



English Carpet Bowls Association

ENGLISH CARPET BOWLS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the AGM of the English Carpet Bowls Association held at Brentwood Hotel, Rotherham,
on 12th April 2025

Present: Representatives from Cambridgeshire, Durham, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk,
Northumberland, Suffolk and Sunderland

1. Apologies for absence

Mick Watkins, Bedfordshire

2. Minutes of 2024 AGM

The minutes of the 2024 AGM were agreed. Proposed by Cambridgeshire. seconded by Norfolk.

3. Matters Arising from previous minutes

None

4. Chairman's Report

Thank you all for travelling to the meetings today, I think it important that we have an in person get together, in addition to our online meetings.

The last year has gone by very quickly, but looking back, it is pleasing to see that all of our events have run smoothly. Whether that be the Triples and Rinks run by the respective host counties, the Festival, Champion of Champions or Nationals, the efficiency of these events is down to a lot of hard work, both before and on the day. Thank you to everyone who has done anything to ensure these events can be enjoyed by those taking part. My congratulations to all the bowlers that have been successful at those events.

I also want to record my thanks to my fellow Officers for their support in assisting me through my first year as ECBA Chair. There is a lot of work and communications that go on behind the scenes, which keeps the ECBA and our events running efficiently.

My thanks also to all of the county delegates for their attendance and input at our meetings.

Finally, when it comes to recognition, I need to highlight the efforts, over many years by Mick Watkins, who is standing down as National Referee. Mick has put in so much work and time, both in the Referee role and on the developmental side and he will be a great loss to the ECBA. Thank you, Mick, for your support and everything you have done for the ECBA and Carpet Bowls.

Having had a year to stabilise following the death of Colin Young, now more than ever is the time to look forward. Our events run well and whilst we need to ensure this continues, more needs to be done to promote Carpet Bowls, whether that be within the counties that already play or elsewhere, there is work to be done. There are already some good individual examples of promotional efforts out there, but more collective effort is needed.

5. Secretary's Report

None

6. Treasurer's Report

We have ended the year showing a surplus of £1818, up from £728 last year, thanks to increased profits for the Festival, and reducing our losses on the Nationals.

This has helped bring our bank balance back up to £14200, after a period from 2019 to 2023 where we'd seen it decline by £4000.

Having stabilized our finances, we now have an opportunity to decide how we might use the money to promote the game.

7. Referee's Report

It is time for me to step down, and hopefully, hand over to someone new.

I have served on this committee a fair few years, firstly as a Delegate and then as Referee. Changes have happened in that time, not least the approach to national matters. I don't see the inward approach so much. It is pleasing that this committee looks beyond their own Counties. My only real regret is that there is not enough importance to the role of the referee. Only one County takes this position seriously, Essex. Some of the Counties have no qualified referees, hopefully a new face will be able to put that right. In saying that, I must thank all the people that have worked to make the job enjoyable. Travelling around the Country was one of the best things that I have taken on, and hopefully some of the set-ups are still on the go.

May I wish you good luck and hope that progress continues. I will always be about and if I'm able to help in any way, I will make myself available.

Following on from Mick's report, Neil Jolly (Chairman), confirmed that he has spoken with Mick regarding paperwork and contacts, they will have a second catchup in due course.

8. Child Protection Officer's Report

No problems reported. We still have regular interactions with the Bowls Development Alliance, who, while they are keen for closer ties with us, have no hidden agenda in seeking to do so.

Our Child Protection Policy has been updated, and will be posted on the ECBA website.

9. Election of Officers

With the exception of Mick Watkins, who had already given notice of his intention to step down from the role of National Referee, the remaining officers all agreed to stand for a further year, and there being no other nominations, were voted in en-bloc.

Chairman : Neil Jolly
Vice Chairman : Peter Cook
Secretary : Pauline Charleton
Treasurer : Paul Daniels
Child Protection : Rebecca Hearn
Referee: Vacant

The role of the National Referee was discussed and currently no-one had expressed an interest in the position. It was decided to keep the position available, but to have a contingency plan.

The Chairman suggested that, going forward, there should be a designated Event Controller for ECBA events, who would be the point of contact, in the event of any issues which might arise. As a concept this idea was approved by the meeting.

For the upcoming Festival, that will be Neil Jolly, and for the Champion of Champions, it will be Peter Cook. A decision as to who would take the role for the Nationals, will be made later.

Mick Watkins had previously done a lot of work over the years on the developmental side of the game. After some discussion on this, it was agreed that Michael Laydon and Steve Roe would take on the role of Development Officers for the North and South, respectively.

10. Annual Membership Fee

The annual membership fee of £100 (£20 for associate members) was agreed.

11. Any other business

- a) The Essex delegate asked if it was worthwhile approaching Sport England again, after an unsuccessful attempt to get recognition many years ago, in the hope of obtaining funding, although that may require the ECBA to become a governing body, a role which it has never held. Paul Daniels advised that when this was pursued many years ago, Sport England would not recognise carpet bowls as a stand alone version of the game of bowls, this prevented it being pursued further.

The Sunderland delegate stated there have been changes through the years with the Bowls Development Alliance (BDA), and that there is funding available from them, if the ECBA were to be recognised by, and join the BDA. He had attended a recent BDA Open Day and had obtained some handouts, by way of an example of how the BDA were assisting Short Mat Bowls. It was agreed that there should be follow up with the BDA and the Chairman asked the Sunderland Delegate to explore setting up an initial meeting so we can find out what the BDA could offer. Future discussions can then take place to establish if there is merit in pursuing further.

- b) The Sunderland delegate established via the BDA that carpet bowls is played in Ireland, Scotland & Wales, so there was potential for international matches, perhaps at Potters.
- c) Rebecca Hearn advised that the BDA have a bowling facility at Melton Mowbray, which could be a potential future venue for ECBA events.

Votes then took place on the proposals discussed at the previous meeting:

- d) Champion of Champions Proposal to change from 2 wood Pairs to 3 wood, was agreed, 5-3.
- e) Nationals Playing Short Rules - The vote was 7-1 to retain the current rule.

12. Date of Next AGM

Saturday 18 April 2026 - to be confirmed
(possibly to tie in with the ECBA Fours (Sun 19 April 2026?) to be hosted by Sunderland))

Meeting closed at 3.03pm.