

LANCASTER BOWLING LEAGUE.

Minutes of the AGM held at Skerton Liberal Club on Monday 20th January 2025 at 7.30pm

Top Table:	Chairman	David Clarkson (DC)
	Vice Chair	Janine Bebbington (JB)
	Fixture Secretary	Mike Armishaw (MA)
	Treasurer	Denise Nardone (DN)

The Chairman welcomed all those present and thanked Skerton Liberal Club for allowing the league to use the club for the AGM. DC apologised for what was a very full agenda but hoped that by sending out all the reports beforehand the evening would proceed smoothly.

Unfortunately, league secretary Mark Norcliffe was away on holiday and so Graham Brandwood had agreed to take the minutes of tonight's AGM and distribute voting cards to Clubs and teams.

All Clubs (and teams) were present and represented at the AGM.

1. Apologies for absence.

Mark Norcliffe and Julie Norcliffe

2. Minutes Silence.

Those present observed a minute's silence in memory of deceased members.

3. Minutes of the AGM held on 16th January 2024.

The minutes had been circulated to all clubs in advance of the AGM. The minutes of the AGM were agreed, by those present, as being a true record of the proceedings.

Proposed: Linda Murie (Carnforth) Seconded: Don Fairhurst (Overton)

4. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising from the AGM minutes.

5. Chairman's Report.

The report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. A summary of the main points follows.

DC congratulated all those teams who had enjoyed success and commiserated with those who had found themselves in a relegation position. He had officiated at the Cup semi finals and also a final and had been treated to some superb bowling, played in a true sporting spirit.

With the exception of Mike Armishaw (fixtures secretary) it had been a completely new committee and DC thanked his fellow committee members, who he felt had worked well together. There had been a number of issues to overcome, with a lack of financial information and other items to contend with. He was proud of being part of a committed and professional committee, who had met regularly and been forward thinking on how the league might be improved. Secretary Mark Norcliffe, together with the amazing work ethics and input of Julie

(Norcliffe) had driven the meetings forward. Denise had worked tirelessly to bring the accounts up to date, and presented them in a professional manner. Mike had ensured that the switch to the Bowls Results website had gone smoothly.

DC congratulated Peter Shallis (Lune Road) who had won the division one merit and would represent the league at the NL&F Champion of Champions event in Burnley on the 5th April.

6. Appointment of President.

Bruce Alexander (Quernmore) was appointed as League President for 2025. Bruce was invited to come forward and be seated on the top table.

7. Secretary's Report.

The report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. In the absence of the secretary the written report is given below in full.

Following the formation of the new committee in January 2024, I believe the Lancaster Bowling League had a successful season.

We lost Slyne A following the team numbers decision at the last AGM but managed to gain a new Slyne C team to bolster our lower divisions.

The season ran smoothly with most clubs managing to maintain player numbers and some attracting new blood. This is critical to our bowling future and whilst it is not for me to sway anyone's decisions, decreasing the number of players in a team shouldn't be an excuse to avoid recruitment or retention of players. Janine Bebbington will make a small presentation later to encourage recruitment.

The NLFCBA along with the BCBA are looking to promote our sport more heavily and will be seeking increased membership fees to support their marketing programmes. These will be recognised in our own fees.

Much work has gone into the background of the league and how we run. This is critical as we seek funding support in the future, we have to demonstrate we run effectively and I wish to thank Julie Norcliffe for the volume of work she has undertaken to ensure we have documents and policies in place for today's world. In addition to this, Julie is progressing an initiative called Social Prescribing. This involves individuals who would benefit from some light exercise, either due to physical or emotional needs, being signposted to the league from GP surgeries etc. This stemmed from Julie's work with the indoor league but she saw the opportunity to include our league clubs as well. It's early days but let's hope this leads to our league flourishing with an influx of new players.

