

ESSEX COUNTY BOWLING ASSOCIATION GROUP 6

A.G.M. MEETING 9th OCTOBER 2025 at 7p.m.

Meeting opened at 19.00

Stand in Chairman David Birch 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

Gt. Wakering; Shoebury Park; Wickford

Delegates Present

Belfairs; Bournemouth Park; Castle Point; Essex County; Fairwood; Hadleigh; Hockley; Memorial Park; Prittlewell; Rayleigh; Rochford; South Benfleet & Canvey; Southchurch Park; Southend; Thorpe Bay; Whitehall;

Delegates Absent

Chalkwell Park; Runwell;

Officers Present

Chris Flack; Mike Birch; Kevin Robertson; Ken Griffiths; Dave Starkey; Dave Birch

Officers Absent

Jim Bunce; Lee Watkins; Ray Woollard

3. Chairman Jim Bunce statement, read by David Birch

A season of nearly's for Group 6 this year.

We should have reached the final in both the Ashford Cup and the Wally Ball; maybe next season.

Having seen the officers at work during the season, I am sure that Group 6 is in good hands for the future.

I have nothing more to add

With Jim retiring this AGM, the Group 6 Officers would like to say a few words of thanks on behalf of the everyone in the Group: -

We don't think we should let Jim Bunce retire from Group 6 without we express our thanks for his many years of service

Unfortunately Jim cannot be with us tonight having undergone heart surgery recently, from which we hope he makes a full and speedy recovery and can return to playing bowls.

Jim has supported Group 6 activities for many years both as a player and an officer.

We would go so far as to say that it was Jim almost single handedly who took on the responsibility for organising the Group 6 clubs in replacing the old officer's regime in the 2000's which allowed the group to finally move forward into the successful group we see today.

He personally visited all the Park Circle clubs on Saturday afternoons, when they were playing their weekend competition, to gather support for the changes that followed, for that we will forever be in his debt.

Although Jim supported all Group 6 activities his personal favourite was the Ashford Cup in which he not only played but also managed with great success.

He liked nothing better than taking new bowlers on the journey to their County Badge via the Ashford Cup

Jim always supported the other Group 6 officers in their work and was a staunch ally whenever things got a bit hairy.

On behalf of the officers here today and past officers who worked with Jim, we would like to say a huge thank you for your many years of support to the group, you leave a big hole that we will do our best to fill

Thank you, may you have a long a healthy retirement when hopefully we will still see you around supporting us.

On your behalf we would like Jim to accept this small token of our appreciation

4. Approval of Minutes of the 2024 AGM held on 10th October 2024

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

Proposed - Bournemouth Park delegate

Seconded - Thorpe Bay delegate

There were no matters arising

5. Officer Reports

Treasurers Report

At the start of the year we had a bank balance of £2171.96 over the year we had a surplus of £404.40 giving us a closing balance of £2576.37.

As usual, by the end of the year we have received the following years affiliation fees and league entry fees. These, as usual will be included in next year's accounts but mean the actual end of year bank balance is £2976.37.

As well as the affiliation and league entry fees the other main source of income has been the subsidy paid by ECBA. Part of this money is to help cover travel costs of Group officers to matches; Ashford, Wally Ball and Intergroup. This year, as in previous years, our officers have not takes these expenses. This accounts for a large part of our surplus.

This year we decided to change the Group 6 shirts. There will be an ongoing annual cost for this, it is adequately covered by our reserves.

The Affiliation and League Fees, supplemented by part of the ECBA subsidy cover our normal annual expenditure.

Secretary's Report

Firstly, I would like to thank every club for returning your 2026 Affiliation Fees & League subscriptions on time, this has allowed us to present you with some options for next year's League structure at today's meeting rather than later. Thank you

So next year, Group 6 league will be maintained at 21 affiliated clubs. with no further withdrawals

I would like thank those clubs who have returned their nominations for next year's Representative games, I have only received 20 nominations for the Ashford Cup. so far, so if you have forgotten, it is not too late, just email me a copy please.

I would also like to thank the 16 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 2026 Affiliations Fees and your club contact details for next seasons County Handbook.

On the subject of County Affiliations I would like to draw you attention to one matter that could have major ramifications for us all in the years to come.

Sport England who provide funds to both outdoor and indoor bowls nationally have asked the question, 'why are there two national bodies', could this be reduced to one that covers both indoors and outdoor activities.

Consultants have been appointed who are looking at the ramifications of this change.

