

# Oak Hill Bowls Club

January 2026



## What's in this newsletter

Christmas lunch

Membership

CIO/CIC

Club AGM

Club Shirts

Close Season Working Party

Recruitment

Winter Activities

Indoor Matches

County & District Competitions

Getting to Know ...

## Happy New Year

At the beginning of a new year we look forward to what the 2026 season might bring, give news of various plans, and also recap on the events towards the end of last year.

### Christmas Lunch

On the 13<sup>th</sup> December 36 members and friends gathered in our clubhouse for a Christmas lunch. It was a lovely occasion and we are very grateful to Yin and So Ha for all the work they put in to make sure we had such a wonderful feast – a Christmas meal with a difference. Not only did we enjoy delicious food, but many thanks are also due to all the helpers who decorated the clubhouse, donated gifts for the raffle, wrapped presents for our surprise Santa to give out, and helped on the day in so many different ways. As a result we raised substantial sums towards club funds and a donation to the North London Hospice.



## Membership

We are sad to report that, since our last newsletter at the beginning of October, three of our members have passed away.

**Gordon Greenfield** had been suffering from different forms of cancer for quite a while, but his passing was still quite sudden at the end. Gordon made major contributions to the club over many years – as a joint founder with David Conway of our hugely successful Open League – and as a prime mover in obtaining a number of sponsors for the club. He made major contributions to the future planning for the club and he will be sorely missed.

Whereas Gordon had not been well for a while, it was a total shock to us all when **Christine Shields** passed away in November. She had been a loyal member of the club for a number of years and served as club secretary between 2019 and 2023, and bar manager in 2024. When she suffered arthritis in her right wrist she took up bowling with her left hand and, although she did find some difficulty with this, she was a member of the team winning the club triples competition in 2022. Christine was heavily involved in the local community, primarily through her work with the East Barnet Residents Association and organising committee for the East Barnet Festival. She will be greatly missed.

**Josie Kelly** passed away in December, just a few months after her beloved husband Norman. Josie was a stalwart member of Oak Hill for more than 20 years and had a number of successes in club competitions. However, she and Norman will be remembered mainly for their huge loyalty and quiet, but consistent support for the club over many years. Their nephews have decided to donate a trophy to the club in memory of Josie and Norman and we look forward to presenting the “Kelly Cup” this coming year.

On a much happier note, many congratulations to **Rhys Lewis**, who was invited for a trial for the England partially-sighted bowls team for the inaugural 4 nations para-games to be held at the end of February. For more information, see the interview with Rhys later in the newsletter.

## CIO/CIC

At the extra-ordinary meeting of club members, it was agreed that we should submit a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) application to the Charity Commission for the bowls side of the club, and a separate Community Interest Company (CIC) application for the non-bowling activities of the club. Since then we have been working with our solicitors, initially on the CIO application. This is now almost ready to be submitted.

We decided to proceed with the CIO application first, since this is likely to have a longer turn-round time. We have also been in touch with Barnet Council, since any change in status of the club will have implications for our proposed new lease. At this stage it is difficult to predict whether we will know if our applications are successful before the revised AGM date, but we will keep members informed of progress as we know it.

## AGM

As mentioned in our last newsletter, the revised date for the club AGM is **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March**. Please reserve this date.

This is the main opportunity for members to express their views on the club, predominantly by voting for the Officers of the club. Nomination sheets have been posted on the notice board in the corridor leading to the toilets. When making nominations, please make sure that the nominees agree to be proposed and they confirm this with their signature. Formal notice of the AGM will be circulated to members well in advance of the meeting.



## Club Shirts

We have been looking into changing the supplier of our club shirts. Although we were quite happy with the design and quality of the shirts supplied by Aceit, one main problem is that they required a minimum quantity with every order. This was not easy because of the difficulty in predicting the sizes of shirts and jackets required.



We are grateful for the research that Pete Headland has undertaken, with some input from Rhys and other members. As a result, we will be ordering an initial set of shirts and jackets through Zapkam, who also supply the club shirts for Glebelands. The design of the shirts will remain the same and the jackets will look similar, but will also include a hood. In our initial order we will be buying shirts and jackets of different sizes. The intention is to keep these as samples, so that they are available for members to try on and select the correct size, before they order their own shirt – either directly with Zapkam or through the club. Individual shirts can be personalised with the member's name. Zapkam's shirts are slightly cheaper than those from Aceit, and they come in two types of fabric, one thicker than the other, so we will have samples available in both fabrics. We should have a set of sample shirts and jackets available before the start of the new season.

## Close Season Working Party

Our close-season working party carried out various works before Christmas, with the main work being the painting of the interior of the clubhouse, under the direction of Mike de Campi. This has resulted in a major improvement and very positive comments from all that have seen it. Many thanks to Mike and his team of workers.