The sad and untimely loss of our president, David Hoyle encouraged us to ensure we delivered for you and the success of the UAL trophy, in David's memory and well hosted by Slyne BC, showed there is an appetite for competitive bowls outside the top divisions. I would also like to thank Tony Hunter for his recent support in managing the LBL Trophy but with Tony leaving the area, we now need to consider how we manage this event. It has been traditionally hosted at Parkside but I would welcome any approach from others to host. I am delighted to announce that Bruce Alexander will take on the role of League President for the forthcoming season and as such, Quernmore will host the UAL Lower league trophy hopefully on Sat 16th August 2024. We had the misfortune to be badly managed in regards to the presentation night and my thanks to Gill Simm for her efforts in ensuring we were able to hold our event slightly earlier than planned. We will move the date back and at present, it is hoped to hold on Friday 24th October at Skerton Liberal Club. The 2024 presentation evening was a success and we will look to follow this format.

The league management committee continues to meet at regular intervals and we post our meeting minutes on the Bowls Results website. If anyone has issues they wish to raise, then we are happy to try and assist where possible.

Thank you all for your support in 2024 and here's to a successful 2025 season.

8. Fixture Secretary's Report.

The report below had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Last season was our first year using the new Bowling Results website to manage the league fixtures. Setting up the website and transferring all team and player data from the Online Bowls website took a lot of work. But we now have a system that is much easier to manage.

My thanks to all captains for entering results promptly after matches and for sending me copies of all result sheets.

There were again only a few postponements, and most of these were rearranged amicably by the captains involved. There was one postponement, due to inclement weather, that was disputed by the visiting team. This has led the committee to clarify the rules on how long players must remain at the green before games may be postponed due to bad weather. All players must remain at least 30 minutes beyond the scheduled start time before a match is postponed.

There were 14 occasions when teams were short of a player, involving 10 matches. This is a significant increase over previous years and is concerning. It is not acceptable for players to travel to a match to find they have no opponent. The league will need to monitor this and consider introducing penalties for offending teams.

We again had a team withdraw shortly before the start of the season. This meant that only one of our four divisions was complete, while three were one or two teams short. This is not a healthy position for the league, and both the league and individual clubs need to do much more to recruit new players.

Towards the end of the season, there was some debate about the scheduling of cup matches, especially the semi-finals and finals. For next season, we will schedule these matches earlier in the year, before floodlights are necessary. We will also try to schedule the Challenge Trophy and HW Nichols Trophy semi-finals and finals on different dates. This should allow more players to watch these matches and support teams from their clubs.

Finally, I am standing down as fixtures secretary for next season, as I am moving away from the area. I wish to thank the committee and all team captains and club secretaries for their help in making this job much easier than it could have been. I will be available to help the new fixtures secretary with setting up the new season.

MA asked whether anyone had any questions relating to the report. Jan Rawes (Lansil) queried the comment relating to teams being short and the possible introduction of financial or other penalties (see above).

9. Treasurer's Report.

The report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the Profit and Loss Account was tabled. The full report and accounts are included at the end of the minutes.

In her report DN highlighted some of the difficulties she had encountered in taking on the role. She, with the full support of the committee, had had to start from scratch. Now, having worked through a full year as treasurer, she felt that she had a clearer understanding of the income and expenditure, and felt well placed to make recommendations for the coming year.

DN went through the main points on the Profit and Loss Accounts and invited questions from the floor.

The Accounts had been audited by Linda Murie (Carnforth) and found to be accurate and should be accepted as a true record.

Proposed: Steve Watkinson (Slyne) Seconded: Amanda Oakeshott (Bowling Green)

The Accounts were approved unanimously.

10. Election of Officers.

With the exception of the Fixture's Secretary all current officers were prepared to stand again in their current roles. DC asked those present whether anyone wished to put themselves forward for any of these positions. There was no response from the floor. Proposals and seconds were then obtained for the current officers to be re-elected to the positions of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. All were re-elected unanimously.

