

Chairman's Annual Report 2019

With the conclusion of another year and as we approach the Annual General Meeting I present the following report to the members of Hexham Bowling Club.

With the club issuing a regular monthly newsletter much of this report will be a repeat of what has been reported there. I must say that the feedback that we have received from the membership regarding the regular newsletters has been very positive as you the members deserve to be kept abreast of what is happening in your club.

Financially it has not been a good year as we have not achieved balances of the two previous years.

However before looking into the reasons for the decline it should be recognised that we still remain debt free.

With our current clubhouse over twenty years old like many of us as we get older things start to break down and the need for renovation and refurbishment becomes a necessity. Refurbishment and renovation do not come cheaply but every effort has been made by your Board and indeed Management to keep the costs of renovation to a minimum.

The new exterior décor of the club was a big ticket item which came under the category of necessity with the building looking both dingy and uninviting. However the new exterior décor, chosen by the membership through survey, has attracted much positive comment from both members and visitors alike. We believe that it was money well spent.

Added to the outside facade members find many alterations inside and out with the extended Bistro area, the renovated al fresco gaming area, the new shade shelters for the bowling greens as well as the alterations to the mezzanine section upstairs. Much of the interior work, along with the placement of the shades has been carried out by our hardworking maintenance team of Glen and John who have saved us thousands of dollars with their great work. The two boys are also responsible for the placement of the children's playground in the bistro – something that we have been lacking for some time. Their contributions have also extended to the Hexham Cottages at Harrington where kitchen renovations and general maintenance has been carried out. Pleasingly so much of the aforementioned changes have come about at absolute minimal cost.

However there have been quite a few "big ticket" items of replacement and refurbishment which have not come cheaply. I speak of the air conditioning and security cameras and of course the ongoing waste water treatment plant.

As a result we have had to become more frugal in many areas of the club's function – particularly in the promotion side of the club. In the past our members have enjoyed a most generous practice in the area of give-away promotions. We have had to curtail or modify several of these as the expenses had become exorbitant. However I would venture to say that our members still continue to enjoy a great value for their membership which is the envy of many other clubs and which continues to grow.

Our Budget predictions for the year proved to be well astray with the number of unforeseen and therefore unplanned projects that have, through necessity, been undertaken in the shape of the

afore mentioned refurbishment. With upgrades to the air conditioning and security being forced upon us coupled with the renovations the projections took a huge hit. Along with the usual down times in trade, the increase in honorariums for which we had not budgeted, the costs of promotions – which have since been rectified - we find ourselves down on the balances of the previous two years and the budget projections. On top of that we continue to have the Waste Water problem hanging around our necks – albeit still closer to that long awaited pump out into the river or onto our greens and gardens as I have said for several years now.

Despite the above expenditure it should be acknowledged that our financial position continues to remain reasonably strong. Income from gaming and from bar sales has grown whilst your Board and management continue to investigate other avenues of income. In particular we are keen to utilise our upstairs facilities to a far greater extent by breaking into the wedding celebration market. A package has been prepared to be presented at the Newcastle Wedding Expo. Our Chef, Scott and the management team are very optimistic that we can become a recognised venue for the lucrative wedding celebration market providing value for money through our offered packages with several weddings already booked.

Our cafeteria whilst not making vast sums of profit is attracting greater patronage and is providing another food option for our members. The sales of coffee are increasing and the sandwiches, pizzas and other options provided by Chef Scott are growing in popularity almost daily.

As members will be well aware we have appointed a Welfare Officer for the members. Our appointee, Leesa, is well conversed in this area having worked in the funeral industry previously and also as a marriage celebrant. She has already visited or made contact with several of our members who have been “doing it tough”. I believe that she will become a real asset for our club and members extending further our reach throughout the club and to the community. In reaching out to our community a major part of our Clubs Grants was made to the Drought Appeal as your club led the way for many other local clubs to follow suit for this great cause.

Membership has grown over the past twelve months not only from our local area but from further afield with many travellers availing themselves of our facilities – enjoying them and deciding to become members.

I certainly believe that your club is in a sound and secure position and I sincerely thank our whole staff particularly our General Manager, Jennie, for their commitment to making this establishment one of which we can all be proud. Our staff which obviously includes our fabulous Riverside Bistro team, are second to none and enhance our great reputation far and wide.

I take this opportunity to thank your Board for their diligence and commitment over the past twelve months and look forward to a continuance of their dedication in making Hexham B C a club of which we can all be proud.

Les Carter Chairman