There are major differences between the two organisations, one being finance, with Bowls England having significantly greater funds than the EIBA who run the indoors. This is simply because there are 100's of outdoor clubs who pay affiliation fees but relatively few indoor clubs.

Another significant difference is paid staff, where Bowls England have dozens and the EIBA have 4. They both have a paid CEO. which would be reduced to one.

This issue is unlikely to have any impact on us as clubs for many years, maybe the end of the decade, but change is inevitable.

As last year, I will also be asking you to provide me your club contacts for 2026, once received I will forward to complete list to all club secretaries and delegates.

Our Group 6 competitions returned this year, with 27 entries in the Singles and 20 in the Triples. All the rounds were completed on-time for which I would like to say thank you to all the players.

The SINGLES was won by Alan Eldridge (ECBC) who beat Duncan Barton (TBBC) by 21 shots to 14.

The TRIPLES was won by Gary Telling (sub-Ray Bone), Malcolm & Alan Eldridge from Essex County who beat Steve Gymer, Allan Peterson and Keith Lucock from Fairwood by 22 shots to 6

I would like to say a big thank you to Rayleigh Bowling Club for hosting the finals this year, they proved excellent hosts and together with a lot of support for the players, (especially from Fairwood) everyone had a very good morning, in which the weather also played its part.

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 as well as bowls across the County, so please use it.

I would also like to mention the great job Paul LaPlain from Essex County did this year as County President, he certainly represented Group 6 very well.

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 list is long but these achievements should be recognised at this meeting.

English National Championships

- Ed Morris (ECBC) on winning the Champion of Champion Men's Singles
- Ed Morris and Steve Gunnell (ECBC) on reaching the Final in the Men's Championship Pairs
- Barry Miller (Rochford) on reaching the Qtr Final in the Men's Senior Singles
- Nigel Smith, David Dar, Barry Stone & Richard Spriggs (ECBC) reaching the last 16 in the Men's Senior Fours
- Alan Eldridge (ECBC) on reach the last 32 in the Men's Junior Singles
- Ed Morris (ECBC) on reaching the last 32 in the Men's Two Wood Singles
- Ed Morris (ECBC) on reaching the last 32 in the Men's Championship Singles
- Alan Eldridge (ECBC) representing Essex and reaching the Junior Top Club semi-final
- Ed Morris, Steve Gunnell and Ray Bone (ECBC) representing Essex and reaching the Balcomb Final, narrowly losing to Leicestershire
- Essex County on reaching the Qtr Final in the Men's Top Club played at Leamington

County Competitions

- Ed Morris (ECBC) winning the Men's Championship Singles
- Ed Morris (ECBC) winning the Men's Two Wood Singles
- Ed Morris and Steve Gunnell (ECBC) won the Men's Pairs
- Alan Eldridge (ECBC) winning the Junior Singles
- Nigel Smith, David Dar, Barry Stone & Richard Spriggs from ECBC winning the Men's Senior Fours
- Essex County on beating Frinton in the final of the County Shield

London & Southern Counties

- Keith Emberson, Chris Morris Nick Rodwell and Steve Laver from South Benfleet & Canvey being runners-up in the Men's Fours against Poplar
- Essex County winning the Shield beating Broomfield
- Ed Morris (ECBC) winning the Gold Badge (Men's Singles)

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

Finally, I would like to express my disappointment that we only have one nomination for Group 6 Officers positions this year, I can't believe in what is probably the largest group (by membership) in the County only one person has come forward.

It might seem harsh but I blame you the delegates for that, by not communicating these vacancies within your clubs will never find new blood

We have 100's of members, I don't believe we only have one person that has stepped forward, there must be lots of potential candidates out there, they just don't know about our activities and how they can help, once again there is no communication.

League Secretary's Report

The league ran smoothly this year with results being reported generally on time and with the league tables updated within days of the games. Only one game was left unplayed, due to player unavailability at short notice.

For next season, we have the same teams being entered as in 2025, so there is no need for any restructure. This is, of course, dependent on the motion proposed by Bournemouth Park.

The Officers are presenting a motion to formalise the switchover to Wednesday evenings as we have received no specific feedback from the clubs.

The Officers are also presenting a motion later in this meeting to change the league rules to clarify the situation relating to the number of ends that can be agreed upon in the case of expected bad weather.

Finally, congratulations to all the Divisional winners and I look forward to summer 2026.

Match Secretary

2025 has been a difficult season to arrange the same friendly fixtures that we have had in the past.

