

# ENGLISH CARPET BOWLS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of meeting of the English Carpet Bowls Association held on 21st September 2019  
at the Holiday Inn, Rotherham

Present: Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and representatives from Bedfordshire, Essex, Norfolk, Northumberland, Suffolk and Sunderland

**1. Apologies for absence**

Cambridgeshire and Durham

**2. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

**3. Matters Arising**

**(a) Development of Carpet Bowls**

Suffolk reported that they had received an approach to help set up 2 new clubs via Active Suffolk, part of Active Partnerships which helps promote active lifestyles. So far they have helped obtain equipment for a new club in Laxfield and provided them with a demonstration.

Mike Walker processing interest from a lady from Liverpool regarding carpet bowls, equipment has been provided and feedback expected.

**(b) Website**

None

**4. Correspondence**

None

**5. Chairman's Report**

None

**6. Secretary's Report**

None

**7. Treasurer's Report**

This year's Festival of Bowls yielded a surplus of £2260. This figure is down on the last couple of years owing to a lack of overseas visitors.

**8. Referee's Report**

None

**9. Child Protection Officer's Report**

None

**10. Competitions**

**National Championship**

The event will move back to a 15 mat format, rather than using just 12 mats, Team captains are asked to hand in their team sheets on Friday. Those teams who will be short are asked to provide a full schedule including the names of players scheduled to fill in the places in their short blocks.

**Festival of Bowls**

Mike Walker reported that there has been no interest from Norway for next year's Festival and that he will be releasing the places currently being held.

**Champion of Champions**

**Date 6-7th June at Stanley Bowls Centre, Durham**

Although the dress code is set out in the playing programme, it was noted that there were some players at this year's event, did not meet that code, although this was as a result of having to stand in for absent players at the last moment. The reminder of the code will be made more prominent on the programme in future.

**New Zealand report by Neil Jolly** (separate sheet)

**11. Any Other Business**

Since players in the Northern Counties are affiliated to their counties personally rather than via their clubs, as is the practice in the Eastern Counties, it was thought that there needed to be further clarification with regard to who is eligible to compete in the ECBA Triples and Rinks competitions. In future the entry forms will make this clear.

Mike Walker reported that Bedfordshire are unlikely to have a county squad in 2020 owing to a shortage of players willing to commit to playing for the county and a reluctance of anyone to take on the role of county captain at the present time.

**12. Date of Next Meeting**

11th January 2020 @ 12noon

## Report on NZ trip for ECBA

**Background:** The story starts in May18, when I kept in touch with some members of the NZ team following their visit to the UK. With the NZ team planning to return to the UK in 2022, we spoke about the possibility of us doing something in NZ in 2020. If that was going to happen, we needed to play their version of the game. Through our contacts Jason Ellis & I paid for three carpets & jacks to be flown over. Around the same time in July18, one of our contacts said that he'd rented a house for their 2019 Nationals, he had two rooms he was looking to fill, would we be interested? We accepted & from there, we were also offered accommodation for before & after the event, then Trevor & Linda Rayner said they would bowl with us in the triples & fours.

**Nationals:** That takes us to the start of June19 when we flew to NZ, into Auckland airport, picked up the hire car & drove to Hamilton to stay a few days with Teri Anderson & her family. We took the opportunity to get some practice in & attended one of their club nights. The hall we practiced in had 21 mats down, a small production studio & an overhead camera for live-streaming purposes.

We then drove to Rotorua to the rental house, where we were staying with five other bowlers. The Nationals was over 8 days, singles (first two days), then pairs, triples & fours. The main Open events run alongside the Masters events (for over 60s), there were 300 singles in the open event & nearly 200 in the Masters, increasing to 400 bowlers in the open fours event. The Arena had eighty mats, split into lettered & numbered zones. You play four group qualifying games & you have to be a group winner or win 3 games to get through to the second day knockout games. Whilst we didn't qualify in the singles, pairs or triples, we did win some games. We then won three fours games to qualify, but we were knocked out in the last 32 by the eventual winners.

