HOLWELL SPORTS BOWLS CLUB

Founded 1917

Minutes of AGM held at The Club, Asfordby Hill, Melton Mowbray on Friday October 16th, 2026, at 7.00pm.

In attendance: A & B Broadberry, G Butler, H Cramp, M Cregan, M Cuffin, E Faulconbridge, S Hall, J Hughes, B & V James, J Ladkin, R & S Lemon, G Marshall, S Moore, R & J Penny, J Reynolds, G Rudkin, M Simmons, A Spaulding, A Tipper, F Thorpe, K Tween, C & E Underwood, A Whittaker.

1. **President Fred Thorpe** opened the meeting thanking everyone for attending an important meeting allowing us to discuss the business of the club. It was good to see so many members attending.

2. **A Minutes Silence:** For friends and fellow bowlers, we have lost.

3. **Apologies**: C & J Cregan, L Higgins, C Hollis, V&D Hopkinson. J & P Francis, R Faulconbridge, P Lamb, T Lapworth, E Pearson, J Rudkin, M Thorpe. G

4. **Minutes of Meeting** held on the 10th of October 2025 were taken as read.

5. **Adoption of Minutes**. Proposed as a correct account by Anne Whittaker and seconded by Byron James and duly signed by President Fred Thorpe

6. **Matters Arising** None

7. President's Report Fred Thorpe

A warm welcome to members to the AGM.
It has been a busy year with matches, my tour and social events. Plus ,we hosted a ladies county match between Leicestershire and Northamptonshire which went down well with most of the players. A big shout out to the members involved that day both getting the green ready and members who prepared and served the meal. Well, done.
A lot has gone on with the sale of the area, but more of this will come later.
We have several games either cancelled or rearranged because of the heat. It makes a change from the rain.
A lot of injuries and illness in the club this year including my polymyalgia and tricks on a step ladder. We wish everyone a speedy recovery and hope to see them back on the green next year.
I would like to express my thanks on behalf of the club for our outgoing treasurer Simon Hall. Simon has been doing this job for a number of years, and he now feels it's time to hand over the reins to someone else.

Also, my thanks to Eric Falconbridge who has done a sterling job as competition secretary this year and to Sue Moore who has come to the end of her year as immediate past president.
A successful year of fundraising for my charity the East Midlands Air Ambulance Service we raised a total of £370 Many thanks to those that contributed in some way or other. The winner of the Sweepstake held at Presentation Night was Joy Penny.

My tour was to Eastbourne this year staying at the Daish's Hotel the imperial. We had a good trip down with 48 people on the tour. We checked into the hotel and were assigned our tables for the four nights there. Our first match should have been against White Rock at Hastings but due to unforeseen problems we played at Hailsham. We still had time for a morning of sightseeing in Hastings. The match was close, but we lost 85 to 94. Next day we headed to Brighton. After a morning of wandering around there we headed along the coast road to Hove where we again lost 78 to 92. Our final morning left us free to explore Eastbourne before going along the coast to Royal Sovereign Bowls Club another close game which we eventually won by 87 to 83. A very successful tour which I believe was enjoyed by all who attended. I didn't hear any of any complaints about the rooms or the food which is always a good sign.

I have enjoyed my year as your President and wish good fortune to Ann Spaulding for next year

