SUSSEX COUNTY BOWLS (Women's Section)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 4th November 2026
at Adur Indoor Bowling Club, Southwick.

Present: 65 members, including 40 delegates.

1. The Senior Vice President Anne Chuter opened the meeting with an address to those present wishing them a very warm welcome and acknowledging that this would be the very last time it will be in this format. Anne commented on the strong turnout noting this as a true testament to the health and spirit of Sussex women bowling.

   She offered thanks to the hard-working committee and every single member who has represented or supported the County over the past year. Anne acknowledged the challenges faced stating that moving forward the greatest strength will always be unity. "We win as one County, Sussex, and we will face many bumps in the road together."

   Looking ahead to the upcoming season, Anne shared her hope that we play our bowls with pride, respect our opponents and each other, welcome all our new members with open arms, and most importantly, enjoy every minute we spend on the green.

2. Apologies for absence:

   Val Maher – Arundel, Tina Phillips – Friendship Fund Secretary, Denise Cook – Bognor Regis, Anne Barnes – Burgess Hill, Julie Cottingham – Herstmonceux, Margaret Winton – Isle of Thornes, Maz Howe – Maltravers, June Lambert – Nutley, Paula Monk – Northiam, Sue Llewelly-Powell – Peacehaven, Betty Pain – Past President, Carolyn Worth – Sidley Martlets, Doreen De Silva – Southwick Park, Linda Cooper – Staplecross, Chris Searle – Uckfield,

3. The minutes of the last AGM held on Wednesday 5th November 2025, having been circulated, were accepted as a true record, proposed for adoption by Cora White, seconded by Carol Bowles, and signed by the Senior Vice President.
4. Matters arising – None
5. Reports:

   <u>Hon. Secretary Kathy Flood</u>:

   Kathy gave a brief summary of her report and requested that a more detailed version be included in the minutes for reference.

   Kathy spoke of the hot weather experienced this summer and congratulated everyone for completing their competitions despite this added challenge. She offered her thanks to committees, both present and past, and past presidents for all the support she has received. In 2026 19 ladies received their County badge, a further 19 ladies will be receiving theirs in 2027. Kathy thanked Sheila Simmons who is standing down from the post of Competitions Secretary (East).

   Full Report - *The over-riding memory of 2026, I think, will be the hottest weather ever recorded in this country. There were three spells during July and August when the temperature reached an unprecedented 100 degrees. Many people found this this extremely debilitating, but with one or two tweaks, we managed to get all competitions and matches played, and our players did so well to get through it.*

This has been a somewhat unusual year for Sussex women, in that for the first time in its 95 years history, we did not have a President, due to the fact that S.V.P. Debbie Juden, who played at Woodingdean B.C., moved unexpectedly to Liverpool in the latter part of 2025. As the Junior Vice President, Anne Chuter, understandably did not feel ready to take on the Presidential role, it was decided to use Officers and Past Presidents to fill the role for this year. This has worked extremely well, and I would like thank S.V.P. Anne, Immediate Past President Marilyn Doust and Past Presidents Jill Saunders, Gill Hill, Wendy Davies, Yvonne Woodcock and Julie Hawkins for stepping in and doing a grand job.

We obviously did not have a President's Day, which was sad but unavoidable.

In friendly County matches, Sussex won 4 and lost 5. The match due to be played at Buxted Park against Kent had to be cancelled by Buxted Park due to an unfortunate date clash with the Cricket Club who use the same premises, but it is hoped that we can go there next year.

In the Johns Trophy, we did win not through to the Section Finals but everyone did their best, and I'm sure our Johns and Walker Manager, Wendy Davies, will give a more detailed report.

There was a further change in the Walker Cup, due to many complaints to Bowls England after the fiasco of 2025. This year it was played on one day, on a Sunday in May. Sussex were the hosts for the south-east area, and we played at Worthing Pavilion against Hampshire, I.o.W. and Surrey. It was a somewhat chaotic day, but we got through it.

For the first time, Sussex entered the National Mixed Fours competition, and amazingly reached the Finals at Leamington Spa. A fantastic effort and I'm sure Wendy will have more to say on that.

Thanks must go once again to our Selectors, Wendy Davies, Tricia Fry, Gill Hill and Sue Walter for all their efforts.

An unusually large number of Sussex Unbadged players reached the National Finals at Leamington this year, as well as our more established players, well done to your all. Our biggest success was the Bowls England-managed ladies Overs 60s Pairs, and our sincerest Congratulations go to Doreen De Silva and Helen Jones from Southwick Park, who won the National title. Again, I'm sure our Competition Secretaries will give more details in their Reports.

At this point, I would like propose a vote of thanks to Sheila Simmons, who is stepping down from her role as Competitions Secretary for the east area after six years in the job. Thank you Sheila for all your hard work and help to the ladies requiring assistance to enter and record their results on line.

Nineteen ladies were presented with their County badge at County matches this season, and to them we offer our sincere congratulations and success in the future. There should have been 21, but sadly, two had to withdraw due to injuries, and will receive their Badges in 2027. Next year, a further nineteen ladies will be presented their County Badges.

