

Pentyrch Bowling Club

Q1. Tell us about your club

The club "evolved" circa 1983, founded by a bunch of "ageing" rugby players looking for summer recreation. Recruitment of some bowlers and other interested parties living in the village resulted in the carving out of the green from the rock of the Garth Mountain. By 1991 the club was ready to play with Dr Kim Howells MP officially opening the green and a new era in the life of the village began.

Some uncomplimentary comments were made about the standard of the green in its early years but under the professional eye of retired City of Cardiff Head Groundsman Harold Evans the surface quickly improved. Over the last 20 years Bill Malcolm has taken on the groundsman duties supported by several volunteers from the membership.

We have both Men and Women teams playing in various leagues and have a regular Monday evening social games with teams drawn out of the hat. We have also, for a number of years, gone on a tour either to foreign parts across the bridge or to West Wales and this has resulted in a number of clubs visiting Pentyrch as part of their tours.

Q2. What was the project/initiative your club run and why?

The project was RECRUITMENT

As with a number of clubs, our membership has been declining as the passage of time has taken its toll and this was starting to have an impact on our ability to field teams for our various league matches. It was clear that we had to take action to recruit new members.

In 2019 we had a leaflet campaign to homes in the village and surrounding areas but this had very little effect. Our plan therefore changed for 2020 to look at social media as a means of campaigning but the effect of the pandemic brought this initiative to a halt. There was however a small window in August 2020 where we ran some taster sessions which did interest a few people.

2021 we kicked off our campaign on social media (Facebook and Twitter) putting information onto the various community sites. We also put-up large banners at key locations and posters on community noticeboards.





Following attendance at the BowlsWales online workshop we specifically advertised a four-week taster and coaching sessions. Whether it was the volume of different media or because of people wanting to get out locally after the lockdowns and impact of COVID we got a positive response.

Q3. What was the impact?

Although initially the response was slow the taster sessions seemed to generate interest. We decided that, after the planned four weeks of tasters, we would extend the sessions until the end of the season. In the end we had 24 new members signed up, plus expressions of interest for next year from those who only came along in the last month or so.

All the taster sessions were free and for those who became a member each received a free club shirt. We also ran two new member competition days, one for the first 14 new members and a second for the 10 who joined after that event.

The true impact is that we have gone from a club with a membership falling into the low forties to one in the high sixties and we hope to grow further.



Q4. Was there any learning you took from the project?

The main thing we learned is that you have to use as many different ways as possible to generate interest. A leaflet drop on its own does not work but coupled with social media, posters and banners people start to notice.

Secondly it's about people enjoying themselves and learning from each other and doing the basics of the game and not trying to be too prescriptive. We played target bowls and double points if you touched the jack and stayed within the target area but minus if you were outside. We tried to make it fun before we introduced other parts of the game.

Q5. Any advice for other clubs?

It takes effort and perseverance, there are no shortcuts but if you get people through the door make sure they are enjoying themselves and are having a little fun.

Q6. Did you work with any partners/organisations on this project?

The Bowls Wales workshop was the one useful external aspect which we were involved in but everything else we worked on within the club.

Q7. Any other information you would like to share around this project?

We intend to run some winter events, coffee mornings, quiz nights and other social gathering just to keep members together as much as possible and we will continue to use our social media avenues to advertise these events and hopefully hit the ground running on recruitment before next season start.