

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

GREAT HOLLANDS BOWLS CLUB

Sunday 4th February 2024 10:00 at the Clubhouse

Attendees: Full Members (with voting rights): 42 of 74 Social Members: 17 of 33

- 1. Meeting Opened:** The Annual General Meeting was opened at 10:00 by Lorraine in the Chair. Members were welcomed and reminded that the sign-in sheets at the door should be completed and that extra hard copies of all the documents to be discussed were available. Lorraine extended her appreciation to members continuing in Club roles and on committees, and also to those who are standing down, for their hard work and dedication this past year. Nominations for the vacant positions were extremely disappointing and lack of volunteers might put the Club in jeopardy. Lorraine hoped that members will step up to safeguard the Club's future.
- 2. Minute's Silence:** Lorraine asked that members join in a minute's silence to remember those we've sadly lost this year: Bob Rhodes (14-March), David Harnden (7-Sept) and Tim Barrett (11-Nov)
- 3. Apologies for Absence:** Apologies had been received in advance from Karen Chapman, Ian Clarke, Gloria & Brian Cooper, Carol & Charlie Drury, Mim Gamble, Carol Hegarty & Trevor Compton, Lesley & Wilf Langer, Neil Lofthouse, Sheila Readings, Jo Sanders and Kevin Merryweather, Sheila & Mike Stickland, Derek Tickner and Jean Williams
- 4. Approval of the Minutes** of the 2023 AGM: Minutes of the AGM held on 5-Feb-23 had previously been made available to members. Eddie Readings proposed and Stuart McMoneagle seconded the acceptance of the minutes and after a show of hands they were duly signed by Lorraine as approved.

5. Reports for 2023:

Executive Committee Reports

President - Olive Bambury : Olive thanked Lorraine for the lead she had taken over the last two years as Chair. The past year has not been without it's challenges but Lorraine has been a stalwart of the Executive Committee. She thanked Sue Richardson for supporting Ken with the role of Treasurer during his period of ill health in the autumn. Additional thanks went to Ray for his hard work arranging fixtures and club games and for printing the diary.

Club Captain - Ray Furnell : Ray explained it had been a difficult year for him personally since sustaining his leg fracture last August but thanked everyone who'd supported him during that time. The Club had a very successful Open Day in May and welcomed a good number of keen new members. Ray encouraged everyone to approach and encourage new people and to support Olive and Steve in their respective roles as Ladies' and Men's Captains.

Clubhouse Manager - Phil Sherman : Phil explained that this year there had been a number of changes in the Clubhouse with associated expenditure namely CCTV, certification for the fixed electrics along with PAT (small appliance) testing, repairs to the roller shutter (hopefully his modification will now stop a repeat of the problem) purchase of the storage bin and several smaller expenditures. Phil explained that family commitments mean he's not able to continue in the role but will support the new Clubhouse Manager by staying on the Management Committee. He encouraged members to put their names down regardless of their skill levels and confirmed that Social members are welcome too. Phil extended thanks to John Hills who previously and steadfastly carried out the role over many years to the benefit of the Club.

Treasurer - Ken Perrett

The end of year accounts had previously been made available to all members. Ken reported that last year the Club's income rose in line with the increase in membership (106 members at the end of the season) giving a healthy income of £26.5K and a small deficit of £832. A bank total of £19.5K plus the Covid Grant of £9,050 gives the Club a net worth of some £28K. Ken confirmed that after seven years in the Treasurer's role he would be stepping down. He thanked Sue Richardson for the support she'd given him when he'd been unwell.

Acceptance of Accounts : All questions from the floor having been answered, Lorraine proposed the acceptance of the accounts. David Horton proposed and Terry Sharmer seconded the proposal and the accounts were formally accepted by a show of hands.

Ken expanded on the Addendum to Accounts (as notified to members in email of 22-Jan): On 8th January he'd received statements from Bracknell Town Council relating to electricity used from 1-Mar-23 to 29-Aug-23. SSE are consistently late with their invoicing which is why the period relates to last year. The electricity meter linked to the BTC account is in the Clubhouse (ladies loo). The workshop adjacent to the Clubhouse has its own meter which monitors usage by the works team. The total bill (i.e. our use plus their use) for the stated period was £8K. After applying the established algorithm our allocation is £5K.

