

Bowling with a disability

Open Day 11th May

West Backwell Bowling Club, West Town Road, Backwell BS48 3HQ

Your invite - we look forward to welcoming you

Programme of Events

11-1pm Give bowls a try - discover the different equipment & aids you can use; Hear from visually impaired and physical disability bowlers; Learn what's needed from coaches, umpires, markers and directors;

1-2pm Lunch & Learn - Inclusion - your chance to discuss what inclusion means for you and your club and to ask questions of Bowlers with disabilities including England Para Squad Members, Coaches, Umpires, Markers, Directors and Bowls England.

2pm Exhibition Match v Bowls England Disabilities Squad

Who is this for?

Bowls is one of the most inclusive sports there is and we believe anyone can enjoy it regardless of age or ability.

Anyone who has an interest in finding out more about bowling with any disability.

Children & Adults with a disability, their friends, family, carers and personal assistants

Those who run groups, schools or in advisory roles
Social prescribers and professionals

Bowling Club reps, Coaches, Umpires & Markers

#PeopleLikeMeDo

Bowling With a Disability

Open Day

Bowls is one of the most inclusive sports out there and we believe anyone can enjoy our sport. Join Bowls England at a tailored open day for those with a disability, in collaboration with clubs across the country.



Where and When
West Backwell BC
Sunday 11th May
11am - 4pm

Join us for free

Give bowls a go
Learn about and try bowling equipment
Speak to various experts
Meet international Para players
Enjoy refreshments
Watch an exhibition match
And more...



Follow us
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Find out more and sign up:
bowlsengland.com/bowling-with-a-disability



We run Try Bowls Tuesday sessions weekly @6pm for beginners and we also can arrange sessions for groups during the week...

Group Sessions

We aim to make all of our Backwell group sessions great fun.

Once we've sorted you out with the right size bowls and any equipment you need we set up fun games to get everyone involved quickly. All you need to bring is flat shoes and a smile.

To book your session please contact us on: wbbcsecretary@yahoo.co.uk

Why bowls?

We believe everybody should realise the joy and benefit of playing sport, regardless of age and ability. And there are so many reasons why bowls is ideally placed to unlock the fantastic benefits that playing a sport can bring. Here are our top 3 reasons to give bowls a try:

- Playing bowls is very doable. It truly is a sport where everyone can compete regardless of age, gender or ability. And we want to provide as many opportunities as we can for people of all abilities to give it a go! Our campaign Thrive With Bowls is all about helping others, especially those who haven't considered bowls as an activity or didn't believe they could take part.
- West Backwell is fully accessible and has all the equipment you need including a specialist bowling wheelchair, bowls launchers and picker uppers for grip and mobility issues, plus bowls for big and little hands.
- It's free! We are committed to helping everyone 'Thrive With Bowls' and we would like to offer your group a 2hour taster session for free. With all the equipment and coaching that you need to ensure a fun time. You just need flat shoes.

THRIVE *With Bowls* AT WEST BACKWELL

**Proud recipients of the
Bowls England National Award for
Diversity & Inclusion**

Bowls is for everyone and you are invited!



Bowls has given me a new lease of life!

When Emma came with her family to the West Backwell Bowling Club open day she had no idea that she would be hooked. "I only came along because my husband wanted a go, but I knew from the moment I bowled that first bowl I was going to love it!"

A competitive sports player in both hockey and golf with a busy family life and high profile career, 12 years ago Emma suddenly became severely ill. "I have always been very sporty and loved being outside. After becoming ill all of that went and I never imagined that I would be able to play and enjoy sport again - let alone be competitive at it too." For years Emma was bedbound, but has slowly worked to regain her strength from using a wheelchair to now being able to walk using a stick. She says "I still have to be careful as to how much I do. The hardest thing is that I become exhausted very quickly and this can leave me very weak and needing to rest for several days or more."

Emma is determined to spread the word that bowls is good for you - physically, mentally and socially and that anyone can do it. Despite some difficult times being positive is Emma's super power and she says "playing bowls has given me something to enjoy - physically it has made me stronger, it has got me out of the house meeting new people and it has shown me that I am still a useful engine, I just now work a little bit different."