We hope that further work can be completed on the changing rooms before the start of the new season, and we will also need to do more work on the green surround. Thanks to Ian Wilson who has jet-washed the ditch mats ready for their return before the new season.

## Recruitment

We are planning to have a major recruitment drive at the beginning of the new season. A working group – Pete H, Paulette, Sian, Junior, Louise, Rhys and Wing – have been looking at this, and they would be happy to hear from members with any ideas. Our main emphasis will be on the weekend of May 9<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup>, which will culminate with a friendly match against Hertfordshire on the afternoon of the 10<sup>th</sup>, to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the club in 1956.



## Winter Activities

We are planning various activities throughout the coming months. The **World Indoor Bowls** competitions are held at Potters resort in January and we invite members to come to the club on the afternoons of **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January**, when we will be showing the televising of the semi-finals and final of the Open Singles competition. The bar will be open and we will be providing refreshments. More details will be posted on the WhatsApp group a few days in advance.

In February we are planning a **film matinee on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February at 2pm** when we will be showing "The Duke", a comedy from 2020 starring Jim Broadbent and Helen Mirren.

We also hope to organise another event in March. Please let us know if you have any ideas.

The cribbage group continues to meet on Monday mornings and the bridge group on Wednesday mornings throughout the winter. We would hope to have more members come along on Wednesdays for our games afternoons, so we are planning to re-launch this by arranging a **Traitors Afternoon** on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January at 2pm for a 2.15pm start.



We know that a number of members are keen viewers of the BBC programme, so we will be arranging our own version and invite you to come along and try your investigative and deception skills. Other possibilities for Wednesday afternoons will depend on interest, so please let us know of any other activities that you would enjoy.

## Indoor Matches

We lost the first-leg match in our friendly fixture against Glebelands for the John Golding Memorial Trophy on the 1<sup>st</sup> November, so need to put out a strong team for the second leg on the 21<sup>st</sup> March. We also have a friendly match at Glebelands against Bishopswood on the 4<sup>th</sup> March, so look out for the team sheets on the notice board at Glebelands or let Rhys know if you are available to play.

We won the 4-club match against Arnos, Cockfosters and Maccabi on the 7<sup>th</sup> January, winning 3 out of our 4 triples games and drawing the fourth. Congratulations to all those who took part.



## County and District Competitions

The entry sheets for the **Hertfordshire county** competitions are available on the respective notice boards in the clubhouse. If you wish to enter any of these competitions please put your name down as soon as possible, or let Rhys or John Abson know, so that we can put in our entries in good time.

Entry sheets are also available for the **Finchley and North London competitions**. As the closing date for entries is the 1<sup>st</sup> April, we will be sending out a further reminder nearer the time.



## Getting to know ... Rhys Lewis

### Who is Rhys?

Rhys was born in South Wales – with a name like Aled Rhys Lewis, you would never guess his nationality! – and sport has always been a huge interest. He was registered with the Bristol Rovers football academy aged 13-14, and had a trial with Southampton FC when 16. Having completed a degree in Leisure & Business Studies at Manchester, he started his career managing a leisure centre in South Yorks, where he also played semi-professional football, playing in the first preliminary round of the FA Cup for Arncliffe Welfare FC.

Having had a career in sports development, managing sports centres and developing sport in schools, in 2019 he was made redundant and decided to concentrate more on private coaching. In June 2020, in the midst of the Covid crisis he was walking through Oak Hill Park, popped into the bowls club and met Gordon Greenfield. He had his first coaching session the following day and ... the rest is history.

In 2019 Rhys had partially lost the sight in his left eye due to Optic Neuropathy and then a similar problem developed in his right eye in August 2024. He is now registered as partially sighted and is awaiting ratification that he can compete in the B4 category of para-bowls. He was invited for a trial for the England para-bowls team, but his ratification has not been confirmed in time for him to compete in the inaugural 4-nations para-bowls games.

### Proudest achievement?

The weekend in September last year when he won the Finchley open week pairs with John O'Flynn, the triples with Antonio del Vasto and Bill Germaney on Friday, then followed this up with his victory against Damian in the club championship on the Saturday.



**Oak Hill Aspirations** – More involvement in coaching, encouraging more players to compete in district and county competitions.

**Advice to New Bowlers** – Watch good standard matches, get a mentor, practice and ... more practice.

**Hobbies** – All sport – watching and competing

**Favourite Food** – all food, and lots of it.

**Favourite Restaurant** – Da Franco in Friern Barnet.

**Favourite Television** – Gogglebox.

**Other Interests** – Listening to audio books, primarily sports biographies.

**Travel** - Favourite holiday was to South America – Rio, Buenos Aires, Machu Picchu etc. Most humbling experience – serving food and working in the soup kitchen at the Golden temple in Amritsah, India.

**How would you describe yourself?** – Driven, reserved, energetic, sincere, honest.