



The Valley Bowmen of Huddersfield

Membership Survey 2023

As at midday on 17th Jan we received a total of 40 replies. A spreadsheet detailing all the replies (anonymised) can be made available to anyone wanting to examine the data in more detail or to conduct further analysis.

Synopsis

Although there was an even spread of replies from old and new members the vast majority of replies (75%) were from active archers who shoot at least once a week. It is therefore hardly surprising that the participation rates are high and the feedback has been very positive and very complimentary about the club. However, it does mean that we still have no clear picture why people remain members but don't shoot/participate.

Again, because of those that have responded, the attendance (or potential attendance) at club events is high especially considering 25% are unable to shoot at weekend for one reason or another.

One theme that runs through the various responses is that members "don't think they are good enough" to either take part in Club events or to volunteer.

Turning to thoughts about the club, most like the friendliness, the facilities available and the unrestricted access. There are lots of good suggestions about other events we should consider and thing we should do more of, and there are a handful things that some people don't like.

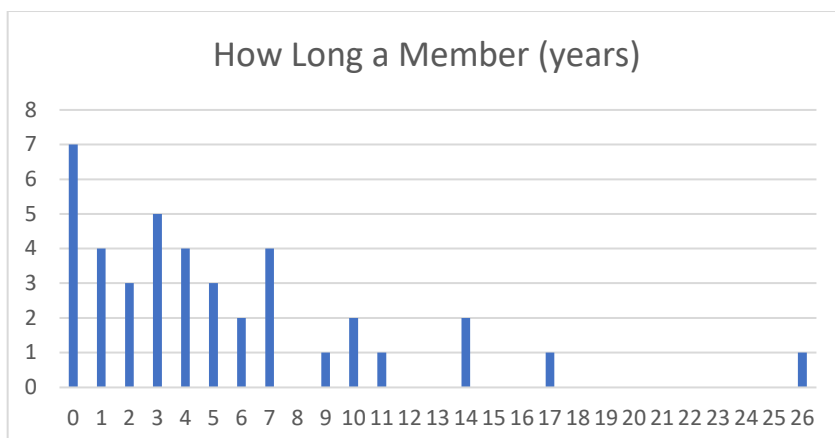
Regarding the questions on coaching, there is clearly plenty of support for more formal coaching sessions which should be every month/quarter although the jury is out as to when they should be held. However, it is less clear just how well attended these sessions would be.

Whilst it would be an impossible task to address all the issues/suggestions raised we should come up with a plan of action and respond to the membership letting them know how we intended dealing with their feedback.

Analysis

The following is my attempt to summarise the replies given.

2. How long have you been a member?



3. What made you join the club and what is it that makes you remain a member of Valley Bowmen?

It’s hard to distil all the comments, however three factors appeared multiple times:

- a) Accessibility – able to shoot whenever 24/7
- b) The Social element – to socialise with other members and comments about friendliness of members
- c) Facilities – quality of the facilities was mentioned several times

4. How often do you shoot

● More than once a week	10
● Once or twice a week	19
● Once or twice a month	1
● Occasionally	6
● I've not shot in the last 6 months	4



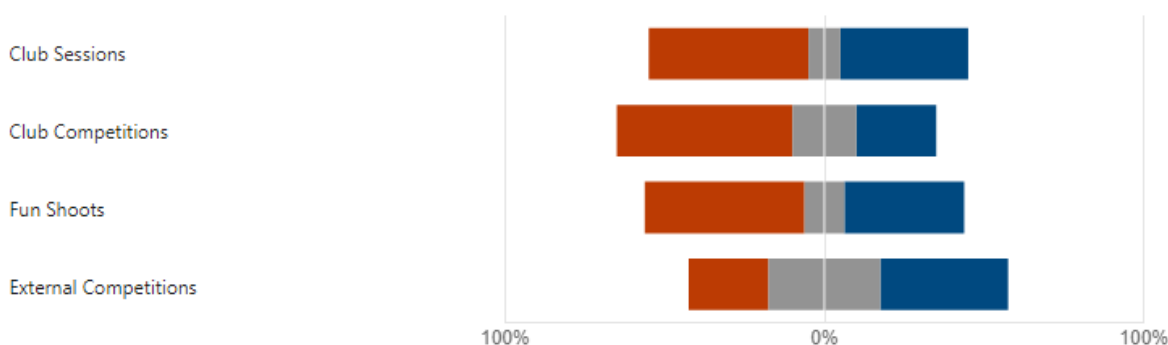
5. If you have not shot in the last 6 months is there a reason?

