

GERRARDS CROSS



BOWLING CLUB

Founded 1909

The Robert Brown Green
Maltmans Lane Gerrards Cross Bucks. SL9 8RS
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**MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held in the Clubhouse
on Sunday 18th November 2018**

1. President Kirk Smith was unavoidably absent, and so Vice-President Richard Reid took the chair and welcomed everybody to the meeting. A total of 50 bowling members had signed in as present. As this is more than one third of the bowling members, the meeting was quorate.

It was with sadness that Richard reminded the meeting of the deaths of eight previous members of the club who had passed away during the year: Brenda and Garvin Pollock, Alex Moon, Sandy Foote, Suzanne Thomson, John Coles, Ted Holloway and Douglas Harrison. Those present paid their respects by standing for a minute's silence.

2. Apologies for absence had been received from 12 members – Richard read out the names.

3. The Minutes of the AGM held on 19th November 2017 were agreed unanimously and were duly signed by the President.

Richard then gave the President's report on the year as follows:

We held an Open Day again this year, the weather wasn't as good as last year but none the less we still had encouraging numbers trying out our great game and 22 went through the coaching sessions and all 22 joined. The sub-committee responsible did an incredible job as did the members who assisted throughout the day. Planning for next year's open day will start early next year.

On the Green we have had a very successful year with the highlights as follows...

England Captain John McGuinness
Junior International Tom McGuinness
Junior Trialists George Reid & Courtney Harvey
!3 players in the Middleton cup
6 players in the Johns Trophy
National 2 x 4's Champions
Sutton Winston under 18's Champion Courtney Harvey

Chiltern and Thames League Champions

County singles winner John McGuinness
County singles runner up Andrew Briden
County 2 wood winner Andrew Briden
County 2 wood runner up David Simpson
County Under 25 singles winner Michael Gomme
County Under 25 singles runner up Nathan Harvey
Ladies county under 25 singles Runner up Courtney Harvey

County Pairs runners up Tom & John McGuinness
Ladies County under 25 Pairs winner Courtney Harvey
Ladies County Triples winners Hannah McConnell, Julie Skelly, Mary Price
Men's County 4's winners David Ross, Richard Reid, Kirk Smith, John McGuinness
County Over 55's Pairs winners Neil Farnish, David Simpson
County Over 55's fours winners Ray Keen, David Grieve, Keith Patrick, David Simpson
Winners of the Benevolent Triples David Thomson, Matthew Hyde, Alan Price
Winner of the Bucks League (Erasers)
Winners of 3 divisions of the Bucks league (Erasers, Allsorts and the Rowers)
Runners up Bucks cup

The club has entered more competitions next season to ensure that those who wish to play will be given the chance, including London & Southern counties for the men and Top Club, Vi Trundle and Burnham Plate for the ladies, and the mixed Bucks League. We have also been invited into the Watford and District Bowling Association. They play men's singles pairs triples and fours on a knock out basis. Entries for these competitions need to be in this month, so please fill in the form or let Andrew Briden know if you intend to enter.

A big thank you to Andrew Briden who took over organising the club Social evenings and again these have been well received and well supported by the members.

The club competition entries increased again this year. If you don't normally enter these please reconsider, there are competitions for everyone.

We have been asked to host two County Middleton cup matches next season, and we applied to be a host club for a quarter and semi final and I was told yesterday that we have been given the Fours County quarter and semi-finals. If anyone can help on the day in the kitchen or behind the bar, we would be very grateful; or if you prefer to watch, do come and support.

We have two special matches next year, the first one we play is a mixed match against the Friends of Bowls England which was originally set up by one of our members Eric Smith. The second match is a Charity match against the Dennyside team where we will raise money for a local charity yet to be picked: if you have any small local charities that you wish to be considered please let me know.

It is not until you start to write this thank you list that you realise how much time and effort people put into the running of this club, I have quite a list of people, so please bear with me.

This year's committee, for steering the club in such a positive direction for the members. I would particularly like to thank David Grieve, Joan Marshall and Joyce Ludford who have decided to step back from Committee this year.

David Hall for his hard work in looking after the club finances.

Giles Brisbane for looking after the club administration so well and for the new look of our website.

Duncan Gauld for somehow managing to keep track of the membership.

Alan Price for handling the role of club Captain with his flair and passion.

David Grieve, Chris Rowe and all of the captains of the day.