Outside of the main bowling events, the NZ Executive organised a quiz night & a District Challenge event on another night. That involved four bowlers in a triple playing four ends, rotating positions (reserve, lead, second, skip), with fun rule changes. We filled into a team & as a gimmick they allowed us to put a bar stool on the mat as a centre block. We managed to win one game, but the highlight was the whole hall singing "Swing Lo Sweet Chariot" whilst we were playing. This also happened when we were out in Rotorua for dinner one night. Generally we were made to feel very welcome & so many people spoke to us & wanted to know about the UK game & our time in NZ. The NZ bowling community is so friendly & very passionate about their game.

**International Game:** As well as NZ & the UK, the game is also played in Australia. The NZ mat is 22ft by 6ft, very thin & does not have a centre block, the jack is slightly smaller & lighter. Given the speed of the mat, most bowlers don't stand up to bowl, but play of one knee or two. The Australian mat is the same size as ours, they also have no centre block & the bowls they use are slightly bigger. From what I've seen most bowlers there have a stand up stance. Currently every two years, NZ play Australia in a Test Match, which has been going since 1975, 7 men, 7 women playing singles, pairs, triples & fours over three days on a compromise length mat of around 26ft.

I think that the different games can learn from each other.

By way of an example, at the NZ Nationals, there are **no drawn games**, if you are level after the last end, another end is played, which adds excitement & drama to those games. Why don't we consider introducing the playing out of drawn games to our Nationals & Champion of Champion events? If a potential objection to this is that it might add extra time on to the day, why not consider reducing the games to eight ends to compensate?

In NZ, **live-streaming** of events on Facebook is getting more popular. It's progressed from using mobile phones to static & roving cameras. At recent events, they've also had bowlers doing commentary & on-screen graphics showing the score. At the recent Test Match between NZ & Aus, they employed a broadcasting company who usually do speedway events to livestream the event on Facebook & that footage is now on the NZ Bowls Youtube site. Trevor Rayner livestreamed the Eng v NZ games at Potters. Someone in our game might know someone who can assist with cameras to livestream at the Nationals or Champion of Champion events?

Finally, having played the NZ game & watched it played at the highest level, there is one thing we could do to make our game more exciting. Get rid of the **centre block**. It would open up so much more variety of shot making & jack movement. It would prevent ends of bowls on slower mats being over early on because short woods & blockers result in the losing team sometimes literally having no shot to play.

Why not invite bowlers/ counties to play some games without the centre block & obtain feedback?

**The Future:** We took the opportunity to speak with various people whilst we were over there, including Nigel Warnes, who is the President of the NZ Executive. He's really eager to progress the international game, so I would strongly recommend that the ECBA keep in contact with him. I'm conscious that both geography & finance could be potential blockers (pardon the bowls pun), but when we all started bowling, who would have thought that our game would ever have an international flavour too it. The last couple of years have proved what is possible, so there is something to build on & progress our game.

### **ACTION POINTS FOR THE ECBA**

1. Consider the introduction of playing out drawn games at our Nationals & Champion of Champion Events. ECBA to ask their County Delegates to seek feedback on this from their bowlers & report back to the ECBA for a decision to be made.
2. Consider livestreaming of some games during our ECBA events. ECBA to consider setting up a Facebook page to implement this & other promotion of our game. ECBA via their County Delegates to enquire whether anyone has experience of camera/production work.
3. ECBA via their County Delegates to invite bowlers to play the game within their club/ county without a centre block. Counties could arrange open nights or a competition for bowlers to come & play games without the centre block. ECBA to obtain feedback from their County Delegates on the pros & cons.
4. ECBA to maintain contact with the NZIB Executive, to see if the international game can be progressed & that the English game remains involved.

Neil Jolly