



## HEXHAM ELVASTON BOWLING CLUB

### New Member Pack

Welcome to Elvaston!

We are very happy that you have decided to join us and hope that this introduction is of assistance.

This set of notes aims to provide you with basic information about the way the club is organised, and to answer the sort of questions which new members might well ask. If a question occurs to you that is not covered here, please contact the Secretary, who will be glad to provide an answer and/or include the issue in future notes.

#### **BASIC FORMALITIES**

##### **Membership**

As you have already submitted a Membership Application Form, membership fees are payable. The Treasurer will contact you with payment details. If, on your application form, you have asked for an outer door and/or locker key then those will be available to you by way of an addressed envelope on the desk in the main entrance or by arrangement. The Main door is the one on the north end of the building; the south door (opposite the main gate and path) is opened only from the inside, during matches.

##### **Fees**

Although you might have joined and paid membership during the summer, the current rules provide for payment for the following season by 31<sup>st</sup> March of each year.

#### **BOWLING ACTIVITY**

##### **Use of the Green**

As a member you can use the green for practice or social games at any time, subject to obvious restrictions such as bad weather, green maintenance, or occasional County games. There are no green fees payable. Members may introduce visitors up to three times per season, at a cost of £5 per day/person to be paid at the time of a visit. A book to record such visits is on or near the desk in the hallway. The green is normally cut three times a week, as a rule on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from about 09.00 until about 10.30. We cannot be more precise than that, as the timing may vary depending on weather and match schedules, but it is a good guide.

In order to maintain the green, we do ask that players use the rinks in rotation when playing practice matches or the early rounds of competitions. We play "hut to hut" (pavilion to shelter) or "hedge to hedge" (north-south, parallel to Elvaston Road) on alternate weeks. It is usually obvious because we have the rink markers out to show the direction on any given day. The sheet inside the door also has a reminder of this, so do not worry!

There is no dress code for practice games, other than bowling shoes, of course. **Jacks** are stored in racks near the main door; **mats** are stacked just to the right of the desk in the hall; the woods and shoes on the shelving on the back wall, as well as the bowls in boxes, are for general use if you do not have your own equipment.

New bowlers may also like to note that it would not be normal to go out to practice while a formal (league or Cup) match was being played against another club, or certainly not if the majority of rinks were being used for a competition. If, however, such a match was taking up only one or two rinks there would be plenty of room to make use of a spare rink. This is not something that is rigidly defined or included in the rules – just ask a member if you are in any doubt.

### **Club “Jumbles”**

The term Jumbles very loosely describes the various club sessions which take place on two days of the week, although in practice they are a little different. The Jumbles idea expresses the fact that in one way or other names are drawn at random.

**Saturday Jumbles:** this is the purest form of the random draw, since there are three games in the afternoon, with teams and team positions decided by chance for each game. Players score points according to their team total for each game, and the winner at the end of the afternoon may go home with a bag of sweets to celebrate. There is a short tea break between Rounds 2& 3. Saturday Jumbles usually start at 2pm but see note below.

**Monday Shield:** for this evening session we make up teams by choosing the skips and then allocating the remaining players among the teams by drawing lots. There is just one match (15 ends), and players’ scores (the team total) are recorded each time. At the end of the season the six leading players on aggregate contest a Final. The Monday Shield usually starts at 18.15 but again see note below:

**Note:** For the Saturday and Monday sessions we ask that players arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the session, so that the draw for teams can take place ready for a prompt start. If you are delayed but do intend to reach the club before the start, please phone to let the duty person know that you are on the way.

### **League Matches**

The Club plays in three different leagues: The Knights (Mixed), Collins & Shipley (Ladies) and The West Tyne (Mixed – we have two teams competing in 2026). These are noted on the website, and the relevant team sheets for League and Cup matches are posted up on a board on the back wall of the main hall of the clubhouse. The system is simply that you put your name down on the “for selection” sheets (which show dates up to ten weeks in advance), and then check the team sheets in the week before the match to see if you are playing, and in what position. (We do also circulate team selections by email.) If you are chosen as a reserve, it is expected that you attend home games, ready to play if necessary; there is no need to travel to away games, but you should be ready in case someone calls off at short notice. We encourage ALL members to play so do not be shy.

For away matches team members make up an informal Rota for providing transport – please add your availability whenever you can. This does not mean you would be driving each time; it simply provides options. This year we are operating a flat fee system of £5 per journey.

It is worth noting that while teams for league games are naturally chosen on merit, to try to win the match, there will always be scope for new bowlers to be given a game, especially in the West Tyne League. This applies even more to friendlies, where we try simply to ensure a balanced all-round team, and where less experienced players are given precedence in team selection.

### **Friendly Matches**

Friendly matches (*men's and mixed*) are advertised on the board on the back (long) wall of the clubhouse. The one or two *ladies'* friendlies are noted inside the ladies' locker room.

The system for noting availability and advertising teams is the same as that for league games. If in any doubt at all, please ring the Men's or Ladies' Match Secretary or the club Secretary.

An extra item here involves catering requirements for home matches, which usually involve a "pooled tea" in which each member of each home rink provides one category of food (sandwiches, cake, etc.). This is shown on the sheet, and you should aim to bring sufficient for your own rink. The number of players will either be eight or (usually) six, depending on the format for the match in question.