With so few replies from members that aren’t shooting it’s difficult to draw any conclusions about why this might be the case. Here are the four reasons given. Perhaps we should reach out to the first respondent and see if we can help them back to the sport.

- Difficulties gaining motivation and not being aware of the latest access codes and procedures
- Not shot due to shoulder injury
- I’ve been too busy and I haven’t got a routine that includes Archery
- Only just joined

6. What Club events do you take part in?

■ Yes ■ No ■ I Might in future



Approximately half the respondents take part in the Club sessions, Club Competitions and Fun shoot. Of the half that don’t, a significant proportion indicated they might in future.

It is a different story for external competitions. Only 25% take part in external competitions with 40% saying they might but 35% saying no they don’t.

7. What stops you taking part in the above events?

All the responses are listed in Appendix 1 with a summary of the number of replies as follows:

- 7 = Held at Weekend/Sunday
- 9 = Time/Life/Another Hobby gets in the way
- 8 = I'm not Good enough
- 2 = New to archery
- 5 = Not Competitive/Interested in competitions
- 6 = Misc

8. Would you attend Club competitions if held on a Saturday?



Analysing the "Other" responses it comes out as

Yes = 20 Possibly = 7 No =12

9. Are there any events you think the club should organise (either sporting or social)?

The responses were as follows:-

- Build more club shoots in - like pre-Covid times, were more days/times -- Wednesday night, Friday night, Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon.
- A mixture of both would be good but also coaching sessions especially for new archers to keep them interested in the sport
- Club competitions and Fun shoots are primarily based outdoors. Holding events/competitions using the indoor range more may increase participation especially in winter or when it's raining.
- Club versus other club competitions.
- Competitions to suit lower poundage bow styles
- From past experience, structured training sessions would be useful. People turning up and leaving 'club shoots' at anytime they like is disruptive.
- Has been said in the past - the indoor range could be used for none shooting events - social nights, e.g. quiz nights, casino nights, film nights.
- Organise and open/invitation competition for other club archers to attend? We have the facilities, we should show them off."
- I think refresher courses for those that want to reconnect with the club are a great idea. It would be nice to hold more events in the indoor range in the evening or at weekends - quizzes, concerts on screen big screen, Archery games nights...
- Possibly some friendly shoots with other local archery clubs? "
- Maybe a specific event for new archers, maybe invent a new round (6 dozen at 40 yards for instance), established archers could come along to help, give advice etc
- Maybe corporate events?
- More club competitions would always be welcome. An indoor one would be nice also.
- Novice competition shoots. As I feel that will encourage recently qualified members to shoot and not be intimidated by more experienced archers.
- Possibly midweek retired members competition

- Some coaching sessions would be great
- Visits to other clubs to experience different styles of shooting.

10. What do you like about the club?

In 31 of the replies there was some comment about the friendliness of the members and the people they shoot with. 18 commented on the ability to shoot whenever they wish, 24/7 and 17 commented on the facilities available.

11. What don't you like about the club?

There were a handful of comments about parking and I have also excluded comments about the sloping field and shooting into the sun. Whilst we can do something about parking clearly the slope and the sun are outside our control!