"For anyone reading this I want them to think 'if she can do it so can I.'"



Emma playing in the England v Ireland Disability Test Series. And celebrating a win for the South v North at the DBE National Finals.

I started playing in 2010.

I started playing because my Grandad was a regular player and he got my brother into the sport. I wasn't doing anything at the time and thought I'd have a go and loved it from the first time I got involved.

I have never looked back since.

I have monoplegic cerebral palsy which effects the left side of my body and have had this since birth.

My disability affects me in many ways the most significant affects that will impact my bowling is balance, fatigue and pain.

The best thing about bowls is that is that it is a sport for all and you can be as competitive as you want or as social as you want.

A photograph of Kieran Rollings in a white and red bowling shirt, black shorts, and blue shoes, in the middle of a bowling delivery on a green lawn. A blue bowling ball is on the grass in front of him. In the background, spectators are seated in stadium-style chairs.

KIERAN ROLLINGS

I started bowling in 2013 at an open day and fell in love with the sport on the day.

I have a form of cerebral palsy and have had it since birth.

Having a weakness in one side of my body means that i can tire quicker as my body has to work harder on the other side.

The best thing about bowls is the social side of the sport where anyone of all ages and abilities mix together and there are no barriers.

A photograph of Fynn Kyser in a green and blue bowling shirt, black shorts, and blue shoes, in the middle of a bowling delivery on a green lawn. A blue bowling ball is on the grass in front of him. In the background, spectators are seated in stadium-style chairs.

FYNN KYSER

England star Jennie says: Give bowls a go

Jennie Sandford would not change a thing about her bowls journey as she continues to play after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

The Haywards Heath native first took up the sport in the 1980s and after her MS diagnosis in 2018 had no fears about continuing to play.

She has since been selected to represent England in the Para team for the 2023 World Championships in Australia.

"There wasn't a worry about not being able to play bowls because I knew that even if you end up in a wheelchair you can still bowl," said the 63-year-old, speaking ahead of Bowls' Big Weekend 2024.

"Because the equipment is user-friendly on the greens



Jennie Sandford, right, is urging people to give bowls a try

so there wasn't that thing of this is going to be the end of the bowls.

"It is just frustrating be-

cause I keep thinking I could do this just a few years ago but I can't any more. Now I have to bowl with a bal-

ance aid because otherwise I would fall over.

"You can manage it so I know that I can keep bowling and I still do disability and para bowls and all the county and nationals as well. I wouldn't change it for the world, especially having to give up other sports.

"I used to play tennis and squash and they are now completely out of the question but I know I have always got bowls and however the MS causes the regression, I'll still be able to bowl even if I have to bowl in a wheelchair, I will still do it."

Sandford was speaking ahead of Bowls' Big Weekend, partnered with Aviva, which will see over 560 clubs opening their greens from

24-27 May for newcomers to try out the sport.

Former driving instructor Sandford's club Lindfield are not taking part in the initiative this year in part because of their success recruiting members in previous years of the campaign.

Meanwhile, Sandford will be representing England at the International Bowls for the Disabled World Championships in South Africa on the same weekend.

She added: "We've got members from the Bowls Big Weekend in the past, with people bringing along friends and family."

To find your nearest participating club and sign up for a free session go to bowlsbigweekend.com

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eClips

Bowls gave me a new lease of life - Yearling

By JOE HARVEY
Bowls correspondent

ALISON Yearling admits playing bowls changed her life after being diagnosed with a genetic eye condition in her 20s.

The 44-year-old from Plymouth, who won Commonwealth bronze in 2022, was diagnosed with Stargardt's Disease in 2003 which left her partially sighted.

For a time, Yearling struggled to come to terms with the condition, before joining Plymouth Visually Impaired Bowls Club.

There Yearling developed an aptitude for the sport and began to strike up new friendships.

"It was a period of trying to come to terms with the fact I was losing my sight," said Yearling, speaking ahead of Bowls' Big Weekend 2024.

"I wasn't in a very good place. It took me a bit of time to adjust to what was going on.

"In the end it was like, I can't stay in the house any longer, I need to get out and push myself to get out and try and do something. I am really glad that I did. It has changed my life.

