



Manual for Club Open Days

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1 Introduction

Planning and hosting a Club Open Day is a clever way for your club to connect with local schools and communities. It is the perfect opportunity to extend a warm welcome to both existing and potential players, and to showcase your club programs and activities.

This manual provides an overview of the sorts of factors that should be taken into consideration if your club wants to deliver a fantastic event. It is just a guide and your club can be as inventive and creative as it wants to be.

BCGBA is on hand to assist with planning, promotion, equipment and giveaways.

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2 Club Open Day Objectives

Some of the objectives of hosting a Club Open Day are listed below:

- Attract new members.
- Provide a fun and social event for existing club members.
- Promote the club and its activities to local communities and schools.
- Capture the interest of new players of all ages and standards.
- Potentially convert the new players into regular players at your club.
- Showcase your club facilities and programs available.
- Communicate to the broader community that your club is “open for business”.
- Conduct additional activities aimed at fundraising e.g. a raffle.
- Offer valuable marketing opportunities for your club sponsors.

3 Club Open Day Benefits

The benefits are many and varied, and will be experienced in a variety of immediate and longer-term ways by all stakeholders. They include:

- Attraction of new players and members.
- Motivation to maintain membership.
- Positive income streams to coaching, sponsor, and support service businesses.
- Encouragement to all to take up a healthy sport for life.
- Club profile and viability is enhanced.
- Participation rates increase.
- Competitive edge.
- Fundraising income.
- Potential new sponsorship deals.
- Club recognition by local government which enhances relations.
- Community goodwill.
- More people playing more often at YOUR club.

4 Plan & Prepare

In order to make your event a success, the club must plan and prepare with plenty of time to spare. Some of the preparations might include:

- **Ensure all Welfare and Safeguarding standards are met before the date of the event.** For the current standards, please refer to www.bcgba.org.uk/safeguarding or www.safeguardingbowls.org. You can also discuss Safeguarding requirements directly with your County Welfare Officer.
- Communicating to your committee, members, and sponsors of your Club Open Day date and format.
- Contacting your County Association to organise equipment loan (if necessary).
- Make sure open day does not clash with other local events.
- Notify neighbours, so as to avoid any upset on the day.
- Link up with a local charity and raise money for them on the day. This demonstrates community spirit, adds engagement through them and provides you with the opportunity of linking up with their supporters.
- Coordinate prizes and giveaways for raffles, spot wins etc.
- Prepare flyers and posters for placement in local schools, community businesses, letterbox drops, newsletters, and distribution.
- Position signage on club fence.
- Spread the word by asking your current members to tell everyone.
- Prepare information for the “What’s On” section of the local paper.
- Contact the “Community Noticeboard” section of the local TV and or Radio stations.
- Organise other activities for the day and any catering or equipment that may be required such as: BBQ/Sausage sizzle, Welcome/Sign in table, paperwork, membership forms, raffle books, Face painter, Jumping Castle, Entertainment, music, club merchandise, volunteer badges/caps, club prospectus, camera etc.
- Work with your volunteers on the schedule of the day.
- Make sure the club and surroundings are clean and tidy.
- Contingency plan in the event of bad weather.
- Access for people with disabilities.
- A qualified first aider with appropriate equipment available at all times.
- Additional insurance cover (if not already covered).
- Additional car parking spaces.
- Volunteers to clean up litter after event.

5 Promotional Ideas

- Work with your members and sponsor businesses to advertise your event within their networks.
- Contact local schools for promotion within newsletters and on noticeboards.
- Letterbox drops.
- Utilise local newspapers and community service announcements to communicate key details of the event.
- Distribute promotional posters to local businesses and offer a referral discount scheme for business recommendations.
- Provide existing members with incentives to “introduce a new player to the club”.
- Contact your local council to seek their support in both promotion and ancillary service support.
- Place signage at your club.
- Dummy bowler on local roundabout.
- Connect with neighbouring sporting clubs to promote to their members.
- Send an invitation to your local MP or to an identity who may come along and take part in an activity like an exhibition match.

- Liaise with other community groups (such as Lions, Rotary, Fire Brigade, Charity) who may like to become involved in the event.
- Promote via social media and your website.
- Create some special deals that are win-win on the day.
- Run a raffle leading up to the event – winners must be at the Open Day to claim prizes.

There are currently 38 million (58.5% of population) Facebook users in the UK. Of which 32 million are classed as regular users.

Also, 73% of the population use the internet every day.