The other comments include:

- Club information is not always circulated to all members. WhatsApp groups created but not shared with everyone.
- I dislike being shouted at via email. I understand the security risks of leaving gates unlocked etc, but the ALL CAPS shouty emails to all members really put me off.
- No lighting around key areas.
- Not enough space to put equipment bags etc when range is busy.
- Shortage of new outdoor targets - I have had to resort to buying my own as there are never any available in the container which is annoying for the outdoor shooters.
- Sometimes there is an excess of emails.
- Mowing the grass on Friday afternoons as it's the only time I can take my Granddaughter, so, we miss out regularly due to field closure.
- We could do with a couple of new outdoor wood framed targets to increase capacity.
- The locking up rigmarole - I would prefer to have a set of keys - I would be happy to pay a £50+ deposit for.
- WINDY CORNER. This appears to be a bone of contention, I am aware that this has been raised by various members about a solution and it would appear that it is not being addressed. The main reason given, being that it would block the view from the road thus concealing possible vandals from view. The 40' clubhouse obviously doesn't .
I've yet to see many committee members shooting from there during practice or competitions.

12. Is there something you think the Club should be doing MORE of?

See Appendix 2 for responses

13. Is there something you think the Club should be doing LESS of?

We had the following responses:-

- I realise that courses and the university bring money into the club, but being run at peak times when those who work during the week can come to shoot can be a pain.
- Maybe having fewer external groups using the facilities therefore stopping members using the facilities at those times.
- Wasting money on nice to have projects i.e. tarmaced car park, its ok as it is. Have a published accounts for the true cost of running the indoor range, i.e. rates, heating, lighting etc and charge an appropriate additional fee for those who do use it.
- Beginner courses
- Running beginner events on Club days.

14. How often should the club offer Coaching sessions

● Once a month	16
● Once a quarter	17
● Once a year	2
● Other	5



Clearly the membership feel that coaching should be available on a regular (weekly/monthly) basis. The “Other” comments include:

- Weekly/Fortnightly
- Dependant on numbers who are available
- Once or maybe twice/year
- Either monthly or bi-weekly over several months in my view (depending on feedback of course!)
- As required.

15. If there were coaching sessions available, how often would you attend

● Once a month	7
● Once a quarter	9
● Once a year	3
● Whenever I felt in need of soom...	19
● Never	2



With the majority of respondents being established archers these are the ones that have chosen “whenever I need some” and it is likely that it is the relatively new members that would be seeking more regular coaching sessions

16. When should we hold coaching sessions?

● Saturdays	19
● Sundays	13
● Weekday Evenings	14
● Other	12



I feel the only conclusion to draw is that there is no one single time that suits everyone!

17. Do you help on Beginner Courses, Taster Sessions or Have-a-go sessions

Again, the results here are skewed because it is the more active and involved members that have responded to the survey

Yes = 21, No =19

18. If you don't, is there something holding you back from volunteering?

- I don't have any qualifications
- Not enough experience yet
- Thought you needed to be a coach to do this.
- Not sure how much value I can add at the moment - could be the blind leading the blind :-) But would be happy to help when I am more experienced / expert.
- I'm still very new to the sport so I wouldn't be able to offer anything to those sessions at the present time. I would absolutely help out in future though.
- Have yet to complete my forms
- I will, just waiting to sort the paperwork out
- I can barely remember which end of the bow to hold, let alone show someone else. And time
- I have in the past, but now work every other Saturday so unable to commit
- I'm getting too old, don't mind maintenance but I'll leave teaching to the youngsters
- I'm not always available when they are run so don't like to commit
- It's not really my thing.
- My lack of patience.
- Regrettably work and distance to field. Also I am a beginner
- Time. I have helped in the past but I hardly have time to shoot
- Too far to travel again most held at the weekend
- Work, and family.

19. Comments

Apart from the comments about how respondents like the club and think we are doing the right things we received the following comments:-

