

ESSEX COUNTY BOWLING ASSOCIATION GROUP 6

A.G.M. MEETING 12th OCTOBER 2023 at 7p.m.

Meeting opened at 19.00

Chairman David Jacobi welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. In Memoriam

A minute's silence was observed in memory of fellow bowlers who had passed away during the past 12 months.

2. Apologies for Absence

Carreras; Gt. Wakering; S. Gunnell

Delegates Present

Alexandra: Belfairs; Bournemouth Park; Castle Point; Essex County; Hadleigh; Hockley; Memorial Park; Prittlewell; Rayleigh; Rochford; Runwell; Shoebury Park; South Benfleet & Canvey; Southchurch Park; Southend; Thorpe Bay; Whitehall; Wickford

Delegates Absent

Chalkwell Park; Fairwood

Officers Present

David Jacobi; Chris Flack; Chris Chorley; Kevin Robertson; Ken Griffiths; Jim Bunce; R. Woollard

3. Chairman David Jacobi

I have for the most part enjoyed my year as your Group 6 Chairman and I would like to thank every member of the committee for all their hard work and their giving up their time to carry out their respective roles in the running of Group 6.

I think I can safely say that 2023 was another successful year for Group 6. For the first time since 2016 we reached the final of the Inter Group knockout and we also came out winners. Well done to Steve Gunnell, in his first year as the team selector, and to all the players involved. Unfortunately, we were not so successful with the Ashford Cup or the Wally Ball Challenge Shield but saying that we were very close to reaching the finals in both competitions with a couple of rinks losing narrowly by one or two shots. With the badged and unbadged players that Group 6 has at its disposal there is no reason why we cannot reach all three finals next year!

As in past seasons, I have tried whenever possible to attend the matches and support the players in the Ashford Cup, Wally Ball and Inter Group Knockout and have witnessed some great bowling and exciting matches.

I continue to act as Group 6 selector for the County friendlies and would like to thank all those players who have helped me out by taking the place of players who had dropped out at the last moment.

I cannot let this meeting pass without having something to say about the problems encountered by games not played in the Group 6 league and in particular the game that involved Shoebury Park and Southend which affected which team finished runners up in Division 2. Never before has the decision of the committee been challenged so many times, not once, not twice but 3 times and for it to be suggested that the committee were not aware of the full facts before making a decision was totally incorrect.

I also found their remarks in one of their emails insulting and completely out of order and I quote 'We realise the Committee Chairman is a member of Thorpe Bay and will have a clear conflict of interest. Can we be assured that he will not be present when the validity of the decision is discussed and will not be party to the committee decision in this regard.' I would like it known in our very first committee meeting when the issue of whether to award points or not was discussed that I would not be party to the vote and that the minutes should reflect this.

On both occasions when the full committee met the unanimous decision was not to award points to either team. This decision was again challenged and it was at this point that a number if not all of the committee including myself were on the verge of resigning. None of us do this job for personal gain, we do it for the benefit of the County, for the benefit of the clubs in Group 6 and for the benefit of the players. I don't see any new faces coming forward to take on positions within the group so what would have happened if all the officers had resigned. This would have affected all clubs within the group with no one to run the Group 6 league, no one to select players for the Intergroup Knockout, the Wally Ball or the Ashford Cup or indeed run the end of season pairs and singles competitions and more importantly select players to play in the County friendlies through which many Ashford Cup players gain their County Badge.

Even though the structure of the Group 6 leagues were being changed due to the unsatisfactory situation of only having 4 teams in the bottom division which meant that 3 teams would be going up from Division 2, so finishing 2nd or 3rd in the league would have made no difference and there is no prize for finishing second, this was not accepted by Shoebury and we were threatened by them to refer it to the County, which indeed they did although the county stated that this was not a matter for them as it was an internal Group 6 matter.

To try and finally resolve this matter and to prevent sleepless nights by some of the committee a discussion took place with Thorpe Bay who thankfully could see the bigger picture and they happily accepted finishing 3rd in division 2 and getting promoted. So although some of you may see this as capitulation by the committee we wanted to see the end of the matter as there were more important issues to be getting on with.

Finally, as many of you know I have decided to stand down as Group 6 chairman at the end of next season, assuming I am elected for the coming season, as well as coming off the committee.

Next season will be my 12th term in this role, so it is time for new blood. I would like to thank you all for your support throughout this past season and indeed in the previous seasons.

4. Approval of Minutes of the 2022 AGM held on 5th October 2022

The chairman asked the delegates if the minutes of the AGM were an accurate record of that meeting.

