

BIDDENDEN BOWLS CLUB

REPORT FOR 2021 AGM 16 NOVEMBER

CAPTAIN **Paul Buggins**

Thank You to everyone for your support throughout what turned out to be a another very “interesting” year. Unlike 2020 we were able to plan a much more “normal” start to the season, albeit Covid restrictions meant some changes in “modus operandi” early on. However, all members using club facilities and participating in matches adapted very well and ensured everyone`s safety and that we worked within government guidelines.

I am very grateful to our Chair **Jeannette**, who also covered the Secretary role, Vice Chair **Hugh** and Treasurer **Kim** who managed the *administration* of the Club most effectively, with the support from the broader committee of course, allowing me to focus on the Club bowling activities. Despite the changes needed to comply with Covid guidelines it is great to see the progress made amongst our bowling membership this summer, particularly those who only took up the sport in 2021.

A full, and near normal, programme of bowling was put in place for 2021, including 43 Friendly matches, 38 League games and 10 Club competitions See details a little later.

Some clubs returned to bowling somewhat later than BBC so a few early season matches were lost, most notably Iden, Folkestone and Rye. Additionally, a few Clubs, Clare Park, Rochester Blind and the Maidstone Police were unable to fulfil their friendly fixtures this season. (We believe the Police will be closing fully after this season) Friendly matches are a big part of our club bowling activities and provide an opportunity for individual improvement in a competitive but comfortable environment. Results this year were not as good as I would have liked but recognise the significant loss of experience, we have seen at the club during the last two years. I am however very encouraged by the improvements seen amongst our newer bowlers and how those with just a few years` experience have stepped up to fill the gaps and take on greater responsibility. In all we had 45 Friendly matches scheduled, 10 were not played/cancelled, 8 Won, 25 Lost with just 2 Draws. As regards the League`s the Weald B team had a good year in Division 3 finishing mid table winning some 50% of the games, great experience was gained by all. The A team found it tough in Division 1 and were relegated winning just three games, there was a great result on the last game of the season beating title favourites Lenham by one shot on each rink to take all 10 league points. (Lenham finished fourth and had only needed 5 points to win the title)

Many of you will have seen the impact of the work of our “Inclusion and Accessibility” subcommittee (summary report later) which I think is great for the long-term future of our Club. It is marvellous to see the involvement of so many children and young people in our sport and the ongoing efforts to improve accessibility for all. The link with Tom Swaine, Sports Route Coaching (SRC) and the Summer Clubs is marvellous, I know it took a great deal of organisation by **Kim** and support by many members, my grateful thanks to all. The closer links that have been “fostered” with the Squash club will continue to provide that broader engagement we need. The Bowls “Big Weekend” and other “Taster Sessions” have seen quite a number try bowls for the first time and new people take up membership which “augers well” for the future of our club. We have also had a few parents / grandparents come along and try bowls alongside those attending the junior sessions.

I know the Chair and Treasurer will reflect in more detail on the financial stability of the club but want to mention/reinforce a couple of aspects. We are most grateful to the UK government (via ABC) for providing us with grants to help us cope with the impacts of the pandemic/restrictions and

return to a level of normality as quickly as possible going forward. **FUNDRAISING** is vital for the club to continue, and enable subscriptions to be maintained at a lower level. However, many sources of funds have been/will be lost again this year (Tractorfest, Quiz Night, Annual Dinner, Fish and Chip supper etc. circa **£5000**) these may not return and must be replaced. We need an active fund raising group within our membership and ***The support of ALL members is vital!!***

Looking forward to a more normal 2022 I encourage everyone to get involved with Friendly and League matches, consider entering County competitions as well as our own club events. Many Thanks to **David**, our Fixture Secretary for the last few years, who has organised a full programme for 2021 and is well advanced in getting things sorted for 2022 Hopefully we can find a replacement as David is stepping down at this AGM .. Hopefully someone will have put their name(s) forward We have entered a team in the Ashford Indoor Bowls competition (Classic 77 Trophy), run for outdoor bowls clubs, there will be 5 matches on Sunday mornings during the winter. This will provide us with new opportunities and challenges.

We continue our liaison/engagement/ involvement with other sports clubs in Biddenden and the VHSC (our direct landlord) to both maintain and improve our facilities. During September/October we have updated our Project / Strategy plans (the VHSC Long Term Improvement and Development Plan – **LTIDP**) that encompass not only short-term requirements but looking further ahead as well (Please let me know if you would like to see/get involved with this) This links in part to the overall Bowls Club Development plan and strategy that Jeannette and Hugh are co-ordinating and will/ will have provided detail.

Finally, (at last I can hear you all say!) thank you again for your support in 2021, and hopefully even more people can be involved in taking the club forward in 2022 and beyond....