- Advertising competition's sooner to members via the notice boards, signage etc. Maybe then we might get more attendees. not everyone reads emails, looks at the website etc. Old fashioned methods are sometimes easy for the members.
- As long as we keep a sensible number of members and keep running courses and attract people to join after a course to replace the natural 'wastage' then I don't have any further comments.
- As previously mentioned, I recognize the need to grow. However, at times it seems to be an `all-consuming issue`. Let's acknowledge that we have a fabulous club, great facilities. Yes, there is work to do, and what we do, we do well. Some consolidation is needed, some slight changes might bring great rewards as discussed in the development plan. A pat on the back to all the club members who contribute in whatever way to making us the premiere Archery club hereabouts.
- Ask the member ship about club clothing, some people don't like it. Should we insist that archers representing the club at external events should wear club clothing?
- Find a way for other bow styles to trialled.
- How long will the club carry on increasing membership as there must be a critical limit when there are too many archers wanting to shoot at any one time and they will get fed up with waiting etc and may stop coming? As I have said a couple of new outdoor targets would help and have new targets readily available throughout the year (not just in Summer).
- I was wondering if something like a technical/tuning workshop might be worth running? Say something quarterly, possibly partnering with Aardvark Archery for example. If we could get someone from there to come to the site to run tuning sessions it would be useful to members and also be an opportunity for Aardvark to make some sales that they might not otherwise make.
- Not really, I've outlined my general thoughts and I feel that club is doing a good job overall. I've been involved with lots of different clubs and sports to know that the majority of the work is done by the few and I admire committee members who do it for the right reasons and I know you can't please everyone.

- Some decision making should be a bit more democratic.
- The club is very good indeed, the only thing is I would like is for there to be a couple more outdoor laminated target bosses
- The indoor range is an amazing asset for the club and the numbers of archers booking sessions supports this, making the range available throughout the winter for the many 'fair weather' archers, like myself.
- We enjoy going and shooting at the club and look forward to the weather improving so we can get back to shooting regularly again.
- With the club having grown so much it is obvious that some members put in a lot more effort than others on a voluntary basis which can be very onerous. With recent security issues consideration should be given to perhaps a fulltime paid caretaker role?

Appendix 1 – Question 7 - What stops you taking part in events?

Held at Weekend/Sunday

- Held at weekends when wife is not working
- They are mostly on Sundays and we go to church.
- They tend to be on a weekend and I only shoot midweek when it's quiet .
- I wouldn't want to wait for a target to be available as I feel it puts pressure on the archers already shooting to finish early.
- If we had 2 more new outdoor wood framed targets this would help."
- It's been a combination of not being available on Sundays and a series of health problems.
- My Sunday climbing commitments have moved to Thursday nights, not sure how long this its going to be this way. I'm earnestly hoping my health improves to the point where I can take part in more club events and personal shooting."

Time/Life/Another Hobby gets in the way

- Time
- Time - and also feel I need to get to a better standard too through practice.
- Time - both of us work full time and partner works a shift that encompasses weekends
- Working and life!
- I only enter all the above occasionally. Other family commitments and my cycling hobby prevent more participation.
- Enter when I can, child minding usually stops me.
- Life changed after COVID lockdown, taken on new hobbies so limited time wise how much I can devote to archery.
- My free time is limited because full time carer
- Mainly struggle to get to shoot in the evenings due to commuting and work. Otherwise I try to take part

Not Good enough

- I do archery for fun and to clear my mind. Not good enough to complete and bit shy.
- I'm not confident in my ability to score a round, identify different types of round and remember how to shoot properly
- I'm not competitive and I think probably embarrassment at not being 'good enough'. Also not sure of my ability to mange enough ends (arthritis in fingers)! Probably an excuse....!
- Not being good enough yet.
- Need to improve after 6 years lay off
- Lack of talent
- Lack of accuracy with a stick and string vs recurve or training-wheels bows
- I know I am not ready yet for external competitions

New To Archery

- I'm still very new to archery and trying to gain some level of consistency. I've only recently bought my bow so I'm still also getting used to that. Once I become more consistent and I get to know more members, I'd be happy to do events in the future.
- Nothing- only just joined

Not Competitive/Interested in competitions

- Not competitive enough.
- No desire to travel to compete. Prefer to stay local and shoot without pressure
- No personal interest in external competitions
- Nothing stops me, but I like to shoot at my leisure not being a competitive person
- just enjoy shooting with friendship group

Misc

- Arthritis in my left hand I can only shoot for 30-40 minutes before the pain gets too much
- Bad weather and Covid.
- External comps due to covid
- Find 'fun shoots' frustrating
- N/A - Some shoots like the traditional one limits the arrows that can be used and no sights which may put a few people off.
- used to attend on a regular basis but when covid struck it affected attendance and sometimes now it becomes more difficult to drag yourself out on a night (particularly in winter) and as I get older the motivation wanes.

