

MINUTES OF THE TWENTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF KENT COUNTY SHORT MAT BOWLING
ASSOCIATION HELD AT LANGLEY VILLAGE HALL ON SUNDAY 8TH JUNE, 2008

OFFICERS/	MR T RYCRAFT	CHAIRMAN
COMMITTEE	MR D CARPENTER	VICE CHAIRMAN
PRESENT	MS M FITZGERALD	SECRETARY
	MRS J DAVEY	TREASURER
	MRS S WATSON	COMPETITION SECRETARY
	MR M WIEDEHOLZ	COUNTY TEAM MANAGER
	MR T COLES	COMMITTEE
	MRS I BENTON	COMMITTEE
	MR C ENGLAND	COMMITTEE

Representatives of the following Clubs were present at the Meeting:

Borden	Newington
Boughton Monchelsea	Queenborough
Culverstone	Ryarsh
Detling	Shorne
Eastling	St Mary's Platt
Harrietsham	Tunbury
Hamstreet	Tovil
Hempstead Valley	West Malling
Joydens Wood	Wye
Langley	

1. APOLOGIES Apologies for absence were received from Alfie Spelman, Rules & Regulations Officer & Whiteoak Club.

2. MINUTES Members present were asked if they agreed that the Minutes of the Nineteenth Annual General Meeting were a true record of that Meeting? Jan Davey noted that under 'Election of Officers' it stated that Tim Rycraft was unanimously voted in and asked for it to be amended to voted in by a majority; the minutes from 2007 were then unanimously agreed.

3. M A T T E R S There were no matters arising.
ARISING

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT The Chairman opened his address by welcoming all members present to the Meeting. He continued with his report which read as follows;

"As most of you know I have been involved in some way within this association for all of its 20 years, however, this is my first year as Chairman, it has been an honour and I am proud to have served in this capacity.

It is my privilege as Chair to make the first report and steal all my committee's thunder....only joking. There are so many excellent positive points to report for the past year.....I will try to keep this as brief as possible.

Firstly, our county team has been waving the Kent flag again this season and despite both Premier and A teams missing out on final success it is my opinion that we have so much to celebrate here that I felt that I must make a special point to thank the county manager Mark and those players who have played their hearts and bowls for him. It is encouraging to see a continuation of new quality players coming through our system...proving the cream still rises to the top. I will say no more so as not to take Marks glory.

Next I would like to thank Sonia and the backroom supporter Colin for their constant dedication, commitment and huge effort in running our domestic competitions plus the too often forgot little additional events also run during the season. I hope you will all agree that this season was again run smoothly and incident free, whenever I wandered to the table all seemed calm and under control....what greater compliment can we give. I hope that all our members take the message away with them what a great venue we enjoy, how fairly & well run our competitions aremore members and competitors are always welcome.

In my year as Chair I think we identified and subsequently agreed that we face challenging times, nearly all our clubs face declining numbers and interest. The average age is increasing with the number of younger players reducing all the time. It is this committee's intention to keep developing our sport wherever and whenever we can. We encourage the youth to play and compete as they are our future however this proves more difficult to do than say. Perhaps if every club where to develop just one youngster each our sport might grow once again.

This brings me on to what I hope is more positive news, with our diligent and prudent Treasurer we have had a good financial year with the balance sheet continuing to look healthy, whilst continuing the equipment improvement programme via the purchase of 4 more mats. I hope when you see the treasurer's report you will agree with me that we continue to grow our funds so that we can continue to encourage and develop our sport in Kent. We should not be afraid to think and dream 'big'....we are no longer the little brother to outdoors and long mat....we are one of the country's leaders in this sport.....I hope we can continue this into the next 20 years!!!

I could not do a report without mentioning my personal and committee thanks to all of our helpers at Strood....without them we simply could not operate. There are so many unsung heroes....one member even arrived at a competition this year to lay all the carpets prior to the competitors and organisers arriving. Thanks Alan!!! However for every good there seems to be an equal & opposite evil.....we continue to harbour players who feel it is there right to do nothing....always the same group. Perhaps most sadly these are some of our alleged best players who have represented our county at the very top level. In future I hope these people will do more as they are from our younger ranks.