The meeting unanimously agreed

There were no matters arising

5. Officer Reports

Treasurers Report

We started the year off with a bank balance of £1648.65, and thanks to the ECBA, we have increased our balance to a total of £1887.33.

We continue to purchase shirts for members who participate in both Group 6 and County Representative games, as well as maintaining our website. I wish to thank those selectors and committee members who despite many journeys to and from different clubs, do not desire compensation for their travel expenses. This may change with the advent of different personnel involved

This has helped swell our funds by a further £240 this year, which will help if any unforeseen expenses occur.

We have decided to continue the present affiliation fees, but this will be reviewed next year depending on our financial circumstances.

The Wickford delegate expressed his thanks to the Treasurer for his hard work in a difficult job.

Secretary's Report

Firstly, I would like to thank every club for returning your 2024 Affiliation Fees & League subscriptions on time, this will allow Kevin to report next year's League structure at today's meeting rather than later. Thank you

On the same theme I would like thank those clubs who have returned their nominations for next year's Representative games, I am a little surprised by the low numbers returned, so if you have forgotten, it is not too late, just email me a copy please.

I would also like to thank the 19 clubs who returned their Green Testing Forms back to us at the beginning of the season, so they could be viewed on our website for everyone to see, hopefully next season will see the same response.

As last year, you will be receiving emails directly from the ECBA regarding your 2024 Affiliations Fees and your club contact details for next seasons County Handbook.

You also need to be aware that your 2024 County Affiliation fees will be increasing by £0.50 this year, going up to £3.00 per registered player.

As last year, I will also be asking you to provide me your club contacts for 2024, once received I will forward to complete list to all club secretaries and delegates.

I also need to remind you of the requirement from Bowls England that from 2025 your club will need to have a named Safeguarding Officer(s), failure to do so will result if your club not being affiliated to Bowls England or ECBA.

I sent you the contact details of the ECBC Safeguarding Officer or alternatively some safeguarding courses that are available from Coach Bowls and I have also sent you details of another organisation that Hadleigh Bowl Club used for training courses and they are recommending called 'High Speed Training'

This is something that should be at the top of your club's priorities.

I have also sent you recently details of coaching courses that are available in Essex, which come highly recommended, and we would encourage all clubs to think seriously about using these resources.

As you know Essex has gone its own way with regard to coaching in the County, not following the national route of 'Coach Bowls' but setting up their own organisation; Essex Bowls Coaching Association, which is proving very successful and has some really good people working for it.

I have left details of the courses on the table should you be interested.

Unfortunately there no Group 6 competitions were held this year. I apologise it was my fault, but I promise they will return next year.

Once again, I would like to encourage all clubs to use the Group 6 website for all the latest information about Group 6 bowling.

In addition to all the normal information on leagues, representative games, green testing etc. we are putting more and more information on our website

A lot of time goes into ensuring that it contains all the latest information about Group 6 bowls, so please use it.

Finally I would like to draw your attention to some of the bowlers from Group 6 we must congratulate for achieving some outstanding results this season.

The most obvious result to applaud was Group 6 winning the Inter Group Knockout competition, the first in this competition since 2015, a great game and even better result. Well done to all the players and officials.

2023 World Championships - Gold Coast, Australia

- Ed Morris (ECBC) played in the England Men's Pairs just beaten into 3rd place in their group on shots, just missing out on a place in the Quarter Final.
- Ed Morris (ECBC) played in the England Men's Fours and again just beaten into 3rd place in their group
- Ed Morris (ECBC) played in the Champion of Champion Men's Singles and qualified for the Qtr. final having finished 2nd in his group. He won his Qtr. final on shot difference and lost the semi-final to the Scotland champion.

British Isles Championships held in Wales in June

- Ed Morris (ECBC) won the Singles for the second year in a row, the first man to do so since David Bryant

English National Championships

- Ed Morris and Steve Gunnell (ECBC) on reaching Leamington and the final of the Pairs, losing on the last end.

- Ed Morris and Steve Gunnell and Simon Kittle (ECBC) on reaching Leamington and the final of the Triples, losing on the last end.

County Competitions

- Ed Morris and Steve Gunnell (ECBC) won the Pairs
- Ed Morris, Steve Gunnell and Simon Kittle reached the final of the Triples losing to Kings Chase
- Trevor Pearce (TBBC) won the Unbadged Singles (this is a repeat of last year's competition, also won by a TBBC bowler, well done to Thorpe Bay

Not quite as good a season as last season but still great results for Group 6 that should be celebrated

Question for the floor - The Essex County delegate asked why the Group 6 Constitution and Rules does not appear on our website.