Maureen Merry for all the hard work that she put in as ladies captain, Joyce Ludford for in her supporting role as vice captain and for running the short mat for everyone.

Hugh Russell for his work as County Delegate.

Roger Sheehy for all of his efforts with the maintenance around the club, I know that Gary Amer, Derek Evans and Hughie have helped out too.

Club coaches, Chris Rowe, Derek Evans, Hugh Russell, Julie Skelly, Margaret Poole.

Pauline and David Roff, for planting & maintaining the potted plants.

David Thomson, for the Club draw.

Chris Rowe for organising the raffle.

Maureen and her team of helpers for all of the hard work they have put in again catering for us.

Alan Price and Andrew Briden for running the club competitions.

Peter Fountain, for examining our accounts.

John McGuinness for securing sponsorship - I would also like to thank our sponsors for their support.

The Green Cutting & Sweeping team headed by Chris Buswell, Ivor Ludford, Derek Evans, Chris Rowe, David Simpson, Ray Keen, Tony Green, Patrick Johnson, Steve Riddlington-White, Barry Connell, Peter Bevins and Keith Young.

Joan Marshall, for organising the Dinner & Dance.

The volunteers that help behind the bar.

Richard Reid our Vice President for helping me out on numerous occasions and for his efforts behind the bar this year.

Helga Thorpe and Pam Smit, for maintaining the surrounding flower beds for the last several years. These lovely ladies have decided to hang up their gardening gloves, so we need to find volunteers to help keep the surround up to the standards we have enjoyed.

At this point Richard presented floral tributes for Helga and Pam, who received a round of applause.

He then called on Giles Brisbane to present the Secretary's Report:

4. Secretary's Report

“We have a lot to get through today, so I'll try to be quick.

It is my official task to tell you how many members we have, which is 140 playing members including six Juniors; and 30 social members. This is an increase of 22 playing members from last year. 86 of our playing members are men, 54 are ladies.

In addition a further three people have applied to join, we believe that six of our social members wish to convert back to be playing members, and we currently have another four people who are expected to apply. If all these people do indeed want to join then it would take us over the current limit of 150 playing members – so we have a proposal about that to consider later.

I have to tell you that your committee met 6 times this year, 4 quorate, (not that we needed a quorum). No major decisions, or disagreements, just running the place, which has kept us busy enough. More members means more activity – we have entered more competitions this year than ever before, we've run more social events, have cut the green more often and so on. So it is just as well we have had a full committee – there has been plenty of work for all of us.

Just two other things – the emails and the website.”

At this point Giles asked for a show of hands in answer to the question: “How many of you wish I didn't send you so many emails?” and no-one put their hand up; and another show of hands to answer the question: “How many of you wouldn't mind if I sent you twice as many?” and most people put their hands up.

He thanked the members for their response, saying that he wanted to keep them informed, but didn't want to send out emails that were considered to be spam.

Giles then reported that he was in the process of redesigning the website. He said he would keep it going while it is being changed, but that it will be a bit messy for a while.

He explained that the fashion in website design had changed since he put the club website together 10 years previously; these days websites are expected to be more visually attractive, people would rather click a link to find what they want than scroll down a page and so on. The website does get a fair number of hits – about 5,000 to the home page this year, and another 18,000 or so to the other pages combined. And for some people it will form the first impression that they get of the club, so it can be important for recruitment, so it is worth some effort.

Giles said that he didn't mind doing the redesign work – there is a **little** less secretary work to do over the winter so he had some time – but he does need help during the bowling season in keeping the website up-to-date. To actually edit and publish the information you need to be reasonably confident at working a computer, but he urged anybody could help him with that – perhaps look after one or more of the pages – to please get in touch. But what he also needs is reporters and photographers, and all that is needed for that is to be able to write English, or work a camera – phone cameras are fine – and to actually be there, which he is usually not.

He asked all members playing in or watching matches to please email him a photo or two, or put them on WhatsApp, and write a few words to say what happened, even if it is only the score and maybe something like 'fine day lousy green'.

5. Captains' Reports

Alan Price gave the Captain's Report:

Firstly, I'd like to thank my Vice Captain, David Grieve and the Ladies Captain, Maureen Merry for all their support last season. I also had Captains of the day and I would like to thank them and in particular, Chris Rowe as without his help and time, the job of being Captain, alongside my day job, would not have been possible.

