

LORD'S AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) has just published a comprehensive report, by London Economics, which shows how the local economy benefits from major matches being played at Lord's.

The 50-page report is based on the biggest-ever spending survey, involving almost 3,000 fans, at a major cricket fixture in Britain - the npower Test match, between England and the West Indies, at Lord's in May this year.

Local impact: almost £30 million annually

The report shows that this single match had a local economic impact of £9.5 to £10.8 million - supporting the equivalent of 133 to 151 full-time, year-round jobs. On an annual basis, London Economics calculated that the local economic impact of major matches at Lord's is £26.6 to £30.2 million.

Experts from the consultancy (led by Dr Gavan Conlon) also calculated how the Club could further boost the local economic impact of these matches, and MCC's own income from them, by increasing daily attendances to capacity levels more often - through, for example, improved ticket marketing.

Looking further forward, London Economics estimated that a 5,000 increase in the ground's capacity would boost the matches' annual local economic impact by between £3.0 and £3.86 million; a rise of 10,000 would raise it by £6.01 to £7.72 million per annum.

Growing competition from other grounds

However, if Lord's lost any of its current major matchdays, the adverse economic impact on the local area would be between £1.9 and £2.16 million per day.

Although Lord's has long staged two Test matches and two One-Day Internationals per season, its current Staging Agreement with the England & Wales Cricket Board will expire in two years' time.

With new grounds securing Test match status, another (The Rose Bowl, in Southampton) determined to do the same, and many traditional Test venues (like Birmingham and Nottingham) already increasing their capacities, the competition to stage international matches has never been more intense.

On behalf of the players, its members and the local economy, MCC is determined to ensure that Lord's, which is unique in staging two Tests per season, manages to retain its current share of these major games.



Dr Gavan Conlon said: "We were delighted when MCC chose London Economics to conduct this research and produce this report. It's been a fascinating process, and we've loved the chance to work at Lord's. We hope our report provides MCC, its members and the local community with plenty of food for thought."

Striving to keep two Tests at Lord's

MCC's Secretary & Chief Executive, Keith Bradshaw, commented: "After conducting some impressive research, London Economics has produced an excellent report. I'm sure it will be widely read by our local stakeholders, who already know that the Club is keen to increase the ground's capacity and to keep its current share of major matches - including two Tests per year. It's right for the players and right for the local economy as well."

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major MCC survey
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Lord's switches on
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Lord's on target
for London Olympics
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KEEPING LORD'S WORLD-CLASS

MCC consults on masterplan for the future

MCC is about to conduct the biggest ever survey in the Club's 220-year history.

Detailed questionnaires will soon be sent to its 22,000 members, to help establish their views on a range of possible improvements at The Home of Cricket. The results will then play a key role in enabling MCC to develop a strategic masterplan for Lord's, with the twin aims of improving the ground's facilities and increasing its capacity. By doing so, MCC believes that it can maximise the ground's chances of retaining its current share of major games.

As well as conducting this postal survey, MCC is convening a series of special meetings, at venues from Bristol to Leeds, to enable its members to put questions and comments to a panel including Keith Bradshaw and Tony Lewis (MCC's Chairman of Cricket). In due course, some additional meetings will be arranged at Lord's for non-members so that the Club's consultation process can involve as many stakeholders as possible.

The scale of these consultative measures reflects the importance that MCC attaches to developing the best possible plans for the long-term future of Lord's. Indeed, the Club is keen for its new masterplan to set the strategic framework for the ground's next 100 years.

As a result of work undertaken over recent months by MCC's Masterplan Working Party, the Club's questionnaire sets out several different ground improvement options and invites its members to comment on their importance.

These suggested improvements include: the creation of a purpose-built museum (to house MCC's outstanding collection of cricket art and artefacts); the development of a new Indoor School & Cricket Academy (to include a sports injury clinic and swimming pool); and the installation of permanent but retractable floodlights.

The Masterplan Working Party, chaired by Sir Michael Jenkins (an MCC Trustee), is also suggesting that there should be no reduction in the size of the two playing areas at Lord's - the main ground and Nursery Ground. Moreover, it envisages that the ground's picnic gardens should be retained (and, if possible, enlarged).

