. The first weekend of fixtures will be a week earlier than usual in fact, with the 1st and 2nd XI beginning their campaigns on Saturday 17th April.

Tim Mansfield of the Westmoreland League Committee states “ *Essentially this year’s cricket season will start with playing conditions very similar to those which were in force in 2020, and will initially include the rule of six for spectators. We had hoped for a statement on use of changing rooms, but for now we should interpret the guidelines to mean that they cannot be used. Bars won’t be able to serve drinks inside, but we think outdoor service is permitted so long as social distancing rules are met. More information will be shared as we have it, and it’s important to remember that everything is subject to review and possible change.*”

There have been some changes in captaincy in the first and second teams with local lad, Steve Yates taking over the mantle from Dave Jack in the first team. Dave has led his teams in recent years with great commitment and passion and he will remain a key player in the team with his pace bowling and destructive batting. Steve is a village man through and through who has played at Clifton Park through the junior ranks and previously captained the second team. He will be a popular and adept captain and we wish him all the best.

Mark Sutcliffe stands down as third team captain to be replaced by Jonty Collinson at the helm. Mark had captained the first and second teams successfully in the past and been a high-quality batsman at all levels. Mark will be seen as being the captain at the club who gave young players their head in the third team and thereby secured a bright future for all three teams with a wealth of young talent coming through. Mark will continue his sterling work as under 16s coach and again we thank him for his commitment and self-sacrifice over the years. He will leave the third team in the capable hands of Jonty who will continue with the same philosophy as Mark in the thirds, one of enjoyment and participation as well as the skill development of young players.

After a hugely successful 2020 season with a second division champions trophy and cup final runners up, Simon Gould continues to lead a very strong second team, aided by vice-captain Paul Yates.

The Ladies team will begin their weekly practices in April too and are looking forward to a full season with the promise of more fixtures against Westmoreland League teams and teams from Lancashire and Greater Manchester. We welcome new players and we will begin the season with a fun, taster session (date to be confirmed).

The junior section continues to be very popular and there will again be teams at under 11s, under 14s and under 16s, and practices will commence on Monday evenings when the nod is given by the ECB. Matt and Paul Yates, Jonty Collinson and Mark Sutcliffe will be the lead coaches once more. After many, many years leading junior cricket at Shireshead Colin Twiname has officially stepped down as junior organiser. The contribution made by Colin to the success of junior cricket at Shireshead is massive and he alone is responsible for the development of hundreds of young cricketers through recent decades. We thank him wholeheartedly for his work and commitment and Colin remains a key member of the committee and club. The under 8s All Stars programme has been incredibly successful and popular in recent years and is a great introduction to cricket for youngsters. Paul Yates will lead this programme and again more details will follow on our website and in the local social media.

In spite of the second lockdown the committee have met every month remotely and move forward with plans for club development. We have acquired a new electronic scoreboard, practice nets and new covers sponsored kindly by Towers and Gornall of Garstang, and we continue to look for solutions to the drainage situation which has worsened in recent years. The outfield and square have had their first trim and the pavilion has had a repaint ready for the new season.

The pavilion bar will open when we are able to do so and we envisage that outside consumption will be the first step when the law permits. We are also in the process of planning some events for alter in the year when social gatherings may be permitted. Of course, all villagers are welcome and you will find a friendly and welcoming atmosphere on Friday and Saturday evenings so please pop down for a drink when the time comes, or visit us in the afternoon on Saturdays and Sundays when there is nearly always cricket being played.

All new players are very welcome including senior, ladies and juniors whether you have cricketing experience, want to learn the game or just have some fun.