You have already heard about our outstanding achievements in the County and National competitions in the President's report so this leaves me to inform you of our performances in the club friendlies.

As with both the County and National competitions, it has been a successful year for the club. We were due to play a total of 28 games, 5 of which were cancelled due to inclement weather and lack of players from both us and other clubs. Of the 23 games that we played, Men's, Women's and Mixed, we won 19 of them, another truly outstanding performance from the club.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the club competition winners and to thank everyone for supporting these competitions as this greatly contributes towards the success of our club.

Finally, I would just like to say many thanks to you all for your support both on and off the green and for making Gerrards Cross the successful club that it is today.

Lady Captain's report

Maureen Merry gave the Ladies Captain's Report:

I would like to thank Joyce Ludford for supporting me throughout the season, and indeed thank all the ladies.

We started the season well, but as time went on we had matches cancelled due to the heat, and then more were cancelled by the opposing club because they couldn't get enough players.

We entered the Vi Trundell for the first time for many years, and reached the quarter-finals – well done ladies; and also congratulations to the ladies who got through to Leamington in the Nationals. Looking at the County Competitions list we could have a lot more there next year.

We had a great end-of season occasion with a match and an excellent buffet, and we celebrated 50 years since Ladies became part of the club.

Ladies - please support your Captain next year.

6. Treasurer's Report

David Hall presented the accounts for the year, reporting a profit this year of £3,459 – over £4,000 down on last year, but we had spent a great deal more than that on improving the car park and replacing the fences.

David thanked Richard Reid and the bar team for their contribution, noting that in the past the bar had had a turnover of around £8,000, and this year the bar had made over £14,000 profit (applause).

It had been a hot summer, and hence the water bill was much higher this year. The water company is changing its charging method (separating clean water from the sewage charge) and David asked for anyone who had knowledge in this area to contact him.

We have over £20,000 in the bank, and are in a very, very good financial position.

David thanked Peter Fountain for auditing the accounts again.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Simon Lowe, seconded by Rick Eshelby and carried unanimously.

8. Proposed New Life Members

Proposed:

That Life membership be bestowed upon David Roff and David Thomson for their outstanding work within the club over many years

Proposed by Rick Eshelby seconded by Bill Church

Giles Brisbourne spoke to this, quoting the words of Rick Eshelby, but before doing so he told the meeting that Rick and Bill, the proposer and seconder, are the two existing life members, that both had contributed a massive amount to the club in many ways, but Bill in particular for recruiting fine players who became the nucleus of our success on the green, and Rick in particular for the huge amount of work he had done on the green over a long period.

Rick Eshelby's words:

"This honour is not easily achieved but it awarded to members of our club that have contributed so much over many years.

Can I start with David Roff who I would describe as our Doyen!

The Collins English Dictionary says Doyen is the senior member of a body of colleagues, although he is not necessarily the most senior in age as some can beat you!! David joined the Club in 1968, so a member for 50 years. During these times he would regularly turn up on a Sunday morning in his father's van to relieve our Club of all its rubbish. Sunday was his only day off work too. David was our President in 2004, and his playing achievements are quite clear to see on our honours board. I should say that the Committee in 1995 decided that David should (and in the lack of engraving space) be given the original Two Woods Cup as a 5 times winner. David, along with his wife Pauline, still keep us looking very pretty with our seasonal pots of plants around the Club.

David Thomson has recently been described as Evergreen!

David joined our club in August 1984, a member for 34 years. During David's years he was a frequent member of a greens keeping team, along with his lovely dog Benjie. Benjie often joined David on the green but could not get off the green because of the depth of our ditches — he was only a little Yorkie. David has been very instrumental in assisting our club with amendments in the Club rules and bye laws, and is a wizard with his skills on the computer for things like the club draw. David was our President in 1997 and 2010, captain in 1990 and again his achievements are clear to see on the honours board. One thing that isn't on the board is that this year he got his first County honours as a member of the winning Benevolent Triples team.

David and David, on behalf of the Club thank you for all you have done and continue to do."

The proposal was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

9. Proposal to set up a planning sub-committee:

It is proposed that we set up a facilities planning sub-committee, with an initial budget of £5,000, with an initial task of determining the feasibility of moving the sheds to the waste land behind the green, in order to free up space for extension of the club facilities.

Proposed by Giles Brisbourne, seconded by Alan Price.