8. **Secretary's Report** Sue Lemon.
This year the committee has had to deal with reports about the possible purchase of the site. The information we received was surrounded by a great deal of conjecture, which made it very difficult to plan any strategy until our position was certain. That certainty came on the 30th of June, when the owners' son presented us with a lease. Since then, we have been looking at ways to ensure the club brings in enough revenue to cover the annual lease of £3,600.
The committee has proposed an increase in membership fees, which would make a big difference; this will be voted on later in the meeting. Ideally, however, we would like to raise the money from outside sources rather than from the existing membership. The key to our success will be recruiting new members and becoming more involved with the local community to bring in additional revenue.
We have formed a working group made up of Alan Tipper (who has been carrying out research for us), Bob Penny, Anne Spaulding, Fred Thorpe, Mark Simmons and myself. Any members interested in joining us would be very welcome to come forward. we really need someone who is into social media and what we can do with Facebook and Instagram, so if you fit this description or you know of someone who does or you know of a school doing an IT project who would help us, please let us know.
I will not hide the fact that ChatGPT has provided a basis for our planning and has helped us develop ideas we might not otherwise have thought of.
If the membership agrees to support it, we intend to set up a 100 Club with monthly prizes of half the takings. Initially if 40 people sign up at £5 a month, this would give a prize of £100 each month and raise a further £1,200 a year for the club towards the lease. We would hope that members would encourage friends and family to join us in this venture.

We have been offered the chance to hold a Family Prize Bingo at the Legion at Easter. We will be asking members to request donations from retail outlets they use regularly. Donations should ideally be valued at £10 or £20, although smaller items can be grouped together. These can be gift cards or items of value to families and children (grandparents too). Glenise has kindly taken the lead on this, and we thank her. I will put together a template showing how many prizes are needed at each value, and with your help we hope to do this at little cost to you or to the club.
We would like to hold a community challenge match during the summer. If you belong to any group you could approach to see whether they are interested, please let us know.
Our Jumble/Table sale gave up to a dozen members a very sociable day at the club sorting the amazing number of things that were donated and manning the tables. About 20 local residents came and we did sell some of the donations. Those that were left were then donated to the Hanger or taken to the tip (sadly). We may have another attempt at this but by hiring out tables and having it at a weekend. If we can we will have a table of our own.

This list is just the start, and we are asking for the support and ideas from all our members, as we will need your help for any plan to succeed.

Sadly, we are losing valued members of the committee at this meeting.
Our IPP Sue will have completed her three years but has stood for the Competition Secretary post. So glad you are staying Sue and thank you for doing this.
Eric our competition secretary who ensured we finally have a set of rules to apply to the competitions is stepping down.
Our Treasurer Simon who has done so much to keep our finances stable throughout difficult times and has been on hand to offer advice when needed. He has attended endless meetings, when possible, scenarios for the site were discussed after it went into administrations and has kept a cool head throughout all. We will miss Simon's clear thinking and common sense, but he tells me he will be around if we need his help. His daughter is being married this year so it's out of the frying pan into the fire for Simon. We have a parting gift for Simon which President Fred will present. Simon has a great love of cake which prompted our choice.

Anne Whittaker is stepping down after 25 years and we will miss her at our meetings. She gave us insight into the history of the club and its traditions. She brightened every meeting with her smile, and we wish her a happy retirement, but she will continue to be our Raffle Queen. Anne has a special birthday this month, there is a zero in it somewhere - from all of us we wish you very special birthday celebration from us all. We have a gift for you Anne along with flowers and cards to be presented by President Fred.

I have with me Gift Vouchers from the County Men's Benevolent Fund for members if they would come forward to receive them. All have had periods of time unable to bowl during the season. I would like to thank Arthur for reminding me of this most important Secretary duty. Alan Tipper, Reg Jackson, John Francis, Harold Cramp, Angelo Grillo, and Joe Hughes. I realise now that Glen Roberton should be included in this group and I will address this oversight.

Finally, my thanks to all the hardworking members of the committee and our members who do so much around the club on a regular basis to ensure our club is run and maintained so well. We are what we are because of this.

9. **The Treasurers Report**:

At the 2025 AGM I reported that Club funds were £8,617. As of 9th October 2026, total funds stand at £9,384.

Income is £8,466. This is £557 lower than last year. Membership and subscriptions were lower, as were bar profits. However, Monday U3A and chummy sessions brought in £466.

Expenditure was £7,699. This is £569 higher than last year. Bar License renewal was paid twice this year at a total of £360 and as expected the water, and electricity bill was high.

We finish the 2026 season with a strong balance however we face significant increases in costs now we have rent and rates to find.

