

DRAFT

MINUTES OF ESMBC AGM 22<sup>ND</sup> JULY 2021

HELD AT EBC CLUBHOUSE, EWHURST, SURREY

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Di Richardson and David Gillings
2. APPROVAL OF 2019 MINUTES - Minutes were approved and signed by Chairman (DMcG)  
Proposed by Jo Reynolds and Seconded by Tony Hodge
3. MATTERS ARISING: Jackie Wright asked why items in the Minutes should not be marked by bullets and this would be considered. Also Jackie Wright had no knowledge of training sessions and was advised that these were fully advertised and many members took full advantage of them.
4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: A welcome was given to all 37 members attending. We have experienced a national and global affliction not experienced since wartime conditions. The club was closed before the planned end of the 2019/20 season with a small but important number of competitions completed.

It was concluded that an AGM in 2020 for the previous season was impracticable due to Covid restrictions so this AGM covers all the time since our last AGM in 2019. An AGM whilst demanded by the Constitution is in reality a point of reckoning as to just where the club sits at that time. This day is the earliest available to our club.

Try as we did to get the unfinished matches played, the opportunities were snatched away from us by the relevant restrictions imposed upon all clubs by the ESMBA directives and government policy. Whist I agree with any constraint imposed because of safety concerns, as time has gone on I am less convinced that anyone at the Government Culture and Sports making those plans had the slightest idea of just what short mat bowling was. I also wonder whether there was any meaningful communication with the department from ESMBA.

I have written to Barry Hedges, Chairman of ESMBA, asking for clarification of the correspondence between ESMBA and the Dept of Culture Sport etc. and also asked about the recent ruling of one person only on the mat when the current rule was six to a mat. Barry replied but did not answer my questions and even denied knowledge of the one player rule. Barry wrote it in a March "route map" circular to counties. I copied his publication and sent it to him.

It has been a tough time for everyone, but I must pay tribute to the stalwart support our club has had from each and every one of your committee. Whist Pauline, your secretary,

has been the fulcrum point which has kept us on track, everyone has been a truly dedicated player within the committee team.

My thanks also go to Mike and Ann, Roger and Sue and Margaret for allowing us to hold our committee meetings in their gardens which we managed to convene all through the restrictions. Not to mention the coffee and biscuits!

I also pay tribute to Roger and Jo Newman for their sterling work, over many seasons, as club bar stewards. In all seasons but the last the bar profits contributed significantly to our finances. That task is now being taken over by willing volunteers David and Mavis Kempson effective from the start of 2021/22 season in September.

The future of bowls generally within Surrey is of an uncertain nature, largely caused by the pandemic, with clubs not registering for a variety of reasons. On the bright side, registered players can, as from 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021 play at Wey Valley in controlled circumstances.

Those clubs which are not registered are thus ineligible for competitions with registered clubs and players. In particular, the future of the SHAB League will no doubt be reviewed by the Officers (and Committee) of SHAB. At this time leadership of SHAB is uncertain.

My appreciation is unreserved for the 67 players who supported the club through the bad times even though potential for play was uncertain. That support made our efforts worthwhile. Data Protection legislation denied the club from maintaining details of the now unregistered players and I took advice on this legality from the Bowls England Safeguarding Officer, a solicitor.

Contrary to some stated beliefs, we have published either in the Newsletter or by dedicated emails to all registered players, any and all relevant information. We have no secrets.

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT: We have 37 members attending this meeting. For members safety we do have a first aid box in the kitchen cupboard and also a defibrillator in the porch. We did initially have a demonstration of how to use this machine and hope to organise another instruction session with St John Ambulance in due course.

A few thanks, firstly to Mike, Ann and Steph for setting up the hall for this meeting with chairs spaced to avoid unnecessary contact. Also to other members who support and maintain the club and help it to be the success it is especially during these very difficult times. Also to Roger Newman for maintaining and updating the website.

We also have to thank all the members who have supported us throughout this season by joining although there was little possibility of playing and to the committee for their efforts to keep the club operating and informing club members of developments and changes. Also members of the committee have been stewards for the summer season organised by Margaret Weeden and to Roger Dobbins for the booking system via the website.

We do have a list of current members but DATA Protection does not allow us to leave this in the clubhouse so if members require a copy they can email me and I will pass the information to them. In order that I can keep this list up to date could you please let me know of any changes etc.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT AND ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS: The Treasurer welcomed the members for attending on a very hot evening.

