**ETWALL BOWLS CLUB COMMITTEE MEETING**

Held on Thursday 16th October 2025 at 2pm in the Pavilion, Frank Wickham Hall, Etwall.

The meeting was chaired by Dave Dolman.

Members Present

Janet Dolman, Dave Dolman, Graham Hesketh, Tony Higgott, Jackie Fisher, Kath Irvine, Beverley North, Ann Williams, Julian Baker.

Apologies

None.

Minutes of the last meeting

Distributed to all attendees and agreed as being correct.

Matters Arising

None.

Chair update – from Dave Dolman

The background to today’s meeting is different to any other year, and as a committee it is important that we keep up with the growing, and changing, demands of all of our members.

What is different?

* 97 members ;
* Perhaps 20 teams next year;
* Pressure on the green;
* New members in 2025 already making an impact;
* New league bowlers for 2026 already signing up for teams to play in;
* Today’s members have more holidays and are now missing for parts of the season so we need more cover.

This season’s successes by having 6 teams promoted shows how the quality of bowlers is improving and being enhanced with new players, who have been welcomed into many different teams this season. This needs to be encouraged.

From last year’s committee meeting we agreed to try two new ideas: Paul Taylor’s regular Sunday morning competitions, and Open Days to attract new members. Both were resounding successes. They have actually worked well together, with some new members joining in the Sunday sessions with many different bowlers bringing all parts of the club together. I would like to thank everyone involved in these two ideas, and, alongside the bowls team successes, it has made this a very enjoyable season with so many more people playing bowls.

Finance Update - Report by Jan Dolman

This year we have 97 members (including 24 social).

No major expenditure and no other equipment needed.

Final balance is around £18300, which is up £1800 on last year. We are therefore in an excellent position to start 2026.

We again owe our thanks to Etwall Parish Council for their continued support in paying 50% towards our green keeping materials.

Dave and Jackie again raised the point that, although the Club is making some money via Easy Fundraising, further promotion of this, especially to people who book holidays or take out insurance via the web, would help bring in even more money to the club without any effort on their part.

Dave thanked Jan for all her help with the accounts.

Green maintenance

Tony commented that it had been a difficult year for the greens given how dry it had been, but our close season maintenance had gone very well, and he was optimistic that the reseeding and treatments would be successful. He did point out that the rising cost of consumables needed to properly maintain a green in good condition is one of the primary reasons why greens are deteriorating, and we should factor this into our future plans.

There was a unanimous vote of thanks to Tony for all the amazing work he puts in.

Floodlights

The floodlights had a breakdown at the start of the season, and, although repairs by Abacus were successful they have left some glare into our neighbour’s property. He has complained to environmental health that the floodlights need putting back as they were last year. Unfortunately, Abacus have not yet come up with a solution as using scaffolding in darkness is not allowed. They are currently redesigning and hope to get a solution in place before the start of next season. Environmental Health have expressed their thanks to us in trying to find a solution.

The warranty on the poles (2 years) has now passed but the warranty on the lights (10 years) still affords good cover. However, it doesn’t include failure due to the build-up of dirt etc. They do offer an inspection and cleaning service (one off £1070) which should eliminate the likelihood of non-warranty failures. We agreed to book an inspection for winter 2028 and, based on the result, take a decision then on the frequency of future inspections.

League Meetings

* Martin Bowker & Graham Hesketh have agreed to continue as SD reps – no proposals, but a suggestion to the SD Committee that the Mon & Fri leagues start as early possible so that the Floodlight league can finish earlier, allowing reseeding to start earlier. [*Done*]
* Bev & Martin North have agreed to continue as Belper reps – no proposals.
* Tony Higgott has agreed to continue as Burton Vets rep – no proposals.
* Jackie Fisher has agreed to continue as SD Ladies rep – no proposals.

Captains’ reports and suggestions

All the reports submitted were read out.