The secretary explained that he did consider publishing these documents on the website but decided that without password protection these documents could be copied by other groups etc. and why should we give them an easy ride on the back of our hard work. He is investigating introducing some form of password protection on our website for items such as this.

Question for the floor - The Castle Point delegate asked about the process of applying for a DBS check which is part of the coaching requirement, he has experienced problems completing the on-line documentation.

The Shoebury Park delegate explained that he has completed this process and would recommend that other clubs use the postal method, as this is far simpler.

League Secretary's Report

Mostly the league ran smoothly this year with results being reported generally on time and with the league tables updated within days of the games. Almost all of the games that needed to be rearranged were played (bar two – which were un-played), and this did delay production of the final tables.

The two games not played caused me, and the officers a great deal of angst, as how to treat these issues is very awkward. I always strive to be completely fair but will undoubtedly disappoint people who don't get the result they wish.

At this point I would like to distribute my proposal for next seasons league structure, so you can see how it affects your club.

For next season, we have lost one team – Chalkwell from Div. 5 (dependant on the Park Circle AGM in November).

I realised fairly soon into the season that having a Division (6) of only 4 teams was not really very satisfactory and looked at how to restructure the league to remove Division 6. and have larger Divisions.

As we are trialling Wednesdays for the League in 2024, I am proposing to make Div. 1 & 2 larger

To compensate for the extra two game's, I am making use of the two spare weeks in June where we have paused the league in the past to account for County Pairs.

Can I ask for your reaction to these proposals please before I move on.

The League Secretary asked for a proposer and seconder that these proposals are accepted by the meeting

Proposer: Runwell BC

Secunder: Prittlewell BC

A show of hands by the delegates approved the new league structure for the 2024 season

The Officers are presenting four motions later in this meeting to change the league rules which we think will make the leagues easier to manage and also bring the format of our leagues more into line with other competitive competitions played around the country, we also want to tidy up a couple of loose ends in the rules.

I look forward to some lively debate on those motions

Finally, congratulations to all the Divisional winners and I look forward to summer 2024.

Question from the floor - The delegate from Essex County BC asked; following the cancelled games problems experienced this season and the subsequent decisions as well as the motions being proposed by the Group 6 Officers regarding changes to the league rules on cancelled games. Why does the League Secretary need to refer these matters to the committee, why can't he just make a decision himself.

The League Secretary explained although the rules state he can make a decision, in this specific incident, he didn't feel confident enough to make the decision alone, he wanted the support of the committee.

He admitted that he could have handled it better and apologised unreservedly to all clubs for the way this incident was handled, he will be better prepared to make these decisions in the future.

Match Secretary

The 2023 season saw an upsurge in the support by clubs for the two friendly fixtures arranged, however a small number of clubs still find it difficult to find four players to represent their club, perhaps next season they may find the situation eases.

Of the two games, the first against Essex Vice-presidents played at Essex County B.C. with fine weather prevailing, the group finished up winning by 148 shots to 103. A fine two course meal was enjoyed after the game. Thanks must be extended to Essex County B.C. for hosting the game

The second game against the Park Circle was played at Prittlewell B.C on a most pleasant sunny afternoon. Prittlewell must be congratulated on the excellent playing conditions of their green, also the hospitality shown by their members in supplying teas/coffees, sandwiches and cakes midway through the game was first rate. The result was a win for Group 6 by 129 shots to 92.

Hopefully next season will be supported well again.

One further thing I would like to add; if any club would like to be considered as a host for the annual Group 6 v Park Circle game, please let the Secretary know. We will always use Essex County for the friendly against the Essex V.P.'s because of the kitchen facilities but the Park Circle game is open to any club.

Finally for those bowlers playing either long or short mat during the winter, enjoy

Selectors

Ashford Cup - We have had a few good years in this competition and we started this year's competition very well, winning our first two games. In the last game we had another very close game with Group 3, who we always have to beat to reach the final or beat them to win the final. This year saw us losing on four rinks and winning on two, with two of the losing rinks only lost by one shot, very close

My thanks to all the 30 players who played this year and to the four players who will get their County Badge, well done. I would also like to thank all the supporters who came to all three games.

This season 11 Group 6 clubs were represented in the competition so it is important for clubs to put players forward, the selection motto is; if you are good enough you will be in the squad, not matter what club you play for. Next year I think this group will be much stronger, so good luck for the future.

