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Howard Garden Bowls Club Constitution updated April 2025 - FINAL

Howard Garden Bowls Club (HGBC) is an affiliated member of Bowls England, Hertfordshire Bowls, and Letchworth and District Bowls Association, and adopts the rules and regulations of England Bowls and EWBA?? in all matters.

No alterations to these rules shall be made except by requirement of the Governing Bodies, or at the AGM or an extraordinary meeting called for such a purpose.

Circulation of the Constitution

All members shall be provided with a copy of this Constitution, and a copy shall be displayed in the Club House. Copies will be provided to members via:

- Club website
- Email
- Issued to those members who request a paper copy

Aims and objectives

HGBC exists to enable adults to learn and enjoy outdoor flat green bowling in a safe and supportive environment, with the opportunity for all those who wish to take part in friendly matches and league matches including County matches, as well as participating in our internal club competitions.

Its objectives are to promote and safeguard the game of bowls, and to enforce the laws of the game as laid down by Bowls England.

The Club's aim is to foster the sport of bowls for all without discrimination. We believe everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability, sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status. We adopt and follow all guidelines approved by Bowls England. We follow all procedures set out in bowls England regulations 9, 9a, and 9b. We will abide with all sanctions, recommendations and/or decisions from the case management panel or national

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disciplinary panel. We are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment where people feel safe and free of any form of discrimination.

The Club is a non-profit organisation and any money raised is dedicated to the furtherance of the purposes of the Club and any Charity approved by the Management Committee.

Membership

Visitors, including provisional members during their three 'roll up' sessions, must sign the Visitors' Book.

We have three membership levels and welcome all those whose membership is approved by the Committee.

Full members are entitled to use our bowls green whenever they wish; put themselves forward for selection for all matches; and take part in all internal club competitions.

Social members are entitled to use our bowls green on Monday evenings 'roll ups', and to take part in all internal club competitions.

Honorary members have the rights of full members, including full voting rights, but need pay no membership fees during their lifetime. A successful nominee for Honorary Membership must (a) be a long term member of HGBC; (b) have given prolonged and outstanding service to the club (e.g. Committee role; maintenance role; catering role etc) during that time; (c) be nominated and seconded by current Full Members of the Club with the nomination indicating how the nominee fulfils (a) and (b) above; and (d) Receive the support of the Management Committee who will review the nomination and have the final say in agreeing or denying it.

Membership at all levels is available to all those aged 18+ who wish to join our club. We welcome all players regardless of their social identity, in particular those currently under-represented in our club, such as younger players, Black and ethnic minority players, and players from any other minority group.

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The club accepts the policy and procedures relating to Safeguarding Adults as set out by Bowls England and requires all members to accept them as a condition of membership.

Subscription

Fees for membership are fixed annually for each season and become payable before the opening of the season, or in the case of new members, on admission to the club.

Membership fees shall be paid directly to the Club's bank account or to the Treasurer not later than 30 April of each year. Any member who has not paid in full by the end of May shall not be eligible to participate in friendly or competition matches, or in County or internal club competitions until payment is made in full for the entirety of the season.

Termination of membership

The committee has the power to refuse or terminate membership to any member whose conduct is considered detrimental to the interests of the club. Any member so affected shall have the opportunity of presenting his/her case before the committee before a final decision is reached. On termination of membership in this way, a proportion of the membership fees rounded down to the month of termination will be made.

A member who wishes to withdraw from the club once their membership fees have been received, will not be entitled to any reimbursement of membership fees.

Governance

The club is managed by a Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting who take office at the Spring Meeting. It is composed of Chair, Captains, Treasurer, Match Secretary, Committee Secretary, Competitions (internal) Secretary, and up to four non-office members, from whom any co-opted position may be sought. At the AGM, if more than one nomination is received for any office then a ballot shall be held and all members entitled to vote. All Officers are elected for a period of one year but may be re-elected to the same office or another office the following year.

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In the absence of the Chair, the committee elects an acting Chair from within its members.

Committee members to replace those who leave the committee, or to increase the capacity of the committee, can be elected at any point in the season, through a membership vote, on members receiving writing notice of the nomination/s and seconding and having three days to make their vote known in writing to the committee.

The Committee meet as and when required and is quorate when more than 50% of committee members are present.

The Committee has the powers to raise funds and to invite grants, donations and other contributions.

In addition to the Committee members, the club has a named safeguarding officer who does not report to the Committee; and a Welfare Officer.

An appointed Auditor has full access to all books and properties of the club at all times.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is called at the end of each season and notice in writing is given at least 14 days prior to the meeting. Members are invited to contribute agenda items to the Committee Secretary no later than twenty-one days prior to the meeting.

Attendance at the AGM is encouraged for all members. The business at the AGM is to receive reports from all officials plus the Auditors' report; to elect the officials for the coming season; to elect delegates to represent the club at all Hertfordshire County meetings; and at all Letchworth and District Bowls Association meetings; and to transact any other business of which written notice has been given to the Committee Secretary not less than 14 days prior to the date of the meeting.

