

NUTHALL BOWLS CLUB

Review of the 2026 season

So, another enjoyable outdoor season comes to a successful end, but not without having to overcome certain difficulties that presented themselves. One of these was finding ourselves short of the number of playing members we anticipated would be available when we registered for five leagues back in November. People whom we expected to join us didn't materialize, coupled with current members who were unable to play, mainly due to medical conditions, left us struggling to find teams for several matches, particularly early on.

Another factor, which we should have expected in retrospect, was some members' commitments to the various external competitions and, to a lesser extent, county matches which occasionally impacted on their availability by the clashing of dates or a touch of bowls fatigue. I have no issue with members seeking to expand their bowls experience and personal standing beyond club matches, but it is something we should have taken into account – and need to account for in the future.

I would also acknowledge that we probably sleepwalked into our predicament by a failure to produce the sort of recruitment campaigns clubs like Kimberley and Eastwood presented over last Winter and Spring.

A second difficulty concerned that state of our green, initially due to rain, then the exceptionally hot and dry Summer. However, the Green Team, headed by Pete and Kev Doyle (with help from Granam Lambert, Garry, Kev B and yours truly), did a terrific job in improving the green's performance, especially in late July and August when visiting team after team complimented us on its condition.

Of course, the main function of the club is our participation in the various leagues the highlight of which was winning the Saturday 4 x 3 for the second time in three years. However, we were relegated from division one in the Ashfield 4 x 2, where we had been defying gravity for several years, by finishing second bottom out of nine. In the other leagues we ended up in the following respectable mid-table positions;

Beeston Open League – 4th out of 9

Midweek 3 x 3 division two – 3rd out of 6 (two clubs dropped out during the season)

Midweek 4 x 2 - 3rd out of 7

We didn't fare to well in the various cup competitions but managed to reach the semi-final of the Glover Trophy before being beaten by Rolls Royce (yet again).

The internal club singles and pairs comps that operated throughout the season culminated in finals days over two weekends. The winners were Kev D and Greg in the pairs but the outstanding performance award (if there was one) goes to Rob Ellison by defeating out champion for the last two years, Graham Allen, in the singles final.

Several of our members achieved successes in the external comps but I'm leaving it to Pete to fill us in on the details with regard to those.

I have mentioned the work by the guys in the green team' but I must also thank the ladies for the impressive spreads they produced on Saturday home matches. Di Doyle took on the mantle of leading the catering team and forsook the opportunity to participate in those

games so she could devote the time to preparing the teas for the half-time break. She, and Sue, also baked delicious cakes and always made sure the tables were well presented with a feminine touch that men, admittedly, are not really capable of. If it was left to us, for example, there wouldn't be any flowers nor home-made cakes – just biscuits thrown on to a plate. The ladies also took it upon themselves to clean the pavilion and marquees so their contribution to the running of the club is thus invaluable. There were other members who came along to help from time to time, Steve, Wendy, Paul, Jenny, Gill and Jackie spring to mind, and there were others that assisted when we specifically needed assistance for tasks like erecting and dismantling the marquees – thank you to you all. I am also grateful to people such as Lawrence and Graham Lambert as easy targets for my Sunday morning messages.

Finally, on behalf of the club, I would express my appreciation to Gill's son, Oliver, in the setting up of the Rinklink app. This has transformed the way we can all register, or withdraw, our availabilities for forthcoming games weeks ahead but, more importantly, it is completely transparent. It really is a terrific innovation that, I believe, is being tweaked slightly so as to iron out a few minor issues. Thank you too to Gill and Wayne for updating the fixtures and results as they occurred and for assisting members experiencing difficulties in accessing the app. In addition, most members will not be aware that Sue's daughter, Judy, audits our accounts and prepares the financial statement each year. This saves the club a considerable amount in professional fees, so we are most grateful to Judy for the valuable service she provides free of charge.

It is most gratifying that we continue to operate as a friendly, social club with a warming sense of camaraderie throughout the membership. This, to a large extent, carries on throughout the Winter months with many of us playing at the indoor club. We also keep in touch via the Whatsapp group and, of course, meet up again for the Christmas meal - I hope to see as many of you as possible there.

Nigel Dodd

Secretary