

WICKHAM MARKET PLAYING FIELD BOWLS CLUB

ANNUAL REPORT TO PARISH ANNUAL MEETING: 11 APRIL 2025

The Playing Field Bowls Club has been playing green bowls on our outdoor green just beyond the Playing Field children's play area for over 70 years since its formation in 1952.

We are a small but active, friendly and welcoming, community resource which is still thriving having, at present, 24 players registered for league games and seven 'social' bowlers who do not play in league games. Our season runs from late April to early September.

Bowls is not just a game for the elderly or for retired people. We offer opportunity and activity for both sexes and for all age ranges from upper primary school through secondary school to Senior Citizen. Our achievements in the two midweek leagues we play in on Wednesday and Thursday evenings is improving. Last season we finished third (of seven) in Division C of the Ipswich Triples League – against clubs with scores of members – some of whom went away from our green having been thoroughly beaten! We finished on 40 points while the winners, Kesgrave Greens, achieved 52.5 and the bottom club, Hadleigh, 16.5. That's one of our best results ever. Most new players learning the intricacies of green bowls get to play almost every week in the Fynn League. Unfortunately we finished bottom of our section – but achieved two wins and 19 points. In 2023, when we didn't finish bottom, we had two wins, one draw and got the same 19 points. We also made our first brief appearance in the Millennium Cup – winning on the away rink but losing on the home rink and overall on aggregate.

In addition to the leagues our weekly club night on Monday evenings, which is just for fun, goes from strength to strength and there are in-club competitions and a number of end of season friendly games for everyone.

At the moment we are coming to the end of a pre-season refurbishment of our pavilion and facilities which has included the redecoration of the pavilion, kitchen and toilet facilities and the re-roofing of part of the pavilion. The former has been in the hands of volunteers but we had to use contractors for the roof work which cost £1,680. But the really big hit this year has been the need for the total electrical re-wiring of the club pavilion – including the installation of a new steel wired armoured cable from the meter in order to meet current standards and the requirements of our insurer. While we are **extremely grateful for grant aid received from Wickham Market Parish Council and the Wickham Market Partnership**, this work has been a big drain on club resources as we still seek to achieve security of tenure via a new lease.

Nevertheless we look positively to the future. There is a happy and co-operative atmosphere in the club and there is plenty of space on our membership list for any who would like to join.

Saturday 26 April will see our annual open day when anyone will be welcome to visit us from 2pm to 4pm and, if possible, try their hand for what is known in the trade as a 'roll up' – i.e. a taster trial session. We offer experienced bowlers to assist newcomers to the sport and can also loan all necessary equipment apart from footwear. We have a number of sets of bowls of various sizes (including smaller bowls specifically designed for young people or those of smaller stature). All you would initially need to provide are flat soled shoes (most trainer type footwear will be fine).

Bruce Laws: Club Secretary