PROPOSAL FOR AN INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP FEES TO BE VOTED ON AT ITEM 23.

Since the purchase of the Holwell Sports grounds, the club needs to find an additional £3,600 p/a in income to cover rent and an as yet unknown sum to cover local authority rates. To cover the rent alone from an increase in membership fees would require an increase of £90, from the current fee of £60 to £150 (assuming 40 members). There are concerns that such a high increase may result in a decrease in membership which we would want to avoid as much as possible.

It is proposed that membership fees are increased from £60 to £100 (£10 to £20 for associate members) for the 2027 season. This should raise an additional £1,600 in funds.

The remaining £2,000 of additional funds will be covered from club reserves which should enable the club to continue functioning financially for 3 years.

It is proposed that additional sources of funding are sought over the next few years in order to try and minimise further increases in membership fees, although it is recognised that club funds and fees will need to be reviewed on an annual basis.

10. **Fixture Secretary Report**:

The season has given us a lot to think about. The heat waves we experienced, and the impact of parking during the Football Club's home games, have affected us all. The forecast for the coming year suggests we may well have another long, hot summer. We want to enjoy the good weather while avoiding play when the heat is at its worst, which is why home games will start at 10am from June onwards. Not all our visiting clubs can adjust to this start time, but the majority can. We understand that not all members will welcome the earlier starts; we simply ask that we try it for the coming season and see how things work out.

Because of our changing circumstances, we are introducing weekly Free Taster Sessions throughout the season as part of the recruitment process, we need to have in place. I am halfway through developing a booking system with the help of ChatGPT – fingers crossed it works.

We had a full calendar this year, even before adding County, National and Club competitions:

Saturdays: 14 friendly fixtures, plus President's Day, the Memorial Day and the Alec Whittaker Trophy.
Sundays: 2 friendlies.
Club games: the Ladies v Gents game, our successful Open Weekend, the Aussie Pairs League and the Monday Chummy. Fun Day run by President Fred in September reintroduced the players to Snakes and Ladders on a day which could have been warmer.
Leagues: 8 Melton Triples League fixtures and 6 Kings Cup fixtures. The Kings Cup will increase to 8 fixtures in 2027, with Greetham joining.
Hosted events: a ladies County game and a regional National Final. Although County games are hard work, they bring in a substantial amount to the club for a day's work. We will continue to seek these.
As I said last year, the Aussie League needs players, either to support existing players or to form a new team. If you do not play now, please consider putting your name forward.
Everyone playing this season once again fitted the one Friday evening game, and this has been enhanced by the Friday Chummy, which is proving popular. Thanks to Alan Tipper, Mark Simmons and Cath Hollis for giving their time to create the evening.
I would like to thank Margaret Thorpe, who catered for our Saturday friendly games so that our players could be on the green rather than in the kitchen, and Rosemary Faulconbridge, who gave a hand throughout the season. Having Viv Hopkinson make sure the bar is open is such a blessing, and we cannot give enough thanks to her for that. I also want to thank everyone who has helped catering for the county game.

Your Suggestions
We try to provide games for all our members. If you feel this could be improved, please do not hesitate to let us know your suggestions – and if you are interested, you are welcome to take your idea forward."

10. **Competition Secretary Report**: Eric Faulconbridge
I am pleased to report that the Club Competitions were completed in line with the schedule.

During the season ill health, physical injuries and holidays disrupted some matches and withdrawals had to be made to ensure early round schedules were met. However, some intriguing and close-run matches were played throughout.

Unfortunately, the Finals 'Weekend' wasn't adhered to. This was mainly due to the unavailability of finalists for both days of the scheduled weekend and multiple finals for a few of the players. Congratulations to the competition winners and runners up. My thanks to Sue Lemon for organising the lunchtime refreshments, Pat Francis for preparing the soup on both Finals days, the ladies who supplied the homemade cakes, the ladies who set out and cleared away after the meals, Viv Hopkinson for running the bar, and the markers who covered the singles matches, despite the changes that had to be made.