6 Activity Suggestions

On the day, there are so many different components your club could add to the event to give it points of difference. Such as:

- Free coaching for adults and juniors.
- Free social play.
- Hit the target competition.
- Supervised games for children.
- Social doubles round robin.
- Spot prize giveaways.
- Exhibition Match.
- Local Celebrity guest attendance.
- BBQ/Sausage sizzle/Afternoon Tea/Spit Roast/Mini Café.
- Bouncy Castle.
- Face Painter.
- Musical entertainment.
- Business vs Business challenge.
- Beat the Coach challenge.
- Special membership deals on the day e.g. “juniors sign up today @ ½ price”.
- Sponsor businesses’ trade table.
- Club “tours”.
- Raffle.
- Silent Auction.
- Lucky Number prizes.
- Photo sessions/Filming (note importance of obtaining consent for taking and using in subsequent promotions for the club).

7 On the Day

Brief volunteers to make sure they are prepared and understand their duties. It is always a good idea to have a few extra volunteers on hand acting as floaters so they can be quickly deployed to help where needed.

Make it easy for visitors to identify who is running the open day, by asking the volunteers to wear club shirts.

If any local dignitaries are in attendance, allocate a volunteer to look after them.

Everyone likes a warm welcome, so make sure volunteers are on hand to meet visitors and show them where to go.

Asking visitors to fill out a simple contact form means you can get in touch with them after the event.

8 Capture & Convert

Memberships at your club are an important source of income and provide individuals and families with a great sense of club identity and community. But the notion is changing and people are looking at memberships with more scrutiny, asking about value for money, and identifying new ways of “joining in”. Clubs need to evaluate their membership models and establish choices to suit changing needs and differing wants.

On the Club Open Day your club potentially has a captive audience to “win over”. It is a great chance to be creative by offering some “one off” deals that whet the appetite for the longer term, and to start establishing communications with potential members.

Some ideas to convert people on the day to sign up include:

- Recording key information of attendees for further follow-up, invitation, or promotional communication.
- Waiving a percentage of normal fees for membership on the day.
- Creating special offers for different categories of membership.
- Adding incentives to register on the day such as free club shirt or sponsor driven prizes.
- Ensuring you have plenty of information flyers and membership forms available to capitalise on expressions of interest.
- Extending an invitation to all non-members to come along to a subsequent social opportunity or match.
- Following up attendees via letter, email, phone call etc. to thank them for supporting the event and to remind them of membership packages and upcoming occasions.

9 Equipment Checklist

A checklist of the key items your club needs to have on hand to make the day run smoothly and successfully should include:

- Signage.
- Welcome and registration desk.
- Literature: membership information, registration forms, coaching and sponsor information, business cards, receipt book, raffle book, nametags, attendance sheets, club flyers etc.
- EPOS facilities and/or cash tin for potential transactions on the day.
- Sunscreen and First Aid kit readily available.
- Bowls and jacks.
- Whiteboard or noticeboard detailing the event’s activities.
- Music and electrical requirements.
- BBQ and catering equipment, food, hand sanitiser, drinks, refrigeration options.
- Balloons, prizes and giveaways.
- PA system (if necessary).
- Any equipment related to other activities on site e.g., raffle barrel, generator etc.

10 Follow-up

Once your event has concluded, follow up is essential to obtain feedback on the areas of win and/or improvement for next time. It is also critical to your club's ability to act upon any expressions of interest from potential members and to communicate your thanks to all people involved on the day.

In your after event activities, documenting and promoting the event is valuable for a variety of reasons. Consider writing an article for your local community website (as well as your own), and ask your local newspaper to run a photo and article from the day.

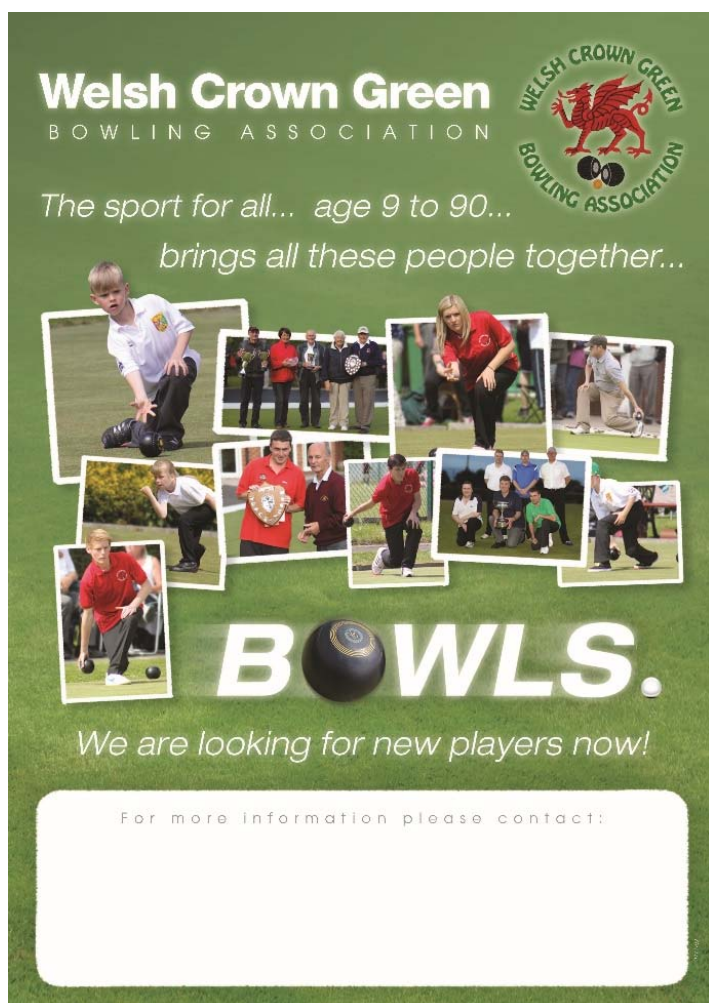
Positioning photos on your noticeboard, on Instagram etc. are ongoing marketing strategies also, and continue to engender interest for a subsequent occasion.

