



Oak Hill Bowls Club

March 2026

AGM and plans for the new season

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AGM

At the club AGM on Saturday 7th March, the following Officers were elected for the coming season:

President	John Abson
Secretary	Sian Allen
Treasurer	Yin Man
Ladies' Captain	Paulette Cowan
Men's Captain	Rhys Lewis
Men's Deputy Captain	Derek Broomfield
Fixture Secretary	Julian Shulman
Competitions Secretary	Rob Petty
Membership Secretaries	Junior Brewster, Pete Headland
Green Ranger	Terry Doe
Social Secretary	Jackie Robinson
Catering Manager	So Ha Liu
Bar Manager	Annika Strandberg
Property Manager	Martin Woodrow
Club Almoner	Brenda Hart

We would like to express our thanks to those officers who have served the club in the past year, with special mention of David Conway, who has "retired" as club treasurer after more than 15 years' invaluable service in that position.

We would also remind members that club officers are all volunteers and serve the club on your behalf; we ask that members treat them with respect at all times.

If any members have constructive suggestions about improvements we can make in the club, we would be very happy to hear them. Just mention your idea to any of the club officers.



Accounts



At the AGM David Conway presented the accounts for the club's accounting year to 31st October 2025. The main points, and the differences between the accounts for the last 2 years, can be summarised as follows –

- The club reported a loss of about £1700 over the year;
- Numbers of members were down on the previous year, resulting in our income from subscriptions reducing by £500;
- Income from sponsors was about £1000 less than the previous year. This was the main factor in reducing the profit on our Open league;
- In the previous year we received a sum of £1940 for the coaching we provided to East Barnet school. This was an exceptional payment as part of the grant that the school received from the government;
- In the last year we paid £3720 in legal fees, as payment for the work our solicitors did on the discussions with Barnet Council about our new lease, and the CIO application to the Charity Commission;
- In the previous year we bought a new dishwasher;
- The main expense for the club - green maintenance - continues to increase each year, so we need to ensure our income also increases to meet these additional costs.

Sponsorship

We are very grateful for the work Gordon Greenfield did over a number of years in obtaining financial support for the club through sponsorship.

In particular, Mantlestates and Churchills Funeral Directors supported our Open League over a number of years. However, partly because of Gordon's infirmity and also because of the difficult financial climate, the amount of sponsorship money we received last year was reduced considerably compared to previous years.



We are exploring other ways of increasing financial support for the club from external sources and are confident that we can generate income at a similar, or better, level compared with earlier years.

News on this front will be included in future newsletters.



Recruitment

We are planning a major recruitment drive at the beginning of the new season. Our main emphasis will be on the weekend of **May 8th / 10th**, when the club will be open from 6pm to 8pm on Friday 8th, and from 10am to 12noon on Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th. We will be producing leaflets and posters to promote this weekend, and will need a number of club members to support this key work.



In addition, we have agreed a joint initiative with the Barnet branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A). That branch has 1800 members and we have agreed to start a group for their members on Friday afternoons, from 2pm to 4pm, starting on the 1st May. We will be promoting this plan at the branch's monthly meetings on the 2nd April and the 7th May.

We also hope to promote the club in the monthly newsletter of the East Barnet Residents Association.

We would love to hear from members with other ideas about recruiting new bowlers to the club, and would also remind you that the club has a scheme where a member's subscription is reduced in the following season for each new member they introduce to the club. Last year Sian was involved in introducing Louise McKie and Marc Folan to the club, so she will have a reduced subscription for the 2026 season!

Instructors

In order to help with training new members, the U3A group, and the pupils from East Barnet school, we need to have a group of "instructors". Very little experience is required – just a basic knowledge of the sport, a willingness to help potential bowlers, and a positive attitude.

Rhys and John will be providing some training sessions for potential instructors at the beginning of the season, so please add your name to the list in the clubhouse.

Club Shirts

We now have a range of club shirts and jackets available from Zapkam, our new supplier. Shirts in different sizes, and in two different thickness of fabric, are available for members to try on before ordering. The cost of an individual shirt is £31.19, but a reduction to £27.59 can be obtained if more than 5 shirts are ordered at the same time. Jackets include a hood and cost £37.19 each. Individual names can be printed on the shirts at no additional cost.



We also have a supply of shirts and jackets from Aceit, our previous supplier, in some sizes. These will be available at a reduced price - £20 for a shirt, £30 for a jacket. More details available before the start of the season.



50/50 Club

Last year the club's income from the 100 Club, Bonus Ball and Golden Pot was just £115. This was because we had continued to pay out a fixed sum to "winners" despite the fact that fewer members were participating. This is obviously unsustainable, so we have decided to replace the 100 Club and Bonus Ball initiatives with a new raffle to be called the 50/50 Club. In this plan:

- Individual numbers will be available to members for £10 each, to cover the five months of the season, from May to September;
- The winning number will be drawn at the last club-night of each month;
- The amount of prize money for the winning number will depend on the amount in the fund for that month – 50% of the fund will go to the winning member, 50% to the club;
- Additional numbers can be purchased each month for £2;
- Members can purchase numbers on the subscription form, or from Kay Comer at the coffee morning on the 18th April. Please join this fund-raising initiative – "you have to be in it to win it".

We plan to continue running the Golden Pot initiative on club-nights with 50% of the pot going to the winning number, 25% to the club and 25% to the North London Hospice.

Subscriptions

The club officers have decided to leave the level of subscriptions for the 2026 season at the same level as last year, i.e. £190 for a full-playing member, £95 for an associate member, £30 for a social member, £5 for a junior member. The annual subscription forms will be sent to all members, or made available in the club-house, at the beginning of April.

