



English Carpet Bowls Association

ENGLISH CARPET BOWLS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the English Carpet Bowls Association held on 20th September 2025

Present: Representatives from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Northumberland, Suffolk and Sunderland

Neil Jolly (Chairman), Pete Cook (Vice Chairman), Paul Daniels (Treasurer)

1. Apologies for absence

Pauline Charleton (Secretary), Peter Wood (Durham), Michael Laydon (Sunderland), Adam Wilson (Sunderland).

2. Minutes of last meeting

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

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Correspondence

We have had an email from the Basque Association of Minority Sports, who are looking to purchase equipment, with a view to running events in 2026. We have responded with details of suppliers, and invited them to get back to us, if we can be of any further help.

5. Chairman's Report

I hope you've all had an enjoyable summer and are now looking forward to the start of the new carpet bowls season.

Since our April meetings, there have been four ECBA events, participated in by bowlers from all of our counties.

ECBA Fours: Thank you to Norfolk who hosted this event at Littleport, with twenty two entries. After a competitive day of bowling, it was the Hertfordshire four of Matt & Emma Thurley and Simon & Amy Missing who were the most consistent team, winning the final 8-2 over the mixed Hertfordshire/ Durham four of Pete & Marilyn Cook, Stephen Templeton and Dave Smith.

Festival of Bowls: Another enjoyable week of bowls at Potters with c100 taking part, including a small party from Norway. Indeed, the main headline of the week was Trond Bekhe from Norway winning his way through to the singles final. That match proved one too many, though, with Adam Wilson (Sunderland) coming through as a worthy winner. It was another Sunderland win in the pairs, with Martin Campbell and Steven Wilson taking an extra end win over Jim Goodrich and Neil Jolly (Suffolk). Lastly in the rinks, it was Sally and Jim Goodrich, Ally Hobbs and Neil Jolly (Suffolk) who took the title, beating Paul and Sue Cousins, David Clemmet and Angela Newling (Suffolk/ Cambridgeshire) in the final.

Champion of Champions: Over a weekend of high quality bowls, the wins were shared between Durham and Hertfordshire. Pete Cook (Hertfordshire) won the singles, Ross and Ian Clark (Durham) successfully retained the pairs, Ryan Meldrum, Nathan and Wayne McMann (Durham) won the triples and, Amy and Simon Missing, Emma and Matt Thurley (Hertfordshire) winning the rinks, backing up their ECBA Fours win. Durham won the team event, reflecting their consistency over the weekend, two firsts and two seconds in the events.

Thank you to Shirley Wood and her Durham colleagues who assisted with the fundraisers.

ECBA Triples: Thank you to Durham, who hosted this event. Entry numbers were very low, and congratulations to the winning triple of Kevin Hutchinson, Aiden Turnes and Wayne McMann.

Today is the opportunity for us to look ahead to the events that we have taking place over the next twelve months and put our plans in place to ensure they all run smoothly.

6. Secretary's Report

Nothing to report.

7. Treasurer's Report

A copy of the most up-to-date Balance Sheet had been circulated to the representatives, showing a £3300 deficit for the year-to-date, having just paid out the Nationals Travel Subsidies to the counties, which this year totalled £5844.

We were able to raise £460 through the sale of the equipment we obtained at the end of last year, which would otherwise have been dumped. The equipment went primarily to two brand-new clubs in Suffolk.

8. Development Officer's report: Michael Laydon (North) / Stephen Roe (South)

Stephen reported on the work he has been doing:

Cambridgeshire

Norman Cross, my own club, carried out a leaflet drop and from that, in the last eight weeks, we have had seven new members that have all returned.

North Cambs – I have been looking at clubs that have closed since the pandemic or have left the league. Unfortunately, most of those that closed have sold their carpets and equipment.

There are a couple of old clubs, where carpets and equipment still exist, and during this season looking at having a family day at the weekend at each of the venues.

Two clubs that still play but not in the league, one I have organised a friendly with, so we can have a chat to their members to see if they want to rejoin the league.

The other in serious difficulty, down to five players, so organising an open afternoon next Sunday to try and get new members for them.

I am looking at parts of Peterborough which never had carpet bowls in their area.

