



# English Carpet Bowls Association

## ENGLISH CARPET BOWLS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the English Carpet Bowls Association held on 7th February 2026

Present: Representatives from Cambridgeshire, Durham, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Northumberland, Suffolk and Sunderland, Neil Jolly (Chairman), Paul Daniels (Treasurer)

### 1. Apologies for absence

Pauline Charleton (Secretary), Pete Cook (Vice Chairman), Rebecca Hearn (CPO)

### 2. Minutes of last meeting

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

### 3. Matters Arising

None

### 4. Correspondence

There was an email from a youth worker in Hertfordshire, who is now in contact with Pete and Rebecca about setting up a club.

New Zealand Indoor Bowls have been in contact asking about the history of carpet bowls in England, Neil will be responding in due course.

### 5. Chairman's Report

Thank you for all attending today's online meeting.

Since our September meeting, we've had our National County Championship at Potters, and this will be discussed and reviewed later. Overall, the competition ran seamlessly, and our thanks go to Paul for his work both before and during the event and to Cambridgeshire for running the raffle.

On the Friday night, the Inter-County Championship was between Sunderland and Suffolk. After some close games and a tense finish, for the first time in its 33 year history, both points and shots were equal. It was decided, absent a rule to cover this scenario, that the trophy be shared. Coming up with a suitable rule will be discussed later in this meeting.

The Championship event took place over Saturday and Sunday, and it was great to see Bedfordshire taking part again, to make up the full complement of nine member counties. For the most part of Day One it was Suffolk and Essex that set the pace, with Hertfordshire and Sunderland scoring good points later on. By the end of Saturday, Suffolk held a nine point lead over both Hertfordshire and Sunderland. As Sunday played out, those three counties remained at the top, but Suffolk's lead could not be breached, and they held on for their eleventh straight title, with Hertfordshire taking the runner-up spot.

Today we will look ahead to our upcoming events and hear from both of our Development Officers, and there are other matters to be discussed before our April meeting and AGM.

### 6. Secretary's Report

Nothing to report.

### 7. Treasurer's Report

We are currently showing a surplus of £1500 for the year to date, and with the financial year closing at the

end of this month, not much will be changing between now and then, so it will be another year of improving finances, which will bring us back to where we were before the pandemic.

## **8. Development Officers**

### **Stephen Roe (South)**

#### **Cambridgeshire**

There is a strong possibility that next season a club in North Cambridgeshire that had previously withdrawn from the league will be rejoining.

Four out of the eight clubs located in the Huntingdonshire area have been visited with the hope that competition between them be organised.

Development in the Peterborough and Fenland District areas is planned.

#### **Lincolnshire**

There are 5 clubs in the South Kesteven area, of which 3 have been visited so far. Once they've all been contacted, the hope is that a league can eventually be organised.

Another seven clubs in North Kesteven have yet to be visited. The plan is to get them organised and then arrange a match between the two districts.

Seven other clubs have been identified in the county so far.

#### **Rutland**

Two of the four clubs in the county have been visited.

#### **Other Counties**

Several clubs have been identified in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and North Northamptonshire, with approaches still to be made.

### **Michael Laydon (North)**

It's good to report that all 3 current Northern Counties have been able to recruit new players. However, all three are aware that there is still a lot of work to be done, due to an aging membership.

#### **Lincolnshire**

No further progress for the time being. The contact details will be passed on to Steve, since it's closer to his area.

#### **Cleveland**

A number of leagues have been identified within the county, and are hopeful that they will move forward with the formation of a county association, perhaps by as soon as the end of this year.

#### **Lancashire**

Lancashire look to be the closest to becoming ECBA's newest members. A friendly with Sunderland was recently organised, they have 4 rinks entered for the Durham's Rinks competition at Fleetwood in March, and they are keen to compete in both the Champions of Champions and the Nationals.

#### **Other Counties**

Discussions also have been had with North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Cumbria and North Yorkshire, as well as West Sussex.

While it's all still some way off, with the possibility of new counties joining the ECBA, it's worth giving some

consideration as to how future events might need to be restructured to allow for increased numbers.

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

Nothing to report.

## **10. Competitions**

### **a) 2025 National Championships: Review**

Following the incident at the Nationals involving an intoxicated non-playing individual who was with the ECBA party, we had been in communication with Potters, and subsequently with the county representatives. The person involved has been banned by Potters from both of their resorts, and we fully support that decision. There were a few other incidents reported to ECBA Officers by bowlers and not directly from Potters. If we had received those reports from Potters, the above incident shows that the ECBA will stand by Potters with any actions or decisions they make.

While clearing up after the event on Sunday evening, it was sadly noticeable how much rubbish had been left behind in the seating areas. Although this is something which is covered in the event programme, the counties were asked to reiterate to their players and supporters that not cleaning up after ourselves does not reflect well on the ECBA. This request will be repeated ahead of this years' event.

The matter of the tied Inter-League match was raised, and the need to introduce a rule to decide what to do should there be a recurrence. The idea was put forward that each county should nominate one of their teams to compete in a single end play-off, on a mat, to be decided at random, on a mat not played on by either team involved, thus providing a suitable climax to the match. There were no other suggestions, but it was asked that the representatives take this idea to their respective counties, to see if there were any other ideas. A new rule would be decided upon at the AGM.

### **b) Rinks (19 April 2026 Host: Sunderland)**

The entry form will be going out with this meeting's minutes. Given that most of the entries will come from the Northern counties, Neil asked that those counties make an extra effort to promote the event.

### **c) Festival of Bowls (27 Apr - 1 May 2026)**

Potters have confirmed that we have 109 bookings at present, very much in line with last year's entry. That does not include the usual group from Norway, who we have not heard from yet, but they do usually contact us fairly late in the day.

### **d) Champion of Champions (June 2026)**

As previously announced, this year's event will be held at Hartlepool.

### **e) Triples (September 2026 Host: Essex)**

Because of the time of year the event is held, the plan is to get an entry form out at the end of March, to catch clubs before the Summer, and then send out a reminder nearer the time.

### **f) National Championships (6-9 November 2026)**

Potters should be getting in touch with the county contacts shortly with their accommodation paperwork.

## **11. Any Other Business**

Pat reported that Northumberland has 52 people lined up to go to the Nationals, so far, and that the county has a new venue for their events.

Sunderland have a Rinks and Pairs competition planned at Hartlepool for the weekend of 18-19 July. An entry form will be out around the time of the AGM.

Pete Cook has set up a Facebook page for ECBA. He has also recently been streaming Hertfordshire matches and events over YouTube, with commentary, with the idea that it can be rolled out to include ECBA events.

The usual notices which need to be made in advance of the AGM will be circulated very shortly.

**12. Date of Next Meeting**

Saturday, 18th April 2026 (including AGM), at the Brentwood Hotel, Rotherham.

The meeting closed at 12.02.