Looking further ahead, Sir Michael and his colleagues have emphasised the importance of the Club appointing architects who can demonstrate a real appreciation of the heritage of Lord's, a proper understanding of its worldwide reputation as The Home of Cricket, and full recognition of the need to work within the Westminster and London planning frameworks.

As far as financial issues are concerned, the Club expects future improvements to be funded by a combination of debenture seat income, a sensible level of borrowing and some residential development on the ground's edges (subject, of course, to planning consent) - for the first time since the construction of Century Court in the 1960s.

MCC chooses green energy for Lord's

Although MCC is known the world over for its red-and-yellow club colours, it is starting to go green - helped by npower.

Under a new agreement between the Club and the energy company, Lord's will be powered by 'green electricity' provided under npower's 'Energy Solutions' package.

The partnership reflects MCC's commitment to operating in an increasingly environmentally responsible way, plus npower's position as a market leader in renewable power.

Andy Duff, Chief Executive Officer of RWE npower, said: "We're very proud to be powering Lord's with our 'green electricity'. It's a fantastic hat-trick for npower, as we're already providing 'green electricity' to the Millennium Stadium and the new Wembley as well."

The 'green electricity' will come on stream shortly, on the expiry of MCC's current energy contract. Other recent environmental initiatives from MCC include the launch of a five-year partnership with Climate Care to make its overseas cricket tours 'climate neutral'. In addition, MCC has taken measures to reduce its water consumption and boost its recycling rates.



New Lord's role for David Batts

David Batts will become MCC's Masterplan Project Director, from 1st October. The announcement was made by Keith Bradshaw when he addressed the recent Annual General Meeting of the St John's Wood Society.

David (above) has previously served, since 2000, as MCC's Deputy Chief Executive. During his spell at Lord's, he has been responsible for a range of major initiatives, including the acclaimed Pavilion refurbishment project (in 2004-05) which cost around £8 million.

Other ground improvements implemented by David include the renewal of the Mound Stand's 'tented' roof, the refurbishment of the Lord's Tavern Bar & Brasserie and major improvements (including enhanced disability access) to the Thomas Lord Suite.

Before joining MCC, David was Chief Executive of Radisson Edwardian Hotels and Chairman of the London Tourist Board (now Visit London).

RECENT EVENTS AT LORD'S



Archers on target for the Olympics at Lord's

An international archery tournament was staged at Lord's, for the first time, in mid-August. In another historic first, the visiting contestants included men's and women's teams from China. However, the Chinese archers were out-performed by their counterparts from Great Britain and India (who won the men's and women's events, respectively) in front of a 200-strong crowd, which included dozens of local residents.

While the winning teams were delighted to receive trophies from MCC, as well as medals from the event's sponsor (npower), they appreciated, above all, the opportunity to compete at Lord's, which will host the archery competition during the Olympic Games in London in five years' time.

Commenting on the tournament, Larry Godfrey, one of the victorious British archers, said: "I felt a great buzz here, imagining the ground packed with British supporters in 2012." India's Rahul Banerjee added: "It was great for us to compete here. We're looking forward to coming back to Lord's for the archery competition in 2012."

MCC's decision to stage the contest reflects its commitment to increasing public interest in archery in the approach to 2012. It is also determined to provide British archers with every opportunity to train and compete at Lord's over the next five years, to give them the best possible chance of 'going for gold' in the Games themselves.

A late summer night's dream at Lord's

In another fresh initiative, an open-air production of Shakespeare's 'Romeo & Juliet' was staged at Lord's in early September.

The pioneering performance was arranged jointly by MCC and Shakespeare's Globe, whose actors and actresses enthralled a capacity, 500-strong crowd - consisting of local residents and Club members.

The production also enabled MCC to raise around £4,000 for St John's Hospice in Grove End Road.

After receiving tremendous feedback from spectators and performers alike, MCC hopes to stage further open-air Shakespeare, in partnership with the Globe, at Lord's in 2008 and beyond.

First-ever floodlit fixture at Lord's

History was made when, on 10th September, MCC staged its first-ever floodlit fixture at Lord's.

