

The Valley Bowmen of Huddersfield

Membership Survey 2024

The survey was open over the Christmas break and when closed had received a total of 65 responses which was a 50% increase on last year. This represents just over 30% of the 180 archers who are currently fully paid-up members of the club and AGB.

This year, although still skewed towards longer standing members, the spread of respondents more closely matched that of the overall membership where over 50% of member have joined in the last two years. Again, however, as the majority of respondents shoot at least once a week we still have little insight into why half the membership shoot infrequently, if at all!

Analysis of Responses given to questions in the survey

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

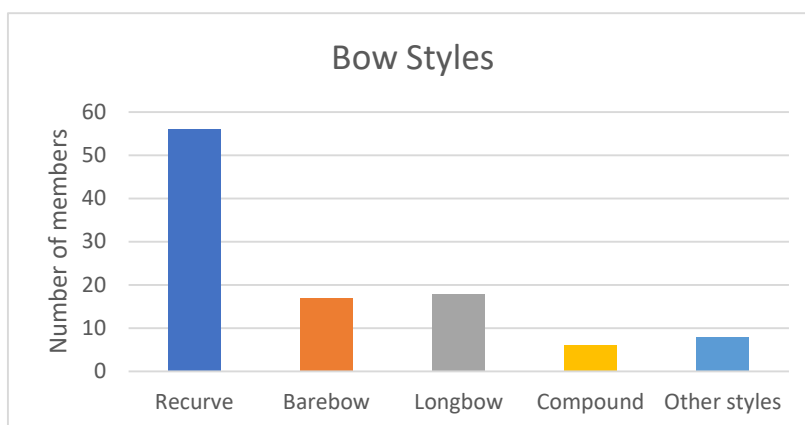
63 people responded to this question. Reasons for joining included wanting to try archery as a hobby, as a result of attending a beginner course, coming along with friends/family or having shot before and wanting to join a local club. Reasons for joining this specific club included access to facilities, 24/7 access, and the locality of the club.

Reasons for remaining a member included enjoying the sport, enjoying improving skill level, the other members, 24/7 facilities, the friendly atmosphere, reasonable fees, convenient location, indoor range, family activity, and meeting other people. Most common answers included the friendly and welcoming atmosphere, community of other members, and the availability to shoot 24/7.

What Bow Style(s) do you shoot?

Although solely recurve was the most common answer (26 responses – 40%) it was interesting to note that around a quarter of respondents reported shooting more than one bow style. It is clear there is a diverse range of bow styles represented at the club, including flatbow, horse bow, yumi, and various kinds of longbow. Although we have no historical data, we believe the number of longbow archers is increasing and that the pendulum has swung away from compound to barebow archery.

