

QUEEN'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Collingwood Bowling Club received the QAVS award in June 2019 and became the first 'flat green' bowling club in the UK to receive this prestigious group award for voluntary service to the local community.



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

TRUSTEES:

- Elected President/Chair: Michael Watson
- Life President/Club Ambassador: Michael Wilson
- Elected Club Secretary: Fabian Scott
- Elected Treasurer: Keith Armstrong
- Elected Vice President/Vice Chair: David Pygall
- Business Manager: Alan Hall
- Other Trustees: Amelia Casson, Don Slater, Malcolm Foxton, Scott Elliott, Helen Jobe and Dennis Wrighte

Get in touch

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COLLINGWOOD BOWLING CLUB



From this: November 2014



To this: June 2019





BACKGROUND

Since 1902, Collingwood Bowling Club had been a 'men only' club, sited at the Council maintained West End Bowling Park, which became part of the Parks Sports and Leisure Centre in the late 1990s. Cutbacks and changes to fees led to the club seeking a new venue.

A NEW VENUE

In 2014 the club was made aware that the Heaton Terrace bowling park was available. After much deliberation the club decided to make the move. It was felt that the new green would give us our own identity and ownership, plus giving us more freedom to engage with all aspects of the community, young and old.

The lease was officially signed in March 2015 but we were allowed access to the site from November 2014.

The site was in a derelict state and we knew we had a big task in hand to bring it back to a usable condition.

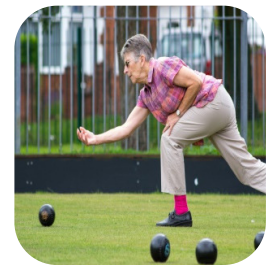


David Ramsay lives locally and joined the club in April 2017. David has been registered as partially sighted for over 21 yrs and for a number of years has also had cataracts, but because of his condition they would be dangerous to operate upon.

David says, "I had been my mother's full-time carer for her last seven years and when she died I was looking for a hobby to help me get out and meet people. I made contact with a family friend who suggested I tried bowls and so that year I joined Collingwood Bowling Club. I found my fellow members great which helped me to relax and get over my loss. Also after being alone for so long I found meeting the club members a great comfort and have thoroughly enjoyed playing bowls at Heaton Terrace with Collingwood."



Kate Adie lives locally and joined the club in April 2015. By the 2016 season we had sufficient lady members to run a ladies club championship knock-out competition. Kate was our first lady club champion and retained that title in the 2017 and 2018 seasons.



Kate says, "When I joined Collingwood Bowling Club I had been playing badminton for over 20 years before that, but found that I needed to do something a little less physically demanding. It was the first year that the club was open to ladies and all of the new members were made very welcome. Everyone has been so friendly and encouraging, and it is now a huge part of my life. The club is a great asset to the local community and I hope to continue to enjoy membership for many years to come."



Millie Casson - pictured second from right - joined the club in March 2015 and was our very first lady member. Her rear garden backs on to the bowling green and she was co-opted on to the Management Committee as a Trustee in early 2017.

Millie says, "When I joined the club I had been recently widowed and thought that it would give me an opportunity to meet new people and enjoy some healthy exercise. I have found the club to be most helpful to me, it also gives me good company and I have met lots of new friends."



Matty Stronge - pictured on far right - lives nearby and joined the club in March 2015. He became a Trustee at the 2016 AGM and volunteered to be on the team selection committee for the 2017 season.



Matty says, "Because of health problems, I had become a virtual recluse and did not do any socialising. On receiving the club flyer through the door in 2015 I decided to purchase a second hand set of bowls and give this new club a go. Since joining the club it has turned my life around from being at a very low ebb to having a brand new beginning. When I started I had difficulty walking any sort of distance and had no friends. Now I am much fitter and healthier, able to be actively involved in bowls and have new friends."



FIRST STEPS

We knew that there was lots of hard work ahead, but with the help and commitment of our members we could 'bring the park back to life' and become an 'independent' club with a 25 year lease. But first we had to rejuvenate and maintain the site and make the club financially stable.

The site had a high level of youth crime and due to the neglected and overgrown state of the park we needed hundreds of volunteer hours to physically reclaim the jungle. Many of our 25 members were over 60 years, so the hard physical work was done by a small core of physically able members and volunteers.

WELCOMING EVERYONE

At our first general meeting in Spring 2015, we made a decision that would fundamentally change the club - it was time to move away from being a 'men-only' club and open membership to all.

This decision has changed the whole face and perception of what Collingwood Bowling Club is and offers to the community. We have doubled our membership and are a friendly, supporting club where every member feels at ease and has a sense of togetherness and ownership of their club.

INITIAL CHALLENGES

During the 2015 season the bowling green was not a very good playing surface, but all our members and the vast majority of visitors appreciated the difficult situation the club was faced with and the work being undertaken.



FINANCING THE PROJECT

Over the winter of 2014 to 2015, as the initial clearing operation showed signs of progress, we needed to finance the purchase of specialist green equipment and cover maintenance and running costs. We approached North Tyneside VODA for advice and guidance on the following:

- A new constitution to reflect our 'open to all' policy
- Good committee and governance structures
- Where to gain funding and how to structure the applications to have best hopes for success

With the full support of VODA, we persevered during those initial stages despite having limited early success in gaining sponsorship contributions. However we started to gain support from several charitable funders over the 2015 to 2016 period and successfully gained funding for the purchase of machinery, essential green care products and a costly green sprinkler irrigation system.

