

ENGLISH INDOOR BOWLING ASSOCIATION LTD

# RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN GUIDANCE

CHAPTER ONE: FIRST MEETING  
THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT

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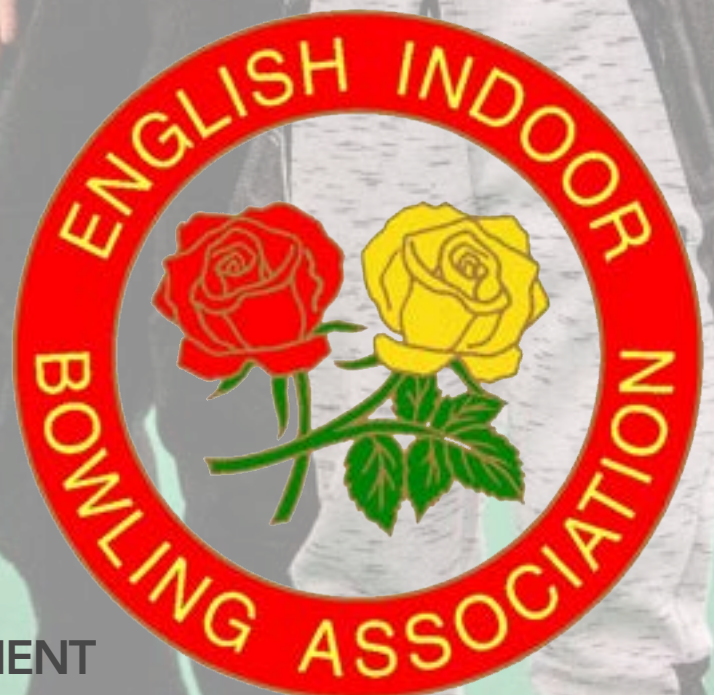




Photo courtesy of Bowls Development Alliance

# THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR EVENT...

## APPOINT A TEAM LEADER

They **MUST** be a good organiser who will get the timeline planned and will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of your recruitment campaign.

Create a working sub-committee who will both take on tasks of their own and find **volunteers** for later in the process.

*TIP\* By far the best way to secure volunteers is to divide the task down into small packets of time, e.g. 3-4hrs on the open day for helping, or a couple of afternoons delivering flyers to local shops, church halls etc, saying "you can really help the club by doing this". This rewards the volunteer for the activity but doesn't commit them to a long-term duty.*

## HOLD YOUR FIRST MEETING

At this first meeting discuss how ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL it is to accommodate AS MANY AS IS POSSIBLE of the following recruitment methods. Some will get you many more recruits than others, but DO NOT FALL INTO THE TRAP OF DECIDING IN ADVANCE that some activities will NOT be worth doing.

By contrast there are some activities you MUST DO - these will be highlighted in **GREEN**.

*Please remember that any options you might reject at this stage will reduce the eventual numbers recruited.*

## DISCUSS THE RECRUITMENT METHODS AVAILABLE - LET'S START WITH THE "MINOR" METHODS

### A5-sized leaflets/flyers for distribution around:

(a) the immediate locality of your club, for shops, post offices, church halls, council boards, supermarkets, libraries, other sports facilities etc - pay anything asked. **It is a trivial outlay for a couple of new members!**

(b) For your own members living OUTSIDE the planned distribution area, provide bundles of 20 for any willing members to give to friends and neighbours in their localities.

The photographs used in these flyers needs to be given some thought. It not only needs to be well-lit, colourful and sharply focused (all digital cameras and most phones these days are perfectly suitable for this), but also it needs to reflect the variety of members your club routinely encourages - women, men, old, young, able and disabled



example of a good photograph to use on your leaflets

*TIP\* Try not to use an image of a club game where everyone is in whites and club tops!*

If you have an individual or a team that has won something significant, include this (smaller) photo to demonstrate that your club can also be competitive. Not everyone wants to compete, but it does show your winners in the club's kit and that you are justifiably proud of your champions.

## Newspapers & Magazines

Regrettably these days, very few people read newspapers, preferring social media, but free papers and local & parish magazines may still obtain a minority loyal audience. Each of these options come with a cost, some of which are disproportionately expensive for any expected return, so shop around.

**Outcome = You may well find another couple of members this way.**

Perhaps the best route is to invite your regional newspaper, your local free newspaper and/or magazine to publish an article that you provide about your open day, which will include your leaflet and 100-200 words to accompany it - use the word **FREE** liberally, stress coaching is provided and no specific clothing required except for flat shoes.

This sort of article should not incur a charge because it's a "news" article. It should also prove to be stronger than an advert.

**Outcome = that couple of new members might stretch to 4 or 5.**

## Radio Interviews

Not normally a good return, but if you fancy a visit to your local radio station, you may be rewarded by your power of persuasion, and it could be fun too!

# THE ESSENTIAL BIG FIVE!

## LEAFLETS

**"Oh, we've tried leaflets - they don't work".**

Really? So why do you still get all that literature through your letterbox for double-glazing, gardening services, river cruises etc? The truth is that leafleting returns are generally tiny, between 0.25-0.50%, so you almost certainly didn't deliver enough. 1,000 leaflets might have got you more than 2 recruits if you were lucky, and you may have relied on your members to do that? A small return for a lot of effort!

