



## **Sharnbrook Bowls Club Whistle-Blowing Policy**

### **Purpose**

This policy supports an open and honest culture at Sharnbrook Bowls Club, encouraging individuals to raise concerns about potential wrongdoing, misconduct, or unsafe practice without fear of reprisal. It ensures that everyone involved with the club can speak up in confidence, knowing their concern will be treated seriously and appropriately.

### **Who Does This Policy Apply To?**

This policy applies to:

- Club members, including social members
- Committee members
- Coaches and officials
- Volunteers and staff
- Parents or guardians of junior members

Concerns raised under this policy should relate to serious breaches of conduct or policy. Personal grievances should be addressed through the club's complaints or grievance procedures.

### **What is Whistle-Blowing?**

Whistle-blowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or risks, including:

- Criminal offences or suspected illegal activity
- Safeguarding breaches or risks
- Breaches of Club or Bowls England policies (e.g. anti-doping, equality, disciplinary)
- Financial or administrative misconduct
- Health and safety risks
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above

### **Why Speak Up?**

Reporting your concern protects individuals and the club. If you raise a concern in good faith, you will be supported and protected, even if it turns out to be unfounded.



### **How to Raise a Concern**

Concerns can be raised with:

- The Club Safeguarding Officer
- The Club Chairperson or Secretary
- The County Safeguarding Officer (if not appropriate to raise it within the club)
- Bowls England via Regulation 9 (Disciplinary and Misconduct)

Reports should include as much factual detail as possible. Requests for confidentiality will be respected as far as possible.

### **What Happens Next?**

- Concerns will be acknowledged promptly.
- A club official will assess the concern and may investigate or refer it.
- If an investigation proceeds, the whistle-blower will be informed where appropriate.
- If no case is found, reasons will be explained and escalation options provided.

### **Safeguards and Protection**

- The club will not tolerate retaliation against whistle-blowers.
- Any mistreatment of a whistle-blower may result in disciplinary action.
- Malicious or knowingly false allegations may also lead to disciplinary measures.

### **Confidentiality**

Where possible, whistle-blowers' identities will be kept confidential. Anonymous reports may be harder to investigate but will still be considered.

### **Review and Adoption**

This policy should be reviewed annually and adopted by the Club Committee. It should be clearly signposted for all members and volunteers.

**Approved by:** Rob Halls

**Role:** Chairman

**Date of Adoption:** 11 August 2025