

A Memorable Visit to Merstham Magics

9th September 2020

Formed in 2004, the Merstham Magics offer weekly sessions for individuals with a range of disabilities and they form an integral part of Merstham CC. Ben – pictured with the trophy – was the founding member of the group and, when he first came to the club looking to play cricket, he set the wheels in motion that would change the outlook and ethos of the club. Attendance quickly swelled and the sessions now regularly see fifteen plus participants enjoying their cricket at Merstham CC each Wednesday evening.



As with any cricket club, there are extremely hard-working volunteers that make things happen and ensure everyone is able to enjoy cricket in a safe, supportive and fun environment. From lead coach, Dan whose responsibilities range from setting up small-sided games and drills right through to helping the participants with challenges they are facing away from cricket; to team manager Chris who ensures that all of the wonderful and exciting ideas that the group have are actually achievable. And affordable! The hard work of all the volunteers at Merstham CC cannot be underestimated, but – as Dan informed me from his position as square-leg umpire – the true success of this group is the fact that

“It has been a good achievement to play cricket with people who have a disability and to have fun as well. I liked playing the match on Sunday with Alex and the Essex team against Surrey, I hope to play more games next year. Thanks to Chris & Dan for helping me along the way.”

John, team member of the Magics

it is run by its members. Each of the participants have a say in what their sessions look like and their voice is given equal weight as any other Merstham CC member. The players came up with their team name, they complete the annual player surveys to help shape the future of the cricket club and everyone involved at Merstham CC understand the significant value that the team bring to the club as a whole. From helping mow the outfield to umpiring matches and sometimes playing in the club’s weekend league fixtures; the players’ involvement goes far beyond just being members of the Magics.

One of the learnings early on in the formation of the Magics was a need to develop a year-round offer. The end of the traditional cricket season was not the end of the Magics’ enthusiasm, and so they moved their weekly sessions to an indoor venue. Whilst cricket remained the common theme, the social aspect of the club quickly gained real traction and the group now regularly meet for quizzes, BBQs, and the famous Christmas party!

In a summer so decimated by the pandemic, it was fantastic to see the difference that cricket can make, in action. It was clear that, thanks to the enthusiasm of its members and dedication of all involved, the Merstham Magics will continue to thrive for a long time to come and I look forward not only to my next visit to the club, but also sharing their story and the lessons that they have learned to help other such sections develop at cricket clubs across England and Wales.

“What is great about the team is that they turn up, week after week, summer and winter, to practise. When we have a competitive match, whether against the Merstham girls, or Harold Wood at the Chelmsford County Ground, they really raise their game and play with such unbelievable enthusiasm. They are a joy to watch.”

**Chris, Magics Team
Manager**