Previously BTC had an EV charging point connected to our side of the meter and this was only removed on 8- Sept-23, i.e. after the date of these charges. BTC have separately estimated their use of the EV charging point and deducted that from our gross share of the cost. We had evidenced a private vehicle using the charging point which is concerning.

As a Club we have refused to pay the bill. The Executive Committee have challenged the figures as SSE claim that we have used an average of 60.6 kWh per day. In the period 1-Mar to 8-June-23 they claim the average use was 79.6 kWh which is twice as much as we have ever used at any time over the last 5 years. BTC are being supportive, are investigating the charges and have also challenged SSE whose response so far is that no faults have been reported. At present we have refused to pay the bill as our disagreement is with the amount of power they say we've used and **not** the price (at the business rate) per kWh.

The Executive Committee had discussed this at length and its impact on the Club in respect of the uncertainty about the Club's future (given the poor response to nominations), the uncertainty about the amount the Club will end up paying (as a precautionary measure the new shirts project had been put on hold), and the need to provide a stable basis for the Club to continue operating.

The Executive Committee acknowledged that a new electricity contract with a different supplier, starting 1-Feb-24 at half the price charged during 2023, is a positive as is the fact that the Club has assets of over £28K at 30-Sept-23. However, a provision will need to be made in the general account to cover settlement of the bill whatever the final outcome of us challenging our apportionment. The Executive Committee put to the floor that one way forward could be using part of the Covid Grant to offset this electricity cost and/or any other such exceptional bills in the future.

Discussion ensued and strong opinions were expressed. Several members had understood that the Covid Grant was to be used for the improvement, development and growth of the Club and that it should **not** be used to shore up the general account. Suggestions were muted that i) an extra level of charging for members who attend social events over the winter be reinstated and/or the existing charges be increased to generate a steady income stream, ii) that any future expenditure to improve the Clubhouse be paid from the Covid Grant and not the general account, iii) that membership fees be increased incrementally every year to avoid what could be considered a big jump if fees should stay the same and then go up considerably the next year, and iv) that a reserve of £19K in our general account could be considered high in business terms so settling this electricity bill (whatever the outcome) from the general account would be prudent. Likewise, the next electricity bill covering the period from Sept-23 over the winter period (and again at the inflated electricity rate) should be paid from this account.

Ken reiterated that when the Club was awarded the Covid Grant the £9,050 was set up as a separate fund in a new account. At that time the stipulation was made that agreement be sought **from full members by a vote at the AGM** (or EGM) on how it should be spent ... BUT it could be used for ANY purpose AS LONG AS agreed by a vote at an AGM (or EGM).

In response to a suggestion from the floor, i.e. that before any further discussion on finances took place the decision on membership fees should be finalised, the following proposal was put to members :

Membership Fees - Proposal by the Executive Committee that in order to give stability to the Club (by encouraging new membership and retaining existing members), for the forthcoming season the Club maintains the subscriptions at the current rate, i.e. Bowling membership £120 and Social membership £30.

A majority show of hands of members entitled to a vote (9 against) agreed the motion of keeping the fees as they were in 2023.

A separate vote was subsequently undertaken on the following : to accept the motion that the electricity bill (when eventually agreed, plus any further such bills) should be paid from the general account. A majority show of hands of members entitled to a vote agreed the motion to pay these bill(s) from the general account.

Club Reports: Lorraine invited those holding Club positions to present their reports, thanking them on behalf of the Executive Committee and Club members for the work they have done. A summary of each report :

Bar Manager - Linda Stone

Thanks went to the bar staff: Angie, Eddie, George, Irene, Karen, Mike, Roy, Sheila and Stewart, and to Neil for maintaining the stock (Peroni offered now in addition to Fosters) and for seeking out best deals on spirits. Thanks given to Carolyn for controlling the honesty bar, £500+! No price increases envisaged in the short term but costs are being monitored constantly. A profit of over £5,400!

Competitions Secretary - Sue Richardson

Entries will be organised differently this year - sign-up sheets will be available in the Clubhouse to simplify admin of the entry charges. A new memorial mixed singles competition, The David Harnden Trophy, will be run for each season's new bowlers - our more experienced bowlers are asked please to offer to mark the early rounds.

