



Culture, Media and Sport Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel 020 7219 6188 website www.parliament.uk/cms

Colin Graves CBE
Chair, Yorkshire County Cricket Club

By email

22 May 2024

Dear Colin,

In our report, *Equity in Cricket*, published on 5 April 2024, we agreed with your assessment that Yorkshire County Cricket Club was best served by being owned by its Members rather than becoming a private institution.¹ Indeed, your return to the club was predicated on your financial support not being contingent on demutualisation of the club, in contrast to alternative bids discussed by the board. We are therefore concerned that you have now decided that converting the club to a private structure is now “essential”.²

Prior to your bid’s approval, you reassured them members of the club on 16 January that “there are no discussions or plans to change the mutual status of YCCC.”³ This claim was made despite your September 2023 offer to the YCCC board, which you initially denied any knowledge of to us, which was contingent on such a demutualisation.⁴ Given the financial challenges faced by the club, it is surprising to us that you were unaware of their scale at the time you were willing to make substantial personal investment into the club, while all other bidders had already come to the conclusion that demutualisation was the only viable option. As recently as the AGM, which confirmed your chairmanship and your preferred board appointments, you do not appear to have been ready to come to this conclusion, or at least willing to share this conclusion with Members.

While decisions on the future of Yorkshire CCC are rightly for its members to take, we would be grateful if you could answer the following questions in order to assure us that the evidence you provided to the Committee was accurate and to understand how the situation has changed since then:

- What changes occurred between your bid of 25 September 2023 and your successful later bid that meant demutualisation was no longer a requirement of your funding?
- What subsequent changes or new information since your statement of 16 January 2024 has meant that demutualisation was now “essential”?

You have previously told the Committee that you have no role in your family trusts. Your statement on 20 May offers a reassurance that “in the (perhaps unlikely) event that any financial upside emerged from ongoing refinancing efforts for either myself or my family trust, these

¹ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5804/cmselect/cmcumeds/526/report.html>

² <https://yorkshireccc.com/news/an-update-for-members-from-club-chair-colin-graves/>

³ <https://yorkshireccc.com/news/statement-from-colin-graves-to-yccc-members/>

⁴ <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/14307/html/>

amounts would be donated in full into a charitable trust supporting Yorkshire recreational cricket, both men's and women's." We would be grateful for clarity on the following points:

- Whether the trustees of the Graves family trustees have agreed to the commitment to donations, and your role in securing this agreement?
- Whether the 'financial upside' referred to in your 20 May update includes the interest rates of 4% above base rate, which will be returned to you and your family trusts as part of the repayment of debts?
- The proposed governance arrangements for any new charitable trust for Yorkshire recreational cricket.

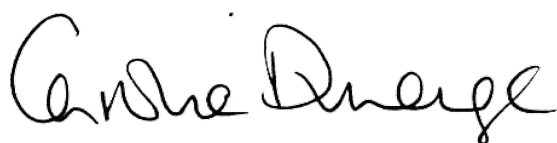
Finally, your update on 20 May states that your "intention" is that "members' current rights are protected and that a demutualisation would represent no change to their current interaction with YCCC". Your earlier statement on 16 January told members that "the rights of all YCCC members to watch all professional cricket in Yorkshire will be maintained." Intentions are not binding, so we would welcome your confirmation on:

- What rights of YCCC members will be protected in the event of demutualisation?
- How these will be enshrined in the club so that they cannot be further reduced without the further agreement of members?

Given the apparently rapid changes needed by the club, it is unclear to us how YCCC members can be reassured that any intentions made will be honoured, unless there are enforceable, binding commitments as part of them.

We would be grateful for your response by 31st May.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Dinenage', written in a cursive style.

Dame Caroline Dinenage DBE MP
Chair, Culture, Media and Sport Committee