



### **Unsung Hero of the Year**

Name of Nominee: Kerry Bowley

County: Derbyshire

Club: Long Eaton Bowls Club

### **Why do you feel this person deserves to be recognised for their contribution as an Unsung Hero?**

During the last couple of years Long Eaton BC, like many clubs, had a reduced membership. Realizing that to increase playing members the most important age groups to encourage were youngsters of a school age. Kerry put forward to the club and county propositions asking for support in developing bowls for this age group, getting the club involved in the Bowls Big Bash and Big Bowls Weekend and continuing coaching youngsters on a weekly basis (at a minimum).

This naturally extended to older generations too as parents came down with their children and gradually tried out the game themselves. While there has been limited success in increasing numbers yet (we have had only one full season to date) the club has seen some of the younger players have a go in friendly social games, indeed one did represent the county in a Midland Counties game at the end of the season. Kerry extended her original schedule of coaching sessions and willingly went down if contacted by 'new bowlers' to coach and encourage them. Without Kerry's enthusiasm and time commitment the potential for the club (and therefore the county) to increase its 'young membership' (and who knows some 'oldies' too) would not be happening.

PS during the close season Kerry is coaching youngsters at Erewash Indoor Club on a weekly basis too.

### **Tell us more about the person you nominated.**

Kerry had some success as a bowler prior to having a family and took a break from bowling while her children were growing up. Now returning to play on a full-time basis, representing the club and county in both leagues and competitions she made the decision to encourage youngsters to try the sport that she had some success in. She applied for some financial support to get her ideas to a practical outcome. She applied for, and was successful, in getting the club involved in the Bowls England Bowls Bash (as evidenced by paperwork from the Bowls England Conference) and has as evidenced above been responsible in encouraging, coaching and enthusing local youngsters. Continuing in the winter with indoor coaching sessions for the younger bowlers from a variety of clubs.

Her enthusiasm rubbed off on the rest of her close family too, getting her in-laws and husband to help out when needed!

The county will benefit in the longer term (we hope) at a time when the number of clubs in Derbyshire is falling. The only hope for the future is if those learning to play at a young age become the successful bowlers of the future.