In the Huntingdonshire district council area, I have found eight clubs where carpet bowls is played, and will be visiting these clubs to assess if a league might be formed.

Fenland District have three clubs that I have located, and I will be trying to get them interested in competitions, and to see if they currently play each other.

Lincolnshire: South Kesteven

In Colsterworth, where I live, a club has been started up, playing during the daytime.

There are four other clubs in that area, so will be contacting them for friendly matches, and chat to their members to see what interest they have in competitions.

Lincolnshire: North Kesteven

I have located seven places that play carpet bowls, and will be looking to visit them at some point.

Also in Lincolnshire, I have found a couple of other areas that have a handful of clubs.

Rutland

Not including North Luffenham, who already play in the North Cambs league, there are four active clubs located so far. I have already visited a couple, as they were active through the summer. Both play on a social basis, both have around 20 to 25 members. The aim is to visit the others and try and build interest in organising competitive competitions amongst them.

Other Counties

Moving forward I will be looking into clubs in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, North Northamptonshire, and Derbyshire.

9. Child Protection Officer's Report

Nothing to report.

10. Competitions

a) Triples (14 September 2025) report

Disappointingly, there were only 6 entries for the event, all from Durham and Sunderland, it seems like there was not a great deal of communication, to let bowlers know that the event was taking place, with the bottleneck possibly being clubs not passing details on to members.

Craig Hearn (Hertfordshire) suggested setting up an ECBA Facebook page, as a way of directly reaching bowlers directly. Pete Cook agreed to take on that task.

Northumberland reported that travel was a problem for many of their older players, and that as a county, they are struggling to find a suitable, and affordable venue for their own events.

It was also suggested that the date for the event might be a problem, coming as it does at the end of the outdoor bowls season.

Neil Jolly suggested that we need to review the Triples and Rinks going forward, and what might be changed to make the events more attractive.

b) National Championships (24 – 27 October)

The programme for the event will be sent out with the Minutes.

All counties present at the meeting reported that they have full teams of 24 players.

Counties were reminded that they will need to provide referees for their assigned sessions, which will be the one on each day, where they are sitting out. The refereeing schedule will be highlighted in the programme.

In the absence of a National Referee, following Mick Watkins stepping down from the role, in the event of any issues, the point of contact will be the Event Controller, who is Neil Jolly.

The counties were reminded to provide £30 worth of prizes for the raffle, and Cambridgeshire were thanked for running it this year.

c) Rinks (April 2026 Host: Sunderland)

Although a date has not yet been set, it is hoped to arrange it to take place in conjunction with next year's AGM. The plan is therefore to have the AGM at Rotherham, as usual, on Saturday, 18th April, with the Rinks being held at Stanley on Sunday, 19th. Neil Jolly will speak with Michael Laydon, to agree a date and venue and then the ECBA Secretary about the AGM hotel booking.

d) Festival of Bowls (27 Apr – 1 May'26)

We already have 104 booked in at Potters, including 12 places being held for the Norwegian contingent.

By way of comparison, we had 112 taking part last year. We will send the event flyer and entry form out with these Minutes and advertise again at the start of 2026.

e) **Champion of Champions (June'26)**

The date has yet to be confirmed, but should be on the weekend of 6th - 7th June, at Stanley, as normal. Neil Jolly will speak with Michael Laydon to arrange this.

f) **Triples (September 2026 Host: Essex)**

No date or venue yet confirmed. Neil Jolly to liaise with Essex to discuss further.

g) **National Championships (2026)**

Potters have been in touch with us about 2026.

The date they have offered is 6th - 9th November 2026, which is a week later than the date we have been used to over the past couple of years, and while we would have preferred to maintain that consistency of date, moving it was not an option available to us. On the price front, there is an increase which was initially an extra £20 per head, but after getting back to them, emphasising this year's increase in numbers, with the return of Bedfordshire, we were able to get a £10 discount on the initial pricing, thus limiting next year's increase to just £10, which is in line with recent year of year increases.

11. Any Other Business

Bowls Development Alliance

Michael Laydon was not present to report, but it is understood that he has made contact with the BDA, Neil will liaise with Michael to arrange a meeting at some point.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Saturday, 7th February 2026 (11am) - online.

The meeting closed at 11.55am.