THE HISTORY OF OUR CLUB

THE BEGINNING

The formation of the club came about after a public meeting was held by Peacehaven Town Council asking for support to extend the public amenities in the area by having a Bowling Green laid adjacent to the Sports complex in Piddinghoe Avenue. There were around 60 people who attended the meeting, out of which only 6 had ever played bowls.

The council was satisfied with the initial interest shown and the laying of the green and surrounds began, but the green could not be used until it had been down for at least a year.

All the above took place sometime in 1980.

The club actually formed in 1981 with 60 members. The joining fee was £1 and the green fees were £13 per year. Because the green was not yet usable matches were played at Newhaven.

Once the green was ready a small hut was provided at the bottom of the steps for storing our equipment, but the hut was also shared by the Tennis Club for their equipment. As the hut was very small only two bodies could fit in there at a time, consequently a queue formed to inspect the match sheets and competition sheets which were pinned on the walls.

Later that year the club obtained permission to purchase a larger hut which was placed inside the grounds where the present Portakabin stands. Tea for matches was made on two primus stoves with water brought in by members in large containers. Toilet facilities consisted of Portaloos placed where the old children's playground was.

Social evenings were held in a room above the Dewdrop Inn and were attended by about 20 people, playing silly games and refreshments were provided by the landlord.

In 1983 fundraising was started in earnest with coffee mornings, a lottery and a barn dance to obtain money to build a new pavilion.

In 1984 when the first hut was built by members of the club, floor lockers were built down one side of the hut to store the china etc and the lockers could be used as seats and could accommodate a match of 3 triples. It was a tight squeeze as the tea had to be made on two primuses and an urn which had to be filled from a standpipe at the side of the green. For larger matches it was a case of tables outside and pray it did not rain!

Later an arrangement was made with the Football Club to use their facilities for match teas. Shortly after this a more permanent and better facility was arranged by using the Community Centre.

In 1986 the club was offered the offices at Barretts Show Homes for the princely sum of £1 on condition that there were no costs to them and that the club dismantled and removed it from the site. Vic Dennis and Reg Boatman were appointed site foremen and with a party of club members the demolition began. A lorry was hired to transport the building to Piddinghoe Avenue. During this year a new flag was displayed for the first time and the rent for the green was £640.

The following year 1987 the building of the pavilion was started. On 9th February the council started making up the road from Arundel Road to the gates of the Sports Park and also began laying the sewerage pipes and electric connections to the club. Lewes District Council paid for the above work and approved a grant of 25% of the building costs up to a maximum of £2250. Telscombe Council gave the club £50 towards the cost of the pavilion and a working party was formed.

Finance was now the most important factor and there was an all out effort with fundraising and members each gave a £50 interest free loan to the club.

Work began. The first part was to build the brick piers to take the girders for the floor. Once the floor was laid, the sides were erected in sections.

Then came the great Gale of 1987 in October. The sides of the building were all blown at an angle. The next morning all the men were summoned and were able to re-erect the building, but the equipment shed was demolished so all the stuff was sent to Audrey's garage for safe keeping.

The council gave permission for the building on the proviso that if we left at any time, they would take possession of the building.

Work continued apace, Peter Garner and John Kirby spent two winters fixing the electrics. The wire and other electrical pieces were given to us from the University of Sussex where Peter worked. He also got the lockers from the Uni. The men worked really hard to get the pavilion ready for opening on 6th August 1989. The licence for the bar was first used on the club's open finals day on 26th August. It was agreed that all members would take a turn in cleaning the pavilion and also to do tea duties. The membership was 120. A 20 year lease was signed with the council.

In 1990, our first open day, was sponsored by Skoda and run by Vic Dennis with outside caterers and meals held in the Hub complex. These went on until 2008 with the last few years being picnic days.

Many modifications have taken place to the old pavilion. A new kitchen was put in by the men, led by Vence Thomas. A new ladies changing room was built on the side, also led by Vence. The outside was clad, new windows put in and more recently we have had an extension built and a viewing platform, led by Ted Giles. We also have a disabled toilet.

The grounds have seen many changes. The old shed was replaced by the big Portakabin in 2003?. The smaller cabin was given to us by the House Project and we have numerous sheds and a greenhouse. The green is still maintained by the council, but the gardens and surrounding grass is looked after by members.