



From left to right: Ron Pearson, Keith Cook, Helen Smith, Raj Cherodian, Buster Lawrence (collecting on behalf of his father, David) and Alec Stewart receive their awards as the ECB's inaugural Honorary Life Vice-Presidents (Photo: Steve Bardens)

May 13, 2025 14:58 BST

ECB announces inaugural Honorary Life Vice-Presidents

Six cricketing champions have been announced as the ECB's first Honorary Life Vice-Presidents, as part of a new initiative to celebrate individuals who have made exceptional contributions to breaking down barriers or demonstrated extraordinary long-term service to the game.

The six – three from the professional game and three from recreational cricket – were presented with commemorative silver bats to mark the honour

at today's ECB Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Southampton.

The six recipients are:

- Raj Cherodian – For over 30 years, Raj has volunteered at Ifield Cricket Club, dedicating himself to growing the game both locally and across the Sussex community. From fundraising for new facilities to coaching youth players, his commitment has been unwavering.
- Keith Cook – Keith retired this year after more than 50 years as Cricket Operations Manager at Warwickshire County Cricket Club. Since joining in 1973, he has been a constant presence through the club's evolution—from portacabins to the modern Edgbaston. His embodiment of the 'Once a Bear, Always a Bear' spirit made him a beloved figure among players and staff alike.
- David Lawrence – A formidable fast bowler with 625 wickets in 280 matches for Gloucestershire and five Test appearances for England, David was the first British-born Black cricketer to represent the national team. Now President of Gloucestershire CCC, he continues to inspire with his courage and resilience following his diagnosis with motor neurone disease.
- Ron Pearson – Ron has spent 63 years transforming Gwersyllt Park Cricket Club into a true community hub. From player to secretary, his leadership has built vital facilities and nurtured youth development. He was also honoured with the “Lifetime Achievement Award” at the 2025 National Cricket Collective Awards.
- Helen Smith – Helen has devoted 47 years to Plymouth Civil Service & Roborough Cricket Club. From scoring and preparing teas to founding the Colts section and launching women's cricket programmes, her passion has been central to the club's growth.
- Alec Stewart – A legend of English cricket, Alec scored 8,463 Test runs across 133 Tests, setting the standard on the field and later as a coach and Director of Cricket. Under his leadership, Surrey CCC secured four county championships, including a historic three-peat. He remains a brilliant role model for the game.

Until now, the ECB had no formal process at the highest level for recognising those who have made significant contributions to the game. These new accolades will be awarded annually to a select few individuals who have

helped grow the sport, broken down barriers, or given extraordinary service as players, volunteers, or employees. They represent the pinnacle of ECB recognition, alongside the Cricket Collective Awards and the Business of Cricket Awards.

Richard Thompson, ECB Chair, said:

“It is a tremendous honour to recognise these six remarkable individuals as our first-ever Honorary Life Vice-Presidents. Each of them has made an extraordinary contribution to cricket – whether through decades of selfless volunteering, pioneering achievements on the field, or tireless work behind the scenes. Their stories are a powerful reminder of the many ways people enrich our game and help it thrive in communities across England and Wales.

“This new accolade is about more than just long service – it’s about impact. From grassroots dedication to leadership at the highest levels of the professional game, these individuals have broken down barriers, inspired generations, and left lasting legacies. They embody the very best of cricket’s values: passion, perseverance, and a deep commitment to inclusion and excellence.

“As we look to the future, it’s vital that we continue to celebrate those who devote themselves to our sport. These inaugural Honorary Life Vice-Presidents set a high bar, and I hope their recognition will inspire others to follow in their footsteps. On behalf of the ECB, I extend our heartfelt thanks and congratulations to each of them.”

With the AGM taking place today, the ECB’s Financial Statements for 2024/5 have also been published and are available to read [here](#).

These show that in the year ended 31 January 2025, the ECB recorded a turnover of £319.6m with a pre-tax profit of £2.6m, exceeding expectations in a year without a home Ashes or India Men’s Test series.

The AGM also discussed data about the health of the game from last year, with figures showing an increased number of recreational fixtures recorded – up from 178,000 to 198,000 compared to 2023. There was also an increase in the number of clubs with a junior section (up from 2,635 to 2,693).

There continues to be strong growth in the women's and girls' game, with a 23 per cent increase in the number of women's and girls' fixtures compared to 2023, while the total number of girls' teams has now hit 2,658 – a 21 per cent increase on the previous year.



Contacts



Jonathan Reed

Press Contact

Head of Media & Publications

media@ecb.co.uk

+44 (0) 7525 596 621



ECB Press Office

Press Contact

media@ecb.co.uk