



## **Unsung Hero of the Year**

### **Nominee**

Name of Nominee: Mrs Val Molton  
County: Gloucestershire  
Club: Kingswood & Hanham

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

This lady, Val Molton (Kingswood & Hanham BC), is firstly the Club Secretary of all clubs' dreams ! She is intelligent, highly experienced as both a player and an administrator, driven to both organise and promote her own club (and the game, in fact), ultimately hard-working, and personally inspiring. She is a positive personality, with a great sense of humour, and a ready wit, which always helps.

It should be said that her club is full of great officers and a membership that is also very receptive to the idea of contributing to the running of the club. But – as always - it needs someone to lead the way, and never has this been more significant than in the years leading up to and including 2022. This has resulted in Kingswood & Hanham becoming the BE Club of the Year in 2021. Val Molton is most certainly that leader by personal example, inspiring and encouraging at all times. This nomination is absolutely about her, not the club.

Val led the club's efforts during the first Big Bowls Weekend in 2021. This was an example par excellence of Val's skills. Her organisation of this was just superb, but much helped by great support from lots of our club members. More than sixty possible new bowlers came along, over the two days, to see if they might like flat green bowling, spending several hours with us on each occasion. BBC 'Points West' ran quite long reports over the following days, featuring our club, furthering publicity for the whole national scheme.

The club gained 32 new members from the BBW last year (taking us up to a current approx. 100), so we barely had the space for a further transfusion of members in 2022, but a second BBW effort was nevertheless organised by Val, this time just on a single day, with some good new members also being gained this year. The great thing about both years has proved to be that the quality of our new members has been displayed not just by rapidly-improving playing skills, but by the way in which so many have already contributed in a very positive way to club organisation, and socially too !

It might be noted that several other Gloucestershire clubs have gained from Val's guidance on running their own 2022 Big Bowls Weekend.

The same drive and organisation by Val was evident when our club was given the opportunity to host one of the Walker Cup Regional Finals in July this year. Even though she was herself playing in the Gloucestershire team, as were two other women from our club, Val's capacity to 'go up through her gears' and to multitask, clicked in once again. I'm sure if you were to ask Edna Bessell, Bowls England's representative on the day, she would confirm what a brilliant day was provided by our club to the four counties and their supporters.

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

Val retired in early 2021, at which point her playing and organisation both went up a notch, even though that didn't seem possible. The former resulted in her reaching the National Finals at Leamington in 2021 in no less than 5 events, a not-inconsiderable achievement <https://www.bowlsengland.com/seasoned-qualifier-val-molton-cant-wait->



to-soak-up-atmosphere-at-victoria-park/ . Incredibly, though, she couldn't deal with the boredom of being retired (and her employers were constantly seeking her return), and is now back at work, part-time, which places even more pressure on her completing all her club demands. Whenever I go round to her house, she is always working on something club-wise, poring over her computer (and she's an IT whiz, which helps loads). She is just brilliant at keeping everyone informed, motivated and involved.

Many bowls volunteers make their contribution in one particular way, through probably one role. But Val Molton does it in multiple ways. Besides everything that has been said thus far, she is a qualified Level 1 coach and spends time using her inherent instructional skills on behalf of our club. Equally significantly, she is also one of the top players in her county (of Gloucestershire) and a member of the top county women's teams.

However, it doesn't end there. The same enthusiasm from this lady transfers to the Gloucestershire Youth Academy and to the county women's Amy Rose Bowl team in particular, where the young women themselves two years ago asked Val to be their Team Manager, to which she obviously said 'yes'. They love her too. So her leadership and coaching skills were brought to bear outside the club as well. She led them again in 2022, with enhanced playing skills evident again amongst these younger players. Elsewhere in the County - and despite all her other commitments - she has recently become a member of the 10 person GBA Joint Executive Committee, the county's governing committee. I think that she did this because of I personally asked her, but she is never, ever anything other than supportive to myself and helping when she perceives a need, at the county level. There she is forthright and progressive, taking the initiative this year in relation both to the design of a striking new county uniform, first used in 2022, and also becoming a member of a four-person Executive Sub-Committee charged with a complete review of our county structure and governance, to which she also brings new perspectives from both her professional and business experience, including people-management skills. She also has willingly become, in 2022, an active member of the County Disciplinary Committee.

I cannot imagine asking for a more complete voluntary contribution from one of the most likeable people you would ever encounter. Certainly not someone in the background, in fact always to the fore, but still largely unsung outside our own County and even within it.