

# English Carpet Bowls Association

Minutes of the Zoom meeting of the English Carpet Bowls Association held on Saturday 14th September 2024

Present: Representatives from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Durham, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Northumberland, Suffolk, Sunderland, Neil Jolly (Chairman), Peter Cook (Vice-Chairman), Pauline Charleton (Secretary), Mick Watkins (National Referee)

## 1. Apologies for absence

Paul Daniels (Treasurer), Kay & Tony Cuthbert (Northumberland), Rebecca Hearn (Child Protection Officer)

## 2. Minutes of last meeting

The Minutes were read & agreed as a true record, proposed by Stephen Roe (Cambridgeshire), seconded by Peter Wood (Durham)

## 3. Matters arising from previous minutes

None

## 4. Correspondence

None

## 5. Chairman's Report

Thankyou all for attending this online meeting today & I hope you've all had an enjoyable summer. Since our last meeting in April, we've had three successful events, enjoyed by bowlers from all our respective counties.

Firstly we had the Festival of Bowls at Potters, which saw a small increase on numbers, including twelve

bowlers from Norway. My thanks go to Paul for all of the work put in, both before and during the event,

which ensured it ran smoothly. It was as usual, a fun week of bowls, culminating in three exciting finals.

In the Rinks, the winners were Martin Cambell, Adam & Steven Wilson & Michael Laydon, with Adam &

Michael then becoming double winners taking the pairs title. In a close singles final, it was Paul Daniels

who was the deserved winner.

We then had our Champion of Champions event, a weekend of competitive & high quality bowls. My thanks must go to Shirley Wood (Durham) & all who assisted her, with a successful numbers board

fundraiser. In the events, it was good to see the titles shared amongst the counties. Matt Frost (Norfolk)

won the singles, Ross & Ian Clark (Durham) won the pairs, Carl Pearson, John McKenna & Adam Wilson

(Sunderland) won the triples & Amy & Simon Missing, Dawn Smith & Matt Thurley (Cambridgeshire)

took  
the rinks win. Congratulations to all of our winners.

Finally, a fortnight ago, it was the ECBA Triples at Littleport, hosted by Cambridgeshire. My thanks must go to Maureen Giddens & her team for running the day so well. Entry numbers were a little low & it was disappointing there were only two triples from the host county. Come the end of the day, it was an all Suffolk final, with Paul Daniels, Neil Jolly & Sam Runnacles taking the win.

Looking ahead & with our competitive season starting, our Nationals is at the end of next month & we will discuss that today to ensure we are all ready for it.

This is my first meeting as ECBA Chairman, a position I was proud to take on. I only put myself forward for the role because I want to try & make a difference. As I see it, the ECBA has two main functions, to run events for carpet bowlers to take part in & to promote & grow the game. On the first point, we run five events in our bowls calendar, I think we do them well, but can we do them any better or different to increase participation? Regarding the promotion & growing of the game, what do we do? As a non-governing body, what can we do? I don't immediately have the answer to these questions. However as Chairman, I want there to be discussions, both at ECBA & county level to look at what we do & don't do, with the aim of improvement & growth. This isn't going to happen overnight, but today we can make a start.

## **6. Secretary's report**

None

## **7. Treasurer's Report**

This year's Festival produced a profit of £2300, compared with £1800 last year, thanks to slightly increased numbers, and increasing the entry fee from £10 to £15.

This should match the cost to us of this year's Nationals, which overall was £2300 last year.

The travel allowances have been paid, so please alert your Treasurers.

A Balance Sheet was attached with the Zoom invite – there were no questions asked.

## **8. Referees Report**

There had been a rule enquiry from a club concerning different batch numbers on bowls of the same

manufacturer and colours being used together - would it be allowed?

Mick Watkins stated that in many of our tournaments a massive amount of woods are used & batch numbers are not always the same. He had confirmed that batch numbers would not matter, it is the manufacturer and colours that matter together.

## **9. Child Protection Report**

No report

Neil Jolly advised that within Suffolk recently, there had been an enquiry and it had been established that CRB checks are now classed as DBS checks  
Bedfordshire (Jill Ellis) stated that the ECBA Child Protection Policy still requires updating. This will be covered at a later date after discussing with Rebecca Hearn.

## **10. Competitions**

**Nationals:** 25th - 28th October 2024 at Potters

All counties advised their expected numbers of players - Durham, Norfolk, Essex, Northumberland 24 players. Suffolk 23-24, Hertfordshire 22-24, Sunderland 20-24 players.

Sunderland (Adam Wilson) asked regarding the new format, should a player in a rink already playing short take ill for example, would a player from another rink substitute and would there be no penalty regarding playing on the same carpet twice for that player.

It was discussed and agreed that not all scenarios can be covered and at the time of such an occurrence, an Executive Committee decision and a common sense approach would have to be made at the time.

All were satisfied with the draft programme sent out for the National Competition.

With the change of date this year, from November to October, it now has a clash with the October half term. In 2025 the half term will be 27th - 31st October, so we may have to consider new dates, to avoid half term in October and Bonfire weekend in November. Or return to Remembrance weekend 11th November. This will have to be discussed with Potters, when they offer us their 2025 date.

