

The History of Ibstock Bowling Club

Ibstock Bowling Club was founded in 1929. Originally the land was part of the Miners Welfare Sports ground, purchased from a fund legislated by the Mining Industry Act of 1920, which required the owners of coal mines to set aside 1d for every ton of coal output over the following 5 years.

The fund was to provide recreation facilities for coalminers in the area. The Leicestershire District Miners' Welfare Committee was formed in 1921 to consider applications and apportioned monies depending on the numbers of miners living in each community.

The application selected was supported by the Parish council and proposed the buying of 7 acres of land for football and cricket pitches, tennis courts, a bowling green and a pavilion for indoor games.

A grant of £3,737 was approved but only for the outdoor facilities. A further application was made in 1928 for £1,300 for the building of the pavilion (The Miners Welfare Club), and the bowls club was founded the following year in 1929 by four men – Charles Smith, Jack Spiller, Bert Foster and George Godfrey.

Initially, facilities were run by the council, who employed a man to take monies for hire of the facilities, and later, the pavilion was extended to provide a kitchen and an area for social hire.

The kitchen was used by the bowls club to provide cooked teas to its opponents, supplemented by home-made cakes, provided by the wives of club members. However, times move on and, in common with many bowls clubs, a cooked meal was replaced with sandwiches and cakes.

Also to change was the membership profile. Initially formed as a men's only club, the club was one of the first to open its doors to ladies, who have become many of the stalwarts in the club. In



2018 the club voted in its first lady president.

In 2019, the club was able to celebrate our 90th anniversary, with a series of matches against representative teams, as well as our local rivals over those 90 years.

Over the years, our small and friendly club have produced a regular succession of county players. Through the two teams that we run, we play bowls on weekdays and weekends, afternoons and evenings, so we can offer a game of bowls at a time that hopefully suits you, whether you are looking for a competitive game or just a social experience.

Any reader who fancies trying 'Lawn Bowls' is welcome to join us for a free taster session, on any Wednesday morning at 10.30am or Friday evening at 4pm, when we meet for a natter and a friendly game, all in a COVID safe environment, but subject to the weather of course. All you would need to bring is a flat pair of shoes (no heels).

Please contact Paul Pugsley on 01530 273 227 to find out more.