MA gave further information about what the role of Fixture's Secretary entailed, emphasising again that he was prepared to work alongside any one taking on the role, until such time as he moved away.

Chris Holden (Bowling Green) put himself forward for the position of Fixture's Secretary.

Proposed: Keith Lowther Seconded: Amanda Oakeshott (Bowling Green)

Chris was elected unanimously to the position.

11. League Trophy – Host Club

Bowling Green had hosted the League Trophy successfully for a number of years. The committee felt that it was time to change the venue to another club and DC asked whether there were any clubs interested in hosting the Trophy. A number of Clubs present expressed interest and it was agreed that the committee would talk to the Clubs before deciding on who would host the Trophy in 2025.

12. Motions

- **League and Trophy Fees** – The Treasurer and Committee proposed increasing League and Trophy Fees to £60.

Proposed: Don Fairhurst (Overton) Seconded: Amanda Oakeshott (Bowling Green)

The proposal was passed with two votes against.

- **Honorariums** – The Committee proposed that the current Honorariums paid to committee members and totalling £250 should remain the same.

Proposed: Tom Brannon (Slyne) Seconded: Jan Rawes (Lansil)

The proposal was passed unanimously.

- **Reduction to 8 person teams** – Motion put forward by Trimpell and Seconded by Cumberland View.

DC felt that this motion was likely to involve input from a number of clubs, some in favour and some against, and therefore a reasonable amount of time should be spent debating the merits or otherwise of the proposal before a vote was taken.

Ian Lilley (Trimpell) spoke in favour of the proposal making the valid points that some clubs were struggling to field teams of ten (hence the number of walkovers last season) and that teams of eight meant an earlier finish to matches. Other Clubs, Lansil, Overton and the University also spoke in favour of the reduction re-emphasising the benefits of an earlier finish for those clubs without floodlights and with elderly players.

Chris Greaves and Darren White (Bowling Green) led the counter argument stating that a reduction in numbers would lead to players not getting a game and possibly giving up the sport as a result. A reduction to eight was the start of a 'slippery slope' with future proposals possibly suggesting teams of six. Darren felt strongly that teams should remain at ten, with Clubs reaching out to the community to recruit new bowlers who would come into a team in the lower positions. With teams of eight it was also difficult to have measurers and people to oversee refreshments with all team members involved in either playing or marking.

After a full discussion a vote was taken and the motion was defeated with 13 teams in Favour and 19 teams against.

- **Revised Constitution** – A copy of the revised Constitution had been circulated and its adoption was proposed by the Committee.
Proposed: Diana Ainsworth (University) Seconded: Linda Murie (Carnforth)
The proposal to adopt the new Constitution was passed unanimously.
A copy of the new Constitution would be posted on the Bowls Result Website.
- **Revised League Rules** – Proposed by the Committee and circulated in advance of the meeting. Before a vote was taken a discussion took place with regard to proposed new rule 20 b and an amendment was agreed. The amendment voted on reads:-
If the home captain, on the day, deems that there is no chance of the fixture taking place due to inclement weather and/or other circumstances they should contact the opposing captain and mutually agree that the match should be postponed to be re-arranged at a later date. Once teams have arrived for a match a final decision on whether the match should be postponed is to be made by both captains 30 minutes after the scheduled start time.
Proposed: Steve Parker (Skerton) Seconded: Chris Holden (Bowling Green)
With the agreed amendment the motion to adopt the new Rules was passed unanimously.
A copy of the new league rules would be posted on the Bowls Result Website.
- **Revised Trophy Rules** – Proposed by the Committee and circulated in advance of the meeting. Before a vote was taken a similar amendment to the one above was agreed to cover Trophy Rule 12.b. In addition a further amendment to Trophy Rule 2 was agreed. Rule 2 covering the Challenge and W H Nicholls Trophies now reads:-
Only players who have played in previous rounds of the Challenge/W H Nicholls Trophy for that team or 2 league games for that team are eligible to play in the semi finals and finals of that competition.
Proposed: John Read (Lune Road) Seconded: Keith Lowther (Carnforth)
With the agreed amendment, the motion to adopt the revised Trophy rules was passed unanimously.
A copy of the new Trophy rules would be posted on the Bowls Result Website.
- **Introduction of Code of Conduct** – Proposed by the Committee and circulated in advance of the meeting.
Proposed: Graham Brandwood (Luneside) Seconded: Darren White (Bowling Green)
The proposal to introduce a Code of Conduct was passed unanimously. A copy of the Code of Conduct to be posted on the Bowls Results website.
- **Introduction of Discipline Policy** – Proposed by the Committee and circulated in advance of the meeting.
Proposed: Graham Brandwood (Luneside) Seconded: Linda Murie (Carnforth)
The proposal was passed unanimously and the policy would be posted on the website.

