



English Carpet Bowls Association

ENGLISH CARPET BOWLS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the meeting of the English Carpet Bowls Association
held at Brentwood Hotel, Rotherham on 18th April 2026

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

Prior to the meeting and for the benefit of Lancashire CBA, who were attending for the first time, the Chairman asked all those in attendance to introduce themselves and which county they represented.

1) Apologies for absence

Michael Laydon (Sunderland)

2) Minutes of last meeting

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

3) Matters Arising

None

4) Correspondence

None

5) Chairman's Report

Thank you all for giving up your time and travelling here today.

As we only have one in-person get together a year, it's great to see you all, rather than through the computer screen.

A particularly warm welcome to the representatives of the newly formed Lancashire Carpet Bowls Association. We will cover off their membership application at the AGM, but I felt it right that they should be present at this meeting.

My report starts off with some sad news from last month, the passing of Mick Cook, former captain and county player with Hertfordshire. Mick was a popular bowler in the Eastern Counties bowls scene and this was reflected by the turnout at his funeral earlier this month. Condolences to Pete, his family and Hertfordshire Carpet Bowls Association.

As usual it has been a quiet few months since our last February online meeting, with no ECBA events. However, there have been many communications and arrangements being made towards our upcoming events.

Potters have issued their accommodation paperwork for the November Nationals and as with last year, we will have nine counties taking part. Please ensure that the deposit is paid and accommodation requests returned to Potters in a timely manner.

Before that we have the ECBA Rinks, Festival of Bowls, Champion of Champions & ECBA Triples, we will discuss all of those later in this meeting.

6) Secretary's Report

None

7) Treasurer's Report

There will be a full report on last year's accounts at the AGM

8) Child Protection Officer's Report

None

9) Development Officers' Report

Michael Laydon (North)

Apologies for not being able to attend today but here is an update from my development position.

With Lancashire our new members to the ECBA, I would just like to thank Ian Gill and his squad of wonderful people for making me feel so welcome on my visits whilst working with them.

It's been an absolute pleasure and an honour to help them become our first of many new members to the ECBA.

Currently working closely with Hartlepool/Cleveland – helping them follow in the footsteps of Lancashire.

By 2030 the aim would be to have at least 4 new countries joining the ECBA and of course the Northern League.

Stephen Roe (South)

Cambridgeshire

A summer league has been set up for four Huntingdonshire clubs, while three other clubs have shown little interest in competing now. I will be in contact with these clubs in September reporting on the summer league and try to encourage these clubs to join in a winter league with the other four clubs.

Three open days and evenings in areas in and around Peterborough in May have been planned. Leaflet drops and social media being used for communication.

Lincolnshire

South Kesteven

A meeting has been arranged for five clubs to meet to set up a South Kesteven Carpet Bowls League.

Planning on arranging evenings and Sunday afternoons in a couple of villages to promote Carpet Bowls.

North Kesteven

Planning on visiting the seven clubs that play carpet bowls in early autumn. Hopefully there will be interest for competition and share what is happening in South Kesteven.

Aspirations for Lincolnshire

Michael has been working with Lincoln and District Bowling Club arranging several events promoting Indoor Carpet Bowls.

Once the Kesteven areas have developed along with Lincoln and District Bowling Club, hopefully within three years Lincolnshire Carpet Bowls will be formed.

Other Counties

Carpet Bowls is not played much in the Midland counties of Leicestershire, Nottingham and Derbyshire, where bowls is played indoors, it is usually Short Mat Bowls.

10) Competitions

- a) **ECBA Rinks** (19th April 2026 at Hartlepool Indoor Bowls Centre hosted by Sunderland) 15 teams have entered. Adam Wilson was thanked for his pre event work.

- b) **Festival of Bowls** (27th April - 1st May 2026 at Potters)
Sadly there will be no Norwegian contingent this year. They would have liked to have come, but the flights have altered, meaning that they would have had to fly into either Heathrow or Gatwick, which, along with the coach, would more than double the cost. We remain in contact with them to ensure they have details of next years event.

Despite this, we have actually seen an increase in the number of entries this year, with 130 people joining us.

