

SOUTH LAKELAND RURAL BOWLING LEAGUE

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held 20th November 2013 in The Athenaeum, Leasgill

Present: In the Chair **Tom Grindey**. Representatives from Burneside (2), Burton (1), Crosthwaite & Lyth (1), KA Hale (2), Hawkshead (2), Heversham (1), Holme (2), Levens (1), Lindale (2), Milnthorpe (1), Netherfield (2), Sedbergh (2), Staveley (2), Subscription (2), Windermere (2) (25 delegates from 15 of 21 League Clubs), together with Mr Mike Tordoff, President Cumbria County CGBA, Mr. K Ashcroft, Mr. G H Stephens and Mr J D Smith.

Welcome: The Secretary opened the meeting in the absence of the Chairman, Mrs Alice Waite.

- 1. A minutes silence** was observed in respect of bowlers who had passed away. Mentioned by name were Colin Ainsworth, Langdale, John Newman, Milnthorpe, John Dykes, Holme, Alan Atkinson and Mike Caffety, Burneside, Frank Walton, Burton, Ross Dyer, Brian Maudsley, Ray Sisson and Mildred Vause, Heversham.
- 2. Resignation of the Chairman, Mrs Alice Waite:** The Secretary reported that Mr Keith Waite, Alice's husband had come to The Athenaeum at 4.45pm that evening just as he was leaving, having set up the hall for the evening. Keith said Alice was not well and handed over a letter of resignation which, Alice wished to have read at the meeting. The Secretary then read Alice's letter (see Appendix A).
- 3. Election of Chairman:** The Secretary reported that he had received no nominations for the position of Chairman and invited someone to come forward. Tom Grindey, Heversham asked what was involved; the duties were outlined. He then offered to be Chairman for twelve months. There being no other candidate he was duly elected and took the Chair.
- 4. Apologies for absence:** These were received from Langdale (Club dinner), Victoria (Club AGM), Alice Waite and Bruce Tyson, Heversham. The following clubs, although invited were not represented; Allithwaite, Bowness, Endmoor and Kirkby Lonsdale.
- 5. Minutes of the previous AGM:** The Minutes of the meeting held 21st November 2012 which, had been circulated prior to the meeting, were taken as read and **APPROVED**.
- 6. Business remaining from the last AGM:** Actions from the last AGM were stated by the Secretary to largely covered by the Agenda for this meeting i.e. Minute 6 - that fee for League and Skidmore Competition entry fee be combined ; Minute 7.4 - Nominations for positions to be invited prior to each AGM; Minute 11.1 Consideration of donations to County Juniors and County Ladies to be under one item; Minute 9- Report to be given at next AGM by League representative(s) on the work of the County Committee;
- 7. Treasurer's Report and year end accounts:** Presenting the Annual Accounts for year ending 31 October 2013 the Treasurer, Ken Ashcroft reported that the year end balance was £25.00 down on the previous year. Assuming expenses remained the same in the forward year he considered that the League Fee could remain unchanged for a further year. He had just discovered that a cheque for £25.00 to the County Juniors had not been cashed; he had still to follow this up however, he recommended that a similar donation be made in 2014. **AGREED:** That the accounts be approved.
- 8. Secretary's Report:** This had been circulated prior to the meeting. He had recently tabulated the players playing in the League in 2014; the total was 335. Lindale used the most players (21), Allithwaite and Endmoor used 19 each. Netherfield used the least number (11).
- 9. League Representatives on the County Committee report;** Bruce Tyson was not able to be at the meeting. The other representative, Tom Grindey said he had not been able to attend any meetings due to clashes with meetings of other organisations he was involved in. He invited **Mike Tordoff, County President** to speak. The President said:
 - It had been a good year. Greens had been in good order.

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- There had been a crisis in the County Juniors. At one point it appeared they might have to withdraw for the first time since 1979. However some clubs had produced some young players. The change in upper age limit had caused the loss of some older juniors (eligible juniors have not to have reached the age of 18 on 30 September – previously the definition was 18 on the 1st January).
- The County Ladies had also had problems but will have a County team in 2014. More ladies are needed and he asked those present to go back to their clubs and encourage lady bowlers to make themselves available.
- The proposal for the £1.00 levy had been withdrawn however, 50p/head had been added to the Club affiliation fee which, resulted in £1420 being raised for the County Development fund. This together with other money previously set aside had been used for:
 - Donation to Kirkby Lonsdale for bowls for Junior Bowlers. Over 100 juniors had tried bowling or taken part in club events.
 - Purchase of software to help League Secretaries produce fixture lists.
 - Provide help with travel expenses for Cumbria representatives in the Jack and Jean isherwood and Centenary Pairs Competition finals
 - Holding green keepers seminar for 8 club green keepers. This had been well received and more are planned over the next 2 years. As well as maintenance the course covered Health and Safety aspects of the use of equipment such as mowers and scarifiers. The course also covered the storage and use of chemicals. In this connection he referred to the case of a club member who had stopped a scarifier but left the engine running whilst he cleaned the cutter blades. The scarifier had moved causing serious injury. The club insurers had declared the insurance void because the operative had not been trained and safety procedures had not been followed. The club officials were then sued by the injured party.
- A County Web site was being set up
- The total number of bowlers was falling. There had been a net loss of 50/100 over each of the last 5 years. Currently the number of Registered bowlers was 2730 and 153 new players had been registered. . 80% of the county membership is over 55, 60% over 65. 3% are juniors and only 17% are in the age range 17 to 55. It is important that clubs attract new members and that is where the Rural League is so valuable. Unfortunately there was no equivalent in the Furness area. All clubs should be trying to recruit by holding 'Come and Try' days. He encouraged delegates present to go back to their clubs with this message.

