**Hexham Elvaston Bowling Club**

**Detailed Information Pack for Club Members**

This pack aims to provide you with basic information about the way the club is organised, and to answer the sorts of questions which prospective, new or existing members might well ask. If a question occurs to you that is not covered here, please contact the Secretary, who will be glad to provide an answer and include the issue in future notes.

**The Basics**

**Membership**

If you haven’t yet joined a Membership Form is available from the website and once submitted and accepted membership fees will become payable. The Treasurer will contact you with payment details. If, on your application form, you have asked for an outer door and/or locker key then those will be available to you by way of an addressed envelope on the desk in the main entrance.

The main access door to the clubhouse is the one on the north end of the building; the south door (opposite the main gate and path) is opened only from the inside, during matches.

**Fees**

Although you might have joined and paid membership during the summer, the current rules provide for payment for the following season by 31st March of each year. New members who are new to the sport pay half the fees in their first year.

**Bowling Activity**

**Use of the Green**

As a member you can use the green for practice or social games at any time, subject to obvious restrictions such as bad weather, green maintenance or when matches are taking place. There are no green fees. Members may introduce visitors, up to a maximum of three times in a year, and at a cost of £1, to be paid at the time of a visit. A book to record such visits is on the desk in the hallway.

The green is normally cut three times a week, normally on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from about 09.00 until about 11.00am. We cannot be more precise than that, as the timing may vary depending on weather and match schedules, but it is a good guide.

In order to even the wear on the green, we ask that players use the rinks in the direction stated on the sheet posted on the board just inside the main door. There are two directions of play: “hut to hut” (pavilion to shelter) or “hedge to hedge” and we usually alternate between the two each week and the direction is shown for each week on a sheet in the foyer of the clubhouse.

There is no dress codefor practice games, other than bowling shoes. ***Jacks*** (the small white object balls) are stored in racks near the main door; ***blue mats*** to bowl from are stacked just to the right of the desk in the hall; there are plenty of different sized bowls and a few pairs of shoes on the shelving on the back wall, as well as the bowls in boxes, and these are free to borrow if you do not have your own equipment. Please return to the shelves after each time you use them.

If you arrive for a practice and you find the green being used for a league or Cup match or the majority of rinks were in use for a competition, please check with a club officer or member present if it would be OK to use a rink. If such a match was taking up only one or two rinks there would be plenty of room to make use of a spare rink. This is not something that is rigidly defined, or included in rules – just ask a member if you are in any doubt.

**Club “Jumbles”**

Jumbles take place on Saturday afternoons at 2.00pm when members of all abilities whether long standing or brand new are randomly drawn from a hat into teams to play three friendly matches. After each match the draw takes place again. After the second match we enjoy refreshments together. The person with the highest score wins a bag of sweets. Please book in by 1.45pm.

**Monday Shield**: for this evening session we make up teams by choosing the skips and then allocating the remaining players among the teams by drawing lots. There is just the one match of 15 ends. Players’ scores (the team total) are recorded each time. At the end of the season the six leading players on aggregate contest a Final. The Monday Shield usually starts at 6.15pm, please arrive to book in by 6.00pm.

**League Matches**

The Club plays in three different leagues; The Nines (for men); The Collins & Shipley (for ladies) and The West Tyne League (for men and ladies). These are noted on the website, and if you are interested in finding out more about playing in these leagues please ask the men’s or ladies’ captain.

**Friendly Matches**

Friendly matches, both men’s and mixed, are advertised on the website and board in the clubhouse. It’s a great way of meeting members and visitors from other clubs and playing on different greens to widen your experience.

**Internal Club Competitions**

We hold various knock-out competitions, one-day tournaments for members through the season. Entry forms and fuller details are available on the board behind the desk in the hallway. Members of all abilities and experience are encouraged to sign up for these.

**What do I wear for bowling?**

***Informal practice and roll-ups:***

Flat soled shoes are the only requirement. Other than that wear anything you feel comfortable in.

***Club Informal Dress***: This is a white top with grey below the waist (shorts, trousers or skirts). This is worn for Jumbles sessions, one-day tournaments within the club, and club competitions.

***Club Formal Dress – a rare sight***: For men this involves a white shirt with club tie; for ladies it is a white blouse, with a navy cardigan. For some events the men’s team also have a black (or dark navy) blazer – club badges are available for purchase if you wish. Again, this is a bowling tradition, not a special feature of Elvaston.