The Presentation Evening was an enjoyable evening for the 36 members that attended. The evening was well guided by MC Bob Lemon through the meal, Fred Thorpe's Presidents address, trophy awards by Eric Faulconbridge and raffle carried out by Anne Whittaker. Sue Lemon was thanked for her time and work undertaken in organising the evening.

The competition winners have been recorded on the Club website along with photographs taken during the matches."

11. **Green Keeper Report**: Bob Lemon
We managed to survive this most brutal summer for greenkeeping. The water bill will have been frightening but looking at the balance sheet not as bad as I had thought. However, the green remained playable and a lot of people had a lot of fun. Tremendous thanks are due to all the people who helped with greenkeeping during the year including swishers and sarrel rollers.
Maintenance Report: Dennis Hopkinson
The wet weather before Christmas found that the equipment store roof leaked. We contacted the roofer who came and lifted the roof to give it more fall. This was done under the guarantee. When the inside dried out replaced damaged ceiling boards.
Usual maintenance carried out during the season. Mowers need to go for annual servicing.

14**. Club Captain. Saturday. Report**: Anne Spaulding
As Saturday captain for home and away matches I found it challenging on occasions. Requesting players to put their names on the availability sheets, liaising with other clubs. Lending and borrowing players, so we had enough for a game. Players not turning up was a worry, but more often than not everyone was very supportive. Resulting in some great games, losing more than we won. Hopefully, next year we'll win more than we lose.
Thank you to all players who supported these friendlies, some away matches were very challenging!!
Can members please continue to put their names on the availability sheets. Please check the clubs WhatsApp for updates, it saves captains ringing you individually.

15**. Club Vice Captain. Melton Triples and Kings Cup League Report**: Bob Penny
The Kings Cup and Melton Triples League have been completed. The season started with the addition of Greetham BC into the Melton Triples League.
It has been a somewhat "messy" season with a number of games being rearranged due to weather conditions or administrative errors by an opponent.
A sincere thank you to those who have supported the club in the leagues during the season. We were able to field teams for all games, but the choice of teams was limited on occasions. I am very grateful to Fred and Sue who took on the captain's role when I was away on umpiring duties.
We may need to review future aspirations for league success and recognise that being able to field teams and participate in this enjoyable aspect of the sport is part of Holwell's success.
Enjoy your winter break and let's all encourage our newer members to get involved in these games for the benefit of all.

The final league positions were as follows:
KINGS CUP
Oakham 42pts
Market Overton 38pts
Belvoir Vale 25pts
Holwell Sports 15pts

MELTON TRIPLES LEAGUE
Market Overton 62pts
Oakham 56pts
Holwell Sports 36pts
Greetham 28pts
Belvoir Vale 18pts.

16. **Mid-Week Captain Report:** Fred Thorpe
We played a total of seven games with one cancelled due to the heat. We won three and lost four with a total of points being 406 to 412 so quite close overall. We had a number of players unavailable through illness or injury, so I am hoping for better results next year.

17. **Sunday Captain Report**: my report is short. There were two Sunday Fixtures this season the first against Attenborough at home which we won and the second against Belvoir Vale away which we also lost 36 - 52. I will be sorry not to be part of the committee any longer, but I will still see you all at the club and I will carry on with the raffles helped by Jean and Glenise.

18. **Bar Manager's Report:** Viv Hopkinson.
Apologies for not attending the A G M this year but due to the date being changed halfway through the season we are away.
2026 has been a poor year for the bar as not only have we had more away matches and had the Atkin Trophy game cancelled due to lack of players, but we also had matches cancelled with the hot weather. Now after the final figures are totalled it turns out not as bad as I thought. Simon to agree.
Doombar sales down by 50%, Guiness 00 still being the most popular
Thanks to everyone who are collecting ring pulls. I know Sileby Bowls Club are grateful for these.

