



English Carpet Bowls Association

ENGLISH CARPET BOWLS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the English Carpet Bowls Association held on 19th September 2026

Present: Representatives from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Durham, Hertfordshire, Lancashire, Norfolk, Northumberland, Suffolk, Neil Jolly (Chairman), Pete Cook (Vice Chairman), Paul Daniels (Treasurer)

1. Apologies for absence

Pauline Charleton (Secretary), Essex (Cliff Richardson), Ian Gill & Mo Harmston (Lancs)

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were read and agreed as a true record, proposed by Cambridgeshire and seconded by Northumberland.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Correspondence

None

5. Chairman's Report

Thank you for all attending this meeting, and I hope you had an enjoyable summer.

My report starts with the sad news of the passing of David Schofield at the end of July. In 1991, representatives of a number of county carpet bowls associations met to form the English Carpet Bowls Association, and David was voted in as Chairman. He held that role for three years & was then ECBA Secretary for another two years. He was also the Suffolk Association Secretary for nine years & Chairman for two years. Both the ECBA & Suffolk Associations would not be the organisations they are today, without the work David put in during those early years.

Since we last met, there have been four ECBA events.

Rinks: Held at Hartlepool Indoor Bowls Club on 19 April, fifteen teams took part, and the winning team was David & Stephen Templeton, Adam Wilson & Ian Clark (Durham/Sunderland). Thank you to Sunderland for hosting & Adam Wilson for his work both before & on the day.

Festival of Bowls: Over the week of 27 April to 1 May at Potters. There were 130 bowlers taking part, an increase on the previous year. All of the titles went to our Northern counties, with Michael Laydon (Sunderland) winning the Singles, Nathan McMann & Ian Clark (Durham) the Pairs and Michael Laydon, John McKenna, Adam Wilson & Neil Ridley (Sunderland) winning the Rinks. Special mention, though, for Sue Parrish (Essex), who was runner-up in both the singles & pairs events.

Champion of Champions: Again, at Hartlepool Indoor Bowls Club over the weekend of 6 & 7 June. After many close finishes, the titles were shared around. Pete Cook (Hertfordshire) won & retained the Singles, Michael Laydon & Aiden Turnes (Sunderland) the Pairs, Stephen Templeton, Nathan & Wayne McMann (Durham) won & retained the Triples and Sharon Richardson, Jonathan & Ian Carter & Nigel Pate (Cambridgeshire) the Fours. The team event was won by Sunderland. Special mention to Lancashire, fielding a full team at their first Champions event. Thanks to those involved in the setting up of equipment & assisting with the fundraisers.

Triples: Held last Sunday at Littleport, with 31 teams entered. Thank you to Essex for hosting and, in particular, Ashley & Paul Perkins for their work both before and during the event. Well done to Neil Tuckey, Marilyn & Pete Cook (Hertfordshire), who were worthy winners.

For those who attended the last few events, you will have seen that we added additional cameras and a commentary table to our live-streaming. Thanks go to Paul Daniels for his continuing work on this front and to Pete Cook for his work enhancing our productions. The commentary has proved to be popular, both to those bowlers who've had a go and those watching, something we intend to do more of.

Today we will look ahead to our upcoming events & discuss further our efforts to promote & develop the game.

6. Secretary's Report

Nothing to report.

7. Treasurer's Report

The Festival continues to do well, showing a profit of just over £2000, exactly as it has done for the last four years, with the numbers up even though the Norwegians weren't able to make it across this year.

And the Champion of Champions was able to more than cover its costs, thanks to the fundraiser.

8. Child Protection Officer's Report

Rebecca Hearn has done some work updating both the content and look of our Safeguarding Policy. This will be circulated shortly; any feedback will be welcome.

9. Development Officers

Stephen Roe (South)

Cambridgeshire

Following on from the Summer League in the Huntingdonshire district, the same four clubs are going to be playing a winter league.

Last week after leaflet drops and posts on social media, Barnack, which did not recommence after the Covid pandemic, was started up again; seven people came along who had not played carpet bowls before, and five were from the village lawn bowls club. They all came back this week, so hopefully it will continue to grow.

The plan is to move forward for next year to try and establish more clubs close to where Lawn Bowls is played.

Lincolnshire

South Kesteven

A small league of five teams will be starting in October.

North Kesteven

There are seven active clubs in the area; no league has been set up between the clubs. They are arranging friendly matches between themselves, and there is interest in holding a Sunday competition, including clubs from South Kesteven.

Michael Laydon (North)

Nothing to report.

10. Competitions

a) Champion of Champions – Feedback/Review

This was our first major event at Hartlepool, and everything ran smoothly, although there were a couple

of items of feedback.

