

East Carlton cricket club 2023/24

A huge thank you to everyone who has supported the club over the past year. Contributions by members, players and volunteers have helped us invest in cricket and fund a range of activities for community benefit. Cricket is thriving, with the 1st XI being promoted for the second consecutive year. The 2023 season ended with Kimbolton conceding the final game, leaving us third out of nine in Rutland League, Division Three, with 11 wins and four losses from 16 games. (One game was lost to the weather.) A decision by the league to promote the top three means the team are playing this summer in Division Two against some considerably larger clubs. Great Bowden 3rd XI will again use the ground for its home fixtures on Saturdays and the All Stars and Dynamos programme for young cricketers will resume over eight Fridays in May and June. We have also been approached by several other clubs interested in arranging social, friendly matches, all of which are great indicators that East Carlton is a thriving part of the local cricket community. The club AGM in late January was a chance to recognise the tremendous efforts of our volunteers. Outside, the playing surface has been beautifully maintained. The flowers in boxes and borders make the club look well cared for and attractive to visitors. And the space gives us scope to host community activities such as Bonfire Night and bank holiday village parties. Our head of cricket, Jeremy Strutt, was named club person of the year for his tireless efforts across almost every aspect of the club's activities, including the relaunch of youth cricket. Nick Sumpter was recognised for his decades of service to the club in many different roles, most recently his skillful pitch preparation, which has led to some great games of cricket during the club's rise up the leagues over the past two years. There is also a long list of residents who have put on teas or worked behind the bar. Their support for the club is very much appreciated and helps make every match day special. The clubhouse remains the hub of the community. It provides a venue for our Knit and Natter group to meet and continue its admirable charity work. The Friday coffee mornings offer a time to meet friends and an opportunity to raise more money for worthy causes. The club also gives neighbours and members a place to celebrate special occasions or stage private or community events.

The club continues to offer free venue hire, by arrangement, with support from the Parish Council for local groups raising funds for charity. Last year's events raised nearly £5,500 for charities active in our community, including more than £2,000 for Harborough Dementia, thanks to the Knit and Natter craft fair. Sue Bird's company party raised £1,600 for Lakelands Hospice and the monthly coffee mornings resulted in contributions of a further £1,622 for Lakelands Hospice and £177 for Macmillan Cancer Care. These amounts included Sally Hitches' wonderful knitted creations, the auction of her Royal figures in celebration of the Coronation and her many dressed teddies. The committee is extremely grateful for the support of all members and friends of the club and looks forward to another successful year.