19. **Social Committee Report:** Sue Lemon's report read:
Our social Calander was fully completed this year and gave us some entertaining evenings including
"Guess What "a lively entertaining evening hosted by Bob and Joy Penny,
A curry night served by Bob and Sue Lemon following a Friday Chummy,
Beetle and Bingo which went well once everyone learnt how to work out their score. Alan Tipper then provided two rounds of Card Bingo to complete the evening.
Tom and Janet's Quiz Night tested us all and led to some deep conversations around the tables.
Fun Day run by President Fred reintroducing Snakes and Ladders on the green. Don't miss it next year!
Thanks to everyone involved in organising and to those attending these events.

21. **County Delegates Reports**

Men's Delegate Report Arthur

Arthur reported that the County Delegates would meet once a year as two meetings were no longer needed.

Once again Chris & Neil were part of the Leicestershire's Balcomb winning team. Chris was team captain. It is wonderful to have players of this stature in the club. Chris and Neil were finalists in the County Pairs

Ladies Delegate Report Sue

Work is continuing at pace on the merger project with the following update from the County Ladies.

"Following an appointment process, Bowls England, and EIBA boards have approved the make-up of the England Bowls Designate Board which will be announced soon.

A trademark registration has been filed for England Bowls."

The latest Competition Events Calendar for 2027 is available on Bowls England website – care because of World Championships at Leamington.

22. **Recruitment Report**:

We had 3 new members join us this year: Tim Lapworth and David Gildove (from ourU3A group), plus Raja Khan who has recently moved to the area.

Many of us will remember how disappointing our Open Weekend was, with numbers attending very low indeed, this despite amazing new posters produced by Sue. Alan Tipper and I spent quite a few hours putting the posters around the town and banners on town railings. Also, a lot of time and effort from various people distributing fliers around the town at the 40's weekend and others dropping them through letter boxes. Thank you to all who helped at the weekend and those who distributed the fliers, a special thank you to Alan for all his advice and help. The weather on the Open Weekend didn't help, particularly on the Saturday, plus parking issues on Sunday morning.

Bearing all this in mind we have decided on a different approach next year. It's been suggested that we should move with the times and harness social media, I fully support this. There are several local Facebook groups, including in Asfordby and Melton. We intend to advertise on these that we will make the green available for people to 'come and have a go' on Saturday mornings, beginning from when we open the green in April until the end of May, inviting people to get in touch via our Facebook page. Also offering people the possibility of trying bowls on Monday afternoon and Friday evenings. The hope being that we will reach more people in the local area who might be tempted to give it a go.

Our U3A group will continue next year. In January I will attend the 'Meet the Groups' occasion at the Baptist church, with the hope of drumming up more support for our Monday afternoon session, offering coaching to get people started. Apart from the two members who have joined our club this year, I'm hopeful that from the core of this year's group others might be persuaded to join at the beginning of the season.

The other benefit of having the U3A group is financial, with each player paying £3 for the Monday session.

23. Propositions from Committee

1. It is proposed that membership fees are increased from £60 to £100 (£10 to £20 for associate members) for the 2027 season. This should raise an additional £1,600 in funds. The remaining £2,000 of additional funds will be covered from club reserves which should enable the club to continue functioning financially for 3 years. All voted and the **Proposal was agreed unanimously**

2. It is proposed that additional sources of funding are sought over the next few years in order to try and minimise further increases in membership fees, although it is recognised that club funds and fees will need to be reviewed on an annual basis. All voted and the **Proposal was agreed unanimously**

24. **Life Membership Award:** None

25. **Election of Officers**: President Fred presented incoming President Anne with his badge and the chain of office. President Anne assumed the chair.

26. President Anne declared all seats vacant. All post were unopposed other than the three vacant positions. Nominations were taken from the floor proposed and seconded by members and accepted by nominees. The committee was voted in en bloc unanimously by a show of hands from members attending.