"Great friendships has been a big thing. As a visually impaired bowler, we have a director, and gives us the infor-

mation that we can't see.

"A lot of my journey has been with Sue and Geoff Wherry and they have supported me, been such good friends and Sue was with me at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham as my director, so we won the bronze medal together and Geoff was in the crowd.

"Just to experience that was lovely."

Bowls' Big Weekend, partnered with Aviva, is back for its fourth year and bigger and better than ever, with clubs across the country holding open days to encourage new players to give the sport a go.

With over three million people watching Bowls' Big Weekend on national television last year, and over 560 clubs on board, bowls will be taking over England from 24th - 27th May for the 2024 event.

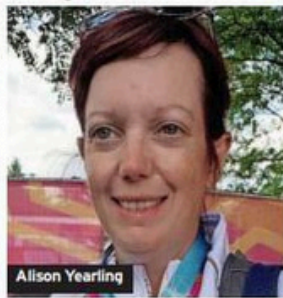
After gaining so much from bowls after a difficult period in her own life, Yearling thinks the sport can offer others plenty on and off the green.

"Bowls is very accessible," Yearling said. "You could have a disability, elderly people that maybe can't walk that well or use a stick, they can still play and it is good exercise, good to be out in the fresh air, you make friends with people which is nice and you can

have a pastie lunch or a beer in a bar.

"A lot of clubs do social activities and that sort of thing. It is a really nice sport - not too energetic. There is a lot of skill involved and it's a really nice game to play."

To find your nearest participating club and sign up for a free session go to bowlsbigweekend.com



Alison Yearling

WITH A SURNAME LIKE "BOWLER", I WAS MEANT TO PLAY THIS GAME

Finding bowls has been life changing for Craig Bowler. Fifteen years ago, the then brick-layer was dealing with prolonged bouts of depression, which became so severe he attempted suicide.

After spending nearly two months in a coma, Craig woke as a triple amputee. Incredibly, the 46-year-old says he wouldn't change a thing and he credits bowls as a "life-changer. Bowls gave me a purpose in life again and helped me with my mental health no end," he added, "I also feel that with my surname, I was meant to find the sport."

Craig, a father-of-two, was introduced to bowls in 2010 by a friend's Dad. "He asked me if I wanted to try bowls and I laughed at him and said it's an old person's game. How wrong I was. I went to my local bowls green and watched them play. It was outdoors and the sun was shining and I thought to myself I'd like to give this a try. Within two hours I was hooked. The following year I had the confidence to enter club competitions. My first success was winning county league and getting promoted to division one for Bedfordshire."



Craig's bowling highlights to date include being selected to play for England in the DBE England Home Nations event. He recalled: "It was such a great honour to put that England shirt on and represent my country and to win the series was amazing. "Another great moment was being selected to play for my club in the National Top Club team. To play alongside able bodied players means the world to me.

"But the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2023 was by far the most amazing experience I've ever had and winning the bronze medal... it stills feels like I was dreaming. They are memories I will never forget as long as I live." Craig describes the tournament as 'mentally and physically tough'.

"The laughter, the emotion, the highs, the lows; you name it -we all felt it. To come away with a medal in front of my wife Abby and son and daughter Max and Tilly, was such a privilege and to play alongside the best in the world will be something I will never forget.

"What I love about bowls is the diversity- there is no other sport that can have a 10-year-old playing against a 90-year-old or a triple amputee playing an able bodied player. "I also love the friendships you make and the social life bowls gives. Whether you are competitive or not competitive, the sport is open for anyone."

When he is not bowling, Craig volunteers in a care home, cooking for residents once a week. He also works with the emergency services and army to assist in training medics before they are put into real-life situations. He said: "I've had a lot of incredible experiences as a result of bowls so it's really nice for me to be able to give something back."



For more information please contact us on
wbbcsecretary@yahoo.co.uk



**Follow us on
West Backwell Bowls Club**

**With huge thanks to Edwards Vacuum
for their support for
Thrive with Bowls - People Like Me Do.**

Edwards Vacuum is a global leader in vacuum and abatement technology within the Semiconductor industry. One of our manufacturing sites is situated in Clevedon, North Somerset.



www.edwardsvacuum.com



Thrive With Bowls @ West Backwell