

Hexham Bowling Club

Chairman's Annual Report 2021

Les Carter Chairman

It gives me a deal of satisfaction to present the following report to the members of Hexham Bowling Club for the year 2020/21.

The past year has been one of turmoil for the community and indeed the club as we passed through the extended period of shut-down and concern brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic that swept throughout the world. Whilst we remain on guard against further outbreaks we have felt quite a substantial impact from it. As one could well imagine the extended closure of the club was not only an inconvenience to some and a disruption to our many activities it also meant that we endured a period of absolutely no income resulting from no trade. Therefore our financial position is not one that we envisaged for the year. Whilst we took a substantial hit to our expected bottom line we have achieved a comparable financial result to the previous year. We are still debt free and our monies on hand in our bank accounts are up significantly. This does hold us in good stead in comparison to other clubs – some who have had to amalgamate - for example Lambton Pk BC – one of the long-standing clubs in the region.

Since we have fully re-opened we have been trading quite strongly particularly over the Friday, Saturday, Sunday periods with our raffles and functions drawing good patronage. We have cut back on expenditure. Some of the cutbacks have caused angst among sections of our clientele. In particular we terminated our bingo sessions of Tuesday evenings and Thursday mornings. This saved some forty thousand dollars but did upset our regular players. The bottom line was that we were outlaying considerable money for a very little return which did not cover the expenditure or even get close to it.

I know that I have been saying for several years that the end is getting closer to the waste water issues that the club has. Within the next months a concrete slab will be laid beside the septic tanks. This will house the new treatment processor which is fully computerised and better still completely endorsed by the EPA to allow river pumping to resume. The system is housed in a container which is manufactured in Melbourne and transported to the site before becoming operational. It is that close to realisation after over a decade and a half of heartache for previous boards and management. I wish to thank our General Manager, Jennie and the Board for their efforts and perseverance in this matter of considerable financial importance.

Our upstairs function area is becoming a venue of greater use generating an increase in revenue in this area. We have been the venue for Clubs NSW, the NDBA, weddings and quite a few celebratory functions across the year although many functions were cancelled due to the pandemic. Indications are that we will continue to grow in this area of our business. One week recently every day of the week saw some function with catering being held upstairs. During that week we were the venue for training seminars, wakes and corporate promotions. I believe that this is where we need to be heading.

Plans are underway for some expansion of our current building. Whilst we are limited for land we have to find a way to expand to comfortably house our membership which has now reached 8000.

There is no way we could house that many at one time but we have to find a way to seat more downstairs during raffle times as well as find more parking space to cater for them. So it has been decided that a section of our bowling greens along the front of the club will be resumed and we will extend in that direction. We are not doing away with our greens as we are primarily a bowling club so we will retain twelve rinks across the two greens. It will be done a little at a time without taking loans. We will do what we can afford.

Also we will extend from the bistro outward towards the car park housing the playground in that area. This will provide extra seating in the ever-popular Riverside Bistro and easing the congestion in the bar area. We are looking into a two storey car park on the site of our main parking area but that may be some time in the future.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude and indeed that of the Board to our staff. So much of the refurbishment and decorating was done by our very versatile staff during the lockdown period. Their commitment to the club along with their new found skills and expertise is greatly appreciated. Our thanks go out to Ricky and his team from the Riverside Bistro for their continued enhancement of our club's reputation. At this juncture it must be recognised by all that such a good, cooperative and welcoming staff are a reflection of the leadership provided by our General Manager, Jennie, who I believe has become a real driving force behind this club leading into the future. And finally thank you to my fellow directors for your input and cooperation throughout this very complex year.

Les Carter Chairman 07/21