MAKING PROGRESS AND REJUVENATING THE SITE

In 2016 we approached VODA again for advice on the possibility of our club being registered as a charity. Excellent advice was given and by November 2016 our application was successful and we were registered as a charity by the Charity Commission. The club members elected 10 Trustees to manage all aspects of club business (as a management committee).

Although our mission was to bring the community into the sport to assist in their health and wellbeing, the means to achieve this aim was to play bowls on a playable surface. We kept our membership on board as we continued with the work to reclaim the green and produce a surface that was remotely playable on.



THE AGE FACTOR

This will always be an issue as by nature the biggest majority of members are of senior age and because of their availability, will be the most likely trustees and volunteers for the many tasks.

Some of the key driving members of the management committee, who have managed to forge through with the positive developments for the club, do have health issues but our club always looks to support and lessen their load to ensure the club responsibilities do not have an adverse impact upon their health.

THE FUTURE

With the excellent support given by VODA, the trustees and all our members, we are now in the position to look forward to a bright future with excellent facilities and a green to match and surpass other bowling venues within the North Tyneside and the Newcastle area.

In life there are always obstacles in the way of genuine progress, but the club has proved that we have the dedicated support of members and the resilience of trustees to ensure that the club can fully utilise all the gains made from 2014 to the present and be of great benefit to their local community in the future.





MEMBER SUPPORT

We are now essentially a small business with charitable purposes in helping the community. However this responsibility holds many obstacles and concerns, particularly when coping with the emotional toll that responsibility has on the management committee members. Many of our members have had sleepless nights over the magnitude of the task - not least in securing match funding for Sport England's initial £30K pledge for the pavilion extension.

Failure in achieving full funding would have meant our facilities would remain at a poor standard and limit what we could offer to the community for the future. It would also have had a damaging impact upon our ability to maintain financial sustainability over future years.



MAINTAINING THE STANDARD - A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

We have gained many new members from the local area as people saw the progress being made bringing the green back to a playable state. The pleasing aspect of the new members was that most of them were new to the sport.

We purchased smaller 'club guest bowls' (Active North Tyneside funded) so we can provide bowls for regular Saturday morning free taster sessions to encourage more of the community to come along and try the sport.

We applied for further funding and were successful in gaining financial support to purchase the essential green care products and ad-hoc items. We had canvassed many local businesses for sponsorship to support our running costs and were successful with a number of companies offering financial help and in some cases donating regular non-restricted annual assistance.

Although we started in November 2014 with less than £2k in our account and no equipment, we are now in a position to have all required machinery, able to maintain a contingency fund, cover our running costs and have a small surplus of unrestricted finance within our account. We are progressively bringing into action several annual fundraising events to make us less reliant upon the generosity of the sponsorship of local businesses.





We have been very fortunate to gain funding and sponsorship from a number of sources, including trusts, funders, local businesses and individuals.

Thank you all for your support!

2015 to 2018

VODA North Tyneside

For their tremendous support in gaining funding from:

Suez Communities Trust - 'Awards 4 All' Big Lottery Fund
 R W Mann Trust – Joicey Trust – Sir James Knott Trust
 William Leech Charity

Community Foundation serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland

For their tremendous support in gaining funding from

Readman Family Grassroots Fund –
 Give 2 N.Tyneside Community 1st Fund *plus* several other private funders.

Daren Persson Funeral Directors Ltd	Allotment Social Club & Institute
White Hot Comms & The Print People Ltd	Aynsley Windows and Conservatories
Freemasons (Northumberland)	N. Shields Quality Butchers
Nestle UK Ltd	Gillie & Partners
Active North Tyneside	Excel NE Ltd
Cormeton Electronics Ltd	Ewan Bramley Dental Care
Leeds Building Society	Rockcliffe Garage
Helen McArdle Care	Cooperative Funeralcare
Ladies Club Championship - 'AJ MEMORIAL TROPHY' privately sponsored on behalf of LD NORTH EAST	
2019	
Allotment Social Club & Institute	North Shields Quality Butchers
A number of private individuals continue to annually make very generous contributions to our club funds.	
Ladies Club Championship - 'AJ MEMORIAL TROPHY' privately sponsored on behalf of LD NORTH EAST	
If you would like to support the club, please visit our website www.collingwoodbowlingclub.co.uk	



The Pavilion Extension Project Timeline

- The discussions on a proposal to extend our pavilion were started within the club in the summer of 2015
- VODA North Tyneside support and advice on options started in 2015
- Initial Pre-Plans were approved in March 2017
- Full Planning permission granted in March 2018
- Building Control approval awarded in December 2018
- Builder started his work in March 2019
- Extension completed in late May 2019

Funding awards and Donations

- September 17 - Sport England 'Community Asset' Fund - conditional on gaining supporting funding from other sources
- November 17 - Christopher Rowbotham Charitable Trust
- December 17 - Ballinger Charitable Trust
- December 17 - Sir James Knott Trust
- December 18 - Foyle Foundation
- January 18 - Rank Foundation
- February 18 - Garfield Weston Foundation
- March 18 - J H Burn Charitable Trust
- April 18 - William Webster Charitable Trust
- April 18 - Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust
- May 18 - R W Mann Trust
- June 18 - Clothworkers Foundation
- November 18 - Christopher Rowbotham Charitable Trust (2nd)
- 2017 to 2018 period - Donations from members / friends
- 2019 - Donation from our club account

Sincere thanks to the following for their hard work and generosity in supporting and supplying services and materials for the pavilion extension:

Ian Cook (Architect) – Warren Bros Ltd (Builders) – Cormeton Electronics Ltd (Alarm system) – Grange Interiors (New Kitchen Units) - Nigel Cooke (Advice/Support)