Position	Nominee	Proposed	Seconded
President	Anne Spaulding	Sue Moore	Sue Lemon
Vice President	Byron James	Sue Lemon	Anne Spaulding
Secretary	Sue Lemon	Cath Hollis	Anne Spaulding
Financial Secretary	Bob Lemon	Simon Hall	Fred Thorpe
Fixture Secretary Men and Mixed	Sue Lemon	Claire Cregan	Mark Simmons
Club Captain Saturday	Anne Spaulding	Sue Lemon	Cath Hollis
Club Vice Captain Melton Triples and Kings Cup	Bob Penny	Fred Thorpe	Mark Simmons
LCB Delegate Ladies	Sue Lemon	Claire Cregan	Dennis Hopkinson
LCB Delegate Men	Arthur Broadberry	Sue Lemon	Peter Farrow
Mid-Week Captain	Fred Thorpe	Sue Lemon	Bob Lemon
Sunday Captain	Anne Spaulding	Cath Hollis	Fred Thorpe
Competition Secretary	Sue Moore	Fred Thorpe	Glenise Marshall

Green Keeper	Bob Lemon	Fred Thorpe	Mark Simmons
Assistant Green Keeper	Dennis Hopkinson	Claire Cregan	Eric Faulconbridge
Bar Manager	Viv Hopkinson	Fred Thorpe	Eric Faulconbridge
Assistant Bar Manager	Cath Hollis	Anne Spaulding	Sue Moore
Recruitment	Mark Simmons	Claire Cregan	Eric Faulconbridge
Safeguarding Officer	Glenise Marshall	Fred Thorpe	Dennis Hopkinson
Safeguarding Officer	Mel Bass	Claire Cregan	Dennis Hopkinson
IPP	Fred Thorpe	NR	NR

27.**Incoming President's Remarks**:
It was an interesting year (2026), supporting President Fred Thorpe,
Chairing committee meetings while he was away on holiday, being there as his righthand woman.
Remembering what he'd forgotten, if I could remember!!
Picking up tips ready for taking on the role of President in 2027, which will be our club's 110th anniversary, which is something to celebrate.

28. **Honorarium:** Status Quo.

Please Note - Secretary Sue Lemon had proposed that AOCB be dropped from the AGM Agenda. Propositions to be put forward to the AGM by members in advance of the meeting. Seconded by Phil Hardy and agreed unanimously at the AGM 2021.

Dates for Diary 2027. (May be subject to change)

- Saturday April 10th Opening of Green. 2pm.
- Flower Arranging Workshop Provisionally Wednesday 2nd December 10am.
- Christmas Party. 14th December 2026. 6.30pm, Tickets £10. Festive Hat Competition, No raffle prizes from guests, complementary Mulled Wine and Mince Pie. Supper – Baked Potatoes and variety of fillings.
- Fee-Paying Night - Friday January 29th, 2027, at the Club. 6.30pm
- Tea Rota Meeting Friday 5th March 2027 – 2pm at the club.
- Family Bingo at British Legion – Friday 26th of March
- Cleaning Day - Kitchen and Club Wednesday 7th April 2027 at 9.00am. All hands to the deck.
- Opening of the Green - Saturday 10th April 2027 at 2pm. (Easter is early 26th – 29th March)

- Presentation Night Friday 1st October at the Club.
- AGM Friday TBA 2027 at the Club.
- President's Tour to Torquay Monday 6th September to Friday 10th September

The meeting closed at approximately 8.40pm

A committee meeting to be held the last Tuesday in the month agreed.
Tuesday October 27th at M&DIBC 10am.

Discussions occurred throughout the meeting. The following was noted for the committee to follow up.

- It was agreed to consider a 100 Club if a minimum of 40 participants can be established.
- A card reader to be considered for the club. There is an opportunity to look at one closely with U3A. Eric Faulconbridge to arrange with Viv Hopkinson to take advantage of this offer
- Family Prize Bingo. Members are asked to speak to retailers they use and try to get donations as prizes either in voucher form or as a prize suitable for a child/ parent/grandparent. Donations are not being asked from members.
- We are looking for sponsors for advertising boards around the green. If a member has a contact, they can use we urge them to do so.