



English Carpet Bowls Association

ENGLISH CARPET BOWLS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the meeting of the English Carpet Bowls Association held at Holiday Inn, Rotherham, on 23rd April 2022 (midday start)

Present: Representatives from Cambridgeshire, Durham, Norfolk, Northumberland, Suffolk and Sunderland

1. Apologies for absence

Bedfordshire, Essex, Hertfordshire and Pauline Charleton

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

3. Matters Arising from previous minutes

None

4. Correspondence

None

5. Chairman's Report

The Chairman thanked all the delegates and his fellow Officers, for their support over the last two years.

6. Secretary's Report

None

7. Treasurer's Report

None

8. Referee's Report

None

9. Child Protection Officer's Report

None

10. Update from Counties (State of Play)

Essex - No report.

Bedfordshire - A few clubs are beginning to play friendly matches, but there is still a great deal of caution in the county, and no rush to return to full competition just yet. Some clubs have lost members and are finding it difficult to fund the cost of hall hire. The plan is to restart county competitions in January 2023, and inter-county and league matches from September 2023.

Cambridgeshire - The North and East Leagues have been played, with 12 clubs (but more teams) competing. They have 30 players available for the county squad. Their Champion of Champions players will be the winners of their competitions from 2020.

Durham - Competitions have been run, and a trials event will be run to determine the players going forward to the Champion of Champions. A full squad is anticipated for the Nationals

Norfolk - North (6 player teams) and South (8 player teams) Leagues are now being played. Their Champion of Champions representatives will be those who qualified for the 2020 event. They will have a full squad of 24 for the Nationals.

Northumberland - A League with 5 teams involved was successfully run over the winter. A Pairs competition has been run with a decent entry, and they will be present at the Champion of Champions. The Northern League (with Durham and Sunderland) was run over the winter, with a revised format.

Suffolk - The Winter Triples League has been completed, with 20 clubs taking part. A Summer League will be starting shortly. All closed competitions have now been completed, with the winners attending the Champion of Champions.

Sunderland - They have not been able to run any competitions, but will have a full squad for the Nationals and will also attend the Champion of Champions..

Hertfordshire - The league was successfully run over the winter, although they are now down to just 8 clubs. All the closed competitions have now been completed, and a team will be sent to the Champion of Champions. They do not anticipate having a full team for the Nationals, but will be competing nonetheless.

11. Competitions

a) Triples & Fours

Fours - 24th April, hosted by Durham. 14 teams have entered.

Triples - 4th September, hosted by Suffolk. Entry forms will be going out around July.

b) Festival of Bowls

9th-13th May, at Potters

This year's numbers will be just over 100, which is down on previous years, owing to the pandemic, with Potters fully booked, and unable to accommodate some who had planned to enter. Rather than having a raffle, an alternative fundraiser will be run across the week.

c) Champion of Champions

4th-5th June, at Stanley

With the exception of Bedfordshire, all counties have confirmed they will be entering.

d) Nationals

4th-7th November, at Potters.

Bedfordshire have confirmed they will not be attending the Nationals this year, as they are not planning to restart county activities until 2023.

Hertfordshire confirmed that they will be short of players and asked for confirmation of the minimum numbers. As discussed at the January 2020 meeting, the minimum number will be 20 players, as previously, but with vacant spots, and those filling in, set according to a fixed template.

Mick Watkins (National Referee) confirmed he would organise the referee rota.

The Inter-League match will go ahead on the Friday night between the Northern League winners and the Eastern county, to be decided at a county competition in September.

The raffle is due to be run by Essex (as per the county rota), with each county as usual asked to provide £25 worth of raffle prizes.

13. Any Other Business

Trevor Tumber asked (by email) why the ECBA's request for recognition by DCMS (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport) was rejected.

The ECBA never sought recognition from the DCMS. The ECBA's only contact with the DCMS was in late 2020, when we sent them our "Return to Play Action Plan". The DCMS reply received was that they were only concerned with team sports, which was a change from what had previously been advised on their website. Sport England's response to us was the same, as team sports were considered as high risk & required greater attention. The advice received by the ECBA was that we should continue to follow Government guidance as far as Covid related regulations. As such, the ECBA continued to issue updated Guidance documents to our member counties, as the Covid Regulations changed.

Norfolk commented that 11 members of their team for the Nationals are singles, but they have only been allotted 6 singles spaces. It was acknowledged that this is a problem for all counties, as Potters only have limited single accommodation available. It would as usual have to be left to the counties to organise as best they can, the accommodation for their attendees.

Hertfordshire referred to Potters now being all-inclusive, raising a potential concern that there might be more drinking, and asked about the ECBA Code of Conduct, and whether it needed to be reviewed.

The Code of Conduct was reviewed and amended in 2018, and now states that “Any County Association, member of an Association or venue host may make a complaint”, where previously only a complaint from a third party was able to start the Complaints/Investigation process. Given that amendment, it was considered that the Code of Conduct still meets our needs. It was noted that Potters would have appropriate procedures in place on site to deal with any potential issues.

Hertfordshire felt that the current Dress Code was too strict and needed to be relaxed so as not to risk excluding potential players and/or deter individuals from entering events. After some discussion, it was agreed that for the ECBA Triples and Fours events, no dress code would be referred to on the competition paperwork, and for the Champion of Champions, the Dress Code would now state ‘smart casual’ as the only requirement. Finally, for the Nationals, the uniform must simply comply with each county’s own dress code requirements.

Norfolk asked if there were any Rule Books available. The previous print run has all been sold, the Rules are available to be downloaded from the ECBA website.

Hertfordshire asked about the possibility of attending in-person meetings remotely. Meeting formats were generally discussed, and it was acknowledged there were clear benefits to in-person meetings, but at the same time, time and money could be saved with online meetings. With the aim of striking a better balance, it was agreed that the January/February and September meetings could certainly continue to be held remotely, but it was important for the Committee and county delegates to meet in person once a year, for the April meeting/ the AGM and that this would continue.

The matter of the Nationals travel allowance was discussed, and it was agreed that Durham, Northumberland and Sunderland would be granted an additional £100 each to go towards the greatly increased cost of coach hire. This would be reviewed again next year.

14. Date of Next Committee Meeting: September 2022 (date to be agreed).

Meeting closed: 1.40pm.