You need to have 10,000+ leaflets delivered, and get it done by a professional delivery service (Google will help you find several local companies to choose from), preferably one that has its delivery staff GPS-tagged. You can dictate a radius around your club, or postcodes, or even streets!

Pay for printing the much bigger numbers and be prepared to pay £500 for 10,000 delivered. This together might total £1000, so why should you pay that?



Because every new member you recruit is worth a **minimum** of **£500** to your club!

A recent survey showed that 57% of all club bowlers in England had been members of their club for 10 years or more, so £500 worth is probably conservative, but is an easy figure to multiply.

So... if 10,000 leaflets recruit a minimum of 25 people, you have just spent £1000 to earn £12,500 minimum. **THAT'S NOT EXPENDITURE, THAT'S INVESTMENT!**

There will be many clubs who have never spent that much money on recruitment in their history, and there will be many long-serving dutiful club officers who will advise (whilst memberships have declined) that "*we have never done it this way before*".

Respect these willing club servants but explain politely that this **HAS** to be tried. There is only one method that will recruit more members than this and they will like that even less.

**Outcome = EXPECT 25 new members for 10,000 leaflets delivered, 50 for 20,000 etc.**

## WORD OF MOUTH/BRING-A-FRIEND/FAMILY DAYS

Now these are justifiably popular and successful recruitment methods, after all you are just inviting people, you already feel comfortable with to join you at your own pastime and see if they take to it as well.

Friends, neighbours and family members will all feel reassured that there are no hurdles they have to jump to try something you obviously find enjoyable. Some may have heard of perceived negatives - dress codes, restricted play times, "having" to be competitive. So it is important that you stress the positives - **regular gentle exercise, a great "safety net" for the elderly and vulnerable, good social atmosphere and great bar prices!** Most of all that it is a sport for **ALL AGES!**

Family Days are great for introducing the youngsters, and when they join, they will have built-in coaches/minders/drivers who will cover some of that trickier legislation that quite rightly covers the requirements in modern society to look after the young and vulnerable.

It is good practice generally to reward your existing members for their loyalty and support.

We **STRONGLY** recommend that whatever your membership fee is, you return **HALF** of it to your introducer of the new member. You should **NOT** reward the new member as they may not

stay with you, but if the existing member introduces two people, then their membership is paid for the year! Your club is still in profit from the new members - this is a much stronger method than paying the incomer.

Giving the newcomer a discount does not show confidence in your "product" that you are giving them.

If you are determined to "give" them something, try a £20 bar voucher and you will receive part back as profit, or get rid of some of that second-hand kit to them.

**Outcome = Tie this in with your open day and you could easily expect 6-10 members here.**



Photo courtesy of Bowls Development Alliance

## BANNERS

Why would something so cheap and easy to obtain be in the Top 5?

Simple, because they **are highly visible in your immediate vicinity and are there 24/7. They also reinforce the other local material you are pumping out at this time and pinpointing "where it's at!"**

Waterproof one-off banners can be ordered online with that same photo and message that's on your leaflets, but BIGGER. 1mx3m with eyelets fitted come in at £50-£70, delivered to you by post, and all you have to do is attach them to your walls, fences and local prominent places (by agreement with an outside host if they are willing).



You can have them new each year with the open day date incorporated, or with slots to insert this year's date should you want to re-use in the future. For **MAXIMUM** impact put them up 2 weeks before the event and they will catch the attention better than if one is permanently hanging there. Other sizes and prices are

available of course to fit your spaces.

**Outcome = Expect 4-10 new members with not much cost and very little effort.**

## OUTDOOR CLUBS IN YOUR CATCHMENT AREA

All indoor clubs will draw from a number of the outdoor clubs in their catchment area, some big clubs may draw from a considerable number. All of these outdoor clubs will have recruited new members during the summer season, even if only by accident and this can be a very big generator of new indoor recruitment too. So why not contact all the club secretaries in your catchment area and treat them exactly like a bring-a-friend category. Invite them to your club for a chat and a cup of tea!

Get the outdoor clubs to recommend you to their new members who would like to continue with their new-found sport. Perhaps invite them to your open day, or even to a separate outdoor clubs welcome day?

Again, as with bringing a friend, offer HALF the new joiners' membership subscription back to their outdoor club. This not only helps these new members continue to play, but also reinforces your bonds with these catchment clubs and gives them welcome extra income.

***Outcome = Expect 5-25 new members from this source.***



Photo courtesy of Bowls England

## DIGITAL

Now this is the future and the method that (a) will outstrip all others and (b) will scare the living daylights out of that nice group of elder statesmen and women that I mentioned under the leaflets section.