County Club Reps - Carolyn Lofthouse and David Horton

Carolyn congratulated the ladies on their success in the TVL League last season - they won Div 2 and will play in Div 1 this year. The ladies calendar is available on the noticeboard and online where the draw for every competition is also published. As usual, the first competition is the Fours starting 17-May-24. This year results will need to be given to Lynn Mockett of Windsor & Eton, the newly appointed Assistant Competition Secretary. This year there won't be any Zone Reps so Carolyn no longer holds a position on the Exec. Closing date for playing in any County match is 15-April and the first 5 games are available to view online. Pangbourne away is the first match for our Top Club ladies. Sheila Stickland replaces Angie as our County Secretary.

Carolyn and David attended the County AGM on 26-Nov-23 and a presentation of the new IT system - already used by Wiltshire and Surrey. It's expected that clubs will be able to access an online demonstration though there has been some delay. When rolled out, the new County data base will allow players to easily find out who their opponents are and how to contact them which has been problematic in the past.

David congratulated the gents who had reached the quarter finals in County competitions. Three of our Club bowlers have county caps with the opportunity to be selected as seniors and for president representation. David encouraged other gents to chat to him to find out more. The Kennett League team will remain in Div 2 but not such good news was our relegation from KLV Div 2 Central East. David encouraged more gents, regardless of experience, to please put their names on the league sheets.

Ladies' Chair - Rita Hills (read by Liz Markham)

Rita congratulated the ladies who participated in the TVL League - winning Div 2 and promotion to Div 1 was a fantastic achievement. It was sad that we only had enough ladies for one team instead of two but thanks goes to Rose Reason who worked so hard as our Ladies' Captain. The ladies pre season coffee morning was well attended, fees paid and the tea rota distributed. The ladies and the Social Committee catered for the Open Day, the spring clean weekend, club competitions and Finals weekend. The same standard of hygiene in the kitchen was maintained throughout the season. Rita wished Jose well as she takes over the position of Ladies Chair and hoped that she would be well supported. On a personal note, Rita thanked all Club members for their cards, good wishes, love and support shown to both her and John during what is a very challenging time for them both ... "Keep Bowling"!

Match Secretary - Ray Furnell

Ray said it had been a rather trying year for the Club fixtures-wise. A number of clubs had cancelled but we gained one or two others. Problems with encouraging members to sign up to friendly games, to travel away, and also with other clubs cancelling due to lack of numbers, persisted. Overall we won as many games as we lost. Information for the new diaries is nearly complete and they should be available at the beginning of March and hopefully in a new, slightly larger (and easier to read!) format. Ray hoped to fill any gaps with Club games which will encourage more of our new members to sign up and should help to increase the bar revenue. Ray supported David Horton in encouraging the gents to sign up for both the KLV and Kennet League as numbers are low so far. 40th Anniversary pens are still available for any member who missed out. On a more worrying note, Ray said he'd squashed a rumour from Palmer Park who had apparently heard that our Club had folded. He put them straight in no uncertain terms!

Social Committee - Barbara Harris

Barbara said it had been a very busy year and, aside from supporting the regular annual Club events, the Social Committee had organised the King's Coronation party and our 40th Anniversary celebrations. Club funds had been boosted by the monies raised as had the Bracknell Foodbank (The Trussell Trust), the Club's chosen charity. A magnificent total of £1,200 had been raised for Macmillan Cancer Support from two events - the Coffee Morning and the Club day that marked the end of the season. All the Social Committee members will be standing down after two years in post and Barbara extended her thanks to each of them: Angie, Irene, Linda, and Wendy, Roy for the music, and Ray and George too for their support.

6. Elections to the Executive Committee : Lorraine reiterated that the response to fill Club positions had been disappointing and there had only been two nominations for the Executive Committee prior to the AGM. These were Olive Bambury to continue to stand as President (proposed by Sue Richardson and seconded by Lorraine Capon) and Ray Furnell to continue to stand as Club Captain (proposed by Angie Sherfield, seconded by Jose Chippendale). Both positions were accepted by a show of hands.

Clubhouse Manager : Ian Clarke had put himself forward subject to approval and was proposed by David Horton, seconded by George Harris and accepted by a show of hands.

Treasurer : Brian Taylor, who joined the Club in 2023, had put himself forward subject to approval and was proposed by Ray Furnell, seconded by Gareth Jenkins and accepted by a show of hands.

Chairperson : Jose Chippendale put herself forward and was proposed by Terry Harmer, seconded by Steve Daniels and accepted by a show of hands.

