HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2026

Madam President and Ladies,

President Dot Pope had a wonderful start to her Presidential year as she celebrated her special day at the beginning of May. Officers of the County, club representatives and friends joined her for a game of bowls, followed by a delicious meal.

MEMBERSHIP is now 2189, a loss of 54 on the previous year.

MATCHES. What an excellent year the Johns Trophy team had. With great delight they reached the National semi-finals and played well, just losing by 3 shots to Leicestershire. I hope they get to lift the trophy next year. Despite their endeavours, the Walker Cup and Amy Rose teams did not qualify for the National Championships this year, but are hoping for better results in 2027. My thanks to Elaine Score and Jane Preston, the team managers, who did a wonderful job.

Sue Harrington had arranged 10 inter-county friendly matches this year. Unfortunately 2 were cancelled. The first versus Suffolk away, who had made a mistake with the date and the match couldn't be re-arranged. The second versus Kent away because of extremely hot conditions. The results were equally divided with 4 losses and 4 wins. 3 mixed friendly matches were arranged to celebrate club's special occasions. These were most enjoyable. The annual match versus the Essex men was played in good spirit with lots of banter. The men were victorious this year, but I am sure we will get our revenge in 2027. Thank you Sue, we look forward to next year.
As always, my thanks go to Romford B. C. and all the clubs who have hosted events for us this year. Your hospitality was terrific and greatly appreciated.

COUNTY WINNERS 2026. Singles Champion: Carole Morgan (Clacton on Sea), r/up Lorraine Farrugia (Liberty of Havering). Championship Pairs Winners: Elaine Score, Emma Chapman (Essex County), r/up Debbie Sales, Kellie Margerrison (Dunmow). Championship Triples Winners: Leah Bamford, Alison Smart, Serena Madgewick (Braintree), r/up Debbie Sales, Doreen Butcher, Hayley Halford (Dunmow). Championship Fours Winners: Debbie Sales, Frances Lavender, Doreen Butcher, Kellie Margerrison (Dunmow), r/up Laura Robinson, Gracie Birch, Elaine Score, Emma Chapman (Essex County). Championship Two Wood Singles Winner: Leah Bamford (Braintree), r/up Michelle Squires (Clockhouse). Champion of Champions Winner: Elaine Score (Essex County), r/up Deb Shrimpton (Silverthorn). Unbadged Singles Winner: Kellie Margerrison (Dunmow), r/up Maureen Kendrick (Holland on Sea). Unbadged Pairs Winners: Emma St. Cyr, Julie Willis (Liberty of Havering), r/up Charlotte Goss, Louise Gann (Wickford). Championship Junior Singles Winner: Evie Mills (Braintree), r/up Gracie Birch (Essex County). Championship Junior Pairs Winners: Evie Mills, Gracie Patient (Braintree, Essex County), r/up Alisha Etherington, Chloe Hearn (Witham, Silver End). Senior Singles Winner: Jane Preston (Clockhouse), r/up Shirley Beavis (Falcon). Senior Pairs Winners: Jan Soar, Brenda Bowyer (Rayleigh, Rochford), r/up Steph Heard, Judy Bohannon (Tiptree Jobserve). Senior

Fours Winners: Lyla Horley, Doreen Willoughby, Maureen Kendrick, Cheryl Williams (Holland on Sea), r/up Terry Armsby, Joan Aston, Terri Bull, Diane Abel (Harlow). Benevolent Triples Winners: Carol Heavin, Sue Company, Jeanette Edmans (Silverthorn), r/up Mo Wood, Edna Woods, Judy Bohannon (Tiptree Jobserve). Albert Crabb Winners: Connaught, r/up Braintree. Top Club Winners: Clockhouse, r/up Holland on Sea. Essex Patron: Jackie Stephens (Buckhurst Hill). Intergroup Winners: D Area.
Congratulations to all our players who qualified for the National Championships this year.

INTERNATIONALS AND NATIONALS. Congratulations to Evie Mills (Braintree) who played again in the U18 International Series. Huge congratulations to Elaine Score and Ed Morris (Essex County) who were worthy National Mixed Pairs Champions. Reaching the semi-finals of the Championship Triples the Dunmow ladies, Debbie Sales, Doreen Butcher and Hayley Halford disappointingly lost by 1 shot to Oxfordshire. The Over 60s Mixed Two Fours from Essex County also lost in the semi-final. Quarter-finalists were Evie Mills (Braintree) in the U17 Singles and Clockhouse in the Women's National Top Club. Well done to all these players.

