Bowls Two Year Impact Report

April 2013 – March 2015

Capturing impact from the programme in partnership with the Bowls Development Alliance and Active Sussex
“As Development Director I would like to thank the team of Active Sussex for your work over the last two years, to drive up participation in the sport of bowls. A lot of effort has been made and we hope that this can be continued to be built on over the next two years as part of your contribution to the bowls core offer”  

Susan Cooper  
Development Director  
Bowls Development Alliance
About this report

This report has been compiled to bring to life the two year bowls development project in Sussex and sits alongside the more formal monitoring provided to our funders, the Bowls Development Alliance.

Active Sussex is extremely grateful to all our partners in the delivery of this project, including the county bowls associations and their member clubs.

Authors: Gina Rogers and Sally Johnston of Active Sussex and Brett Crowhurst of the Bowls Development Alliance.
Key Achievements

Play Bowls Day
- Delivered: 34
- New members: 148
- Participants reached: 558

Play Bowls 4 Fun
- Delivered: 22
- New members: 165
- Participants reached: 198

Coaching Courses & Workshops
- Delivered: 3
  - Introductory module: 1
  - Level 1: 1
  - Safeguarding: 1
- Participants reached: 30
The Case Studies

We have highlighted 8 best practice case studies that showcase the programme and products used to succeed in delivering the overall aim of the programme ‘to increase awareness and participation of the sport in the 55+ age group.’

Showcasing case studies will not only highlight areas of success but will provide an evidence based approach to show return on investment.
Play Bowls Day

Attracting new members in a fun and informal setting

The Play Bowls Day is heavily grounded in the traditional club open day, but the emphasis is placed on attracting new participants and members and on making the day a fun and informal event. Gildredge Park Bowls Club in Eastbourne held a Play Bowls Day, introducing public to the game. A large coaching team was on hand to supervise sessions, covering 4-6 rinks. No time limit was put on the sessions, so participants could play as long as they wished. A total of 12 participants attended most of which signed up for a ‘Bowls 4 Fun Course.’!

“Many opted immediately to enrol on the ‘Bowls 4 Fun’ course and were given dates to attend. During these sessions the club continued to operate as normal, with matches being played on our second green. Many who participated also stayed to watch the matches. This format proved to be very successful and it will be repeated this year on 16th & 17th May 2015.”

Jean Ritchie
Gildredge Park Bowls Club

Gildredge Park Play Bowls Day – 17/18 May 2014
Play Bowls 4 Fun

The perfect follow on from the Play Bowls Day

The Play Bowls 4 Fun programme offers new participants a weekly session of 2 hours, every week for 4 weeks.

Eastbourne Bowling Club ran a total of 19 Play Bowls 4 Fun Day sessions, running from 19 April to the end of May 2014. 26 attendees over 4 weeks accepted the special £60 ‘New to Bowls’ annual membership (normally £150) with 16 already re-joining in 2015 at the full membership rate.

2014 Eastbourne Bowling Club saw an increase in membership with 48 new members (44 of whom were ‘New to Bowls’).

Eastbourne Bowling Club has arranged to repeat the exact same successful formula in 2015.

“The secret to getting new members - just stick a bowl in their hand. A bowl is worth a 2000 leaflets in the bin.” Alan Finch  
President, Eastbourne Bowling Club
Play Bowls Roadshow

The perfect introduction to a Play Bowls Day

The Play Bowls Roadshow was the stand out product of the Bowls Development Alliance 2009-2013 activities, and provided an opportunity for thousands of people to try the sport of bowls in a wide range of surroundings, from County shows to shopping malls, leisure centres to garden centres.

The Play Bowls Roadshow continues to be the Bowls Development Alliances main marketing and promotional tool. In two years up to 81 events have taken place with 9,867 attendees taken part nationally.

In addition, the road show also attended several successful events at National Trust properties that have already been rebooked for this year, following on from the initial success.

In Sussex, Play Bowls Roadshows were held at high footfall locations including Brighton & Hove (TAKEPART Festival), Horsham (Sparks in the Park), and Crawley (Queens Square).
The Case Studies

Clubmark

An accredited club that is recognised as a safe, rewarding and fulfilling place for participants of all ages

Gildredge Park Bowls Club in Eastbourne was the first bowls club to be awarded Clubmark accreditation within Sussex in December 2014.

Active Sussex recognised the club's commitment to providing high quality opportunities for potential bowlers - for both outdoor lawn bowls and indoor short-mat bowling.

Active Sussex is now supporting seven clubs and will plan a series of Clubmark themed workshops during 2015 for other interested clubs.

“The club is to be congratulated on achieving their Clubmark accreditation status, which highlights their excellent work.”

Brett Crowhurst
Development Manager
Bowls Development Alliance

Next Steps

Gildredge Park has plans for a pavilion extension and they have produced a friendly promotional video that brings to life the club’s members and activities.
Active Sussex supported Peacehaven and Telscombe Bowls Club to submit a successful Inspired Facilities Bid from Sport England.

The Club has been awarded £27,573 for an extension to its clubhouse to provide additional space for short mat bowls, which will provide an all-year round facility for club members.

Club Secretary, Frank Leach has been the driving force in preparing the bid and has been assisted by officers from Active Sussex who have advised on preparation of supporting documents, including a sports development plan for the Club (which included Play Bowls projects and initiatives).