Giles spoke to the proposal, saying that there are various ways in which our club facilities are less than ideal. For instance the Gent's isn't great, nor are the visitors changing facilities, it would be nice to have more space outside where people could watch the bowls, maybe tables they could sit round and have a drink while doing so.

By way of context - The last time we made a major change was twelve years ago, and the discussions about it started at least seven years before that.

Giles said he didn't know whether we should be making any changes let alone when, but he believed that we should know what our options are, and the way to do this is to set up a sub-committee to look at the options, and give that sub-committee a brief and a budget. That is what this proposal is about.

To do anything significant we need to find more space. The main area to look for that is behind the green, on the other side of the hedge – there is quite a lot of unused space there. The obvious thing to move there is the sheds which hold the mower, turf iron, tools and so on. If we do that we can move the visitor changing room & gents back, or extend them, or both.

So it is proposed that the brief concentrates on that – find out about any planning permission or contractual issues, possible building problems, access and so on. It might want to actually lay a concrete base back there, hence the £5,000 budget.

The sub-committee will also consider costs and timescale, and produce a report which we can consider in committee and at the next AGM.

Patrick Johnson asked about lottery funding; Simon Cobb said that we had tried that before the last extension and it had been a considerable waste of time and money. Part of the difficulty is that we own our green, and are unwilling to restrict the future options of the club by committing forever that the land will only be used for sports purposes.

Terry Webb noted that we had got some planning permission in the past, which would have lapsed but may make it easier to get new permission now.

The proposal was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

10. Proposed Rule Changes

That the club rules be changed as follows:

- a) *That rule 24 is changed to have a heading of "GENDER" (instead of "Ladies Section") and contain only "The club is mixed, with all rights and obligations being the same for men and women"*

Proposed by Kirk Smith, seconded by Maureen Merry

Giles told the members that the club had for some time treated the ladies equally, but some organisations required us to be officially mixed before they would consider financial support for any of our activities.

He was asked why, if we were mixed, did we have a Ladies' Secretary, and replied that the ladies were equal but sometimes separate; for instance the County dealt with men and ladies entirely separately, and so gender is a useful way to split the workload.

The proposal was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

- b) *That rule 4.1 be changed to read "All membership subscriptions shall be paid in full by the 30th April in each year." instead of 1st April.*

Proposed by Duncan Gauld, seconded by Giles Brisbane

The main purpose of this proposal was to allow payment at the club during April. We would have one or more membership payment nights; and other payment methods become possible, such as card payment, or a box into which forms and cheques could be posted. A payment night would be an opportunity to explain the competitions and encourage people to enter.

The subscription payment form usually goes out with the president's letter in mid February, along with the competition entries.

Use of the club at the beginning of the season might also be encouraged.

It was noted that this would mean later entries into the competitions, which would be a particular problem for the Over 55s, which needs to start as early as possible. Chas and Giles confirmed that it was planned that we would in any case ask for peoples' intentions in February.

Simon Cobb noted that in the past we had problems with members not paying, and an early pay-by date helped pick those up.

Matt Hyde said that we could explain the competitions on the form. Giles said that the committee would look into that, but that there are concerns better handled face-to-face, such as "how good do they expect me to be".

Katie Reid noted that the problem was doing competition entries and club subscription at the same time, but David Hall said that there would be too much extra work in having two different collection times for the money.

Richard Reid suggested that we could have a payment meeting at the end of March.

The proposal was put to the meeting and was defeated by 22 votes to 21 (after a recount), 7 abstaining.

- c) *rule 25.6 to be modified to add the sentence:
For internal competitions, either a white or a club shirt may be worn.*

Proposed by Kirk Smith, seconded by Richard Reid

Currently the rules specify “white”.

Nobody spoke against this and the proposal was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

11. Proposed changes to Club Uniform

- a) *It is proposed that the club seek to change to a new design of club shirt, the design to be agreed at a future AGM, the aim being to adopt it in 2020, with the club subsidising the cost to the members so that anyone who had previously bought a shirt would get the new one at half price.*

Proposed by Alan Price, seconded by Richard Reid

Alan said that the existing club shirt is out of date, many members dislike either the design or the material or both, and better materials are now available at a reasonable cost.

Nobody spoke against this proposal and it was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

- b) *It is proposed that Bowls England style Navy shorts become part of the official club uniform, so that if permitted by the competition organisers, they may be worn instead of grey or white trousers in any competition, as may matching trousers. All teams must wear matching colours.*

Proposed by Kirk Smith, seconded by Richard Reid.

