



PONTELAND BOWLING CLUB NEWSLETTER – November 2021



Buenos dias mi amegos,

We hope you are all well and staying safe. I always find this time of year, with the cold and dark nights particularly difficult. It is also more difficult to maintain social contact with our friends and other club members at this time of year, which is important to our all our general well-being. With this in mind can I draw your attention to two social events that will take place in December in the Clubhouse.

- Wednesday 1st December from 10.00am - **Coffee Morning**
- Friday 17th December at 2.00 - **Dotty Dominoes**. Wear something festive, mulled wine, mince pies and sausage rolls included – tickets £5.

Our green volunteer “Green Team” continue with daily maintenance tasks during the winter period, to ensure we all have the best surface to play on next year. A big thankyou goes out to Billy and the whole team for the work they are doing every day.

Our Clubhouse remains open for Members to call in and check notice boards, etc. If you do so, please ensure that the Clubhouse is properly closed with all lights off, etc, when you leave.

Bowls England - the road to Leamington has begun! The Bowls England National Competitions 2022 are now open to enter via their online portal. Whether you want to give yourself a challenge next year, have some competitive fun with friends or simply experience the thrill of winning - these tournaments are a great way to do all three! To encourage more people to enter, they have reduced the price of entry for all National Competitions if you book before Friday 17th December - after that date, prices will return to last season's level. If you are interested get in early.

Following on from the presentation I made regarding the future of Ponteland Bowling Club at the AGM, I intend to give everyone regular updates on the progress the club is making to address the difficulties we currently face.

The first task we face is increasing the membership. We have lost somewhere between 80 and a hundred members in the last eight years. We have to reverse this situation as a priority. Giving accurate figures is difficult as records before Jean Barras took over are not easy to follow. The GPC met on Wednesday and had a busy but very productive session. The following actions were initiated.

- We have been working on the statement that will go on our new website. When we have finalised what this will look like I will share it with everyone.
- Our Website and Facebook page together with our marketing strategy and materials are being reviewed and updated by some very talented people from Astley Signs (thanks to David Redhead for making this available to the club). Their usual clients are - BP, Amazon, Sainsburys etc, – big national and multinational companies. We are in good hands. Jean Barras, Ian Woodrow and Don Burbeck will oversee the upgrades and running the site and Facebook thereafter – though having another lady member of this team would be good. David Redhead will oversee all developments from the business side.

(We somehow have 2 Facebook pages running – 1. **Ponteland Bowls** is the page set up by Peter Kilmister and is the one the club uses. The other **Ponteland Bowling Club** – has posts from members on it but it is not our club page. Does anyone know who set up this second page (set up 28th May 2017) as we would like to have it taken down to avoid confusion)

- We are setting up an induction team who would deliver an agreed program to all new starters. A team consisting of Allison Storey, Bill Howard, Don Burbeck & Carolyn Burbeck, (Ann & Bob Pearson) will meet on Tuesday 30th November to discuss and agree a program that all can deliver in a consistent way.
- The GPC discussed strategies for promoting the club in and around the Ponteland area. We have identified several strategies across numerous locations. When we have agreed our advertising materials, we will need members to help distribute them and promote the club in the area where they live.

The issues we face are not unique to our club. Bowls nationally is suffering from the same issues, fall in membership and fewer individuals volunteering to help run clubs.

If you go to Bowls England on www.bowlsengland.com, choose the **About us** tab and scroll down to **Fit for Future Strategy 2021 to 2026**, you will open up an interesting development plan, which covers all the issues. Here are a few quotes from the document:

- *“We have been a little remote and officious. We have not created an environment where our sport feels able to embrace change. We have operated too much in isolation, rather than leading a culture of togetherness.”*
- “our sport needs to change to ensure it is relevant now and fit for the future”
- “It has highlighted the value people place on their health, social connection and local communities”
- “To promote and develop the sport of bowls across England so it enriches the lives of its participants, connects communities and is in good health for future generations. Growing the numbers of bowls participants is at the heart of our mission. More participants mean healthier, more vibrant clubs which are able to deliver great experiences for their players. Happy playing experiences means more people advocating bowls to non-bowlers. It will mean **more volunteers**”

There is a lot more in the development plan but basically it is about meeting the needs of local communities where fun, social connection and health benefits are very important to maintain a healthy and vibrant club that has a future. Playing bowls socially for fun is as important as playing competitive bowls as this builds a stronger club by generating more members. There needs to be a better balance of what clubs offer. The report also discusses reorganising the structures of clubs to make clubs in their words “Fit for the Future”, I used the words “fit for purpose”. This is so important to Bowls England and the future of bowling, that they are offering help to clubs to change. When I looked on the website applications for support had to be in by September 2021 – so we missed it (or the first round anyway)

Regards

Your Committee