***Team Dress***: For league and (external) Cup competitions, as well as most of the friendly matches, we wear special sports tops. These club shirts are provided by an external supplier. We sell them at cost price, and have a good range in stock.

For ***friendly*** matches against other clubs the dress code varies, often depending on the traditions and nature of the opposition. The particular style of outfit for each match is noted on the team selection sheet. However, as noted above, we always aim to be as flexible as possible, and you should not worry about the styles of dress at this point.

**General Information**

***Phone***

We do not have a landline telephone at the club. Mobile signal is good and we can get 5G.

The phone numbers for some Club officers are given on the fixture list and website. Members’ phone numbers are available within the club. We try to keep to a minimum the amount of personal data available even to other members. We also do all we can to check that you are happy with the arrangements made. If you ever feel that we are not being sufficiently careful with your data, please contact the Secretary to raise the issue.

***Refreshments***

The fridge in the hall has a selection of soft drinks. Please feel free to help yourself, putting the appropriate cost in the honesty ‘pig’ box. Under the terms of the Club’s foundation we are not able to sell alcohol on the premises, but this does not exclude the *consumption* of alcohol. However, by tradition this is limited to social events, which are often advertised as BYOB.

**Smoking**

Naturally there is a no-smoking policy in the clubhouse. No bowls clubs allow smoking on the green these days, and most clubs do not allow it around the green either. We do not have a complete ban in the grounds, but simply ask for discretion if anyone does feel the need to smoke while on the premises.

**Costs**

Once fees have been paid there are not many additional costs in terms of payment to the club. One or two club competitions have a small charge for catering, and there is also a £1.00 fee for the Saturday Jumbles sessions (to cover the costs of refreshments and some small prizes). Travel costs for away matches were mentioned above.

Other minor fund-raising activities such as the Domino ticket on Saturdays, or various raffles, may also tempt you. A larger event, with correspondingly larger prizes is the 100 Club, which requires a £12 stake per year, with twelve monthly draws and the chance to win £20, £10 or £5 in each one. This scheme is run by Jean Allen who would be very pleased to move towards completing the maximum 100 members - as would the Treasurer! We also hold various fund-raising events from time to time at the club house.

**Mentors**

New bowlers may wish to follow up the idea whereby they can be allocated to an existing member who is not only a decent bowler but also keen to pass on information about the club and the game. This would extend to having practice matches on a one-to-one basis, set up between the two (or more) people involved. This is in addition to our coaching, which is available from any of our qualified coaches.

**Volunteer Duties**

Like any club of this nature we rely almost entirely on the input of members. This involves various jobs at various times, some of them regular and ongoing, others sporadic or complete one-offs. Please do consider if you could lend a hand at any of these things as you hear of them. It is team work both on and off the green. Roles include:

* Catering and kitchen duties
* Helping set up the green for matches
* Tidying the grounds and building in autumn and spring
* Cleaning (clubhouse, toilets, etc) or decoration.

If you have any particular expertise, whether it be accountancy, painting, web design, general DIY skills or woodwork, please do let us know, so that we can make use of your skills as required.

**Car Parking**

When approaching the Club from the east side (Elvaston Road end) parking is free for 4 hours on the left hand side just beyond the junction with St George’s Road and this extends to just short of the first turning left south of the club. There is then further unlimited parking on some of the streets off Elvaston Road south of that junction but we do ask that you ensure you do not restrict any vehicular access to any driveways.

Please avoid parking in St George’s Road.

If you are not yet a member we are delighted that you are considering joining Elvaston, and look forward to your friendship for many years to come.

**Subscriptions:**

**£130.00** but if you are a ‘New to Bowls‘ there is a reduced subscription for the first year of £65.00

**Carpet Bowls**

During the Winter months from September/October to late March inclusive we operate indoor Carpet Bowls sessions on Saturday afternoons with three carpets available. There is a small annual subscription of £10.00 for non-club members and a sessional charge of £2.00. Indoor bowls membership is included in the full and junior membership subscriptions. Check the website for details of the commencement of bowling in the autumn. 1.45 for 2.00pm start.

**Accessibility**

Our clubhouse, although modern looking, was designed and built in the days before accessibility for less able members was considered an important issue. Despite having level access from Elvaston Road (there is a small concrete ‘lip’ at the gates which some may find difficult) there is a flight of steps to gain access to the clubhouse and toilets. The committee is actively looking at how the necessary improvements can be made and if funding can be secured for this important work.