Thank-you letters to key contributors, sponsors, and providers/volunteers on the day provide a personal and gracious demonstration of your appreciation.

11 Appendix 1 - Posters

Promotional Posters are available for use via the Resources section of the BCGBA website.

E.g.



12 Appendix 2 - Press Release

The following statements could be used in your press release.

Bowls is the only sport where you can play for the whole of your life, from 9 to 90. Bowls, will also improve your health and quality of life. Bowling is an anaerobic type of physical exercise, similar to walking with free weights. The flexing and stretching in bowling works tendons, joints, ligaments, and muscles in the arms and promotes weight loss. **While most sports are not suitable for elderly people, it is possible to practice bowling very well at advanced ages.**

Apart from the physical benefits, it also has psychosocial benefits, strengthening friendships or creating new ones in groups.

12.1 History

Bowls is the oldest non-contact sport in the world, it can traced back to 5,000BC in Egypt where artefacts discovered in the tomb of a child resemble an earlier form the game. Many other countries claim that they were the first to play this sport.

12.2 Health

Physical inactivity is described as the biggest health threat of the 21st Century. There is overwhelming evidence that low physical activity is a major cause for non-communicable disease. Being active prevents and treats most long term conditions including diabetes, coronary heart disease, hypertension, osteoarthritis and cancer.

12.2.1 General

Less than 40% of men and 30% of women are active enough for health in the UK. Recognising and addressing inactivity is just as important as managing BP, weight, cholesterol, glucose and smoking habits.

It's never too late to start gaining the benefits of being active. It not only reduces your risk of getting a disease but it has positive health effects for people with long term conditions, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis and even cancer.

The great news is that you don't need to do intensive workouts to gain substantial health benefits.

12.2.2 Diabetes

It is currently estimated that around 10% of the NHS yearly budget is contributed to the treatment of diabetes. This equates to £173 million a week.

People with diabetes are encouraged to exercise regularly for better blood sugar control and to reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases. The reason for this is that muscles which are working use more glucose than those that are resting. Muscle movement leads to greater sugar uptake by muscle cells and lower blood sugar levels.

12.2.3 Dementia

The annual cost to the UK is £26 billion a year. This is increasing as another 225,000 persons are diagnosed each year. This could be reduced by 80,000 if more people participated in light exercise or took up bowling.

Research by Cambridge University says one in three cases of the condition could be prevented by increased activity levels.

The study published in the Lancet Neurology - the first to quantify the combined impact of lifestyle factors influencing dementia - identifies exercise as the most significant protection against the condition. Those who did not achieve five 30-minute sessions of moderate activity, such as walking or bowling were 82 per cent more likely to go on to develop dementia.

The major study follows growing evidence that efforts to maintain a healthy heart also protect against dementia. Reduced blood flow to the heart - caused by a lack of exercise can reduce blood flow to brain.

A study found that the brains of middle-aged and elderly people who went on brisk walks outdoors expanded, at an age when the hippocampus would normally shrink.

The new research led by Cambridge University examined almost a decade of studies on each of the risk factors for dementia, using new models to calculate the overall proportion of dementia which could be prevented. Lead author Professor Brayne, from the Cambridge Institute of Public Health at the University of Cambridge, said: "Although there is no single way to prevent dementia, we may be able to take steps to reduce our risk of developing dementia at older ages. We know what many of these factors are, and that they are often linked. "Simply tackling physical inactivity, for example, will reduce levels of obesity, hypertension and diabetes, and prevent some people from developing dementia as well as a healthier old age in general – it's a win-win situation."