

# SUFFOLK COASTAL PETANQUE ALLIANCE

## OBTAINING REGIONAL STATUS – UPDATE 5<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2022

**(Bold, underlined and red text is used to illustrate certain specific important parts).**

Thank you all for being so patient in awaiting the arrival of this update document. It has been an “open secret” for several seasons now that the next step forward for the Suffolk Coastal Petanque Alliance is being able to stand on its own two feet, independently, as its own region, separating amicably from the Anglia Region.

But first, to dispel all the whispers and rumours that have been circulating in recent weeks, it needs to be noted that if you do not currently have a Petanque England (PE) licence and **NEVER** plan in doing so, then for you absolutely nothing will change in the way the current Suffolk Coastal Petanque Alliance is set-up, with its current cycles of Summer and Winter Leagues, competitions and tournaments and that nothing will change in how you and your team members take part in the various leagues etc. You will not be forced to take out a PE Licence, nor will your team be required to have a minimum number of licenced players and you would not need to register your club or team with PE.

**So as we say, NOTHING will alter in the way the current set-up is, so lets put that to one side and lay the rumours to rest.**

If you are a current PE Licence member, or you are planning to obtain a licence in the near future or at any further time “down the line”, then please read on. Equally if you don’t plan to ever have a PE Licence but want to at least keep abreast of what is potentially happening, then please feel free to also digest the following information.

### **INITIAL DISCUSSIONS**

Those of us that have experienced playing at Regional level over the years or have come into Regional level playing in recent seasons, know what a great step up from “club level” this can be and the opportunities of further playing at a higher level this can bring. This culminates with a region being able to enter the Inter-Regional Championships, held usually in early September each year. This consists of being able to send 8 triples teams to the Championship, 4 additional triples teams to the Challenge and, if a region is so blessed, a junior triples as well. Each triple can be a foursome, so this gives up to 52 players a chance to represent their region, spread over a 2-day weekend.

To achieve regional status, we would need the approval of Petanque England, as our governing body, and having spoken to the vast majority of our current PE licence holders who play in our Coastal events, it became very evident that the desire to become our own region was burning quite brightly in most of us.

So starting in February 2021, outline discussions were held with several members of the PE Board, followed by in person and telephone conversations with the PE Events the then incumbent PE President. After setting out why we wanted Regional status, PE were upbeat in our aims but had the

concerns on how such a separation would affect the Anglia Region, as there is no point in setting up a new region, only for an existing one to decline and potentially fold.

Therefore, PE said our proposals would be reviewed but only on the basis that we obtained Anglia Regions permission before PE would potentially consider it.

So at an Anglia Region Executive Committee in February/March 2021, we were given the opportunity to discuss our proposal to the Anglia Region Executive, who listened to what we had to say and stated that we needed to go away and prove over the course of 2021 that we could generate PE licence holders and create ways in which we could expand on our PE Licenced Membership. They would then review this at the Anglia AGM in November 2021.

### **2021 SEASON**

We went away and, over the course of the season, promoted the taking out of a PE Licence and the benefits it gives. To this end, the Inter Challenge Match versus Mercia Region gave us an opportunity to further advertise the importance of holding a licence, not just the insurance coverage it provides to the individual holder.

That match versus Mercia showed how many would turn out and play for the region with a full 8 triples teams (all consisting of 4 players), therefore meaning 32 Coastal players took part and we even had a waiting list of other players, if any last minute substitutions were required.

**\*All those that took part in this match will still be receiving a free SCPA polo shirt, it hasn't been forgotten!!!**

The match result also shows that we can hold our own on the piste against a settled and established regional team, which bodes well for the future.

### **ANGLIA AGM**

At the end of November, we managed to get our proposal accepted as a Motion to be discussed at the Anglia AGM, in that we needed to seek Anglia's permission to take our formal proposal to Petanque England.

We had to get this Motion included in the AGM at short notice, because had we not done it this year, we would have had to have wait until the November 2022 AGM before we could get it raised again, hence the urgency of our email attempting to get your support.

Having set out an initial proposal document, which was countered by another document, a good, frank, honest, open debate was undertaken and at the end of it, a formal vote was taken. You were only allowed to vote if you were present in person at the AGM and whilst we asked that you emailed your support of the proposal, these votes of support were not counted but at least did prove that the weight of those people who would have been eligible to vote if they had been in attendance, were in favour of the proposed motion that we be given formal permission to speak to PE.

We set out that whilst we had somewhere around 45 current PE Licence holders who regularly play in the Coastal events, that we also had around 15 to 20 others who we believe would be interested in taking out a PE Licence in the future as a "Suffolk Coastal Region" player.

The vote was “near” unanimous with 19 votes for, 2 abstentions and 0 votes against.

### **LICENCE RENEWALS**

Another reason for the urgency in getting the permission to speak to PE was because Licence Renewals were due on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022, and if we were to achieve Regional Status, we needed to give PE time to get Suffolk Coastal added as a Regional option on the LoveAdmin website where Licence Renewals are carried out.

**HOWEVER, PE released news just before Christmas that if you currently hold a PE Licence, its validity has been extended until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, meaning that you DO NOT NEED TO RENEW YOUR LICENCE UNTIL 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.**

This gives us a little bit of “breathing space” in approaching PE, as we need to set out our full proposal but also to understand what documents we need to put in to them to accompany our submission, so this is now the next stage that we are embarking on.

### **WHAT BEING A REGION WILL ENTAIL?**

Being a formal Region involves your membership having to be 100% Licenced members, but as we stated in the opening paragraphs of this document, everything that is currently Suffolk Coastal is totally ring-fenced and left unchanged and unaffected.

So a completely separate organisation would need to be created, where membership is limited to only those who take out a PE Licence but still under the “Suffolk Coastal” branding.

**There is no proposal to run any separate leagues under this set-up. Everything remains as is.**

But the new Coastal Region would then be able to run its own Regional Championships for Triples, Doubles, Singles, Tir De Precision, Juniors (hopefully), Over 55’s etc, with the winners and runners-up automatically qualifying for the annual National ‘Champion of Champions’ event in each category, with every region in England sending their respective winners and runners-up to compete.

As a Region, we would be able to take part in other Inter-Regional events, as well as the main Inter Regional Championships, on an even footing with our opponents as opposed to being a “pseudo-region” as we seem to be at the moment when we play Mercia each season etc.

### **YOUR CHOICE**

**At no point whatsoever are we saying you MUST have a PE Licence nor are we saying you MUST have a Coastal Licence if we get regional status**, we are just saying that we would recommend and promote the obtaining of a licence, as once we hopefully get that status, we need your support to help us be as supportive of our governing body as we hope they will be of us.

**At the end of the day, it will ALWAYS be your personal choice.**

We will always allow non-licence holders to be as much a part of our Coastal brand as we would those that hold licences, whether they be Coastal, Anglia, Eastern or whatever.

## **NEXT STEPS**

We are approaching PE within the next two weeks to establish the parameters of what we need to put in place.

## **OUTCOMES**

From how we see things, there is likely to be one of three outcomes to this:-

1. Petanque England say no.....that's it, the whole proposal stops short, but this will not stop us from keeping asking in future years.
2. PE say yes and we can get everything in place by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 in time for licence renewals.
3. PE say yes but give us a year to get everything in place, so 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 becomes the renewal date, and those who wish to renew their licence this year, will still renew as Anglia Region for the 2022 season.

If you have any questions, please contact us by email at [webmaster@suffolkcoastalpetanque.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@suffolkcoastalpetanque.co.uk).

**Suffolk Coastal Petanque Alliance**

**January 2022**