- **Introduction of Complaints Policy** – Proposed by the Committee and circulated in advance of the meeting.
Proposed: Steve Watkinson (Slyne) Seconded: Diana Ainsworth (University)
The proposal was passed unanimously and the policy would be posted on the website.
- **Introduction of Committee Tenure Policy** - Proposed by the Committee and circulated in advance of the meeting.
Proposed: Amanda Oakeshott (Bowling Green) Seconded: Tom Brannan (Slyne)
The proposal was passed unanimously and the policy would be posted on the website.

13. Promotion and Development of Crown Green Bowling

Janine Bebbington gave a short presentation on how the sport might be promoted and developed by clubs in the future. The importance of clubs developing close links with their communities was emphasised. It was becoming more difficult, if not impossible, for clubs to exist, let alone thrive in isolation.

14. County and National Issues

Graham Brandwood gave a short update on what was happening at both the County (NL&F CBA) and National (BCGBA) level. There was also a handout for clubs to take away with them. Key points:-

- **National Development Strategy** – Launched by the BCGBA. A major step forward and essential for the future of the sport.
- **£1 player levy** – To be introduced this year with funds raised being ring fenced to support the rolling out of the National Development Strategy. County Associations would ‘collect’ the levy from clubs. The levy would only involve those players who played in a league and had a BCGBA registration number (Doesn’t apply to social bowlers).
- **CR2 Form** – NL&F had requested that clubs complete an updated CR2 form listing all their current bowlers. In view of the £1 levy it is important that clubs separate competitive from social bowlers.
- **Insurance** – BCGBA had agreed a new policy for 2025, with enhanced benefits, at a cost of £55 per club. Insurance cover runs from the 1st January 2025.
- **Safeguarding** – It is a BCGBA requirement that all Clubs have a designated Safeguarding Officer who has an enhanced DBS certificate. Luneside would be hosting a course on Saturday 1st February from 2 – 4pm.
- **Defibrillators** – Extremely important that Clubs either had a defibrillator or knew the location of the nearest one. Grants were available and a training course on the use of defibrillators might be organised but the local leagues.
- **NL&F CBA AGM** – The County AGM would be taking place on Sunday 2nd February at The Canberra Club (Salisbury) from 12.00pm.

15. Presentation Evening

Discussions were currently taking place with the Morecambe League regarding a date and venue for the Presentation Evening. Details would be posted on the Bowls Results website in due course.

16. Any Other Business

- **New Teams** – The deadline for Clubs wishing to enter new teams into the league would be the 31st January 2025.
- **Swift Payment** – DN thanked all Clubs for paying league fees swiftly last season. This had made her role as treasurer much easier and she hoped that Clubs could be relied upon to do the same this coming year.
- **Bob Palmer - ?**
- DC reported that a meeting had taken place recently with Cat Smith MP who had appeared genuinely interested and supportive of crown green bowling. Since the meeting she had ensured that Lisa Nandy (minister of Culture Media and Sport) had a copy of the Bowls Development Strategy).