“It is very pleasing to see that Peacehaven and Telscombe Bowls Club have been successful with its bid to Sport England. Frank Leach has worked exceptionally hard on the bid and he has been a great supporter for growing bowls in the County, assisting us in progressing the Play Bowls Initiative for mutual benefit.”

Sally Johnston
Senior Partnership Manager
Active Sussex

Stats
12 clubs supported
5 successful bids
2 clubs applying to inspired facilities in June 2015

On 12 May 2015 Gildredge Park Bowls Club received confirmation that its £75,000 Inspired Facilities bid was approved, again with the help of Active Sussex officers!
Coaching Courses & Club Workshops

Safeguarding, forums, coaching courses and club mentoring have all taken place over the last two years.

Support and formal training has been offered to bowls clubs across Sussex to upskill their workforce in order to increase and retain bowls participants within high quality, sustainable community bowls clubs.

What’s next?

Active Sussex plans to deliver training to a cohort of bowls clubs in Sussex from May 2015. Clubs will be able to register with Active Sussex and be taken through a training and development programme, using the following interventions:

- Register on the Club Matters website
- Clubmark Accreditation
- Club Leaders Workshops
- Group Networking Sessions
- Access to Club Matters mentors

All clubs will aim to have achieved Clubmark Accreditation by Summer 2016.
The Case Studies

Age Project & Just Bowl

Age UK Horsham approached the Bowls Development Alliance via Active Sussex, showing interest in a Just Bowl package.

Brett Crowhurst from the Bowls Development Alliance met with Aimee Day (Hub Manager from Age UK Horsham) in December 2014 to ascertain what support was needed, it was clear they were in need of sports equipment.

After receiving a ‘New Age Bowls set,’ Age UK Horsham started scheduling in sessions into their activity programme.

Only one or two members were taking part, however those who did loved it. As the months passed, more and more sessions were held and the bowls kit is in use at least once a week. All members now take part, and the centre holds inter staff and member tournaments. The members are absolutely desperate to start up an interclub tournament once a month.

Since December 2014, 22 participants have been introduced to the sport of Bowls.

BDA are now looking to support Age UK Horsham further, through additional purchasing of equipment.

“The members have loved having the equipment, they feel it’s been really good for mobility and fitness, they have enjoyed the team spirit and the competitive side of the game.” Aimee Day
Hub Manager, Age UK Horsham
Community & Disability Project

Bowls was involved in a Community Games event in August 2014. The event provided an arena in which non-sporty disabled individuals indulged their wish and had a go at different activities on a level playing field.

The event was run by Wave Leisure Trust in partnership with Active Sussex, The Rotary Club of Seaford, Sainsbury’s, Access Lewes, Seaford and Newhaven.

2014 was the first year in which bowls was introduced to the Community Games Event. It was incredibly popular with all participants taking part. The event attracted 32 participants, some of which live in complete isolation. Transport is provided free of charge to these individuals to ensure they can access the venue.

The event is a huge success and will be returning for 2015, with bowls full integrated into the programme.

“This event truly brings together the whole community and offers a unique opportunity for people with complex disabilities to take part in sport.”

Gina Rogers
Sports Development Officer, Active Sussex
Finances

Management Fee/Bowls Contractor £14,268.13
Courses and Other, £1,424.72
Community and Business Projects, £2,600.00
Club Development, £5,098.82
Courses and Other, £1,424.72

Total spend over two years = £23,391.67
Challenges faced

The two year project has faced some difficulties; the main struggles experienced were:

- Ambitious targets
- Breaking down barriers to get into some clubs and create positive relationships and buy in
- Return of completed monitoring forms
- Limited and varying staff capacity

What has been learned from these Challenges?

- The qualitative results are just as important as the quantitative outcomes
- Work more closely with the county bowls associations and nurture good relationships
- Be clearer on goals and smarter with capacity available
- Retention of members as well as growth is crucial
What change have we created?

Engagement  The two year project has engaged over \textbf{1,755} people in bowls across Sussex between April 2013 – March 2015.

Facilities  \textbf{5} clubs were successful in an Inspired Facilities bid, with two more applying. Bowls facilities are improving where they are not at risk. Clubs are immersing themselves into the wider community offering their facilities for social, health and business purposes.

“An enlarged pavilion will enable us to offer our premises to other groups for functions such as club meetings. This in turn could lead to increased membership by introducing new people to our facility.” \textbf{Frank Leach}  
Club Secretary, Peacehaven and Telscombe Bowls Club

Membership  \textbf{369} people have either taken up membership or are playing regularly during the last two years through the bowls products and programmes.

Workforce  The precious volunteer workforce has been strengthened through training, guidance, events and accredited courses.
**Clubmark**

Active Sussex achieved its Clubmark licence in December 2014, by working with and awarding Gildredge Park Bowls Club with Clubmark. Hollingbury Park Bowls Club also achieved Clubmark early June 2015. Now 7 outdoor bowls clubs are working towards accreditation and hope to achieve it by summer 2016.

**Workshops**

Active Sussex is offering a comprehensive and bespoke workshop and club mentoring package from April-September 2015.

**Disability**

Active Sussex is working heavily with Grace Eyre (Sports for All) and key figures from Sussex have been targeted.

“We introduced the bowls equipment to a group from Crowborough. It has made a huge impact in being able to introduce skills and techniques. This is specifically the case with individuals who suffer from multiple learning disabilities. Basically we love the equipment at Sports for All!”

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*Gabbi Simmonds*  
Sports Development Worker, Sports for All