Recurve	56
Barebow	17
Longbow	18
Compound	6
Other styles	8



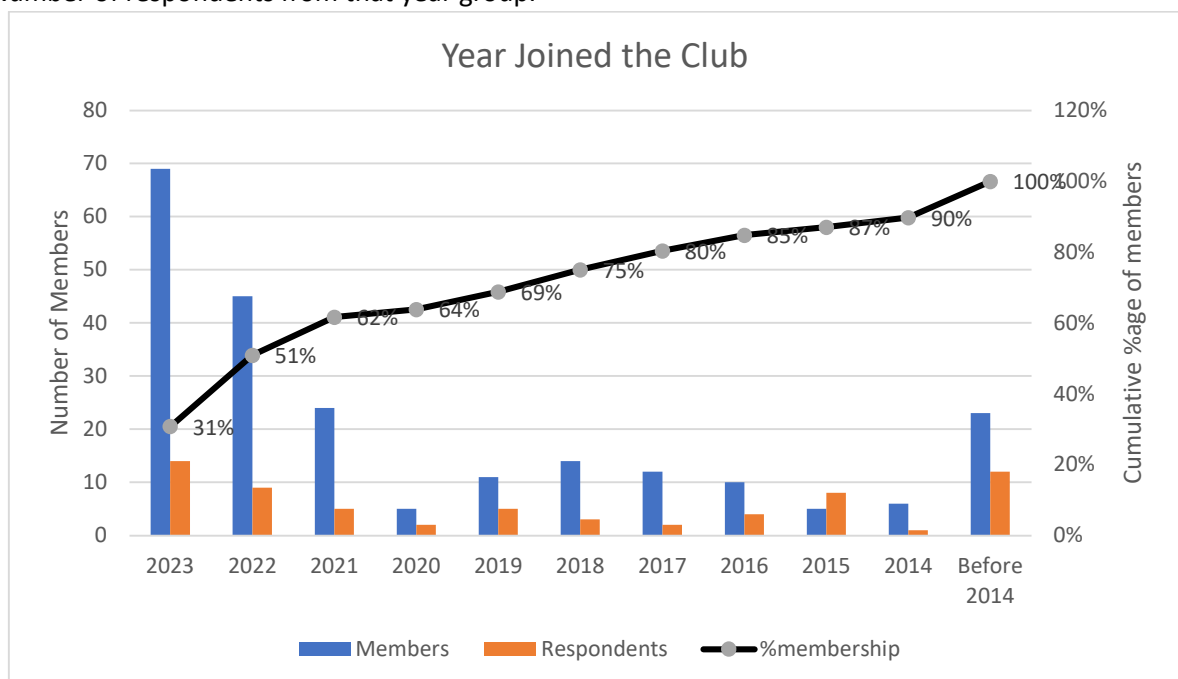
In which year did you join the club?

Almost 20% of the respondents joined the club over ten years ago. This suggests members are generally happy to remain members. Just over half the respondents (54%) have joined within the last five years, with 22% of respondents having joined the club within the last year. This suggests the club is good at attracting new members.

Although we received a reasonably balance response from all year groups, the bulk of the responses were from established members, i.e. those that have been with the club for more than 3 years, and almost 20% of the respondents joined over ten years ago. As the graph below shows more than half the membership has joined in the last 3 years and thus this group is underrepresented in this survey.

The chart below shows:

- Number of members with Club membership (even if AGB membership lapsed in October);
- Cumulative number of members as a percentage (i.e. 51% joined the club in 2022 and 2023);
- Number of respondents from that year group.



Some of you may notice the anomaly with the results for 2015 – we appear to have more respondents quoting that year than we have actual members that joined in 2015. I guess we put this down to memory playing tricks with people.

Participation

Since joining the club how many times have you been to the club to shoot?

Is there a reason why you don't shoot regularly?

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

Using approximate numbers, of our 200 members only 100 actively attend/shoot at the club. These three questions were targeted at these people to help understand why many of our members are inactive,

Only two people said they had only been to the club once or twice, two said they've not shot in more than 6 months and four shoot less that once a month.

Because this is such a small sample it is difficult to draw conclusions however the two main reasons given were health issues or family/work commitments.

Primary motivation for shooting?

The majority of respondents reported more than one primary motivation to attend, the most common of which was 'I shoot as a personal challenge to improve my score' (mentioned by 62%). The second most common reason was 'As a social activity' (mentioned by 52%). Not surprisingly, the most common combination of motivations was as a personal challenge and as a social activity (17%). 42% of respondents reported being a casual shooter, and 18% reported wanting to compete at club level (12%) or county/national level (6%).

How often do you shoot?

What time of day do you usually shoot?

The most common answer to "how often" was two or more times a week (45%), followed by once a week (32%). The percentage of people shooting at least once a week was similar no matter what year people joined the club.

For those who have not shot within the last 6 months, reasons given included work and injury.