It was also with sadness this season that we were notified that two of our near original committee members passed away...Percy Wright from Grain and Ron Clark from Snodland. I knew them both and like many of the longer playing members will miss them. For their service to this association we felt it right to make donations to the British Heart Foundation.

Finally, I would like to say that we shall continue to look to the future; this committee will continue to pursue every avenue for development, growth and success. I would also like to thank each and every one of this committee, I know they have all worked constantly for our association and have put in 110% effort all year. Which I believe shines through in all that we have achieved. An excellent example being the Open 20th Anniversary pairs competition which attracted players from all over the South East, This allowed us the chance to honour our original committee and was superbly run.

Lastly I would like to wish this association and every member continued success into the next season and beyond."

5. TREASURER'S REPORT The Treasurer opened her Report by welcoming members present. As forecast, this year was always going to be very tight financially if we were going to achieve all our aspirations. We started the year with a bank balance of £12,501.44 and ended with £12,549.71 meaning that we kept very tightly to budget with income just exceeding expenditure by £48.27.

We have continued with our programme of equipment replacement. We have bought 4 new Verdi mats, meaning that we now have completed our four yearly programme of mat replacement. We did not succeed in our aim of replacing 16 footmats. As reported last year, our top priority was for the storage of mats & equipment at Strood to be improved. This we have achieved and the equipment is better protected.

Overall our costs for coaches & hall rose slightly (one extra day at Strood & one extra coach) but to counter this fund raising, once more, has been exceedingly good, and the support and efforts of our more active members are appreciated.

With regard to fees, the Treasurer proposed no change for the 2008/09 season and no increases to the honorariums; now after 4 years we need to formulate a new plan so we are all clear what we are trying to achieve financially and to continue to spend wisely so all bowlers and clubs benefit.

Finally to end with, some thank you's – to everyone who has helped in any way, either by playing, by umpiring, by managing, by running our competitions or events, by donating prizes or buying tickets or just supporting clubs or teams or the county in any way and a particular thank you to the people who had attended this AGM and represented their clubs. Please continue to spread the word. We need your support to continue to thrive and foster the sport of short mat bowling.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Davey for her report and asked if there were any questions from the floor.

Barry Baker of St Mary's Platt club asked if the ESMBA's fee is staying the same. The Treasurer confirmed that it is.

Andrea Rycraft of Wye club queried why the youth team expenses were so high; Mr Wiedeholz explained that expenses seemed biased towards the juniors because the other county managers tend to not claim their expenses; also the juniors need chasing more and these expenses built up due to not being submitted regularly.

Mick Heath of Eastling club queried that cost of coaches would surely rise and shouldn't our fees be put up to cover that cost? The Treasurer confirmed that coaches were only booked where necessary, county bowlers would use cars when required and an increase in fund raising would cover these costs; the Vice Chairman is at present talking to R&J Coaches to establish costs.

Ray Anns of Borden club stated that it appears to be the same people that attend fund raising and we should be looking more to the future i.e. Strood Leisure Centre potentially putting up costs; The Chairman stated that he will be talking to Strood regarding the next contract in the coming weeks and months.

Sue Smith of Tunbury club asked if the ESMBA will help us out with county team competitions. The Team manager confirmed that he is in discussion with the ICC coordinator to arrange for the A & Premier teams to play and travel together wherever possible.

It was proposed by Barry Baker of St Mary's Platt that the accounts be accepted.
Seconded by Ray Anns of Borden. Agreed unanimously.

6. **MANAGER'S REPORT** The County Team Manager opened his report as follows;

"I would like to open by saying that my third Season as County Team Manager has been a very enjoyable one and following my re-election as county team manager in April I will be looking forward to taking the County forward for another 3 years.

The enthusiasm and commitment last season from all the county players was excellent, I would like to thank them all for this.

Now onto the individual team reports:

The Premier Team: -

Went unbeaten on their way through the group phase of the ICC Competition. The Quarter Final saw Kent win impressively 27pts to 9pts against Avon to set up a semi final match against last year's winners Cheshire. The competition through the day was fierce but fair, with Kent winning sessions 1 and 3. The match was level on points and was decided on shots which unfortunately for Kent went Cheshire's way; final score saw Kent lose by 20pts to 16pts.