Teams for 2026

The team entries for 2026 will be the same as 2025 with the following changes:

* Mon afternoon Needwood Vets – new team
* Tue/Thu afternoon Burton Vets D – new team
* Wed evening Belper Doubles B – new team
* Wed evening East Mids Parks – team withdrawn

All the current captains were willing to do the job again, with the following changes:

* Needwood Vets – Graham Hesketh
* Belper O55 B – Jackie Fisher
* South Derbys Ladies – rotating captaincy, shared over 5 volunteers
* Burton Vets D – Steve Fisher & Kevin Wright
* Belper Doubles A – Graham Hesketh
* Belper Doubles B – Dave Dolman
* SD Fri Men – Liam Kirkland
* Belper Ladies – Chris Hesketh
* Floodlight A – needs a new captain

Jackie and Bev requested that Captains again be reminded to encourage players to have a more proactive approach to helping at matches, so that the burden of setting up, providing refreshments and tidying away is not left to the same people every week. It was agreed that the Chair would include a statement in his AGM address to the effect that ALL club members playing in teams are expected to support the club and their captain. Ideally this support would occur pro-actively, so the onus does not always fall on the captains to ask for help.

Fees

It was agreed to keep the membership and match fees the same. We have a healthy bank balance and there is no pressure to increase fees so long as annual income continues to cover annual expenses.

Officers

All the current committee members wish to stand again at the AGM. David Bramall has asked to join the committee (unanimously accepted). The current Chair, Treasurer and Secretary have all agreed to continue in post if re-elected. The three Safeguarding Officers all wish to stand down, so the club needs to find a volunteer to take on the role of Welfare/Safeguarding.

Competitions 2026

The Committee agreed to keep the two Bank Holiday open competitions again in 2026. Dave would organise the entrants for the May Day with Beverley & Graham running the on-day administration. Dave would organise the August knockout comp, but Bev would only run it if she has more help. It was decided that the Etwall Mixed Doubles Cup is no longer required.

Future Projects

* The committee is strongly in favour of enclosing the remaining unfenced sections of the perimeter with similar security fencing to what is already installed. Provisional quotes have indicated a total cost around £6000. We will approach the Parish Council to see if they can provide a contribution to the cost, and then make a decision as to whether to proceed.
* We are committed to providing opportunities for non-members to have a go at bowling, so we will continue with the target bowls (Well Dressings) and organise some Open Days. However, we will restrict the Open Sessions to be on Sunday afternoons, following on from a regular Sunday Morning Drive, so that there would be sufficient volunteers already present to support the session. We would only consider organising a different Open Day (say Fri afternoon) if sufficient volunteers had already been identified in advance.
* The collection of donated club bowls (mainly heavy ones) was turned into a comprehensive set of refurbished bowls comprising all weights/sizes from 2lb upwards. Half the cost of this was provided by the Derbyshire CGB Development Fund. Dave Dolman thanked Graham Hesketh for securing the funding and organising the refurbishment. The new bowls have been heavily utilised by the many new members we have attracted this year, and now sit in a specially-constructed stand (crafted by David Bramall).
* Dave Dolman also wished to thank Pat Key for donating money for one of the new benches. Groundwork for locating the two new benches has been completed.
* David Bramall has been commissioned to provide new planters (from repurposed decking) to go at the away end and between the benches. The money which Paul Taylor collected from the Sunday Morning Drive sessions (£147) will go towards the cost of the planters.
* The Tinklers are still keen to look after our plants and have requested a budget to buy suitable ones to go in the new planters. We have agreed that we will reimburse them up to £150 to cover the cost of new plants. If further expenditure is required it will need approval from the committee.

Preparations for next season

* The date for the AGM was agreed – Thu 26 Mar 2026, 7pm in the FWH.
* The green opening date is scheduled for Sat 28 Mar 2026 at 12pm. All members are invited, and we may start with a traditional CrashBowl event (everyone simultaneously bowling at a solitary jack) followed by tea/coffee and cakes and social bowling.

A.O.B.

1. Tony has confirmed that we will book a contractor to do a deep slitting of the green (aeration) at some point in the close season (probably January). The cost is £150. To purchase similar equipment would cost around £8k. However, an alternative tool which can be used with our existing equipment could be obtained for around £1500. It would not slit as deep, but it would provide some additional aeration and could be used regularly over the winter (Tony is happy to do the work). Considering the benefits this would bring to maintaining the quality of the green, the committee authorized Tony to investigate further and purchase one if it can be obtained at a reasonable price.
2. It was agreed to have the end of season lunch at the same venue (Mickleover Golf Club) next year. The date will be Wed 7 Oct 2026.

The meeting closed at 4pm.