The County Semi-finals and Finals Days, which were once again played at the Preston Club in Brighton, ran very smoothly, and thanks must go to the Preston Club for the use of their excellent facilities, and help from their members, and thanks must again go to the ever-stalwart 'Pixies', Jill Saunders, Julie Hawkins and Sheila Simmons for their essential score-board turning skills.

Once again, the County Luncheon was held at the Mid Sussex Golf Club just outside Ditchling, and this year a maximum number of 100 ladies attended. The food was excellent as usual, the service much improved, and thanks must go for clubs and individuals who donated the fantastic

prizes for the raffle, raising much needed funds to enable us to provide coaches for the away County matches.

In conclusion, I must thank all of our hard-working Officers and Committees, who commit so much of their time and energy to ensure that our section continues to run smoothly.

Well ladies, this is my 26th and last Report as Hon. Secretary of Sussex County Women's Bowling Association, a position I have held with honour and pride and will miss terribly but more on that later.

Hon. Treasurer Tricia Fry: (verbatim)

Senior President Anne, Secretary Kathy and all Officers and members of Sussex County Bowls.

I would like to thank all the Officers from the Vice President down, they have all worked very hard to keep Sussex County running smoothly. Especially our County Secretary Kathy Flood who has done a wonderful job, yet again. If you think of all the work your club secretaries have to carry out each season and times it by ten then you will realise how much extra work is involved for Kathy. I think, Kathy, you will be missed but we will discuss this part at the end of this AGM.

We are also losing our Competition Secretary from the East Sheila Simmons.

The accounts:

The County bank balance at the end of the financial year is £15,214.00. This is a lot higher than last year, due to not having to pay out President expenses and the money we received for the sale of two solver cups. I am still confident that we will be able to manage again next season, without putting the cost of County matches up.

Coaches and travel cost us £2715.00 this year, £1731.00 less than last year.

This year with the County Luncheon being on the 7th October I paid Mid Sussex Golf Club on the 3rd October so that amount is not on this year's accounts.

Lastly, I look forward to seeing you all next year for the 2027 season. Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year

Tricia closed by requesting that any questions relating to the accounts be forwarded to her by email.

Hon. Friendship Fund Secretary Tina Phillips – reported by Tricia Fry

In 2026 we lost a number of dear friends and husbands, they will be missed. Tina issued 27 gifts and cards and received thanks for all of them. Tina would like to be informed as soon as possible if someone needs to be sent a card, gift or just to have a friendly chat.

Tina offered her congratulations to the team in the Over 60s mixed competition. She wished to thank Tricia and Wendy for their support. Tina is sad to learn that Kathy is stepping down having been a strong, decisive Secretary for Sussex. She closed by wising Anne Chuter good luck as President.

Hon. Competitions Secretary Zone A Sheila Simmons: (verbatim)

Good afternoon everyone.

The Hot Summer already feels a long way away & heating going on at home.

The Comps Portal is open and closes on 31 January 2027.

Well done to all the Winners & Finalists which I reported at Executive Meeting in September.

I won't make this report again but leave the main report today to Wendy.

This is my last year as Comp Sec for East and I wish Marilyn well in this role.

She has assisted me with the Two Wood Day on many occasions so will not be new to the position. I will miss all the contact with the players but am sure Marilyn will look after you all.

Good luck to everyone next season but most importantly enjoy your bowls.

My thanks again to all the Officers for their support & especially Wendy for hers & Nicki for my lifts.

Best wishes to Ann as County President 2027.

Goodbye to Kathy - what a legend. 26 years of looking after us as Sussex County Bowls Women's Section. Thank you Kathy for all your hard work and dedication. I wish you well, I am sure you will miss being County Secretary but hopefully not too much.

Hon Competitions Secretary Zone B Wendy Davies: (verbatim)

Madam President elect, Officers and Ladies here is my report for the 2026 season, we had an exceptional summer this year with the heat, but you battled on regardless, my thanks go to you all.

Congratulations to all winners of the competitions reaching Leamington, some of you for the first time. I hope you enjoyed the experience and it has made you hungry for more. Congratulations to Doreen de Silva and Helen Jones on winning the over 60s National Pairs. The competitions portal is open for next season and closes on 31st January 2027.

I would like to thank Southwick Park, East Preston and Woodingdean for the use of their greens for Zone Finals, this was the last time we will be using Southwick Park but delighted to say that Preston have offered their green for the 2 Wood Day next season.

We didn't do well in the Walker this year but did better in the Johns, we beat Middlesex in the pouring rain, the girls were real heroes playing in that awful weather. The Amy Rose was regenerated with Jamie Dunk as manager. We had a new comp this year, the Over 60s team event, the men put the entry in with Mark Strong as manager and me as assistant. I'm pleased to say we did very well in this, beating Middlesex, Hertfordshire and Hampshire to reach the Semi-finals resulting in a trip to Leamington where we met Lincolnshire only to play in the pouring rain again and losing by 11 shots. Lincolnshire went on to win. It was a mixed format and our team played extremely well for a first-time effort. The team spirit was great.