Next year will be my last year and I will be helped by Dave Birch who hopefully will put himself forward for election as the Ashford Cup selector.

Selector – Jim Bunce

Wally Ball - Having taken over the Wally Ball Shield squad from Dave Starkey, it certainly has given me pleasure seeing us maintain the required standard needed to win games and felt that we were unlucky not to make the final this year.

The first game (home) at Essex County B.C. v Group 8 resulted in a good win by 3 rinks to 1

Next game (away) at Haynes Park B.C. v Group 4 resulted in a loss by 1 rink to 3 with only 5 shots difference. Both teams complained about the green not being good enough to host these games.

Last game (home) at Rayleigh B.C. v Group 5 resulted in a good win by 4 rinks to 0

This resulted in us being just short of the points needed to make the final.

On behalf of Group 6, I would like to thank Essex County B.C. and Rayleigh B.C. for the use of their green and facilities during this year's competition.

Also, I would like to thank all the squad for giving their time and effort over the 3 Sundays involved.

Let's hope that next year we can go that bit further and win the trophy

Selector - Ray Woollard

Inter Group Knockout - Our first fixture on 11th June was a home draw against Group 3 at Essex County B.C.. I expected a comfortable win which we got with a 50 shot win 142-92. A solid team performance winning on 4 rinks, notably Ed Morris's rink 38-12 and Dave McCathie's rink 30-10

The semi-final on 9th July saw us drawn at Harlow against group 8. A very strong group with many top bowlers in their team meant it would be a difficult game. The overall score see-sawed throughout the morning, but we crucially won the last few ends to win by 3 shots 122-119. Another 4 rinks win with Ed Morris's rink again doing the business with a 30-9 win.

The final on 6th August against Group 2 at Essex County. Another strong group littered with Middleton Cup players. We started well, but Group 2 took an early lead. We pinned them back and the score was very close for most of the game. We finally pulled away in the last few third of the game and eventually won a tense affair by 9 shots 121-112. 4 rinks won again with Dave Dar's rink winning 26-16

We hadn't won this competition since 2015 and I said at last year's AGM that I would pick players I thought were the best to get a result and not use previous year's selection arrangement, I think this approach has been vindicated.

I wish to thank the support of the Group 6 committee and selectors and all the players who contributed to a successful campaign.

Selector - Steve Gunnell

6. Motions/Proposals

Motion 1. Proposal received from Group 6 Officers

Change Group 6 League Rule 7 to: -

"Cancelled Matches - Any team failing to play a fixture on the scheduled date will automatically concede 6 points and 6 shots to their opponents for that game. (Games can be played before the scheduled date, ONLY with the agreement of both teams. If the teams cannot agree, the team failing to play on the scheduled date will concede the game and points, as described above)

Note: Should a *Force majeure* event e.g. Earthquake/War/Crime etc. prevent a game being played on the scheduled date, the League Secretary will decide in conjunction with the clubs concerned, how the result of the game will be decided and the awarding of points. This decision will be final. In the case of bad weather, Rule 6 should be applied"

The reason for this rule change is to remove the conflict between clubs when dates for a rearranged game cannot be agreed and the League Secretary is asked to adjudicate and decide the awarding of points with the inevitable disagreements that occur.

- o **A hand vote was taken (delegates only) with the majority rejecting the motion**

Motion 2. Proposal received from Shoebury Park Bowling Club

Change Group 6 League Rule 7 to :-

"Unavailability of regular players is not an acceptable reason for requesting rearrangement of a match. If a club wishes to rearrange a match for any other reason, this may only be done with the agreement of the opponents. Any rearranged match must be played before 7 days after the last day of the Group 6 season, on a mutually agreed date proposed by the non-defaulting club. In the absence of such agreement the match will be conceded by the defaulting club who will forfeit 6 points and 6 shots to the other club. The League Secretary must be notified immediately"

First sentence -Following experience this year, our main aim is to ensure that no club which is willing to play on a scheduled fixture date has to agree to, or be disadvantaged by, a change of date.

Second sentence - This would allow a match to be re-scheduled after the scheduled fixture date, including the week following the end of the Group 6 season. We believe that this will sometimes be necessary and will be helpful to all clubs.

- **A hand vote was taken (delegates only) with the majority approving the motion**

Motion 3. Proposal received from Essex County Bowling Club

Change Group 6 Rule 7a, second sentence to: -

"The rearranged match must be played within 14 days after the last match of the Group 6 League season"

- **A hand vote was taken (delegates only) with the majority rejecting the motion**

Motion 4. Proposal received from Shoebury Park Bowling Club

Change Group 6 League Rule 4.c to read: -

Teams will concede the match if they fail to appear within 30 minutes of the stipulated start time or have notified their intention is not to appear....."