The in-house cafe only took cash; if that doesn't change, it will be noted in next year's programme.

The social night on Saturday was arranged at the last minute; if it's repeated next year, we will look to get the information out there in advance.

b) Nationals (6 - 9 November)

All counties present report that they will have full teams; Neil will check with the other counties to confirm.

There is no rule for playing short in the Inter-County game on Friday night; the rule for the main event will be added to bring both in line with one another.

There will be a rota for referees included in the programme; each county will be asked to provide two players for one session each day while their county is sitting out.

Each county is asked to provide £30 in raffle prizes. Norfolk will be running the raffle.

Potters have updated their mobility scooter/wheelchair policy; if anyone needs to hire a scooter, it will need to be arranged through Lowestoft Shopmobility. The policy update will be circulated to all counties.

The counties are asked to submit their team sheets at least one week in advance of the Nationals. This will save the organisers seeking these upon arrival & it will assist to help to create a rota for match commentaries on the live broadcast. Delegates were asked to canvass with their bowlers as regards anyone interested in getting involved in doing commentary.

Neil and Pete are planning a pre-event preview to be broadcast on Facebook/YouTube in order to raise awareness of the event and the livestreams.

c) ECBA Rinks (18 April 2027)

Suffolk will be hosting at Needham Market. The entry form will be going out in the new year, and trophies to be purchased. Arrangements will need to be made for the return of the main trophy if the winners do not take part.

d) Festival of Bowls (26 - 30 April 2027)

The entry form and flyer are attached to the minutes. We continue to be in contact with Norway and hope that they will be able to return.

e) Champion of Champions (12 - 13 June 2027)

Hartlepool Indoor Bowls Club has been booked for next year's event.

f) ECBA Triples (September 2027)

Northumberland will be hosting. The delegate was asked to investigate potential venue and date.

11. Any Other Business

Pete reported that via Facebook he had come across a company that is involved in marketing within various bowls disciplines in the UK. Having made contact, he set up an online call (including Neil) with Lucy Smith at Bowls Marketing. This was very much exploratory but with the background of promoting carpet bowls. It was a productive meeting, and with Lucy being an outdoor bowler, she understood the issues faced by bowls organisations. After the meeting, Lucy provided us with details of a training package designed to assist organisations reach a wider audience via Facebook. We already have a Facebook presence, as do some of our counties. This is something we will be looking to purchase and follow through with. County delegates were asked to discuss this within their counties, as ideally we'd have all of the counties with operative Facebook pages linked into the ECBA page.

Regarding our Triples and Rinks, a discussion was held around the nature of the two competitions. The reality is that it is predominantly club bowlers entering these events, and gone are the days when bowlers

from the South, travel up North and vice versa. It was acknowledged that the demographic of the game and cost are factors here.

Question: Do we want the ECBA Triples and Fours to be prestigious events, where bowlers are prepared to travel to play in them, or are we comfortable with them continuing to run as they are? Discussion on this topic included potential rebranding of the events and consideration of date and venue. A possible option could be running two competitions over a Saturday and Sunday, encouraging travel as a worthwhile exercise, but that would probably mean changing the Triples to a Pairs to accommodate that. Delegates were asked to take this topic back to their county committees to discuss, so further consideration can be given to future options.

Jill (Bedfordshire) queried the need for Rule 1.4 which refers to the delivery boxes, which are not necessarily marked on all carpets. The history behind this was explained, but subsequently some counties had not adopted this for their events. It was understood that manufacturers do not mark the delivery box on carpets before sale.

Also Rule 3.2 which refers to the third player visiting the head, and as a result appears to relate only to Fours games, as against any other discipline. It was agreed that the wording could be changed to penultimate player, relative to triples and fours games.

And finally, Rule 6.3 which does not set out any penalty for an infringement of the rule. However, the rules do state that absent an independent marker, skips shall resolve any disputes, which in reality is what happens.

Jill also remarked that the website is not as modern-looking as others. Website design is something offered by Bowls Marketing, alongside the Facebook marketing referred to above, and will be looked into in the future.

Northumberland report that they have a club closing down in the near future and that their equipment will become available shortly. The delegate was asked to provide details if the equipment was wished to be advertised for sale on the website.

Lancashire are not currently in a position to raise a team of 24 players for the Nationals, but wondered if it would be possible to organise some sort of team event requiring fewer players. It is something that will be considered as an additional event.

Neil will be contacting the Bowls Development Alliance in the near future, as agreed at the previous meeting.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Saturday, 6th February 2027 (11am, online)

The meeting closed at 12.25pm.