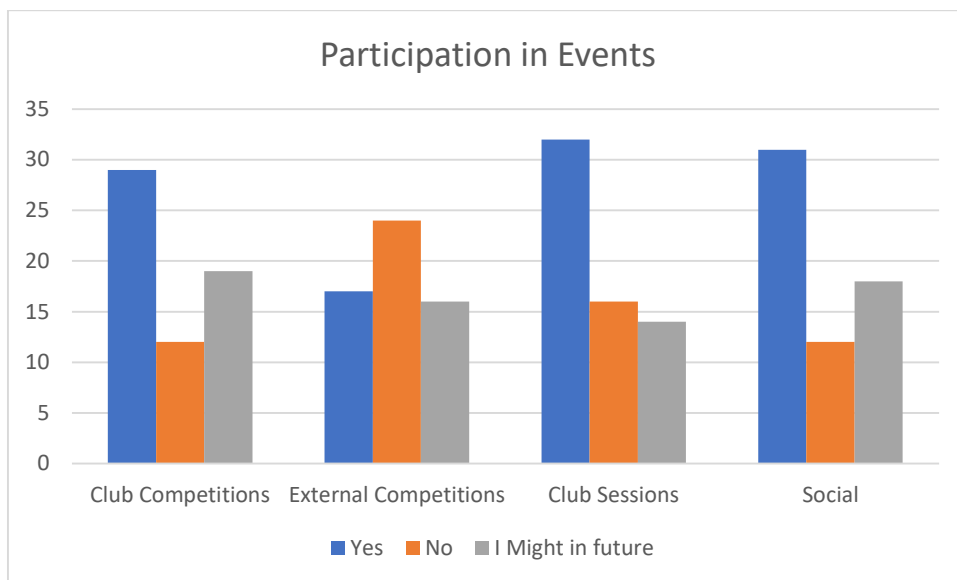
As mentioned in the comments, members appreciate the all-hours access to facilities. As such, there are a range of times people reported usually shooting and little variation in the most popular times (26% early morning, 35% before lunch, 32% after lunch, 35% evening). It is interesting to note that many people chose multiple time options.

Events

Do you take part in any of the following club events?

If you don't participate in the above events, can you give details why you don't take part?

Fun shoots, club sessions and social activities were the most likely events for respondents to have attended. External competitions were the least likely to have been attended, with only 30% of respondents reporting having attended and 28% saying they had not but may in future.



The reasons for non-participations, were much as expected and can be summarised by:

- 17 – work, family or other commitments;
- 5 – lack of time (which is probably do to work/family/other commitments);
- 4 – where respondents are happy just casual shooting;
- 3 – felt they lacked confidence in their ability;
- 2 - religious reasons as many events are on a Sunday;
- 2 – very new members not yet had opportunity to take part.

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

This question prompted a good response with a total of 21 suggestions that can be boiled down to the following:

- A number of people suggested we do more of Quiz Nights;
- A Have-a-Go session for family members;
- A Clout/Field/Flight archery session for members to try other type of archery;
- Several suggestions for an inter-club competition;
- More “topical” events, eg easter, mid-summers day, Halloween, etc and/or a charity shoot;
- A summer party (watch this space.....);
- A pairs, team or handicap knockout competitions.

Coaching

Have you attended any coaching sessions in 2023?

Is there a reason you've not had any coaching?

Did you know that club coaching sessions are free of charge?

If we arranged for a coaching session from a County/National coach would you want to attend?

Overall, 26% of respondents reported having taken part in club coaching sessions during 2023. The percentage of people taking up this opportunity was highest amongst those who said they wanted to compete at club or county/national level (5 out of 12 – 42%), followed by those mentioning a personal challenge as motivation (15 of 40 – 38%). Those who mentioned they were a social shooter were the least likely group to participate in coaching, with only 8 of 34 (24%). Note that many respondents had more than one motivation for shooting.

Of the reasons for not attending coaching, the most common reason was “I don’t want any coaching” (12 of 41 responses), followed by “It is not at a convenient time for me” (10 of 41 responses). Only four people reported that they had not taken part because they were not aware of coaching being offered. Two of these four had joined the club within the last year, and all four had joined since 2019.

There were also 19 ‘other’ responses to this question, which included comments around timing (work commitments or tending to shoot at unpopular times) and a lack of coaching expertise for certain bow styles. Interestingly, there were a significant number of comments suggesting that respondents may take up coaching in the future (reasons ranging from ‘getting around to it’, confidence, concentrating on self-improvement first...). Further comments included people having taken up informal coaching from more experienced members, wanting more advanced coaching than is on offer. One respondent mentioned that they were available for coaching but had not been taken up on the offer.

The majority of respondents knew that club coaching sessions are free of charge (37 of 47 who answered – 79%). Of those who did not know, the majority had joined the club within the last year, and all had joined since 2019.