We have endured a very difficult and in some cases a very stressful 16 months but thankfully we have come out of this pandemic relatively unscathed.

The accounts I am presenting are for the year end April 2020: we had 105 members including 2 social members and 2 life members. Due to Covid restrictions the usual handover was not possible so the bar stock was carried forward as an asset. Some stock was sold through the year, some was lost due to going out of date and some eventually was sold to the EBC. This will be reflected in next year's accounts. We ended the year in a strong position with £1609.58 in the current account and £3552.22 in the reserve. A total, with bar stock of £5300.61.

In March last year and with the pandemic running unabated we entered a period of uncertainty with no clear idea of just what we were facing. In September we asked for our members' support in the hope that some bowling would be possible. We are grateful to the 70 members who paid their subscriptions despite the fact that no guarantee could be given that they would be able to bowl through the winter. As we all know we were not able to bowl despite the committee's efforts to make the clubhouse safe in line with Bowls England requirements, government restrictions simply made it impossible to open the clubhouse.

With this in mind the committee has decided to extend the membership of those members who so generously paid in September 21 to the 21/22 season. Hopefully by then we will be back to a full programme of bowling. This decision has been made possible in part by the government's award of a business grant to all rate paying businesses in the UK and it is this grant which I will endeavour to explain, following the vote to approve the year's account.

David Kempson asked why the accounts only covered 2019/20 and was advised that this year's AGM was put in abeyance and therefore the accounts for this year were not able to be audited. David Kempson asked if previous non-joining members would be asked to pay a joining fee should they decide to rejoin the club but this was not being considered at this time.

Hilary Mitchell asked about the government grants to sports organisations and Mike White advised this would be covered later.

A vote was taken to accept the accounts and this was unanimous. Proposed by Jackie Wright and seconded by David Kempson.

I have been asked to address the situation regarding the governments' Covid grant. In March last year as the effects of the pandemic became all too clear we were locked down

and most businesses were ordered to close. This included sports facilities throughout the kingdom. In an attempt to mitigate the clear financial damage that this would do to the nation's businesses the government announced a series of grants to be paid based on certain criteria. One grant was awarded to all rate paying businesses in the UK. This initial grant was £10,000 paid in March.

You will all be aware that the situation at our club is that the Bowls Club pays all joint expenses and reclaims an agreed proportion of the costs from us, the Short Mat Club. In the case of rent we pay 50/50, in the case of rates we pay 7/12's to reflect the fact that we use the clubhouse for 7 months of the year. The Bowls Club, in line with this arrangement, claimed the grant **but has** (as of today) **failed to share the grant with us**. We have requested that we receive 50% of the grant but none has been forthcoming.

In September 2020 as the pandemic continued, a further grant of £5907 was awarded for the 4 months to December. In December a further £4000 was awarded as the lock down was extended to April 2021. So far we have received just the £5907 despite the fact that the £4000 clearly covers the last 4 months of our season. Then, finally a further £8000 has been claimed by the Bowls Club to "facilitate the reopening of business" **again we have not received any of this money**. Apologies were given for the long list of figures but it was felt important that members needed to know the situation as it stands. In summary the grant received by the Bowls Club is £27,907 of which the short mat club has received £5908.

This is not, in your committee's opinion, an equitable solution to what should have been a situation to celebrate making both clubs much more financially secure for the foreseeable future.

I feel sure members would expect the committee to continue to pursue an "equitable solution" to the distribution of the grant. We consider the grant should be shared equally, as would be fair, and the Bowls Club would need to pay a further £8046.50 to meet this requirement.

Questions were accepted from the members:

Bill Creelman asked why the outdoor club had not offered to share this grant and what was their response to our requests. EBC made the claim as ratepayers without reference to the short mat club. We did try to meet with their committee member but no meeting took place. Jackie Wright asked if the two club treasurers agreed to claim and was advised that only the ratepayer could claim but we were not aware initially that the outdoor club had made the claim and received the initial grant.

Peter Adams, treasurer for EBC, advised that the funds are still available and we may get results in the future after there is a meeting with the two clubs.

