



Somerset's Cooper Associates County Ground in Taunton was one of several that attracted healthy crowds in the last round of the Specsavers County Championship

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## Wasim to chair men's County Cricket working group

Leicestershire chief executive Wasim Khan is to chair an ECB working group giving fresh thought to refining the structure of men's county cricket that has been agreed for 2020.

Wasim will be joined by three county directors of cricket (Keith Greenfield of Sussex, Ashley Giles of Warwickshire, and Yorkshire's Martyn Moxon); two chief executives (Derek Bowden of Essex and Glamorgan's Hugh Morris); Mark

Wallace and Ian Thomas from the Professional Cricketers' Association; plus Andrew Strauss, John Carr and Alan Fordham from the ECB.

They have been asked to submit a report to the ECB's Cricket Committee, chaired by Peter Wright, later this summer.

Gordon Hollins, the ECB's Chief Operating Officer, said: "At such a significant time for the domestic game, it is crucial that we recognise the unique qualities of our existing county structure, ensure it is protected and that it retains the opportunity to thrive within the context of the changes that are coming in a couple of years time.

"The cricket landscape is changing rapidly, both domestic and international – and the counties are very much at the sharp end of that change.

"A number of subjects and proposals have been raised in various forums over the last few weeks and months, such as a new conference structure for the Specsavers County Championship, and the question of what other cricket should be played during the new ECB tournament later in the summer of 2020.

"Given that background, it is sensible to assemble a group of interested and knowledgeable parties from various sections of the game. We've asked them, under the chairmanship of Wasim Khan, to provide a report to the ECB Cricket Committee summarising their views on the options from 2020."

Wasim, who played for Derbyshire, Warwickshire and Sussex before taking over as Leicestershire CEO in 2015, said: "All of us on the working group are united by our passion for county cricket. These are challenging and occasionally unsettling times for some of the game's most loyal supporters, but there are also huge opportunities.

"It's an honour and privilege for all of us to play our part in coming up with the best responses to those challenges to ensure that the county game continues to thrive."

Hollins added: "In striving to reach a new audience, we must not neglect county cricket, nor its great tradition.

“The County Championship is the oldest domestic first-class competition in the world, and also remains the most-watched, as we saw with the vibrant atmospheres at grounds up and down the country when the sun shone last weekend.

“There will be a change of pace when the Royal London One-Day Cup begins next month, leading to the final at Lord’s on June 30 – and that is immediately followed by the start of the Vitality Blast in July and August, with breaks for Championship matches, including some to be played at the outgrounds which are such a popular part of the cricketing summer.

“County cricket is more visible than ever, with extensive digital coverage provided through our ECB channels, and a growing number of counties live-streaming their own matches – several having started this season.

“The figures for those initiatives, in addition to those we have welcomed for the BBC’s ball-by-ball coverage of the county game, underline the substantial following that we have always known exists – ECB has invested significant sums both in the BBC coverage and our ECB Reporters Network for the written media, to support the counties in their battle for regional and national column inches, and digital exposure.

“There is so much to celebrate in county cricket, and that is why it’s so important to think seriously about the best way for it to prosper from 2020.”

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## Contacts



**Kate Miller**

Press Contact  
Director of Communications  
media@ecb.co.uk



**Jonathan Reed**

Press Contact  
Head of Media & Publications  
media@ecb.co.uk  
+44 (0) 7525 596 621



**Danny Reuben**

Press Contact  
Head of Team Communications  
England Men's team  
danny.reuben@ecb.co.uk  
+44 (0)7825 723 620



**Matt Somerford**

Press Contact  
Communications Manager - Domestic Cricket  
media@ecb.co.uk  
+44 (0)7551 134 716



**Hen Cowen**

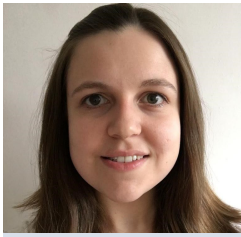
Press Contact  
Senior Communications Manager (they/them)  
hen.cowen@ecb.co.uk  
+44 (0)7585 987 302



**Chris Tuttlebee**

Press Contact  
Corporate Communications Lead  
chris.tuttlebee@ecb.co.uk  
+44 (0)7824 551713

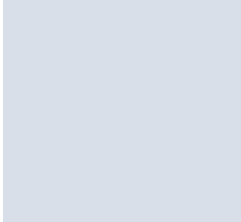


**Emily Liles**

Press Contact

Communications Manager - Performance (England Women)

[emily.liles@ecb.co.uk](mailto:emily.liles@ecb.co.uk)

**Accreditation Team**

Press Contact

Accreditation

[accreditation@ecb.co.uk](mailto:accreditation@ecb.co.uk)

**ECB Press Office**

Press Contact

[media@ecb.co.uk](mailto:media@ecb.co.uk)