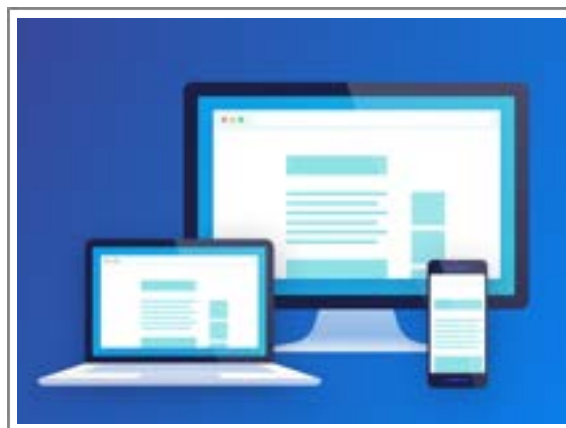
The truth is that the **VAST MAJORITY** of people under 60 years are digitally literate and have presences on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp etc. It must be well over 80% and yet many senior administrators still believe it is not for them or their club.

We are all cautious or scared of what we do not understand. As a septuagenarian myself, let me break it down a bit for you into categories:

### Your Website:

You don't have one - shame on you. All those back in the 1980s and 90s who used to walk in the gate/front door and enquire about giving bowls a try are still out there, but now they sit at their keyboard and search online.

If your website is not particularly attractive, or even worse - does not exist, then they will simply choose to visit another nearby club that has a more interesting look about it. This searcher will not know that your surface is better, your members are nicer, or that your bar and restaurant facilities are excellent, all they will know is that the other club looks better because someone has designed a better site!



Now this need not cost a lot of money to correct. You do not need to have a complicated site with lots of upkeep required. What you do need is that photo again on the same page as some contact details - club address, club website and email address are obvious must-haves, and membership secretary contact details also are necessary.

A general description of the club, its best features, perhaps history, coaching, maybe competition status can be there but kept brief. That is all any potential new members need. Then links or buttons can take you elsewhere in depth, e.g. social, officers, history etc.

For your existing members you need someone to keep a members section up to date, but if this is too much for you to do, you should keep your notice boards updated instead.

However, there is no doubt about it, a membership list accessed through a members log-in section, up-to-date team information and league tables, and news items are all a real attraction once someone has joined. **The initial web page is cheap and can often be provided by a club member. Ongoing member updates probably require a dedicated officer.**



**Outcome = Expect a constant low-level flow of members from this source.**

## Facebook

"Dining with the Devil" said a senior administrator, and **you do need a good moderator just in case someone places any unacceptable content on your page.**

However, **the benefits hugely outweigh the negatives!** As your members become used to "newsy" club matters - socials, results, live match updates etc, the trawling through pictures of member's dogs and family photos doesn't seem so bad. It is basically the same as conversations face-to-face in the club, instantly.

There are two huge benefits:

- (i) the Facebook "family" in your club are bang up to date on anything the club is working hard to do for their members, whereas it is easy to miss new notices on the Notice Board.
- (ii) **RECRUITMENT**



Not only can you announce and prepare your open day, seek volunteers, but you also get a constant trickle of new member enquiries as if you had the banners and posters out already.

The more members you have on your Facebook page, the more friends and non-bowlers see this lively club you have. This creates that tendril-like spread of information far outside your own club community, amongst the desired age-

group and bring-a-friend candidates you are seeking.

When you have your open day finalised, just **ASK** all your members to "share" the date and details to their followers. If you have an established Facebook community this information will percolate to thousands of people **FREE**.

**Outcome = Expect 20-50 members**

Now, if you don't have an existing Facebook Page you can still use it as a recruitment tool.

What you do is create a 'Club Open Day' page for the occasion in the same way any individual would create their own page. You can then pay for your open day advert to be advertised to other Facebook users when they open their Facebook page.

The recipients selected are defined by you according to how much you elect to pay - typical parameters are the number of days (e.g. 10), the radius from your club (e.g. 5 or 10kms according to your local population density) and age profile (e.g. 30-60yrs).

If you have selected a combination which costs you £10-15/day, then you are looking at only £100-£150, and that's cheap.

***Outcome = Expect 10-25, you might decide to spend more!***

# WHO ELSE SHOULD WE ENGAGE WITH?

**Believe it or not there are several other organisations out there who are either paid to help you or are very willing to do so. Not necessarily part of your recruitment planning, but something you should look into.**

***Outcome = Occasional members and income for your club***

## ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Are government-funded bodies paid to encourage the public to engage in sport for health & social reasons - visit the EIBA website to locate yours if you are not currently in contact with them. [http://www.eiba.co.uk/csp/ap\\_summary.php](http://www.eiba.co.uk/csp/ap_summary.php)

They will welcome a link to your website and provide a list of dozens of funding bodies who can provide you with grants and/or loans for club improvements & services to the local population. You may have to fill in a lot of paperwork (needs a dedicated person), but the rewards are typically **£1,000-£250,000!**

Your local council has Sports Development Officers/Wellbeing Officers who are doing the same work for the same reasons. Get that **website link** going for their digital send-outs, their own website (people do check that), plus local libraries etc. They also have funding opportunities, especially near the end of the financial year when they may have surplus funding in pots allocated for distribution that amazingly have not be sought or allocated.

***Outcome = Income for your club and good exposure and local networking.***



Photo courtesy of Bowls Development Alliance