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## **Richard Thompson named as Chair of the England and Wales Cricket Board**

The ECB has today welcomed Richard Thompson as the next Chair of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

Mr Thompson, 55, will take up the five-year post on September 1, moving from his current role of Chair at Surrey County Cricket Club and will bring deep experience from his career across sport and business.

Following a rigorous selection process, chaired by Independent Director Brenda Trenowden CBE, the Nominations Committee unanimously

recommended Mr Thompson to the ECB Board and he will succeed Martin Darlow, who has been in post as Interim Chair since April.

As Chair of Surrey County Cricket Club, Mr Thompson has overseen a successful period for the County on the field, off the field and in the community. His stewardship saw Surrey launch the ACE Programme in 2020, which is now an independent charity designed to engage a new generation of children and young people from Black communities within the recreational game and talent pathway.

Alongside this, Mr Thompson's business expertise has seen the county redevelop the Kia Oval, future proofing the stadium as one of the premier cricketing venues in the country, whilst his tenure also navigated the county through the pandemic.

Outside of cricket, Mr Thompson is the founder and chair of M&C Saatchi Merlin as well as Chair of the broader M&C Saatchi UK Group; chairman of Southshore Group (an ITV-owned production company) , an ambassador for the Alzheimer's Society and Chair & founder of Sport United Against Dementia (SUAD).

**Richard Thompson, said:** "I am immensely proud to become Chair of the ECB at what is a hugely important time for cricket

"Cricket has given me the chance to meet an incredibly diverse range of amazing people. Their passion, endeavour and love for the game is what I want to harness, to take our game forward, to new heights across England & Wales.

"Cricket should be the most inclusive sport in the country, welcoming people from all backgrounds, helping bring communities together. For those communities where we have fallen short, I will work tirelessly to restore their trust in the game.

"With the Men's & Women's Ashes on the horizon, ICC Men's T20 World Cup in October and the recent successes in our red ball game, along with hosting the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in 2026 there is much ahead of us.

"I am looking forward to using my experience and love for the game in taking

this opportunity to give cricket a fresh start. Alongside the Board and senior leaders at the ECB, we will work with the counties and the recreational game. Collaboration and partnership will be the key to our sport's future.”

**Brenda Trenowden, CBE, commented:** “We are delighted to announce Richard’s arrival to the ECB as Chair. His blend of exceptional commercial and cricket administration experience supports our aims to grow and diversify the game whilst guiding the game as we face challenging financial headwinds.

“I’d also like to say many thanks, on behalf of the ECB, to Martin Darlow, for his excellent stewardship in recent months. Cricket has faced many challenges in 2022 and Martin has helped steer the ship until Richard’s arrival, and I’m pleased that he’ll continue to provide his invaluable wisdom and insight through his role as Deputy Chair of the Board.”

**-ends-**

## **Notes to Editors**

### **Five-year term:**

A five-year term requires a special resolution to be passed by the ECB Members. This process will be undertaken as soon as practically possible. His appointment will also be ratified by ECB members at next year’s AGM as is standard practice for all Directors under the ECB’s Articles of Association.

### **Richard Thompson – Biography**

Richard is the founder and chair of talent management agency M&C Saatchi Merlin and Chair of the broader M&C Saatchi UK Group; chairman of Southshore Group (ITV-Owned TV production company) the and was chair of Surrey County Cricket Club, the 2018 county champions.

Richard left school at 16 and set up his first business at 19, a computer sales group. Ten years later, he set up EMS, which he turned into a £25m sales and marketing agency before selling to Mosaic Group.

In 2003, he set up a talent management agency, Merlin Elite, for leading

names in sport and entertainment, selling a 60% stake to M & C Saatchi in 2013. In 2020 Richard was appointed as Chair of the broader M&C Saatchi UK Group.

As chair of Surrey, Richard presided over a turnaround in the county's fortunes both on and off the field. Seven of the 2018 Championship-winning team were graduates of the Surrey Academy, while the club announced £5.4m pre-tax profits last year.

Richard also is the Chair and Founder of Sport United Against Demetria – SUAD, part of the Alzheimer's Society

### **The Nominations Committee**

Brenda Trenowden (Chair) CBE	ECB SID, Independent Director
Barry O'Brien	ECB Cricket Director, ex Chair of Glamorgan CCC
Katie Bickerstaffe	ECB Independent Director
Lucy Pearson	ECB Cricket Director
Jim Wood	ECB Director, ex Chair of Devon Cricket Board
Jeff Moore	Nottinghamshire, Nominated Observer (non-voting)
Nigel Walker	WRU, Independent Observer

### **The Cricket Panel**

Sir Andrew Strauss (Chair)	Chair of Cricket Committee
Gavin Warren	Northamptonshire CCC
Ian Morgan	Derbyshire CCC
Jennifer Owen Adams	Cricket Wales
Isa Guha	Independent Observer

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