

BOWLS HAMPSHIRE SECRETARY'S REPORT 2025

As we close the season for another year, we have had a particularly warm summer which ended with a many rain-soaked days including our final competition.

This year we were able to get through all the County quarter, semi and finals without any interruption. Our successful representative sent to Royal Leamington Spa initially in bright sunshine and very high temperatures but of course from previous experience the weather at the Championships always throws a few curved balls and the weather turned cold and at times very wet.

The beginning of the Championship started with some exciting bowling and wonderful success for Grace Read in the U24 junior singles, who on reaching the final and trailing 19-21 she showed incredible composure to grab two shots on the last end – sealing the title in dramatic fashion, with the excited Hampshire spectators cheering her on, including our Men's President Geoff, who had supported her through all her matches. Grace's reward she will now proudly represent England at the 2025 British Bowls Championships a huge achievement. This was followed by another Final for our U25 Junior Luke Bell who had played superbly throughout to reach the final, playing exceptionally well and just missing out to become the runner up.

In the Para Pairs, the 2023 champions held firm as Stephen Stockley and Mike McDonagh successfully regained their title, overcoming Dave Fisher and Kieran Rollings 16–11. Their consistency on the green once again underlined their quality as a pair. Many congratulations to Stephen and his partner.

Towards the end of the championships Hampshire had three more chances to win gold. Firstly, came the Foundation pairs a new competition for a relatively new or junior bowler playing with a more experienced bowler. Charlie Crook our Amy Rose Manager partner Aksana Nevlev a young junior bowler and they played superbly well in Quarter Final they played a due from Kenilworth after losing the first set, they came through and won the second set, snatching a win on the extra end. In the Semi Final against a team from Fordham here the match went the lady's way winning both sets comfortably. Ten came the Final their third match that day, Charlie and Aksana played a team from Bredon they didn't start well and lost the first set but rallied to draw level by winning the second set. It now came down to the extra end tie break and despite their nerves they got shot and won the title. Many congratulations to both players, winning at their first attempt.

In the Middleton cup, Hampshire led for most over the way before losing out to Lincolnshire in the last few ends of the semifinal.

In the new County Over 60's Mixed competition, Hampshire played Worcestershire in the semi final and after a tense last few ends came out on top by one shot. In the final the opposition was Northamptonshire and it was another close match but one rink lost heavily and that led to a six-shot overall defeat which was disappointing but still a fantastic achievement to reach a National final and gain a silver medal. Next year I am sure Hampshire intend to go one better and get the gold.

To everyone who represented Hampshire, which this year included a number of players attending the National Championships for their first time, many congratulations on reached the National Championships where we saw some super bowling over the 19 days

Our Men's President Geoff Jessup and Ladies President Liz Bingley were at the National Championships and between them ensured they supported all our competitors at times having to move between the five greens in order to support all the Hampshire players.

Huge thanks go to Tony Prince the Umpires Coordinator who not only ensured we had umpires for all the competitions including doing quite a few himself. The County is still short of umpires and anyone interested and would like to know more please contact Tony of I am sure will be delighted to assist you.

Our thanks go to Banister Park who are always most helpful and flexible when changes have to happen beyond our control. It's been a difficult year with the greenkeeper being rushed to hospital and stepping back has meant the green hasn't always been up to the standard we have come to expect but we've been assured work will take place at the end of the season to ensure a green fit for Bowls Hampshire in 2026.

My thanks go to Paul the Bar steward and Dee in charge of the catering which is always first class. They are always ready to make changes so that food can be provided for everyone for all our competitions. The food is excellent and with the help of some volunteers do a fantastic job.

Our West Area Ladies secretary, Carol Broomfield who took over from Kim Harris and has done a fantastic job particularly with this being our first year using the new Bowls Hampshire online system is stepping down due to moving areas. I do hope a member from the West will come forward and take over.

With the implementation of the new online system, there was extra work for myself and the treasurer Carl but following a number of roadshows the first year has gone remarkably well with a lot of positive feedback. Lastly, my thanks go to all the Officers of the County who work tirelessly in the back ground throughout the year and it is hoped that the new online system has assisted to reduce their workload.

Lastly, I informed the Management and Finance committee, it is my intention to step down and with this in mind I will be emailing all Club Secretaries with a view to finding someone to shadow me for 2026. The committee felt that the job would be better if split into two roles moving forward with a secretary/administrator and a County Competition Secretary looking after the competitions from the last eights onwards. I look forward to working with any applicants who would like to take on one of these exciting roles.