Spring meeting

The Spring Meeting is called at start of each season and notice in writing is given at least 14 days prior to the meeting.

Audited accounts and balance sheet for the club will be presented to members at the Spring Meeting for adoption, together with the collection of members' subscriptions and entry forms for all internal club competitions.

Extraordinary meetings

Any member may call an extraordinary meeting, by writing to the Committee Secretary with the support of not less than five members and stating the business to be dealt with. Such meetings shall be called within ten days of request and three days' notice given in writing to all members.

Code of Conduct

All members of HGBC are required to undertake to abide by the Club's Code of Conduct and all policies and procedures adopted by the Club. Members are deemed to be aware of the requirements of all policies, procedures and regulations and to hold themselves subject to disciplinary measures for any breach of these.

Misconduct and grievance matters

Should any member be dissatisfied or have any query relating to the Club's procedures, they should communicate with the Chair in writing, stating their concerns.

In the event of any complaint or allegation of misconduct against one of the members, the procedures set out in Bowls England Regulation 9 and, where applicable, additional guidance provided by Bowls England, will be followed.

Safeguarding Policy Statement

We acknowledge our duty of care to safeguard the welfare of all Adults at Risk (defined as any person aged 18 years and over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation) involved in club-related activities.

We will endeavour to ensure the safety and protection of Adults at Risk involved with the club through the Safeguarding Policies, Procedures and Guidelines adopted by the Main Committee of the club.

Equality Policy Statement

The club is committed to ensuring that equality is incorporated across all aspects of its activities.

The club respects the rights, dignity and worth of every person and will treat everyone equally within the context of the sport, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality or social/economic status. The club is committed to everyone having the right to enjoy the sport in an environment free from threat of intimidation, harassment and abuse.

Conditions for internal Club competitions

The Competition Secretary is responsible for:

- Making the draw for all competitions
- Adjudicating on all matters concerned with the conduct of competitions or arising from disputes between competitors.
- Allocating and adjusting members' handicaps together with club Captains.

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Competitors shall mutually agree to a date on which they are prepared to play-off their ties. The ties must not interfere with normal Club activities. If either competitor fails to play on the date arranged, the Competition Secretary shall decide whether or not a bye will be given to the opponent.

A member may not enter the club competitions if he/she is a member of another club and is proposing to enter outdoor competitions of that club.

It is essential that all matches are played by the due dates. An extension is allowed only in exceptional circumstances and then only by prior approval of the Competitions Secretary.

The onus is on the challenger, i.e. the first named in each match, to contact his/her opponent/s and where necessary to provide the marker. The date and time for the match must be agreeable to all parties. Where members are unable to make themselves available, they must forfeit the match.

Where a player withdraws from a team event, i.e. pairs or triples, any proposals for a substitute must be submitted to the Competitions Secretary, bearing in mind that in drawn events every effort has been made to produce balanced teams.

Dress

At all times, bowling shoes shall be worn when using the green. In the event of bowling shoes not being available, then flat shoes with no heels, ridges or pronounced pattern in the sole may be worn.

One Club shirt is available on payment of Full membership fees and must be worn when playing a match on HWBC Green or when away to competing clubs.

Trousers/skirts are White for competitive league matches, and Grey for all other matches.

Match selection

The selection of teams for all matches shall be by the Captain and Vice Captains, or in line with other arrangements agreed by the Main Committee or agreed at an Annual General Meeting.

Members selected for matches must inform the Captain as soon as possible if they cannot play.

Members selected as Reserves must attend the match venue.

Liability and Indemnity

The Club, Committee, any Sub-Committees, individual officers and members do not accept any liability for loss or damage to any property of persons using the Club facilities or for any injury however caused.

Each member of the Club shall (to the extent that such person is not entitled to recover under any policy of insurance) be entitled to be indemnified out of all funds available to the Club which may lawfully be so applied against all costs, expenses and liabilities whatsoever reasonably incurred by such person in the proper execution and discharge of duties undertaken on behalf of the Club arising therefrom, or incurred in good faith in the purported discharge of such duties. Save in any such case where any such costs, expenses and liabilities arise in connection with any negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust. This provided that any such member so indemnified has been properly authorised in relation to the duties undertaken on behalf of the Club by the Committee.

Dissolution

If, at any General Meeting of the Club, a resolution be passed calling for the dissolution of the Club, the Committee Secretary shall immediately convene a Special General Meeting to be held not less than one month thereafter to discuss and vote on the resolution.

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If, at that Special General Meeting, the resolution is carried by at least two-thirds of the Members present, the Committee shall thereupon, or at such date as shall have been specified in the resolution, proceed to realise the assets of the Club and discharge all debts and liabilities of the Club.

After discharging all debts and liabilities of the Club, the remaining assets shall be distributed as decided by the Committee.