

Ballycastle Bowling & Social Recreation Centre
Secretary's Report 2018

At the outset, mention must be made of the passing in October of our esteemed Member Dan McAfee, a Past President, Selector and Committee Member. Dan was a true Gentleman and highly respected within bowling circles, anything requiring attention was never too much trouble. Deepest Sympathy is extended to his Wife Annie and Family and also to any of our Members who have suffered bereavement during the past Season. Good wishes to any of our Members who are suffering ill health at present.

Without doubt, 2018 has been the Ballycastle Club's most successful year to date. However, at one point we never thought we would get the Season off the ground as a result of 'The beast from the east,' with tons of sand deposited on the green. Sincere thanks go to Ballycastle Golf Club for all their help and to any Members who were able to come along and assist. Thanks also to the Members who came and cleaned out the ditches and those who helped clean up the premises, also to Francis for power washing prior to Opening. Our Official Opening was again held on the first night of the Rinks. A good attendance of members were present to see President, Freddie McCandless deliver the first bowl and officially open the Green for another Season. His good wife, Lady Captain Elizabeth delivered the first bowl on behalf of the Ladies Club. With the Centre Flag unfurled and after a few ends of bowls, we retired to the Pavilion for refreshments.

This year we had 5 new members join the Men's Club in S McCormick, F Regan, J Brennan, J McKinley and F McGinn. It was great to have them join and we wish them every success in the future.

With regard to the bowls as already mentioned, 2018 proved to be an epic year for both teams in the Centre. In respect of the Irish Cup, Ballycastle had tremendous Cup run finishing Runners up in the Irish Intermediate Cup. It all began way back in May with a bye in the 1st round followed by a 2nd round game home to Cavehill winning by 85 shots to 62. The 3rd round saw Ballycastle travel to Forth River winning by 86 shots to 74. The Quarter final was a local derby travelling away to City of Derry on 28th July to play on water logged green. Following a break mid game to allow the green to soak, we eventually won by 79 shots to 68 under very difficult conditions. Semi-finals saw us travel to the neutral venue of Larne to play North Down. This was a very close affair with some big bowls played in the closing stages to win by 76 shots to 69. Finals day saw us travel to Old Bleach to play Ballywalter, last years runner ups. This was a very fast swinging green, and we were able to keep it fairly tight till the closing stages and then it slowly crept away from us to lose by the narrow margin of 10 shots 78 to 68.

Naturally we were disappointed and we all gave it our best, on that particular day it wasn't to be. As was said at the time 2nd in Ireland wasn't bad for the wee Club from Ballycastle! All those involved should be very proud of their achievement. From a Club perspective, thanks must go to those who rearranged work and personal commitments to ensure we had the strongest team possible on the green during the Cup campaign and for the special effort made to turn out in full Club dress on such an important occasion, done both yourselves and the Club proud. The B Team were able to play in the Irish Junior Cup this Year, travelling away to Banbridge, losing by 84 shots to 66.

In respect of the Leagues, once again we competed in Senior League Two and came out on top as League Champions with 75 points having won 11 of our 14 games and drawn 1. Ballycastle B had also a very creditable League campaign winning 8 of their 14 matches with 54.5 points, narrowly missing out on runner up spot by 3.5 points.

Within the NIPBA, our Cup campaign was still very much to the fore. These were played on a home and away basis. The Senior Two Team reached the final of the Cupples Cup with wins over City of Derry and Fairhill and then defeated Castlerock in the Final played in Ballymoney, by 86 shots to 43.

Ballycastle B was also hot on the Cup trail in the Hyland Donaghy Cup. Again played home and away, they had a tremendous first round victory over Culrathain, Junior 2 League Champions in the 1st Round, followed by an equally strong performance against Riada in the semi-final. Ballycastle B travelled to Limavady to play Omagh and came away winners by 94 shots to 54. This was a super performance by Ballycastle B and all involved are to be congratulated on their victory, bringing yet another trophy to Ballycastle. Ballycastle also competed in the 5 man team Competition, and reached the semi-finals of both the Kane and Mullan Cups, being defeated by Dunluce and Cookstown respectively.

