

Bantham Bowls Club was formed 36 years ago by Tom Sapsford, a local builder. Tom was a keen bowler and built the rink in the garden of his house, Bantham Cottage. It was originally for him and his friends but quickly grew to friends of friends and finally the club was formed in 1965 with a formal constitution and committee. It then joined the English Bowling Association (Bowls England), EWBA (English Women's Bowling Association) and the ECBA (Essex County Bowls Association). Tom died in 1978 and Toms wife Nancy continued to support the club until she died in 1995. As the club had no lease it ceased to function at the end of 1995. Tom and his wife Nancy very generously left money to help with the formation of a new club.

Ongar Bowls Club was formed in 1933 and originally played on a tennis court at the Ongar Sports Centre. One of the members who was the landlord of the Red Cow public house, offered the use of a field behind the pub. This became the clubs home from 1934 with the brewers as their landlords. The pub was sold in 1992 to a company who converted the pub into a restaurant. The new owners wanted to use the green as a car park. but their application was refused by the local council, who eventually gave permission for it to be converted into a tennis court and the clubs' lease was not renewed.



Lawrence Eldred, a member of both Bantham and Ongar Bowls Clubs made part of his land at North Weald available for a new club. Outline planning was obtained and with money from both clubs, club members and the lottery fund the **Bantham & Ongar Bowls Club** was formally constituted in January 2000. It was decided that the club would have an Australian synthetic surface, as this gave all the skill of an indoor green that could be used in all weathers. The club house was designed so that short mat bowling could be played in the Winter and the club would be in use twelve months of the year.