10. Election of Executive Officers:

10.1. Treasurer: Ken Ashcroft was willing to serve a further year and was re-elected

10.2. Secretary: J D Smith was willing to serve a further year and was re-elected

11. Election of Press Secretary and Web Site Organiser: AGREED: Hedley Stephens was willing to serve and was re-elected.

12. Appointment of 2 Representatives to serve on the Cumbria County Crown Green Bowling Association (CCGGBA) Committee: AGREED: That Bruce Tyson (Heversham) be appointed. The 2nd position was not filled.

13. Donations: AGREED: That donations of £25.00 each be made to Cumbria County Juniors and Cumbria County Ladies.

14. League Fee for Season 2014: AGREED: Fee to remain at £15.00 for a further year; this covers League fee and entry into the David Skidmore Competition.

15. David Skidmore Memorial Competition Prize Money: AGREED: That the total prize money remain at £100.00; Winner to receive £50.00, Runner-up £25.00, loosing Semi Finalists £12.50 each.

16. Motion 1- Constitution and Rules: Proposal from Secretary: *'That the Constitution and Rules as amended at the AGM of 21st November 2012 be adopted AND that the League Secretary be required to produce and issue a revised set incorporating any changes agreed at the AGM held on the 20th November 2013'*. Motion **APPROVED**.

17. Matters for consideration raised by Clubs

17.1. Submission from Levens Bowling Club (circulated prior to the meeting). This concerned the effect of Rule 6.2 which, precludes bowlers who are regular members of a Kendal League (KDBL) Division 1 or 2 team from playing in the Rural League (SLRBL). The rule operated in Seasons 2012 and 2013.

Speaking on behalf of **Levens**, Ken Ashcroft said Levens were still suffering from the introduction of this rule. They had recruited 2 new members but lost 2 also. Their Div. 3 KDBL team had been promoted and would play in Div. 2 in 2014. Bowlers who had played in the SLRBL last season would now not be eligible in 2014 yet they were the same players. He suggested that bowlers could only improve by playing better players. The SLRBL Rules provide for players to be paired to avoid mismatching. More experienced bowlers can teach and guide new bowlers; also teach aspects of the Laws of the Game. He did not think banning players had helped anybody. He said that if Levens did not have a team in the SLRBL they could loose further bowlers which, might lead to the loss of their Seniors B team.

A general discussion took place.

- 3 clubs, **Subscription, Sedbergh, Windermere** spoke of instances of new bowlers being demoralised by results such as 21-1, 21-4, 21-0, 21-3. Reference was made to a club who had regularly played 2 players who also played for another club in Div 1 of the Morecambe & Lancaster League. The Club concerned (Burton) said this was because the Club had been short of players and the SLRBL Rules did not preclude such players.
- **Holme** said they had a lot of support for Levens. They had taken the matter to their members who wondered why activities in another League are interfering in the SLRBL. The loss of Levens would result in the loss of 144 games. Levens had never won the League or Skidmore Cup. They suggested that Levens might not be the last club to be affected.
- **Burneside & Hawkshead** spoke in defence of their respective clubs concerning an incident which had occurred regarding the selection of a Rothay League Div 1 player. The Secretary commented that the SLRBL rules did not preclude such a player.
- **Subscription** spoke of the problem of players, who spend leisure time in our area, who play in the SLRBL but also played for clubs in other Counties and Leagues and turned out to be players who played at a higher level with their original clubs and Leagues.
- **Netherfield** spoke of the benefits of the challenge of playing better players.
- **Windermere** wondered why people who play at a high level wanted to play in the League. However, they mentioned their match against Hale. They had 4 young bowlers and had explained this to the Hale Captain. The Hale players, elderly gentlemen, had been very good with their youngsters. They had similarly found Holme helpful in this respect.
- **Hawkshead** spoke of having 3 or 4 players who did not play in other Leagues and of their need to supplement the team with experienced players.

