

Back in business

By David Bentley

Bowlers win court battle to use Mount Pleasant

A BOWLING club is celebrating after a 'winning' a legal battle to play on their home green.

Batley Cricket & Bowling Club was locked out of its Mount Pleasant base after clashing with Batley Bulldogs RLFC but the bowlers were back playing this week following a successful court challenge.

The Bulldogs locked the bowlers out because they refused to contribute to the cost of its upkeep to the tune of £1,000 a year.

The bowling club dispute the Bulldogs' demands and say they have no right to ask for any money, citing a 100-year-old agreement that the land was given to the people of Batley for the nominal sum of £1 a year to use for sport and recreation. Batley Cricket Club are also in disagreement with the Bulldogs over financial contributions.

Officials from the National League One RL side put locks on the bowling green gates several weeks ago but allowed bowlers from Batley Rugby Bowling Club (formerly the Batley Taverners) access to play there.

Members of Batley C&BC, which was formed in the 19th century, were in Dewsbury County Court last week to hear Judge Finnerty order Batley Bulldogs chairman Kevin Nicholas to allow them to play while negotiations continue over the cash row. Mr Nicholas was also ordered to pay costs of £2,600.



Bowler Alan Stafford unlocks the gate at the green at Mount Pleasant. 97-year-old Joe Auty (wearing cap) looks on

The bowlers must share the green with Batley Rugby Bowling Club but their fixtures take precedence, with their first Dewsbury League fixture against Soothill taking place on Wednesday afternoon.

Club member Devin Thompson said: "Myself and Brian Gledhill were in court and we were over the moon. I almost jumped in the air when the judge took our side.

"Mr Nicholas seemed really deflated when she backed us and said he had no right to lock us out. We're delighted to be back and we'll fight on from here."

During Batley Cricket & Bowling Club's enforced absence

floodlights have been erected and work on a new brick-built shelter has begun.

Yunus Lunat, legal adviser to both the bowlers and Batley CC, said: "The main action we brought now means that the bowlers can remain at Mount Pleasant for six months, they can carry on as before.

"The season started last Monday so I contacted the Bulldogs chairman to ask if he would remove the locks. He said no, so as a last resort we went to court.

"I asked him to be reasonable but we had to take legal action. It's brought a bit of realism to him now, he's contacting me

instead of the other way round. There's still the matter of Batley Rugby Bowling Club playing on the green but we'll keep fighting and we'll get there."

Batley Bulldogs chairman Kevin Nicholas said: "It's a pity we couldn't sort this out without resorting to legal action but that's in the past now.

"We now have to keep talking to try and resolve the situation. All we want is to share our facilities and reach an agreement.

"We've got no problem with them being back on the green. Both parties also agreed that if we win any subsequent case they will pay us damages."