To try and overcome this situation I was able to arrange one new fixture with the Chelmsford & District B.A., which was played on Thursday 28th August. I have now established this fixture as a regular game going forward.

This game was a replacement for the Essex Vice-Presidents game that was played at Essex County and the Chelmsford B.A. always enjoy playing at ECBC.

This fixture has been confirmed for 6 rinks on Thursday 27th August 2026 at ECBC

Unfortunately with regard to the Essex Vice-Presidents, there was difficulty arranging a suitable date for 2025, I have tried to resurrect this fixture for 2026, offering a spare date in early September, but to date I have not received a response. As a result we will not be playing the Essex V.P.'s in 2026

The usual fixture with the Southend Park Circle could not be arranged due to their difficulties finding a fixture secretary.

To replace the Park Circle fixture I have had preliminary discussions with the Basildon & District B.A. about a fixture in 2026

The one disappointment for me is the difficulty that clubs have in providing one rink of four male players and their playing positions, in a reasonable time.

I try and give the clubs a reasonable amount of time before I call their secretary with a gentle reminder that I need four male players, the response is very often, they cannot find four players to play.

My instruction in previous AGM's has been to contact the club secretary and delegate with my request, as a result of the poor responses we will now include the club captain.

In conclusion. I wish everyone a healthy winter and if bowling indoor, enjoy.

Selectors

Ashford Cup - Firstly I would like to thank MCA trust, Not Just Banners, Aaron Lyons and TGC for sponsoring Group 6 and enabling us to purchase new shirts for the Group and keep the cost down to the minimum. I think they are very smart and I'm proud to have been able to introduce these to the Group.

As my 1st year as a selector I had a lot of nerves taking over the reigns from Jim. I would firstly like to thank my fellow selectors and the committee for their support. Secondly I would like to thank all the players who were at the trial, you gave me a headache selecting the final 30. There were some players who were very unlucky not to make it, I hope to see them back for next year's trial.

Moving onto the games our 1st game away to Group 9 a fantastic effort winning on 5 rinks and up until the last bowl we had all 6 rinks.

Game 2 was away to Group 1, a long away trip and a very tough game. Having lost there last year we managed to reverse our fortunes winning 3 and drawing 1 rink, this put us in pole position for qualifying with Group 1 hot on our heels.

Alas it wasn't to be we played Group 2 at home and only managed to win 2 rinks, a very disappointing result meaning we missed out on the final by 1 point. Group 1 then going on to win the Ashford cup Congratulations to them.

Five players have received their County badge this year Steve Martin, Paul Johnson, Graham Parker, Ben Staines and Andy Dawes, thank you for your contribution to the Ashford Cup squad over the past and I wish you all well. As always this gives other bowlers the opportunity to get into the Squad.

I'm looking forward to next year's competition and I'm sure I will have as many headaches as I did this year. I'm confident that with the bowlers we have in Group 6 last year's result will be a blip and we will win back the Ashford Cup.

Finally a big Thank you to the Squad who turned up every Sunday for the games. I'm proud of each and every one of you

Selector – Dave Birch

Wally Ball - 21 Players selected made up from E.C.B.C (7) S.B.& C.B.C. (5) Rayleigh (3) Runwell (1) Prittlewell (3) Hockley (1) Thorpe Bay (1)

I would like to thank Prittlewell B. & Croquet Club for the use of the green and the hospitality

First Match v Group 1 at Prittlewell

3 bowlers pulled out of match from 1st selection 1 bowler retired after 5 ends possibly caused by the green had not been cut for two days (GREEN VERY HEAVY). The match did not go well only 4 points out of 8 shot difference -16

Lots of moans about playing surface by players.

We spoke to Prittlewell about the green condition we were informed that the green had not been cut since Friday Southend Council would not cut the green on Sunday before unless they were paid. I understand Group 6 chairman suggested that the group 6 paid for the cutting to be done before the next match on Sunday the group Treasure agreed.

2nd Match V Group 8 at Prittlewell

Group 8 had lost their 1st match 8 – 0 So with a little bit of luck and some good bowling and the green being cut just before the match we could do well 3 changes to the front end of 2 rinks right from the start there was some moaning about the pace & line it was still very heavy but the same for both sets of players. I was disappointed with some of the bowling unfortunately being a bowler I have been there myself so I know what they must have felt like again 4 points out of 8 shot difference -8

at least that was better than last week. So it will all be down to the last match against Group 4 needed to win by 8- 0 with a very good shot difference a very big ask.