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- **Milnthorpe** spoke of the League being intended for the less experienced.
- The **League Secretary** reminded the meeting of what the stated objective of the League was and what the Rule regarding use of experienced players actually says Rule C2 OBJECTIVE – *To provide an opportunity for less experienced players to be encouraged to enjoy League competition in a friendly social and enjoyable environment. The objective included floodlit bowling from 1997.*

*C2.1 RECOGNITION – The League recognises that Clubs may have insufficient “less experienced” players to form a team and need to include experienced players. Experienced players are very welcome **but priority** should be given by Clubs to include their less experienced players in teams whenever possible.*

Adding that thus, if they are to be given **priority** the first names to go on the team sheet should be the names of the Clubs less experienced players whenever possible.

Sedbergh then proposed ‘That Rural League teams should be restricted to a maximum of 2 players who play in the Kendal & DBL’. Whereupon **Holme** interjected to ask for a straw pole to be taken before the motion was seconded to see how many clubs would have to withdraw from the League if the proposal was seconded and passed. Eleven clubs indicated this would be their situation. The proposal was not taken further.

Holme then proposed ‘That Rule 6.2 be rescinded’. This was seconded by **Levens**. A vote was taken **9 clubs being FOR** the proposal and **6 AGAINST**. **AGREED:** That Rule 6.2 be rescinded.

17.2 Submission from Sedbergh Bowling Club (circulated prior to the meeting). This raised the following matters:

- 1) Use of Morecambe and Lancaster League and Kendal & DBL experienced players. Sedbergh complained this was ‘bending the rules and not in the spirit of the game’. Thus
 - a. One club had regularly played 2 players who played at a high level for another club in the Morecambe League(see earlier response to this charge from Burton, the Club in question, under Minute 17.1)
 - b. That Netherfield had regularly played six K & DBL Division 3 players saying they could not find less experienced players. The **Netherfield** representative took strong exception to the Sedbergh comments regarding his Club and requested they be withdrawn. The Rules did not prevent such players playing. They could not have been that good since their Division 3 team had been relegated to the 4th division. Additionally they had been challenging Hale for the League title and could have played stronger players in their last games in order to win the League but they had deliberately not done this.
- 2) David Skidmore Competition match Burton v Sedbergh. Sedbergh complained that they had arrived at Burton for an 8pm start to find that the Burton pairings had already been drawn. The Burton representative explained that their Chairman wanted to get things moving because of requirement that the floodlights had to be off at 10pm. He assured Sedbergh that the draw had been proper. The Secretary commented that Rule DSR 4 requires that the draw is made by both Captains.

18. Draw for the 2014 David Skidmore memorial Competition: The draw was made.

19. Trophy Presentation – Season 2014: The Chairman presented the **League Cup** to **Kings Arms Hale**

20. Any Other Business:

20.1. Cumbria County Crown Green Bowling Association AGM. This was to be held at The Blue Bell Hotel, Heversham on Wednesday 4th December at 7.30pm.

21. End of Meeting: The Chairman, thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.10pm (applause)

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Appendix A

Endmoor

19th November 2013

Mr. Secretary, Officers, and Members.

It is with regret that I must resign from the Chair of the SLRBL. Although I have only served as chairperson for the last two years, it has been a great honour to have done so.

The League has in my view seen renewed energy in this last two years, with changes being an inevitable part of life, even in the Rural League as we all fondly call our League. These changes have been seen in clubs recruiting and introducing new members not only to their clubs but also to our League, injecting new energy and altering the familiar and sometimes unacceptable ways that familiarity can bring to any organisation.

During, and even before my short tenure as chairperson, my mission (largely fought behind the scenes), was to ensure open debate and a voice to those clubs who had for sometime felt disadvantaged by the way the spirit of the Rural League had been eroded over the 17 year of it's existence, placing it in danger of loosing it's original purpose, which was, and is, to ensure that less experienced and new bowlers, as well as those who no longer play in any other League's, were, as far as possible, given an even playing field on which they could enjoy a competitive, friendly game of bowls that they stood a chance of winning.

I had always hoped that those Clubs that were either not able or wanting to play within the spirit and the original purpose behind the inception of the Rural League, would themselves see the unfairness of their behaviour, some did and that renews ones faith in the goodness and fairness of people, other's did not, and do not, see that their erosion of the purpose of the Rural is in fact it's destruction in the form it was originally perceived. Since without this purpose, it might well just be any other league, open to all players of any level of experience to play, which it is not.

In my view this cannot be allowed to go on. Clubs who cannot see for themselves or have the good grace to simply accept that they no longer, or have not for many years played within the spirit of the Rural League put the rest of the membership in a position of protecting the spirit of the Rural by bringing in Rules to prevent this abuse, and potential destruction of the League that we all love to be part of because of why it was created.

May I wish you all a peaceful and joyous Christmas, and a healthy, happy 2014, with the sunshine on your face and the wind at your back may you enjoy many happy days of bowling next season.

Yours in good fellowship.

Alice Waite.