Mick Watkins confirmed there will be an umpire rota for each session.

Sunderland are running the raffle this year, tickets have been bought. There was a reminder that every county should provide £30 worth of raffle prizes please.

It was discussed with Jill Ellis (Bedfordshire), that pre-covid Bedfordshire attended the Nationals & that maybe next year they may be able to take part again. Neil will send information about Potters, costs, etc to Jill for her county members.

### **Champion of Champions**

It had been discussed at the last meeting, with regard to the 2024 date, which coincided with half term school holidays. Considering that plus the bank holiday – the best date for 2025 seems to be the weekend of 7th-8th June. However we would need to make an enquiry as to the availability of Stanley (with Michael Laydon or Adam Wilson) and/or maybe consider an alternative venue, at Hartlepool or Darlington.

It would be lovely to see Bedfordshire back at the Champion of Champions, as only 10 bowlers required – to be discussed with Jill Ellis over the next few months.

### **Triples**

To be hosted by Durham, likely date is Sunday 14th September 2025 at Coxhoe.

### **Fours**

To be hosted by Norfolk on Sunday 27th April 2025 at Littleport, Cambridgeshire. Entry form to be sent out early 2025 and Norfolk will liaise with Paul Daniels.

### **Festival of Bowls 2025**

Flyers have been sent out after the 2024 Festival but a reminder to be sent out by Neil later in the year, plus to delegates again now. We hope to keep the entries level, or hopefully more.

## **11). Any Other Business**

**a)** It was noted last Sunday there was no main trophy for the ECBA Triples competition, as there was no representation from the North to return the trophy, a Sunderland team won last year. Neil asked Peter Wood to contact Wayne McMann (skip of the winning triple) asking he bring the trophy to Potters in October. Wayne was also the skip of the winning ECBA Fours team (trophy required in April 2025), could he also be asked to bring that trophy to Potters as well.

**b)** It was mentioned that in Chairman's report, disappointment that Bedfordshire and Essex had no delegate at the April meeting and AGM which followed. The date was set far in advance that there was plenty of time to find someone to attend, if the delegate was unavailable. Jill Ellis (Bedfordshire) said it was so far away from them to travel for a 2-4 hour meeting, Stephen Roe (Cambridgeshire) offered to car share at a specific meeting place which she may consider in future.

**c)** Peter Cook observed that it was disappointing to find the ECBA Triples entries were a very low number, 26, there were no Northern entrants. Of course it works both ways with competitions in the north & few, if any entries from the south. Another reason to consider is that at early September, outdoor bowling is in full swing. Is the event attractive enough - 7 end triples playing 4 games, not overly appealing for a long journey for some bowlers? An option could be to running the ECBA triples over the same as the ECBA Fours, a Saturday & Sunday. It must be remembered that the people arranging the competitions, it is not just open to the county bowlers, the ECBA competitions are open competitions, not national quality bowls, but open to anyone & any clubs, which should be openly advertised accordingly.

A comment was made that events down south have seen the numbers go down since sticking at Littleport. Central venues are going to be attractive if there were 40-50 bowlers, but not so good with smaller numbers. It would be better if there were other venues used around the counties which is what used to happen.

**d)** Peter Cook observed that is now noticeable that the Champion of Champions is now finishing earlier on the Sunday, but it can be an anti-climactic conclusion if an event is already won before the final round of games. Similarly, if you lose a few games early on, you may end up having nothing to play for. Could we look at potentially a revised format, i.e.: top four into semi finals and then have finals to conclude the events?

Delegates were asked to discuss the ECBA Triples, Fours and Champion of Champions events within their counties for their views on the formats, venues and any other options, to be discussed at ECBA level further.

**e)** Peter Cook praised Paul Daniels great work he has done with filming and getting footage of our events on to YouTube. To enhance the viewing experience, could we consider investing in more recording equipment and purchasing different coloured woods (ie: blue and orange as seen on New Zealand Indoor Bowls) as black/brown are hard to distinguish. Does anyone know anyone involved in production that could assist us?

Peter Cook also advised that he would be happy to explore for any grants/funding available. Cliff Richardson (Essex) said that this could be problematic because we are not a Governing Body. Prior to Covid we were looking at this and problems faced if we were to be a Governing Body, with Sports England, Bowls England and the lack of recognition, of the ECBA. We would be lumped into other bowls associations, our money paid to them, with possible interference with what we can do. It was agreed that Peter should look into this & explore any options.

**f)** Neil Jolly advised that he is going to prepare and send out a questionnaires to each county delegate. There is an opportunity for us to learn from each county as what they do, how their leagues/competitions are run and also how ECBA information is communicated within their counties to their bowlers. Do club members know what the ECBA does? Peter Cook advised that in Hertfordshire, any new club bowler is invited to join a WhatsApp group to keep them in the loop with what is going on. It was agreed that we need to look at communication, but we need a flavour of what is going first and then look for improvement.

**12. Date of Next Meeting**

Saturday 8th February 2025 (Virtual 11am start)

The meeting closed at 12.16pm