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Ross CC undertakes annual makeover



This weekend and for the fourth year in succession, Ross CC energetically embraced the England and Wales Cricket Board's NatWest Cricketforce challenge – a national initiative which encourages cricket supporters, their friends and families to give something back to their local community cricket club by volunteering to undertake major renovations to clubhouses and grounds.

This year NatWest CricketForce 2008 attracted a record 1375 clubs – about 85,000 volunteers around the country to take part and the focus this year was on green issues in cricket.

Ross CC has learnt a lot about recycling since it undertook a major refurbishment of its historic 1887 pavilion four years ago and this year was no exception.

“This year we have been fortunate to secure funding from the local council to erect new fencing to replace some dangerous leylandii. We are recycling as many of the old wooden fencing panels as possible and using them to construct a scoreboard for the new junior pitch and a storage unit for the sightscreen panels.” said Nick Tregaskes, Project Co-ordinator. “Sadly a large number of the green wooden fencing panels were stolen early this week – we had been carefully dismantling them over the last couple of weeks so that we could re-use the majority of them to construct a scoring facility as well - it was to be one of our major tasks over the CricketForce weekend – our plans were scuppered with the theft of the panels. Not only is it hugely disappointing for the young people who play at the club – it's very disappointing for the volunteers who have given up their time to make these improvements.”

“This year CricketForce runs over three days – so work started in earnest on Friday, said Nick, “We were out collecting materials from local business who very generously help us out with equipment, materials – some free of charge, some at great discounts. We can’t thank them enough.”

“Other recycling projects included remaking steps, constructing new benches, re-inforcing the bank terracing using panels from a decrepit, but undiscarded former sight screen and using the chippings from the leylandii trees to line the terrace pathways – lots of barrowing – about a quarter of a mile each way! We are keen water conservationists with water butts already in use at the club and we recycle any aluminium cans we use. We are also re-planting trees that have been moved to provide wind breaks. Even an old barbeque has been given a new lease of life as a brazier to burn dead wood from around the grounds we maintain.

The weekend weather stayed fine, bright and windy on Friday and Saturday but a fine dusting of snow greeted everyone early on Sunday morning and despite the outbreak of some bright sunshine, glacial temperatures persisted throughout the day. Diabolical weather forecasts were cast aside and wind, sleet and some hail storms did not deter the volunteer work force of almost 60 people over the weekend. Numbers were further swelled on Saturday when a team of young people doing community service through West Mercia Probation Service, joined the club and worked incredibly hard all day on some heavy duty ground maintenance and clearing.

New in post, Glyn Harrhy, Herefordshire’s Cricket Development Officer, was also on hand on Sunday to support Ross CC’s Chairman, Steve Earl and the volunteer workforce and to see for himself the improvements that have been made at the club, since his last visit to Ross as a visitor on the field of play.

Glyn endorsed the sentiments of Minister for Sport, Gerry Sutcliffe who said: “NatWest CricketForce is an excellent project that gives a boost to local clubs up and down the country. It encourages volunteering and results in improved facilities for players at the grassroots of the game.”

Nick Tregaskes said: “Ross CC is proud to be part of the biggest annual volunteering event in sport – it’s a great way to galvanise club and team spirit on every level at the start of the season. And the feel-good factor that comes from a job well done, isn’t bad either!”

“The work does not stop with this weekend. Conditions are finally such that we are able to give our contractors, Dura-Sport, the go-ahead to install an artificial wicket for the new junior pitch. Work started at 8.30 a.m. on Monday morning just in time for the club’s Registration Day on Wednesday, 16th April.”

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