The Ballycastle Club's success at Irish and Provincial Level saw us being nominated for the Senior Team award in the Moyle Sports Awards. We won the Moyle Heat being presented with an engraved award and then put through to the final stages in the Causeway Coast and Glens Sports Awards in the Lodge Hotel, Coleraine, unfortunately losing out to Coleraine Football Club.

My thanks go to all those who were prepared to take their cars to the away matches and to those Members who gave up their time to float between both teams. This year again a number of players took part in the Veterans League Rinks and enjoyed competing in this competition

I must thank the selection panel of President Freddie, Vice-President Andy, Joseph, Turlough and Michael for all their help in assisting me guide the respective teams through the League and Cup programme. A special word of thanks to Bob for taking charge of the B Team.

The Monday night fun rinks were well attended again and I would thank Alice and Jim Burns for organising

the rinks during the Season and to those who provided prizes each week.

The Ladies Section competed in the Weekly Mixed Triples Competition competing for the Charles Coyle Memorial Cup. This provided the Ladies with competitive bowls and thanks to all the Male Members for taking part on Friday Afternoons. Congratulations to Alice Burns, Tommy Grainger and Francis Regan on winning this competition and thanks to Bob for organising and running this Competition.

Thanks must go to Lady Captain Elizabeth McCandless, Hon Secretary Lyn Chestnutt, Treasurer Rosaleen Donnelly, Catering Officer Catherine Grainger and all the Members of the Ladies Club who give of their time to cater at home matches, provide food for other Centre functions and also through their financial support.

Once again the Club Competitions and Doak Cup were keenly contested and all Competitions were completed before closing.

We held our Green Keeper's Benefit on Saturday 15th September. There was a disappointing turnout but those present enjoyed a rinks competition and were served a lovely tea in the Pavilion.

Our sincere thanks go to green keeper David who has carried out his duties very efficiently with the green playing very well. This year we were able to get hollow tinning, top dressing and reseeding done, so should improve the playing surface next year. My thanks to Brian McKay for all his assistance in helping maintain the green.

May I thank all Officials and Committees for their assistance in running the Centre this Season. Sincere thanks must go to President Freddie, who gave his attention to many issues during the Season and has been at the helm of the Club's most successful year. I also wish Freddie a speedy recovery following illness. Many thanks to Vice-President Andy and Assistant Secretary Sean for their help throughout the Season. Might I also mention and thank Honorary Treasurer, Michael Dennis for all his assistance once again and in dealing with the Centre's financial affairs so efficiently for yet another year. Michael hasn't been in the best of form in the last while, but hopefully now has the worst over him and we wish him well for a swift recovery. Sincere thanks go to all those, too numerous to mention, who slip in and carry out various tasks around the Club which make such a difference.

We have had a very successful year, however success has brought promotion to Senior 1 bowls once again, an arena which we were in before and no doubt will bring its own challenges on the green. I have exhausted all avenues to try and get our Saturday games on an evening, all to no avail. From a Club perspective, the main problem is the transfer of players, on a substitute basis between Senior 1 and Junior 2 and vice versa is now very very restrictive and will require a degree of commitment from Senior players to keep the Senior team going. The use of substitutes will take careful handling so as not to jeopardise the B Teams performance in Cups and League. However, we have faced challenges before and is not in our nature to lie down to these. If the players available in our senior panel were all fielding, there is no doubt we could cause an upset here and there.

The Club's launch into Social Media with our Facebook Page, thanks to Mark and Sean, posting Club information and photographs has opened up a whole new avenue of publicity for the Club in the wider area. As administrators of the page, seeing the hits or views run into the thousands is amazing. This can be only good for ourselves and would ask firstly all members to encourage anyone who is interested to come along. Secondly, use this new avenue of publicity to invite people within this wider viewing audience to come along and have a go.

You will have saw from the minutes we were hoping to get a Grand Draw underway. Obtaining sponsorship has been very difficult with many refusals. I am pleased to say we are slowly getting there and if we could obtain another couple of good sums we will be ready to get things moving. If any of you are aware of any businesses who would like to get involved, please let me know.

The success we have had this year just doesn't happen. It is a result of the commitment from every Member within both teams, their bowling ability, hunger for success and respect for their teammates within their Club, and indeed for their Club, culminating in four Cups at Irish and Provincial level, topped with a sports award. I trust this commitment will be carried into 2019.

S. Craig.

Samuel J Craig
Hon Secretary
14/12/18