COUNTY BADGES. Congratulations to Karen Burns, Jackie Stephens (Buckhurst Hill), Sian Hunter, Debbie Martin (Frinton), Sue Ockwell (Holland on Sea), Sarah Decort, Debra Rose, Dawn Warwick (Rayleigh), Sue White (Romford), Sue Company, Jeanette Edmans and Deb Shrimpton (Silverthorn) who were awarded their County Badges.

ESSEX BENEVOLENT FUND AND BENEVOLENT TRIPLES. Thank you to everyone who supported our Benevolent Triples and President's Charity Day. Thanks to your generosity the Benevolent Fund is healthy and a donation was made to the Essex Air Ambulance. Our Benevolent Secretary, Brenda Bowyer, has sent out several gifts during the year, which have been much appreciated.

ESSEX PATRON'S DAY. This year Hockley, Romford and Loughton hosted the Patron's Day. All participants had an enjoyable afternoon with a fun game of bowls followed by a superb meal. Having three venues resulted in differing opinions, so we will have two venues next year.

PRESS OFFICER. The competition portal has operated well this year with only a few problems, which Dave Jarrold was able to solve. I thank Dave sincerely for his work on the ladies' competitions and hope that next year they will run smoothly.

FINANCE. Jenny Hyland has again worked hard to keep our finances in check. The Essex WI continued to sponsor us, for which we are very grateful. Thank you Jenny for keeping our finances on track.

AREA SECRETARIES. My thanks go to Janice Fortune, Brenda Bowyer, Pat Barrett and Pauline Adams who have all coped with the change over to the competition portal. Thank you ladies for the work you do in your areas. Pat Barrett remained as C Area Secretary far longer than intended, but is definitely retiring this year. Many thanks Pat, I wish you well.

SELECTORS. It has been a year of changes. Jane Preston came in for A Area and took on the job of Team Manager. Maria Nicholls unfortunately has had to stand down for B Area due to family commitments. Sheila Brickel came in for C Area for just the year. Maureen Norgate continues to represent D Area. Thank you ladies for the hours that you have given to the County. Jane and Maureen are continuing in their roles and I hope that selectors can be found for B and C Areas.

LUNCHEON. It was with some trepidation that I decided to look for a new venue for our annual luncheon. My fears were unfounded as Channels did us proud. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming, the meal was superb and all our needs were catered for. President Dot Pope, accompanied by her husband Brian and our special guests from the Essex WI, Moyra Jackson and Gill Hathaway were welcomed into The Barn. 6 Certificates of Merit were awarded this year and I congratulate these ladies on the service they have given to their clubs over many years. We had a tremendous raffle, so thank you to you all for your support and to Jenny and her Billericay ladies for preparing the tickets also the Romford ladies for their help on the day. Dot brought the luncheon to a close with her speech.

I send congratulations to all the clubs who were celebrating special anniversaries this year. I wish you well for the future.

My sincere thanks go to everyone who works behind the scenes, ensuring that their club continues to thrive, thus enabling many people to continue to enjoy playing lawn bowls. The Clubs and the County could not survive without these volunteers, so thank you again. I sincerely thank my Assistant Secretary/Match Secretary Sue Harrington and Treasurer Jenny Hyland for their support. In fact, I need to thank the members of the Executive who stepped into my shoes at very short notice when I had my accident. Ladies you were marvellous and kept everything going whilst I was out of action. "Thank you," does not describe how grateful I am.

It has been a momentous year for our President Dot Pope. She has visited parts of the Country that she probably didn't know existed and met many lovely people along the way. Accompanied on many occasions by her husband Brian, I hope that he has been able to share the experience too. Dot keeps saying how much she has enjoyed her year as President and I know that she will have lots of wonderful memories to treasure. Her support to our players at Leamington was invaluable and it was important to be there for the disappointments and exciting to celebrate the successes. Thank you Dot for making 2026 another wonderful year.

I thank you all for the good wishes I received after my accident in July. They helped with my determination to recover speedily. Thank you for your support and friendship and I wish you well in 2027.

Yours sincerely,
JILL POLLEY
Hon. Secretary E.C.W.B.A.