

Matt Counsell from Somerset scooped the Coach of the Year Award when the great and the good of the cricketing world came together recently in Birmingham to celebrate the work being done by Chance to shine.

The 'Chance to shine Achievement Awards', recognised the efforts of the teachers, coaches and club managers involved on the ground in the country's biggest school sports development initiative.

Among those present were Chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board Giles Clarke, who was formerly Chairman of Somerset CCC, England Women's captain Charlotte Edwards, former England captain Mike Gatting, ICC President David Morgan and former England players Devon Malcolm and Vikram Solanki.

The event included a keynote speech by MCC President John Barclay on the Spirit of Cricket and culminated in the Chance to shine Achievement Awards presentation.

Matt Counsell, who is based in West Huntspill where he captains his local side Huntspill and District in Division Three of the Best Western Shrubbery Hotel Somerset Cricket League, but carries out his Chance to Shine coaching at Chard Cricket Club was presented with the Coach of the Year Award by Slazenger's Sunny Singh.

The judges recognised the 21 year old's commitment to the programme by travelling 80 miles to complete, without fail, his Chance to shine sessions.

In their citation the judges said: " Matt journeys 80 miles to complete sessions. He has never been late or called off a session. He shows enthusiasm and commitment and has a super way of communicating with the children. He has encouraged participation in cricket at all levels from teachers to pupils, including girls, as well as actively promoted Chance to shine in local newspapers. He also assisted with organising the International 20/20 demos at Taunton."

In addition to his involvement with Huntspill and District and Chard CC, Matt, who is currently in his final year of studying for a degree in Coaching and PE at Marjon University in Plymouth was also the team manager for the Somerset Under 12s in 2009.