NOTIFICATION OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: The annual subscription will remain at £40 for 2021/22 but for those members who joined in 20/21 and paid their subscription their membership will be extended for September 2021 to April 2022 in appreciation of their support to the club albeit there was little chance of playing. Of those members who do not

wish to continue their subscription will be returned if required. Peter Adams stated that he will still be prepared to pay his subs for 21/22.

7. MATCH SECRETARY'S REPORT: As the club has been unable, due to Covid restrictions, to hold any matches this season there is nothing to report. The last results remain the same.

Some small changes have been made for the coming season. There will now only be two teams entering into the SHAB League competitions, they will be Ewhurst Red and Ewhurst Blue. Also the emphasis will be on making up good teams who play well together and not so much on individual players. The Eagles and Falcons last results certainly show good teams win matches. They also enjoy playing together which is the main object of the game.

Let us hope we will have lots of good results to discuss by the end of next season.

8. COMPETITION SECRETARY'S REPORT: The Star Cup, Teams of Five, Triples and Wednesday League have been played but the Novice and Drawn Pairs have still to play. The Mixed Pairs cannot be played as some players are no longer registered members of the club. It has been suggested that we might play these outstanding matches in August.

9. ELECTION OF OFFICERS: The forms for Nomination of Officers are normally placed on the club notice board but due to the current situation (Covid Regs) this was not possible so the forms and notices were sent to all registered members via email. There were no proposals for these positions. The current Officers of the committee were prepared to stand again.

The vote for current officers to stand was unanimous Proposed by Ann White and Seconded by David Burge.

10. ELECTION OF ACCOUNTS EXAMINER: Howard Quenell is prepared to continue. Proposed by Liz Hodge and seconded by Hilary Mitchell.

#### 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Roger Dobbing said the booking system had gone well and was well supported. Jackie Wright thanked Roger for his good work. Pauline Shipway also thanked him for his work in producing the Newsletter for many years and especially over the period of restrictions due to the pandemic.

George Shipway asked whether non-members still had keys to the clubhouse and if so should we be getting the keys back. Some keys are still out there but no record has been kept of previous key holders as the person dealing with the list has since died. However, a better system will be implemented in future.

Margaret Weeden advised that session leaders are required for each bowls session and Bill Creelman has volunteered for Monday morning, Steph Taylor will cover Thursday and Saturday evenings. We still require a leader for Wednesday morning. If no leader comes

forward then Margaret Weeden will appoint one of the players to cover. June Ives has volunteered to cover this session.

Hilary Mitchell said if the short mat finals were held in August it would not be fair to the contestants who are currently playing outdoor as they have not had any practice. This will be discussed at a later date.

The meeting was asked how members felt about us pursuing the grant with the outdoor club. Ann White said that the outdoor club has more expenses so we should not claim half. Outdoor bowls have been played all season and short mat did not. Short mat paid all the overheads but did not have use of the clubhouse due to the restrictions of pandemic. If the outdoor club had been more open about the grant then we might have been able to make some compromise. Malcolm Wright said on behalf of EBC they would be happy to talk about costs and come to a reasonable settlement. Dennis McGuinness said that more than the money it was the principal of the issue. EBC has suggested that £4000 of the grant should go to the Centre Management fund. It is not our intention to drive a wedge between the two clubs. Jackie Wright suggested a sum should be put aside for the upkeep of the club. Dennis McGuinness disagreed with this. Mike White said the money was to help with the running of the club. Short mat Club lost a whole year's subs and membership. Hilary Mitchell said it was reasonable for short mat to claim 50%. Malcolm Wright EBC said we should wait until the club representatives had further discussion. Peter Adams will be reporting back to the outdoor committee.

Dennis McGuinness thanked Malcolm Wright for his work on the Centre Management committee but Malcolm will be resigning. The Centre committee has two members from the short mat club on the committee so volunteers would be required. Mike Wells and Gordon Beddall agreed to cover these positions.

Dennis McGuinness announced that the club would be giving an Honorary Life Membership to Roger Dobbing. Roger has been Chairman of the Social Committee, editor of the Newsletter and is on the short mat committee and has worked hard for the benefit of the short mat club. Roger gave thanks for this award. Roger also advised that he would be continuing as editor of the Newsletter but in future it would contain only club news without any articles or competitions as previously.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 930 pm.

Pauline Shipway  
Hon Sec Ewhurst Short Mat Bowls Club  
August 2021

Dennis McGuinness  
Hon Chairman