42 of 63 respondents (67%) mentioned that they would be interested in attending a coaching session from a county/national coach.

Volunteering

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

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

Almost half the respondents to the survey reported that they help at beginner courses, taster sessions or have a go events (30 of 64 – 47%). If comments made earlier in the survey are held true (the same few people having to help all the time), this implies that the respondents were not representative of the membership as a whole.

33 comments were received about the reasons preventing people from volunteering at these events. The majority of these related to not having the availability or time due to work or other commitments (25 comments). Not feeling confident enough or having enough experience was also a common theme (mentioned in 5 comments).

Comments

What are the top 3 things you like about the club?

The friendliness and of the club and social nature of shooting, the facilities (indoor and outdoor access, toilets, and biscuits!) and 24/7 access were common themes. Other comments included the coaching and support available, locality of the club, and the range of events.

Is there anything you don't like about the club?

If there is anything you think the club should be doing more or less of?

Other Comments

Most comments here could be divided into the following categories:

- **Maintenance/general upkeep** (example: *"It would be nice if the field grass could be kept short and the distance lines be remarked more regularly"*);
- **Publicity and promotion of archery and the club** (example: *"Get more people in 20s and 30s involved. Try to widen appeal to other ethnicities"*);
- **Progression** (example: *"Intermediate level coaching, drills, technique workshops etc."*);
- **Support for new members** (example: *"Slightly more structured support for new archers that have just completed a beginner's course and joined the club? Perhaps some kind of buddy system might help with retention"*);
- **Community/social** (example: *"More engagement from the committee to the members, more member feedback sought and fed back on"*).

There were also several positive comments mentioning how happy members are with the club, and that communication towards members has improved in recent years.

Car parking was the main concern mentioned in response to the "don't like" question (13 out of the 28 comments), although a couple of respondents acknowledged that addressing the issue is already on the committee agenda. Other concerns included wanting more input from general members on big decisions, adding more outside targets, and lack of engagement with competitions. One respondent mentioned cliques – this is at odds with the majority of comments about the friendliness of the club, although should be addressed if noticed.

In total there were 89 comments submitted across these three questions as detailed in Appendix I.

We hope the membership understand that it will be very difficult to address every single issue that has been raised, however, the committee hope you are aware of initiatives already in progress to address some of the items (e.g. parking, organisation of competitions), that you will note recent announcements to address a few of these items (e.g. AGB Progress Awards and Bow styles,) and that in the coming months you will also notice more new initiatives (e.g. supporting new/novice members, new social events and improvement to Club facilities) as a direct result of your feedback in this survey.

Appendix I

In total there were 89 comments made in response to the "What don't you like?", "What should we do more/less of?" and "Comments?" questions in the survey

Of these comments:-

- There were a total of 20 positive comments mentioning how happy members are with the club, and that communication towards members has improved in recent years.
- 9 comments are outside our control or we simply can't do anything about. Unfortunately, we can't move the field closer to home and we can't do much about shooting uphill and into the sun - much as we would like to.
- Another 6 comments need no action.

Of the remaining 54 comments the key themes were:-

- 15 statements about the car park and the need to improve the condition and amount of parking.
- 7 suggestions around the need for more structured support, advice, guidance and information available to novice archers. Summed up by the comment "*.... can be rather overwhelming to the uninitiated, leaving the newcomer feeling a little lost*".
- 5 comments referenced problems with the gate and the need for lighting above the key safe.
- 4 comments about the committee. These included concerns about not being inclusive and "*... more member feedback sought an fed back on*" in particular with regard to "*..... projects that use a large portion of club finances.....*".
- 4 requests to either maintain or provide more coaching sessions and another suggestion for Intermediate level coaching, drills, technique workshops etc .
- 3 comments about the maintaining the field with suggestions to deal with the mole hills, fill some of the holes to make the ground more even, to keep the grass short and the distance lines be remarked more regularly.
- 3 members thought the Club Competitions could be better organised and arranged, with a designated Shoot Captain so that the standard is maintained.
- 2 respondents suggested increasing the number of outdoor foam targets from 4 to 6.