



Fit for the Future Awards of the Year

Nominee

Name of Nominee: Milford on Sea Bowls Club

County: Hampshire

Club name: Milford on Sea Bowls Club

We would love to hear the fantastic work that is taking place at all levels of our sport. This award recognises the incredible achievements at club and county level that leads to a growth of participation and exposure in our sport. Please share with us your nominee`s stories, achievements and initiatives of the season 2022.

This nomination relates to the successful inclusion of Paul, who has Autism, into our Club, which was made possible by the positive attitudes of Paul himself, his mum (and carer), our Committee, our Coaches and all Club Members.

The nominee is the Club of which Paul is now a member. Paul attended our Open Day, when we were unaware of his Autism, but it soon became apparent that he was struggling to follow the Coaching guidance throughout his time on the green. His limited verbal communication skills also impaired. One of our Coaches had a wealth of knowledge and experience of working with people with learning difficulties, so she took over Paul`s coaching with a clear focus on his abilities and NOT his disabilities.

Paul is now a full member of our Club and participates regularly in roll ups, competitions and social and special events. In addition, we have seen considerable improvements in Paul`s social and communication skills, which highlights the benefits of playing bowls in an inclusive manner, especially for adults with Autism (for more information on this please refer to the document "Autism, Sport and Physical Activity"

<https://www.autism.org.uk/shop/products/books-and-resources/sport-physical-activity>).

Tell us more about your nominee.

This very successful outcome was the result of the combined efforts of everyone within the Club. Our designated Coach was assigned to deliver 1:1 Beginner`s Coaching Sessions with Paul, ensuring every stage was adapted to his own, very individual learning needs. We were delighted that he showed great commitment and determination to succeed with his game and worked hard throughout. In addition, his pleasure was a delight to witness. Paul`s membership was approved and, with Paul`s and his Mum`s permission, a short talk was given to all members about Autism and, more specifically, Paul`s individual needs, to ensure more understanding of some of his difficulties which could be perceived negatively, without increased understanding. Raising awareness amongst our membership was critical to the success of Paul`s inclusion.

Initially, Paul regularly played in our roll ups with the 1:1 support of a few key supportive members plus the combined support and understanding of all playing members, and even entered a competition, succeeding in winning his first round. He has also successfully engaged with our special bowls events, albeit with 1:1 support, and social events. As a Club we took pride in ensuring that every bowls event at the Club was accessible to Paul to ensure full inclusion.

Beyond the success of including Paul and his developing a passion for the game, Paul`s social and communication skills have improved considerably, much to everyone`s pleasure. His mum is delighted with his acceptance and full inclusion into our Club plus



the considerable improvement in his own skills. She has reported that since beginning to play bowls Paul is more communicative as he delights in telling everyone about his bowls games. As well as his improved communication skills, she has seen increased social interactions and improved concentration levels.

In summary, Paul's successful inclusion, with a critical focus on his abilities and NOT his disabilities, has not only benefitted Paul, but also his mum, Club members and the Club itself. We consider this to be a major success for all involved.