Clubhouse Displays

Following the internal decoration of the club-house we plan to produce new displays of various honours and achievements. Julian has already produced a timeline display of the Presidents of the club since 1956.



On the main wall we intend to produce a display of the winners of last year's competitions, plus two collages of photographs of the teams achieving club honours over recent years, and photographs of this year's club officers. The photographs which used to be shown in frames have been removed and will be included in the club honours book, which contains all the information about club competitions winners and achievements since the club's foundation in 1956. This honours book will be on the shelf in the corner of the main club-house area, but we would welcome ideas for a more suitable home for this book.

Catering at Club-nights

We hope to run a full programme of club-night activities, including meals on most nights.

Jackie Robinson, So Ha Liu or Yin Man would like to hear from any members who feel they could cook, or join with other members to prepare a meal on a Thursday evening.



County and District Competitions

We have submitted the entries for the Hertfordshire county competitions and expect the draws to be made at the beginning of March.

Entry sheets are available for the **Finchley and North London competitions**, where the closing date for entries is the 31st March, so please add your name to the list if you would like to enter any of these competitions. Entry is free, so we hope that a good number of our members will be taking part. It would be good to be able to repeat the successes we have achieved in recent years.

Indoor Matches

We won our indoor match against Bishopswood on Wednesday 4th March.

The second leg of our friendly fixture against Glebelands for the John Golding Memorial Trophy is on Saturday 21st March. Rhys has organised a full Oak Hill team and we'd welcome the support of other members.

Platinum Anniversary

This year is the platinum anniversary (70 years) since Oak Hill was founded.

To help celebrate this achievement we have organised a friendly match against Hertfordshire on the afternoon of the 10th May.

We also plan to give small gifts to all our members, and to members from other clubs playing in friendly matches this season.



Monday Afternoon League

David Mason will again be organising this internal league and we would encourage members to add their names to the list on the notice board inside the club-house, or to contact David directly.

This is a wonderful opportunity to gain competitive experience and we will be encouraging any new members to join this league.

Open League

We have received a full complement of entries from 16 teams for our Tuesday morning Open League. A detailed schedule for the first round of matches, starting on the 28th April, has been sent out to all teams.



Close Season

Working Party

After the work that Mike de Campi, Alan Nicholls and other helpers carried out inside the main clubhouse area and the men's changing room, we need to do various jobs outside the clubhouse and the green surround to make sure the club is ready for the new season.

We hope to do this work, mainly on Thursday mornings, starting on 19th March. Please come along if you feel able to help.

When we cleared the main club-house areas for the internal painting work to be completed, there was a considerable amount of "stuff" – items of clothing, bowls bags, etc. - that had been left cluttering the commonly used areas.

In addition, due to the refurbishment work, we will have a number of items, e.g. picture frames, that we no longer require. At the coffee morning, at the opening of the club on the 18th April, we plan to have these items on display and available for members to "claim" or purchase.

Potters



We are organising a group from the club – plus some friends - to visit the Potters resort in Norfolk from the 19th to the 23rd October.

Anyone interested should contact Jackie Robinson for more details.

East Barnet School

Unfortunately, due to staffing resources in the PE department and teething problems with the timetable, the school won't be able to bring students to the club this year.

Acorn Trophy

We have been asked to re-introduce the Acorn Trophy, as a competitive opportunity for any club members who wish to take part, on Thursday nights. We plan to run this on alternate Thursday nights, from 6pm to 7.30pm, starting mid-season.



Getting to know ... John Abson

Who is John?

John was born in Rotherham, Yorks. His family moved to Stoke when he was two, hence his support of **Port Vale FC**. In 1965 he came to London to study for a Maths degree at University College. He moved to Muswell Hill in his final year at university and has lived in the area ever since. Through his connections to the Methodist Church he met his future wife Elaine. They were married for 47 years until Elaine died in 2023. He has three children – two boys and a girl – and two grand-daughters, now aged 12 and 8.

His first job was in computing, programming and designing systems in various industries. He then moved into management, but was made redundant in 1990 and changed careers, becoming a financial adviser. He worked for Albany Life and Canada Life, and then became an Independent Financial Adviser, retiring in 2013.

How did John get involved in bowls?

In 1999 a client asked him to sponsor a bowls “super-league” that was starting at Glebelands. He contributed £1000 towards the league’s prize money, was invited to come and “have a try” at bowls and ... the rest is history.

John’s first outdoor club was Finchley (Etchingham Park) but he moved to Oak Hill in 2004. He knew some Oak Hill members, bowling with them in the Monday league at Glebelands, and was persuaded largely by the philosophy of Len Wildman, the President at Oak Hill.

Best bowling achievements?

In 2007 he won the Herts Unbadged Singles competition, gaining his county badge, but probably his proudest moment was in 2011 when he and Alan Cawdell were the runners-up in the national over-55 pairs competition. A month later he beat Alan to become the club champion.



Hopes for Oak Hill Bowls Club?

To become a truly sustainable club, John considers we need to have 100 playing members and an active social side. His “dream” would see the club in a new club-house with year-round bowling through short mat bowls indoors in the winter. The cost, about £1.5 million, would be difficult to raise ... but sometimes dreams do come true!

Best advice for a new Bowler?

Just enjoy it – whatever your level

Interests outside of bowls? – travelling and most types of music, particularly musical theatre and especially Fiddler on the Roof

Favourite place visited? Machu Picchu in Peru

Favourite food? – roast duck

Favourite restaurant? -Grim’s Dyke in Harrow which is the former home of W S Gilbert (of Gilbert & Sullivan fame)