Club Secretary : Ray said that if someone would take on the role of the Club Captaincy, then he'd be prepared to take on the Club Secretary role. Eddie Readings put himself forward for Club Captain and was proposed by Terry Harmer, seconded by Mike Brown and accepted by a show of hands. Subsequently Ray was proposed as Club Secretary by Eddie, seconded by Una Cripps and accepted by a show of hands.

To confirm: Chairperson - Jose Chippendale (aided and supported by Mary Thomas)

Club Captain - Eddie Readings (aided and supported by Terry Harmer)

Club Secretary - Ray Furnell

Clubhouse Manager - Ian Clarke

President - Olive Bambury

Treasurer - Brian Taylor

Elections to other Club positions (all approved by a show of hands)

Accounts Examiners (2)	Gareth Jenkins and Allen Tyler proposer Roy Williams & seconder Chris Hynds (& vice versa)
Bar Manager	Linda Stone proposer Angie Sherfield & seconder Irene Bradley
Child & Vulnerable	Steve Daniels
Adult Protection Officer	proposer Roy Williams & seconder David Horton
Club Development Officer	OPEN
Competitions Secretary	Sue Richardson and Karen Chapman proposer Sheila Stickland & seconder Mike S (& vice versa)
First Aiders (2)	Steve Daniels and Roy Williams proposer George Harris & seconder Ian Clarke (& vice versa)
Food Hygiene Officer	OPEN <i>see '7' Club Rules</i>
Match Secretary	Ray Furnell proposer Jose Chippendale & seconder Linda Stone
Welfare Officer	OPEN

Thanks extended to Gareth Jenkins who agreed to continue to maintain the website.

Elections to Club Committees

Clubhouse Management Committee (6 posts): Chris Hynds, Steve Daniels, Terry Harmer, Angie Sherfield, Phil Sherman and Roy Williams

Selection Committee: Club Captain (now Eddie Readings), Ladies' Captain (Olive Bambury), Men's Captain (Steve Daniels) plus 2 other committee members -

- i) Sheila Lee - proposer Linda Stone, seconder Irene Bradley
- ii) Terry Harmer - proposer Eddie Readings, seconder Roy Williams

Social Committee: Ian Clarke was the only nominee. Lorraine expressed concerns that without a Social Committee there will be no extra activities nor support for Club days plus a potential loss of bar revenue. The new Exec will need to address this asap.

7. Proposal to accept the new Constitution & the new Club Rules

Lorraine clarified RCBBA advised us last year that our constitution contained too many items which were effectively rules, and not enough detail pertaining to how our Club is constituted. This rendered the document ineffective in protecting Club members but also cumbersome in that every time we wanted to make a change to what were effectively 'rules' it was required to be done at an AGM (or EGM). Should Bowls England make any global changes or amendments to their constitution (the model we have adopted and adapted for our Club) then these will simply be issued as appendices. Any changes The Executive Committee want to make in the future to the detail pertaining specifically to our Club will still need to be made at an AGM (or EGM). Any changes to The Rules can be made to benefit Club members at Exec level. **Accepting the New Constitution** Proposed by Jose Chippendale, seconded by Eddie Readings and duly accepted by a show of hands.

Accepting the New Club Rules

One query on the Rules was raised by Judith Cooke-Sanderson. Under Club Positions there was an error i.e. *Kitchen & Hygiene Officer*. This should read: **Food** Hygiene Officer and be followed by ... is required to implement the current Food Hygiene Regulations for the kitchen, bar and club events (current Level 2 Food **Hygiene** Certificate). Subject to this change being made a proposal to accept the Rules was made by George Harris, seconded by Sue Richardson and duly accepted by a show of hands.

8. Any Other Business

Charities for 2024: It was proposed that as we'd been very successful with our support for Macmillan in 2023 we should keep them as our main fundraising focus. Proposer Sheila Lee, seconder Jose Chippendale and approved by a show of hands.

Date of the next AGM: Sunday 9th February 2025

- 9. The AGM closes**: Lorraine hoped that the new club shirt and defibrillator projects, currently on hold because of the financial uncertainty, would recontinue under the new Executive. Ray Furnell thanked John Treanor for his dedication to training new bowlers over many years and presented a gift to show the Club's appreciation of all he's done. Una Cripps was invited to say a few words about David Harnden and she expressed thanks to his family for their kind cash donation. A toast was raised to David and drinks were enjoyed after the meeting which formally **closed at midday**.