Appendix 2 – Question 12 - Is there something you think the Club should be doing MORE of

- As already discussed, follow-up coaching/ training especially for new/less experienced members
- Buying more targets for outdoors rather than concentrating on the Indoor Range.
- Coaching for those that want it.
- Encourage increased participation in club competitions and club events. Maybe make reference to in beginner courses/joining information?
- Encouraging more disabled people to shoot
- I think that a balance is needed between the need to grow and fulfilling the needs of the current members. In my opinion we have got or are moving to getting just about right."
- I would like to start to compete and perhaps there could be competitions whereby scores could be submitted upto a week in advance like a kind of postal competition, once a month or so (e.g. monthly Portsmouth or Frostbite) It would possibly encourage more people to take part and be something to focus on.
- Intermediate "back to the shooting line" courses
- Maybe extending facilities for disabled archers
- Maybe organise a club competition just for 'newbies', archers who have shot for less than 12-18 months. Reintroduce club shoots, Tuesday evenings, Sunday afternoons??
- More structured new members sessions to introduce and encourage them into the club. Shooting is more fun if you have people you can go with or meet up with at the field. More use of notice boards for communications, refresh existing notice boards to make them relevant and current"
- No I think there is a lot going on but more events on a Saturday would help us get to more events.
- Not particularly. However the flatness of the field could be improved. Have a published accounts for the true cost of running the indoor range, i.e. rates, heating, lighting etc and charge an appropriate additional fee for those who wish to use it use it. I felt the booking system used during covid worked well and gave you an opportunity to see if the field would be busy or not at particular times.
- Perhaps more publicity to members to encourage higher attendance at club competitions, fun shoots etc. Deliver dedicated induction sessions for new members to take them step by step through the unlocking and locking process as it seems that many members are unsure how the system works so may be nervous about turning up when no one else is around and likewise being left alone to lock everything up.
- Personal development program for each member, with goals and objectives, with additional coaching when needed. New members should be shown the shooting etiquette before they shoot at the club. Perhaps it would be helpful to point out the time to shoot 6 arrows, like they do in competitions.
- Possibly build on the excellent beginner classes - what about improver / refresher courses?
- Possibly encouraging people to shoot? I don't see that many people shooting regularly considering how many members we have.
- Promotion locally - to garner interest in Archery, specifically the inclusivity and wellbeing benefits of Archery and belonging to a club where you will meet likeminded souls.
- Structured practice / training. When the club was hiring Royds Hall, members had to be there on time to shoot a pre-agreed round. This made it possible to keep the practice timely and effective.
- The club could look to offer members more coaching sessions/options either through existing coaches at the club or by bringing them in with a charge to complement existing arrangements (The latter hopefully not being too expensive or potentially subsidized for juniors for example). Such sessions could be tailored to people's needs and be a dedicated session in the week or weekend for this purpose. The club could also mark times in the calendar for more casual shooting too for those that don't wish to shoot rounds etc.
- There is sadly a higher percentage of new archers leaving the sport after just purchasing their own equipment. This may be due to expecting better results from non club equipment. Specific ongoing group coaching sessions may in turn manage expectations of results and help them to achieve their goals faster and stay in the sport. In turn they then renew membership at the club

- Trying to encourage more established members to help out, not sure how to though
- Yes I think that in addition to Level 1 coaches and club archers assisting the beginners courses there could be a move to encourage Level 2 coaches to give tuition to archers that wish to improve their skills. I believe we have close to 200 members. Of which I am certain quite a number would like to progress but who have no one to guide them to the next level. I appreciate that juniors who show promise are fast tracked and given guidance but there doesn't appear to be a similar system in place for adults. I know I'm 82 and too long in the tooth but I still wish to learn as I'm sure that there are other adults who would love to take advantage of extra coaching. I would like to think that we are a proactive club and not just increasing our numbers and then abandoning the members with no further coaching.