If this rule is to stay, it should be referenced back to Rule 7, as the game would be classified as a cancelled game.

- **A hand vote was taken (delegates only) with the majority approving the motion**

Motion 6. Proposal received from Group 6 Officers

Change Group 6 League Rule 4.f to read: -

"Skips allowed to visit the head"

"Three's up allowed, or to visit the head"

Change Group 6 League Rule 4.e to read: -

"To commence with 2 trial ends followed by a match of 18 ends"

The purpose of this proposal is to encourage players to play the game as a fully competitive game and learn to read the 'head' and discuss game tactics as a team.

This would prepare bowlers when they progress to more competitive games i.e. Ashford Cup, Wally Ball, Inter Group Knockout, Top Club etc.

The ends are reduced to 18 to compensate for increased visits to the head

- **A hand vote was taken (delegates only) with the majority approving the motion**

Motion 5. Proposal received from Group 6 Officers

Change Group 6 League Rule 4.e to read: -

"To commence with 2 trial ends followed by a match of 18 ends"

To reflect the game format in most competitive games now

- **Following the approval of the previous motion, a vote on this motion was not required**

Motion 7. Proposal received from Wickford B.C.

All league games in August to have a start time of 5:30pm

To ensure the whole game is played in good light, when the days are getting shorter

- **A hand vote was taken (delegates only) with the majority approving the motion**

Motion 8. Proposal received from Southchurch Park B.C.

Standardise the start time of all Group 6 League matches so they commence throughout the season at 5:30pm

- **A hand vote was taken (delegates only) with the majority rejecting the motion**

Motion 9. Proposal received from Southchurch Park B.C.

Change Group 6 League Rule 6.a, First sentence to read: -

"If a match is not started or abandoned before a 'combined' total of 20 ends have been played"

To clarify that the 20 ends referred to is the combined total of both rinks

- **A hand vote was taken (delegates only) with the majority approving the motion**

Motion 10. Proposal received from Shoebury Park Bowling Club

Change Group 6 League Rule by deleting 4.i : -

The deletion of this rule is recommended as we see no reason why Southend Parks Clubs should be treated any differently to any other Group 6 club

- **Following the approval of motion No. 6, this motion was withdrawn**

Motion 11. Proposal received from Group 6 Officers

Change Group 6 Constitution paragraph 8.1 to read: -

"Voting Powers - Each affiliated club is entitled to one 'male' delegate....."

To clarify that our organisation is affiliated to the Essex County Bowling Association for male members as reference in the ECBA Constitution 3.5

- **A hand vote was taken (delegates only) with the majority approving the motion**

Motion 12. Proposal received from Group 6 Officers

Change Group 6 League Rule 5a as follows -

a. Remove 'Play-Offs from Title

b. Add the following statement immediately following the title: -

"In the event that clubs either withdraw a team or enter a new team, the League Secretary together with the committee will determine the revised league structure. Their recommendations will be presented to the Group 6 AGM for approval. Refer to Group 6 Rules dates 12th Oct 2022 para. 3.4.1."

c. Rule 5a.b - Remove "except Div. 6" and replace with "except the lowest division....."

- o **A hand vote was taken (delegates only) with the majority approving the motion**

7. Election of Officers

All Group 6 Officers are standing un-opposed for next season

The un-opposed positions are: -

<u>Chairman:</u>	David Jacobi
<u>Secretary:</u>	Chris Flack
<u>Treasurer:</u>	Chris Chorley
<u>League Secretary:</u>	Kevin Robertson
<u>Match Secretary:</u>	Ken Griffiths
<u>Selector:</u>	Jim Bunce
<u>Selector:</u>	Ray Woollard
<u>Selector:</u>	Steve Gunnell

8. Presentation of Group 6 League Trophies

David Jacobi presented the winners Trophies to the delegates from: -

Division 1 – Essex County ‘A’

Division 2 – Rayleigh ‘A’

Division 3 – Runwell 'A'

Division 4 – Whitehall

Division 5 – Memorial Park

Division 6 – South Benfleet & Canvey ‘C’

Congratulations to all the above clubs

9. A.O.B.

None

10. Close to Meeting

There being no other business; the chairman thanked Rochford B.C. for the use of their facilities and opening the bar this evening, he subsequently closed the meeting at 8:55pm