

# **REPORT FROM WICKHAMBROOK BOWLS CLUB 2020**

## **Introduction**

2019 saw the recovery of the green focussed towards having the whole area playable in time for the Carnival in July when everyone attending this event would be invited to 'have a go'. It was a massive effort as the grass had grown beyond the normal expectation due to the previously dry summer of 2018. It is at this point that a huge vote of thanks must go to the Chairman at that time, Mr Steve Taylor, who single-handed took on the task of watering which without a shadow of doubt saved the championship quality turf from ruin. Very sadly for the Club Steve did not renew his membership at the end of last year having already stepped down as Chairman due to family commitments. Current members are eternally grateful to Steve and his wife Lynda, who took on the role of non-playing Secretary to the Club and we very much miss their enthusiasm and good cheer – thank you Mr and Mrs Taylor!

## **Making use of the facility**

Not only did the Club promote itself at the Carnival but it was able to offer the chance for the youngsters of Wickhambrook to play bowls in the form of an after-school club organised by Wickhambrook Primary Academy. Matt Thomson, the Mathematics Coordinator at the school, is happily a keen bowls player and the club was quickly up and running in the summer term for the year groups at the latter end of the school. The Bowls Club Chairman and Secretary undertook safeguarding training as part of a certificate of disclosure which enabled them to help each week on the Green. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience for all concerned and we even had a visit from the Headteacher, Ross Towns! It showcased the Club as being not only a venue for the older residents of Wickhambrook but also as a marvellous outdoor sport for children, not all of whom excel in team contact sports, all you need is a good 'eye for the ball' and a bit of a competitive spirit!

## **Financial Support**

With the membership of the club at a low ebb the Club knew it had to listen to existing members complaints regarding certain aspects of play. However with very limited funds it was hard to know how to go forward and address these issues. The lack of toilet facilities made life very difficult for players but the Club was lucky enough to be given a grant of £500 from St Edmundsbury Borough Council due to the support of the then Borough Councillor, Clive Pollington. This was enough to provide a port-a-loo on the site. The Club then applied to Tesco Groundworks and was awarded a £1000 grant for the purchase of a new specialist mower which has encouraged more members to volunteer to cut the Green ready for play! We also cannot thank the Parish Council enough for continuing to maintain the perimeter area of the site which is kept in an immaculate condition due to the local contractor employed by the Parish Council. It is amazing support for this village facility.

We were also awarded enough funds to purchase two sets of Junior Bowls from a grant given by the History Society which was a huge asset when setting up and running the after-school club.

## **Going forward**

What can we say – like everyone all our hopes and plans for 2020 have come to a grinding halt. This was to be the year to really promote the Club, another open day at the Carnival, the after-school club set to continue and flyers to be sent to other Parishes and left in local centres. Our meeting scheduled for March to discuss the forthcoming season had to be cancelled but we have kept in touch with everyone via email. We are now at the point where member play can commence subject to strict procedures set out in our risk assessment. Let us hope that in the months ahead this wonderful Parish facility can be enjoyed more widely again and we can realise our dreams for the Club as things gradually return to the new 'normal'.