Sheila is retiring this year and I would like to thank her for her support and help over these past years and wish her well in her retirement.

Lastly, I must mention Kathy Flood. I was President in 2002 and Kathy was fairly new to the job so we were beginners so to speak but she kept me on the straight and narrow, bearing in mind Ladies

bowls started in 1931, 2002 was a celebration year for a lot of counties and we found ourselves going all over the place for celebration games. We went to Nottingham for the England Presidents day but we decided we would go the night before and stayed at a Travelodge. Next morning we had breakfast and started our journey north and Kathy said she had left her jacket behind. We said we would pick it up on the way back but the next minute we came off the motorway turning back to get her jacket. After a 60 mile round trip we arrived at Nottingham only for me to change into my whites in the street so that we were presentable.

She is a marvellous navigator, she nearly always came out with us in the evenings at Leamington and she would always find the way even a pub in the woods like a Swiss chalet. I wish you well Kathy in your retirement and hope you will continue to support us. Thank you for your support and guidance.

6. Proposition

   The proposition from the Drive BC was withdrawn.

7. Election of Officers and Sub-Committees

   In the absence of a President in 2026, Marilyn Doust presented Anne Chuter with her Badge of Office.

   <u>Anne Chuter – President's speech</u> (verbatim)

   Firstly, I would like to thank all of you for your support and due diligence in getting me to this point! It is an honour to be in this position, and I thank my home club, Midhurst, for nominating me for the role. Standing here I feel a mix of immense pride and great responsibility. It is a unique time. Kathy leaving and Nicki taking over. The joint constitution and the forthcoming Joint AGM. It is transitioning and metamorphosing into a mega change for women. We will make the changes as a joint decision and look forward to all the changes.

   Last year was an odd one. No President so no outgoing president to thank and praise, but what I can do is thank all the past presidents who stepped into the breach and took over the task of president for the day at County matches.

   I was asked, quite recently, at Leamington, 'How long have you been in bowling then? And what is your working background! Bit taken aback to say the least but then I thought well most people probably do not know me, so here's a sort of snapshot!

   I started bowling in Surrey in the late 90s. Just pottering and learning the rules, I was taken under the wing of Jan Pedersen, for me, a truly fantastic player. I played in the times of white and grey skirts, must be certain length! Hats and blazers worn along with neck ties. You were only allowed to remove your jackets when either President or Ladies Captain said so! My how we have progressed since then!

   Raising 2 children and working full time prevented me from playing absolute competitive bowling, won many and loved it. Paul was Home Counties, Middleton Cup standard so he coached me, when possible, then decided when he retired that we would return home to Midhurst. He would step back in bowling and enjoy a chiller game at Midhurst. We moved to Midhurst in 2006 but still played in Surrey, until 2016 when we both joined Midhurst. He soon got his badge, played home counties and Middleton Cup and is now a serving officer on the GPC and Benevolent Committee. Bloody odd for someone who was taking a back step! I took up Coaching, Secretary in 2017 and still in the role for both. I try to encourage the benefits of County Bowling. I encouraged women to

enter County comps, I gained my county badge and so did two others, so the persuading and cajoling worked!

I was a policewoman, where I met my husband, 9 days later he proposed and I excepted, that was 50 years ago last July! I had many jobs after the police force, managerial for large companies, retail and warehousing. Did a lot of HR roles. In 2016 I retired and I hated every minute of it! So, I concentrated on bowling!

Sitting quietly, here actually, having a bite to eat when I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was Wendy! Do you fancy being our junior vice? That started my path up to where I am today. All I can say is, if you get cornered by Wendy you are warned, but I would not have changed a thing. Ive enjoyed every moment. I will support games as much as I possibly can and I will endeavour to strive for Sussex Bowls. I take my role very seriously, I have a passion for coaching and enjoy this immensely, strange sense of humour, maybe that comes from my Welsh roots! Roll on 2027 and may I wish you all every success next season and see you on the green or off! I will not end with Happy Christmas so have a good Easter!

Anne then handed badges of office (where applicable) to the elected officers, all of whom had been duly Nominated and Seconded by their Clubs.

President – Anne Chuter, Midhurst

Senior Vice President – Margaret Kimber, Rottingdean

Junior Vice President – Julie Hawkins, Staplecross

Immediate Past President – None

Hon. Secretary – Nicki Dale, Eastbourne

Assistant Secretary – Anne Chuter, Midhurst

Hon. Treasurer – Tricia Fry, Southwick Park

Assistant Treasurer – Cora White, The Crouch

Competitions Secretary Zone A – Marilyn Doust, Gildredge Park

Competitions Secretary Zone B – Wendy Davies, Goring Manor

Match Secretary – Irene Gettins, Horsham

Friendship Fund Secretary/Treasurer – Tina Phillips, Life Member

Selection Committee for Johns Trophy and Walker Cup:

Zone A – Gill Hill, Eastbourne and Sue Walter, Buxted Park

Zone B – Tricia Fry, Southwick Park and Wendy Davies, Goring Manor

8. The meeting was closed at 15.10 with President Anne Chuter thanking those present for attending.