The shorts are already registered with the County as approved club uniform, but are not permitted at our club according to our rules. In practice they have been worn by, for instance, our National Two Fours team.

They have not been worn so far by any players except for those who play at County level. Several of these players said that while they want to wear the shorts, they don't want them to mark an elite which wears different clothes.

White would still be required for competitions run by many of the external organisations including the Middleton Cup and the London & Southern Counties. Chris Harvey suggested that L&SC (for instance) would change when the clubs changed.

Florence Memery was concerned about what advice would be given to new members. Bill Church and Tim Coles noted that our shirt redesign should take into account the need to go well with the blue shorts & trousers. Chas asked what the rule would be for internal competitions.

Simon Cobb noted that we had 150 members, of whom only 20 wanted to wear the blue.

The proposal before the meeting made blue possible rather than compulsory, and so in spite of widespread concerns about changing to blue, when the proposal was put it carried unanimously except for one abstention.

10. Election of the President

Richard put the nomination of Kirk Smith for President, saying what a good president he had been. Kirk got a round of applause and the nomination was unanimously approved.

11. Election of Management Committee

Nominations had been properly made and received for the thirteen remaining committee positions. These nominations were put to the meeting and unanimously approved. They were as follows:

Vice-President	Richard Reid	Secretary:	Giles Brisbane
Treasurer:	David Hall	Ladies Secretary	Julie Skelly
Membership Secretary	Duncan Gauld	Match Secretary	Chris Rowe
Captain	Alan Price	Ladies Captain	Janice Welsh
Vice-Captain	Maureen Merry	Ladies Vice-Captain	Karen Smith
Maintenance Manager	Roger Sheehy		
Bar manager	Richard Reid	Green manager	Kirk Smith

Hugh Russell had been nominated for County Representative, and was unanimously approved. (County Representative is not a position on our committee, but Hugh has been co-opted onto the committee).

12. Election of Hon. Auditor/Examiner.

Richard expressed his thanks to Peter Fountain for his work on the accounts in 2018. Peter has agreed to act as Auditor again in 2019. The motion that he do so was proposed by David Hall and seconded by Giles Brisbane and was carried unanimously.

The meeting then took a break, at 12:40 pm, and the bar was opened.

13. Any Other Business

Tony Holden said that Friday evenings were important both for new members and ordinary roll-up players, so would it be possible to avoid scheduling competitions then? Richard Reid replied that unfortunately Bowls England set the schedule for National competitions.

June Giaquinto spoke up to say thanks to all those who had visited her in hospital and sent their best wishes.

Simon Cobb said we should have a defibrillator. Cost would be about £1,100, with a 6 or 8 year guarantee. He suggested members be invited to chip in to the cost. They are 'idiot-proof'. There was a lot of support for this idea, including Chris Harvey who said that the life of one of his employees had been saved by one. Giles said he didn't think the cost would be a problem, but the idea had been considered in committee in the past, and rejected as it was felt that 'idiot-proof' or not, most members would not have the confidence to use one. Tim Coles had done the training and said it was very straightforward. To general laughter Tony Holden offered to pay the entire cost as long as he had first call if two people had a heart attack simultaneously – the offer to pay was serious and Tony was thanked accordingly. The committee will look at getting one installed before the next season starts, and consider how members might best be made confident in its use.

John McGuinness praised the club and its coaches, and wondered if we should have a bursary. Giles said that the club normally paid for all training of coaches.

Alan Price asked if we should have a club singles competition open to both sexes; most of those present liked the idea. Chris Harvey proposed awarding a cup for it called the 'Denis Cup' in honour of Denis Ward, which also went down well.

John McGuinness wondered whether we should be running more competitions which included other clubs. Chris Harvey was keen on this idea and suggested a Sunday morning competition with sponsors, big entry fees and big prizes. Keith Patrick offered to help. Chris offered to try to get the sponsors. This met with general approval, and Chris will make a proposal for the committee.

Andrew Briden suggested that we enter a club team into the Watford & District competition. The Two Fours was the most appropriate. Giles will send an email asking members who are interested to get in touch with Andrew.

Chris Harvey informed the meeting that Andrew is now the Middleton Cup manager, and there was a round of applause for Andrew.

There being no further business the meeting was closed.

Signed:

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Secretary

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President