Special Thanks must go to Tim Rycraft (Captain) for his efforts and support.

The A-Team:-

Went into this season as double English ICC champions looking for their third title in a row. Kent had a good run in the group phase of the competition only losing 1 game and that was against West Sussex. Kent finished Runners up in the group which meant a pre-lim match against Norfolk which Kent won convincingly. After that it was plain sailing through to the final beating on the way Somerset and Cornwall. The final again was contested between the two best teams in England – Kent and West Sussex. Unfortunately for Kent the History of winning three in a row was not to be and they lost to West Sussex 25pts to 11pts.

Special thanks must go to Ray Anns (Manager) and Keith Austin (Captain) for their efforts and support.

The B-Team: -

Proved that they also could win trophies by beating West Sussex again in the Shield Match which is held between the 2 counties. Kent won 33pts to 15pts, even with West Sussex fielding "A" and Premier team players. Kent has now won the trophy on 10 occasions and this year made it an impressive 6 years in a row. This success continued all thorough the season with Kent notching up an impressive set of results Played 11, Won 10, and Lost 1.

Special thanks must go to Derek Carpenter (Manager) Jan Davey (Assistant Manager) and John Hallett (Captain) for their efforts and support.

The County Youth Team: -

Unfortunately the number of juniors playing in competitions has dropped from last season, mainly due to college and work commitments, but those taking part have improved and grown through the year, with some juniors trialling for the England in the under 18's squad.

The youth team this year have played various games both against other counties and Kent clubs (St Mary's Platt, Ryarsh, Boughton, Downswood, and Hollingbourne) and in all these competitive games the Kent juniors have done Kent proud.

The annual Bert Allard trophy was held at Strood this year with 9 juniors taking part, the under 25's results were Gary Best (winner) and Matt Dillon (R-up) the under 18's Winner was Chris Philpott and R-up Carol Smith.

Kent took 1 junior team in May to represent Kent in the under 18's Woodbridge Trophy, the Kent team did well and managed to finish in 5th Place.

2 of our juniors Chris Wood (Tunstall) and Chris Philpott (Balfour) took part in the Burwash under 18's open competition; both Chris's did well with Chris Wood reaching the Qtr Final and Chris Philpott reaching the semi final.

Special thanks must go to Chris England and Samantha Philpott for their efforts and support.

The ICC Summer League: -

This is the second year Kent have entered a side into this competition. The competition this year is being played against Northampton, Essex, Hampshire and Surrey over a league basis with all teams playing each other. Kent have played their first two games against Surrey and Hampshire and won both games convincingly 32pts to 4pts and 34pts to 2pts respectively. Kent's final two home games will be against Northampton on July 20th and Essex on 3rd August at Burham village hall if anyone is interested in supporting please feel free to come along.

Future Plans: -

There are many good things in the pipework, I will not dwell on them in depth but just to give you all a taster of things to come:

1) I have through the Committee submitted a proposal to the E.S.M.B.A. to create a B- Team ICC Competition.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS In the absence of the President, the Chairman suggested to the floor that because there were proposals for all the current officers with no opposition (with the exception of the County Competition Secretary and The Team Manager) that these were elected-in en bloc; this was proposed by Hazel Rider of Culverstone club, seconded by Brian Rust of Harrietsham.

Chairman: Mr Tim Rycraft

Vice-Chairman: Mr Derek Carpenter

Secretary: Ms Michelle Fitzgerald

Treasurer: Mrs Jan Davey

Competition Secretary: As there were no proposals for this position, the Chairman informed the meeting that Mrs Watson had agreed to carry on in this position provided she has extra help from the Committee; Andrea Rycraft of Wye offered her assistance if needed.

Andrea Rycraft of Wye proposed Sonia Watson as competition secretary , this was seconded by Laurie Thomas of Boughton Monchelsea and Agreed unanimously.

Rules & Regulations Officer: The Chairman confirmed that in line with the constitution Alfie Spelman had issued a ballot to all the umpires and had received support that he carry on as Rules & Regulations Officer.

8. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE As the existing Committee members all had proposals which again were unopposed, the meeting agreed to accept them en bloc. This was agreed unanimously.

Committee: Irene Benton
Chris England
Thomas Coles

9. PROPOSALS

Harrietsham club proposed the following:-

‘That in the county points round robins that a point be awarded for each game, these points being retained irrespective of the final outcome. The group winner would ‘go up’ to the next round with either 2 or 3 points – not given 3 if he/she only wins 2 games. The losers would at least retain their points earned so far, albeit not proceeding to the next round/s’

For the benefit of the members present the Chairman explained the current system which has been in place for the past 20 years and is calculated from players or teams who win their round robin and earn 3 ranking points toward their 2 year rolling totals, subsequent knock out games are also taken into account with 1 extra ranking point being earned from each victory thereafter; these points are then added up with every member’s tally being ‘league tabled’ the committee then reviews these totals at the end of the season and the ‘cut-off’ is agreed. The key point being that approximately 60 people are required per season, therefore the minimum ‘point’ requirement is fluid and will change year to year depending on what the ‘top 60’ earn in points. This season was agreed at 11 points. The quantity of new badges varied year to year and the speed with which players achieved their county status varied, for some it took one season for others it was a longer road travelled.

The Committee raised concern over drawn games....did this proposal mean awarding ½ points? This would be an administrative nightmare for the competition secretary. Concern from the committee was also highlighted when group results were drawn as the motion made no difference to winners and runners up when they both won and drew the same number of games (i.e. Group winners did not receive more points than the runner up).

After some lengthy discussion where members aired their frustration at playing county players and receiving nothing for losing their round robins; Barry Baker from St Mary’s Platt and Sue Smith from Tunbury confirmed their agreement to the idea as they liked the feel good factor for receiving ‘something’ despite losing their round robin; this opinion was agreed by a few others. A vote was taken on the motion with the proposal being won 15 - 10. Immediately after this motion was passed Warwick Ball from Boughton Monchelsea and the proposer Brian Rust from Harrietsham asked that the motion be amended with regards the points as drawn games were not covered; they then proposed that the Committee review the idea and work something out loosely on the basis agreed noting the point change. This then led to further debate where the members asked that the actual point allocation previously agreed be changed as it was clearly not workable with regards drawn games therefore it was suggested that 1 point for a draw and 2 points for a win be adopted. This amendment to the proposal was then passed unanimously. It was proposed that the committee be given the right to set this system up as they see fit agreed by member’s present.

Harrietsham club then asked that their second proposal be withdrawn as it did not apply.

The Kent County Committee put forward the following proposition:-

“ Kent County Constitution section 5.8 has the following amendment:-

5.8.4 A team manager will initially be appointed for a period of one season with the option of a further two seasons. If after this, the management committee unanimously agrees then one season extensions can be granted on an annual rolling basis”

This motion led to much debate with concern being raised by Ray Anns of Borden that this motion could be seen as “keeping the old boy’s network going”. Warwick Ball from Boughton Monchelsea asked why a working system would be changed? On behalf of the committee the Chairman explained that the safety net preventing the wrong man in place on a never ending basis was that it only took one committee member to abstain and the interview process would be initiated; with regards why change the system, it was felt that 3 years was a short term and the process therefore unnecessary when the incumbent manager was seen to be doing an effective and positive job for the county.

Ray Anns proposed an amendment to the original proposal whereby the following was added to the end of the sentence – “Up to a further 3 years”. This amendment was unanimously agreed and now reads:-

“5.8.4 A team manager will initially be appointed for a period of one season with the option of a further two seasons. If after this, the management committee unanimously agree then one season extensions can be granted on an annual rolling basis up to a further 3 years”

Barry Baker asked that when this amendment is made to the constitution that a date and version number is recorded on the paperwork.

The Chairman confirmed that copies of the constitution would be available if requested.

10. INCREASE OF MEMBERSHIP FEES As per the Treasurer's report she recommended that all of the current fees remain unchanged. This has been agreed as shown in her report.

The formalities were finished and after a brief questions & answers session the meeting was closed.

The Chairman declared the Meeting closed at 12.40am.