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ECB CHAIR IAN WATMORE TO STEP DOWN

Ian Watmore is to step down with immediate effect, it has been announced today.

He has reached a mutual agreement with the Board to stand down following the end of the domestic season and after helping to steer the game through the challenges of Covid over the past year. The decision follows a successful summer of domestic and international men's and women's cricket, the launch of The Hundred and record numbers playing the game recreationally.

Ian Watmore commented: "It is with regret that I step down as Chair of the ECB, but I do so in mindfulness of my own wellbeing and that of the game which I love. I was appointed to the post in a pre-pandemic era, but Covid has meant the role and its demands on time are dramatically different to all our original expectations, which has taken a personal toll on me. Given this, the Board and I feel the ECB will be better served by a new Chair to take it forward post pandemic. Leaving now, at the end of the season, gives the Board time to find a new Chair to support cricket through the challenges of the 2022 season and beyond.

"On a personal level, I also retired last month after five years at the Civil Service Commission and recently became a grandfather. I would now like to retire completely from work and enjoy our great game as a spectator."

During Ian's tenure the ECB has seen the delivery of a full cricket season along with the successful return of crowds, increased diversity on the ECB Board, the launch of the Disability Premier League and the creation of the Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) to explore matters relating to race, class, and gender in the sport.

Current Deputy Chair, **Barry O'Brien**, will step-up as interim Chair, having indicated to the Board that he will not be a candidate for the role.

He commented: "We are grateful to Ian for everything he has contributed during his time at the ECB. He has helped guide the game through an incredibly challenging period, where despite the impact of Covid we were able to stage a busy summer of men's and women's domestic and international cricket. He also leaves with the recreational game in a strong position, with record numbers playing the game this summer, which I know will please him enormously as a lover of the grass roots of sport. We wish him the best for the future.

"We will shortly begin a process to appoint a new Chair to lead the ECB, as the organisation continues to deliver on its ambitions to grow the game and create an increasingly inclusive and welcoming sport for all."

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