The match, between Middlesex and Derbyshire, attracted around 5,000 spectators. More importantly, it enabled the Club to learn some important lessons about floodlit cricket, which will prove invaluable as it strives to bring the Twenty20 World Championships to St John's Wood in 2009.

After discussions with local stakeholders, MCC made several changes to the match arrangements to minimise the inconvenience likely to be experienced by members of the local community. For example, the match's starting-time was brought forward (by half an hour) to reduce the likelihood of any late-night noise. The bars were also closed earlier than usual, to help prevent any anti-social behaviour by spectators. The accompanying incidental music was also played at the lowest practicable levels.

In addition, the Club wrote to all its neighbours, to explain the background to this floodlit fixture, and provided them with 500 free tickets to enable them to see the match for themselves.

As agreed with the "Local to Lord's" group, MCC also appointed a lighting expert to measure the amount of light that 'leaked' from the ground into the surrounding streets. Measurements were duly taken from both business and residential premises, located on all four sides of Lord's. The results, together with the expert's report, will be discussed in detail during the next meeting of this stakeholders' group.

Keith Bradshaw said: "We all want to minimise the levels of light leakage from Lord's. It's quite difficult with temporary lights, which get moved from ground to ground. Ideally, we'd like Lord's to have permanent, specially-designed lights instead; we could then maximise the quality of the lighting for the players and minimise the amount of light which could leak into the local area. In the meantime, I'd like to thank our neighbours for their understanding, and MCC's staff for working so hard to stage our first floodlit fixture at such short notice."



FUTURE EVENTS AT LORDS

MCC staff heading to the Himalayas

A quiz night is being staged at Lord's in mid-October, as part of a major fund-raising initiative which will culminate in two MCC staff trekking to the base camp on Mount Everest.

Both the quiz and the expedition will raise funds for the Professional Cricketers' Association Benevolent Fund. This assists past and present cricketers (and their families) whose requirements have included life-saving medical treatment and re-training following career-ending injuries.

Previous beneficiaries have included Jamie Hood, an ex-Yorkshire cricketer, who was paralysed by a car crash, and the daughter of Owen Parkin, a former Glamorgan player, who was born with a serious respiratory condition.

The quiz night, in the Thomas Lord Suite, has been organised by MCC's Adrian Morgan (below) and Cameron King between their many trips to the gymnasium at Lord's, where they have been getting into shape to cope with the bitter cold and lower oxygen levels of the Himalayas.

To take part in the quiz night, on 17th October, please contact Cameron at MCC's Indoor Cricket School (020 7616 8612). The quiz and auction prizes will include signed cricket memorabilia, lunch with England batsman Andrew Strauss and a dinner cruise on the Thames. Alternatively, Cameron and Adrian (MCC's Deputy Head Groundsman) can be supported through the safe and secure Just Giving website (www.justgiving.com/amorgan and www.justgiving.com/cking).



Tickets to the Long Room carol concert

Although some cricket is still being played at Lord's, on its Nursery Ground, MCC is already arranging 'An Evening of Carols' at Lord's, to help raise funds for St John's Hospice.

Since MCC held its first carol concert in 2000, the evening has become one of the most popular pre-Christmas events in St John's Wood. Over the same period, around £11,500 has been raised for good causes, through end-of-evening collections.

This year's event will take place in the Long Room on Thursday 13th December. As in previous years, the singing will be led by The London Chorus, under the expert musical direction of Ronald Corp (right, above).

Tickets for the concert are free; to apply, simply complete the form below. However, please note that a ticket ballot is likely to be needed, as the level of demand is expected to exceed the number of available spaces.

If you are successful in the ballot, your tickets will be posted to you by the end of November. (MCC will endeavour to contact all unsuccessful applicants too, but we regret that we cannot guarantee to do so.)

'AN EVENING OF CAROLS' THURSDAY 13TH DECEMBER

I would like to apply for one / two / three (*delete as appropriate*) tickets to MCC's carol evening at Lord's.

Name:

Address 1:

Address 2: St John's Wood / Marylebone (*delete as appropriate*)

Address 3:

E-mail:

Please post this form, by Monday 5th November, to:

Communications Department
(Carol evening)

MCC, Lord's Cricket Ground

St John's Wood, London NW8 8QN