- c) **Champion of Champions** (6th & 7th June 2026 at Hartlepool Indoor Bowls Centre)
Cambridgeshire, Durham, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Northumberland, Suffolk and Sunderland will all be present as usual. Both Bedfordshire and Lancashire were also invited to send teams and it was made clear that it was not necessary for either county to be fully represented in every discipline. They would have until the middle of May to decide, to allow time for the playing schedule to be drawn up and distributed prior to the event.

If the venue's Wifi is up to the job, Pete Cook will be using his setup to provide live streaming of the event, with commentaries. The App will be tested at the ECBA Rinks tomorrow.

It was advised that venue parking has to be paid for on the Saturday, but is free on the Sunday. There are food and drinks available for sale at the venue.

The Chairman will liaise with Sunderland nearer the date regarding the setting up of the carpets and have a "TV" mat if the streaming App works at the venue.

The counties that won the events last year were reminded to return the main trophies this year. Pete Cook agreed to be Event Controller, as he had the previous year.

- d) **ECBA Triples** (13th September 2026 at Littleport Leisure Centre hosted by Essex)
The entry form has been circulated to all counties and a reminder will be issued nearer the closing date.
- e) **Nationals** (6th - 9th November 2026)
Potters' booking forms have been distributed to all participating counties.

Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, & Suffolk all confirmed that they will have full squads of 24 players, while Northumberland will have 24 plus two reserves, Durham will have 27 and Sunderland 28.

- f) **ECBA Rinks** (2027)
The Chairman advised that this event being hosted by Suffolk, has been booked at Needham Market Community Centre on Sunday 18 April 2027. It was queried whether the event could be held a week later (Sun 25 April), which may encourage additional entries from the Northern counties, for those bowlers playing at the Festival of Bowls the following week. It was thought unlikely that the venue would be available at this late stage, but the question would be asked. Littleport was suggested as a possible alternative venue, but it was felt that you may lose entries from Suffolk and not replace them with the potential northern teams.

11) Any other business

a) **Child Protection**

It was agreed that the role of Child Protection Officer (CPO) should be amended to Safeguarding Officer to better reflect the fact that the Association has a duty of care towards not only children but also vulnerable adults. The wording of the associated policies would be amended accordingly, but there would be no need for any substantive changes to those policies which already refer to both children and vulnerable adults.

A question was asked as to whether a county needs to know the names of any children/ vulnerable adults playing in their clubs/ county. It was advised by the CPO that was not required.

All counties should have their own Safeguarding Policy in place. Suffolk will circulate a copy of their policy to any county that needs to introduce or consider this.

b) Bowls Development Alliance

There was a lengthy discussion around the ECBA's current position as a non-governing body, the history behind this and the actions of many years ago in conjunction with Sport England for the ECBA to be recognised. It was agreed that there was merit in looking into this again and this should start with contacting the Bowls Development Alliance for a preliminary discussion. It was acknowledged that they do provide significant funding to bowls organisations under their umbrella, but the ECBA need to understand what is required of us and what we could potentially get in return.

c) Development

A general discussion was held around the development and in particular, promotion of carpet bowls. It was acknowledged that there is already some excellent recording and live streaming taking place in both Suffolk and Hertfordshire. The latter had this season introduced commentary to their event streaming and this had produced a significant uptake in viewing on both their Facebook and Youtube platforms. It was generally agreed that social media is an area that we need to attack to get carpet bowls out there. We already have an ECBA Facebook page and it was acknowledged that we need to use this more to promote our game. It was put to the meeting that we need the material from the counties on their events (both to promote before and report on after) to make best use of this. Ideally, we should have one individual per county responsible for providing the information and potentially being an Admin person for the page. The Officers agreed to take this discussion away and follow up with an action plan.

d) Potters Reservation Fee?

A question was raised as to why their county had been charged a reservation fee for certain Potters accommodation at this year's Nationals. It was explained that if you request to be in a specific room, i.e.: the same room as last year, Potters do charge a reservation fee for that request. However absent that specific request, no reservation fee should be charged. It was not clear exactly how this had happened or if there had been an error on the part of Potters or the county concerned. The Chairman agreed to raise the point generally with our Potters contact and review from there.

12) Date of next meeting

Provisionally set for 19th September 2026 (11am start, online)

The meeting closed at 13:30.