3rd Match V 4 at Liberty of Havering

Made some slight changes moved 2 players around & brought one player in Ray Woollard stepped in for me as I was not available on match day no reserves turned up thank you Ray for bringing your bowls in case you were wanted Same result as the other matches 4 point out of 8

Conclusion When the squad was selected I phoned them up with the dates asking them to make sure they were available this did not happen, one player pulled out just before the first match one other could not travel away matches, reserves did not turn up for last match.

With the standard of bowlers, we have in Group 6 we should have done better I blame myself for this I did not get the players I selected in the right places

I have asked the Secretary for a meeting how we could improve the group when selecting and any way we could help to improve the green without the cost coming from group 6

Selector - Dave Starkey

Inter Group Knockout - Sorry I cannot be there tonight, I am on holiday

Our first-round game was away to Group 2 at Radwinter B.C., a tough game for our first game.

Without our best two skips; Ed Morris and Jack Butcher, I picked the best 24 available players, and we lost by 8 shots.

Well done to Phil Brandon's rink (Graham Parker, Ben Staines & Kim Wakeman) who won by 8 shots

With three rinks only losing by 1 shot each

Thank you to all the players who made the long trip to Radwinter especially Chris Watson who travelled as our reserve

We go again next year.

Selector - Lee Watkins

6. Motions/Proposals

Motion 1. Proposal received from Group 6 Officers

Move the Group 6 League night to a Wednesday permanently

Following the vote at the 2022 Group 6 AGM to move the Group 6 League night to a Wednesday for a trial period, this motion seeks to make that change permanent

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

Motion 2. Proposal received from Group 6 Officers

Change Group 6 League Rules 4h to the following: -

'Where bad light or exceptional weather conditions prevail, a match can be limited to 11 ends (on each rink) with the agreement of the captains prior to the start of the match'

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

Motion 3. Proposal received from Bournemouth Park B.C.

All Group 6 League games to start at 5:30pm

The general view of the meeting was that starting earlier every week would potentially prevent some bowlers, especially those that work from bowling in the Group 6 league, which was counter to everything that Group 6 works for.

The Group 6 Officers suggested that clubs could play at any time on the scheduled day, as long the opposing club agreed.

The League Secretary promised to update the league rules to include this addition information.

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

Motion 4. Proposal received from Bournemouth Park B.C.

Only one badged player to be allowed to play on each rink in Group 6 League games

The general view of the meeting was that this would prevent a significant number of bowlers from a lot of clubs bowling in the Group 6 league, which was counter to what Group 6 works for.

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

Motion 5. Proposal received from Bournemouth Park B.C.

All teams from Essex County B.C. to play in their own division within the Group 6 League, with no promotion/relegation

- **This motion was withdrawn prior to the meeting starting with no discussion or vote taking place**

7. Election of Officers

The following Group 6 Officers are standing un-opposed for next season: -

<u>Secretary:</u>	Chris Flack
<u>League Secretary:</u>	Kevin Robertson
<u>Match Secretary:</u>	Ken Griffiths
<u>Treasurer:</u>	Mike Birch
<u>County Selector:</u>	Ray Woollard
<u>Selector:</u>	David Birch
<u>Selector:</u>	David Starkey
<u>Selector:</u>	Lee Watkins

Current Officer standing down (Retiring)

Jim Bunce

The following nominations have been received from the clubs:

Kevin Crowley	Rochford Bowling Club
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Proposal - Kevin Crowley be elected as Group 6 Chairman

- **There were no objections from the floor, Kevin was duly elected**

8. Presentation of Group 6 League Trophies for the season 2025

Paul LaPlain (County President) presented the winners Trophies to the club representatives from: -

Division 1 – Essex County 'A'

Division 2 – Hockley 'A'

Division 3 – Whitehall

Division 4 – Rayleigh 'B'

Division 5 – Hadleigh 'B'

Congratulations to all the above clubs

9. A.O.B.

The delegate from Prittlewell B.C. asked if Group 6 could do anything to prevent clubs from putting wet weather mats down in the height of summer when the ground is 'rock hard'. In his opinion it ruins the game without any good reason.

Various delegates expressed the view that Park Circle clubs and others who didn't own their own green were influenced by the local council's greenkeepers when it came to putting mats down and sometimes the clubs didn't have a choice.

It was also stated; that within the 'Rules of Bowls' it was at the discretion of the home club and its greenkeeper to play with mats down if they think their playing surface will be damaged during the game.

In summary; Group 6 cannot impose rules on Group 6 clubs as to when games are played with mats down.

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 8:15pm