



English Carpet Bowls Association

ENGLISH CARPET BOWLS ASSOCIATION

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

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

Neil Jolly (Chairman), Pete Cook (Vice Chairman), Pauline Charleton (Secretary), Paul Daniels (Treasurer), Rebecca Hearn (Child Protection Officer)

1. Apologies for absence

Bedfordshire and Mick Watkins (National Referee)

2. Minutes of last meeting

Agreed - Proposed by Hertfordshire, Seconded by Cambridgeshire

3. Matters Arising from previous minutes

None

4. Correspondence

Proposals from Durham and Cambridgeshire. Resignation letter from Mick Watkins

5. Chairman's Report

Thank you all for travelling to this meeting today.

Since our February online meeting, it's been a quiet couple of months, with no ECBA events. Behind the scenes though, there have been plenty of communications, working towards today and future events.

Potters have issued their accommodation paperwork to counties for the Nationals in October. I'm delighted that Bedfordshire will be returning, so we will have a full complement of our nine counties taking part. Please ensure that your county's deposit is paid, and accommodation request returned to Potters in a timely manner.

Looking ahead, to be discussed today and to ensure that all arrangements are in place, we have: ECBA Rinks, being hosted by Norfolk CBA at Littleport in a fortnights time. That's closely followed by the Festival of Bowls at Potters.

Then we have our Champion of Champions event at Stanley over the weekend of 7th and 8th June. Finally, there is the ECBA Triples on Sunday 14th September, being hosted by Durham CBA at Coxhoe. It will probably be sensible to have our September online meeting after that event has taken place.

Thank you all for your continued support of the ECBA.

6. Secretary's Report

None

7. Treasurer's Report

None (See AGM)

8. Referee's Report

Enquiries have continued to arrive, via the website.

An enquiry from an Essex club asked about the use of woods that did not comply with the rule book, was referred to the Essex Association.

The most recent request was an enquiry from a Bedfordshire housing block, and this was forwarded to Jill Ellis (Bedfordshire Delegate), who has already followed up on this.

Other matters were dealt with as needed.

9. Child Protection Officer's Report

None (see AGM)

10. Competitions

- a) **Festival of Bowls** - 28th April to 2nd May at Potters. The numbers have held firm this year, with around the same numbers as 2024, which will include a delegation from Norway, once again.
- b) **Champion of Champions** - 7th & 8th June at Stanley. It was decided that an invitation to Bedfordshire, who have been absent from the event for several years, should state it was not necessary to send a full team of 10 players and that competing in one or two of the disciplines would suffice. The Chairman asked the Durham Delegate if Shirley Wood would be willing to organise the fundraiser again this year and this was agreed. As with last year, Sunderland agreed to set the equipment up, Neil Jolly to liaise with Michael Laydon nearer the time.
- c) **ECBA Rinks** - Norfolk hosting at Littleport on 27th April 2025. The closing date was 11th April, and there are 22 entries.
- d) **ECBA Triples** - Durham hosting at Coxhoe on 14th September. The entry form will be issued shortly.
- e) **Nationals** - All counties confirmed they currently have 24 players each to play in October in the Nationals - totalling 216 bowlers.
It was requested that team sheets with the names of players, broken down by block, be handed to Paul Daniels on Friday evening or Saturday morning.
There will be a rota for refereeing, each county to ensure that they have their referees in the hall at their allotted time.
The contribution from each county for raffle prizes is £30. Cambridgeshire to run the raffle.
Since we now have all 9 counties competing this year, the extra sessions required leave no time for a set lunch break, games will be continuous throughout the day.
- f) There was a discussion regarding options for trying to increase the number of entrants for the Rinks and Triples competitions, such as altering the timing of events, which could tie in geographically with meetings/ competitions held at the similar time. Suggestions included, a Pairs and a Fours over a weekend or holding an April event in the South and September for the North. There was also a suggestion of a 'Fantastic Fives' - involving a triples & pairs event. Food for thought and to be discussed at a later date.

11. Any Other Business

- a) The proposals from Durham and Cambridgeshire, regarding the rules for playing short at the Nationals, were discussed at length in preparation for a vote at the AGM.

Both were broadly the same, proposing there be a replacement of the rule introduced for 2024, which allowed for teams to play short, with up to 4 blocks playing with just 3 players.

Durham's proposal was that no county should play with less than 22 players, with players from other rinks filling in and no individual playing more than the one extra game. Plus, if a county has less than 22 players, one of their Rinks must be withdrawn from the event.

Cambridgeshire proposed that teams should have no less than 20 players, with designated players (with the exception of skips) filling in, according to a specified matrix.

The pros and cons of the two proposals, together with the existing rule were discussed, with all counties putting forward their opinions. In summarising the Chairman asked the counties, when voting, to consider what was best for the game. Ensuring that all counties, even if they were short of bowlers, were able to compete on a level a playing field as possible. We did not want to be discouraging a county from taking part at the Nationals, by having a rule that either they could not comfortably comply with or was penalising them for being genuinely short of bowlers. Any rule ideally needed to be straightforward to implement, particularly in the case of an unforeseeable incident part way through the competition.

- b) The proposal from Cambridgeshire to make a change to the format at the Champion of Champions to allow for 3 woods Pairs, rather than 2 wood, was also discussed at length. As with last year, it was generally agreed that the format was a personal preference and counties were likely to vote in accordance with the pairs format playing in their own county.
- c) The Cambridgeshire delegate stated he has had contact from four clubs local to him, who are interested in carpet bowls. His work was appreciated and the meeting looked forward to any further updates.
- d) The Essex delegate stated that they have been approaching players from both Indoor and Outdoor Bowls, but had struggled to get them interested in carpet bowls, given their other bowls commitments and time constraints. He also mentioned that running competitions in April, June & September, make it tricky for outdoor bowlers. Sunderland suggested running a joint event, where carpet bowlers played the indoor version & vice-versa, to attract others to carpet bowls.
- e) The Hertfordshire delegate said that while outdoor bowlers play carpet bowls in the winter, they do not like sitting around, waiting to play.
- f) The Chairman thanked all counties for their answers to the Questionnaire he'd sent around. He will circulate later, so all had an insight into the other counties. Also, the Risk Assessment circulated previously would be uploaded to the ECBA website.
- g) The Chairman said that the ECBA email addresses (one main and others for the counties) might need to be reviewed, to see whether this could be streamlined.
- h) The Sunderland delegate advised Southport are putting a carpet bowls team together, and together with a club in Ormskirk, could form a Lancashire contingent. They ran their own competition recently which was a success and contact will be maintained with them. Similarly, the Sunderland Delegate and ECBA Chair had been involved in two events at Lincoln Indoor Bowls club, to introduce carpet bowls there. Both days had been a success and contact maintained with Lincoln to hopefully assist them further. The venue itself, geographically was potentially suitable for a future ECBA event.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Suggested - Saturday 20 September 2025 (11am start, via Zoom)

The meeting closed at 1.40pm.