At friendlies there is always a raffle, with the home team providing the prizes. An occasional contribution to prizes is normal.

### **Club Competitions**

We hold various knock-out competitions and one-day tournaments for members throughout the season. Entry forms and fuller details are available on the board behind the desk in the hallway; after entries have finished, the draw and results for each round of the knock-out events are found in the same place.

For most Club Competitions there is a cutoff date for entry, usually early May and this is noted on the entry sheets.

New members might well be interested in the *Inch Trophy* (for those who have never won a singles competition outdoors).

### **Trophy Competitions**

There are some Club Trophy Competitions noted in the fixture list where we really need to know who is going to play ahead of the play date viz:

Ambrose Hunter Triples,

Jackie James Pairs

Glenwright Trophy

Ladies v Gentleman end of season/President v Ladies' Captain finale

A list will be put up in the Club House, as for league and friendly matches, for members to indicate their interest in competing.

### **Dress Code**

We try to be as relaxed as possible on the green while adhering to the long traditions of bowls, which stipulated a white top with grey (or in some clubs, white) below the waist.

**Club Informal Dress:** This is a white top with grey below the waist - the make or style of the clothes is not crucial. This is the outfit worn for Jumbles sessions, one-day tournaments within the club, and for the latter stages of club competitions.

**Team Dress:** For league and (external) Cup competitions, as well as most of the friendly matches, we wear special sports tops. These club shirts are provided by an external supplier. We sell them at cost price and have a good range in stock. The Treasurer will be able to supply you with a club shirt on request.

For **friendly** matches against other clubs the dress code varies, often depending on the traditions and nature of the opposition. The style of outfit for each match is noted on the team selection sheet. However, as noted above, we always aim to be as flexible as possible, and you should not worry about the styles of dress at this point.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Phone**

The phone numbers for Club officers are given on the fixture list and website. Members' phone numbers are available within the club. We try to keep to a minimum the amount of personal data available even to other members. We also do all we can to check that you are happy with the arrangements made. If you ever feel that we are not being sufficiently careful with your data, please contact the Secretary to raise the issue.

### **Refreshments**

The fridge in the hall has a selection of soft drinks. Please feel free to help yourself, putting the appropriate cost in the honesty PIG on the fridge. Under the terms of the Club's foundation, we are unable to sell alcohol on the premises, but this does not exclude the *consumption* of alcohol. However, by tradition this is limited to social events, which are often advertised as BYOB.

### **Smoking**

Naturally, there is a no-smoking policy in the clubhouse. No bowls clubs allow smoking on the green these days, and most clubs do not allow it around the green either. We do not have a complete ban in the grounds, but simply ask for discretion if anyone does feel the need to smoke while on the premises.

### **Costs**

Once fees have been paid there are few additional costs in terms of payment to the club. One or two club competitions have a 50p charge for catering, and there is also a £1 fee for the Saturday Jumbles sessions (to cover the costs of refreshments and some small prizes). Travel costs for away matches were mentioned above.

Other minor fund-raising activities such as the Domino ticket on Saturdays, or various raffles, may also tempt you. A larger event, with correspondingly larger prizes is the 100 Club, which requires a £12 stake per year, with twelve monthly draws and the chance to win £20, £10 or £5 in each one. This scheme is run by Jean Allen who would be incredibly pleased to move towards completing the maximum 100 members - as would the Treasurer! We also hold various fund-raising events from time to time at the club house,

## **Mentors**

New bowlers may wish to follow up the idea whereby they can be allocated to an existing member who is not only a decent bowler but also keen to pass on information about the club and the game. This would extend to having practice matches on a one-to-one basis, set up between the two (or more) people involved. This is in addition to more formal coaching, which is available from any of our three qualified coaches.

## **Volunteer Duties**

Like any club of this nature, we rely entirely on the input of members. This involves various jobs at various times, some of them regular and ongoing, others sporadic or complete one-offs. Please do consider if you could lend a hand at any of these things as you hear of them. Obvious areas include:

- Catering and kitchen duties
- Helping set up the green for matches
- Tidying the grounds and building in autumn and spring
- Cleaning (clubhouse, toilets, etc.) or decoration

If you have any particular expertise, whether it be accountancy, painting, web design, general DIY skills or woodwork, please do let us know, so that we can make use of your skills as required.

## **Car Parking**

When approaching the Club from the north side (St Wilfrid's Road end) there is 4-hour parking on the left-hand side just past the junction with St Georges Road and this extends to just short of the first turning left south of the club. There is then further unlimited parking on some of the streets off Elvaston Road south of that junction, but we do ask that you ensure you do not restrict any vehicular access to any driveways.

We try to avoid parking on St Georges Road.

## **Subscriptions:**

**£150.00 a year** but if you are a 'New to Bowls' member there is a reduced subscription for the first year of £75.

## **Carpet Bowls**

During the Winter Months October to March inclusive, we operate a Carpet Bowls session on Saturday afternoons with 3 Carpets available. There is a sessional charge of £3.00.

## **Indoor Bowls**

Also, during the winter many members play indoor bowls at West Denton. Indoor bowls is played on a carpet but is the same size as outdoors and a highly skillful game. Just ask the secretary if you are interested.