

The Abbey Lawn

Dedicated to meeting the recreational needs of the people of Bourne

A Bit Of History

The Abbey Lawn was originally part of the estate of Bourne Abbey and the swimming pool was a fish pond, tended by the monks of the Abbey. The name 'Abbey Lawn' derives from the 18th century development of a sheep lawn which was attached to the fine Georgian mansion, known as 'The Abbey House', built in 1764 by George Pochin, then the Lord of The Manor of Bourne Abbots. A sheep lawn was the equivalent of a deer park among the gentry. The house was used as a vicarage between 1848-1878 and was demolished in 1879. The reasons for the demolition are a mystery, but the grounds remained.



The public were always allowed to use the land at the discretion of the vicar so it became the town's unofficial recreation ground. The land was eventually acquired by a syndicate of local businessmen who rented out the rights for cricket and football. When the land was under threat of housing development in the early 1930's, Bourne United Charities bought it for the benefit of the town.

Over the years the Abbey Lawn has been the venue for many other activities such as maypole dancing in the Victorian and Edwardian times, the annual Whif Monday sports; a notable feature during the 19th century which continued for 30 years and where top national athletes competed. Church feasts were celebrated here, as was Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. The Lawn also hosted military parades during both World Wars.



1 Bourne Outdoor Swimming Pool

After almost 800 years as a fish pond, just after the First World War, keen local swimmers converted the pond to a pool.

In 1989 the pool, which was run by the council was going to close due to high running costs, but a local campaign grew, culminating in a march through the town. A petition with 4,000 signatures was presented to the Council and the Pool Preservation Trust was formed and the pool was saved. The Trust leased the pool from Bourne United Charities and took over the running of it.

The heated pool is 50 yards long, which is almost Olympic sized. In fact it's one of the largest of the few surviving outdoor pools in the country. It has changing facilities and a cafe. It is open daily between the end of May and the beginning of September.



2 Bourne Town Bowls Club

info@bournetownbowls.co.uk

There have been two bowls clubs in Bourne. The present one dates back to 1953. It was originally the Abbey Road Bowls Club but changed its name to Bourne Town Bowls Club in 1979 soon after the present pavilion was built. New members were also accepted from Bourne Abbey Lawn Bowling Club which was formed in 1922 but was forced to close after their land adjoining the Abbey Church was chosen as the site for a new vicarage in 1986.

The Club welcomes people of all ages and abilities. The bowling green has six rinks which are beautifully maintained. The season runs from mid April to the end of September, weather depending.



3 Dimension Skatepark

After a 20-year campaign by a group of enthusiastic volunteers, their efforts to provide a multi-wheeled sports facility in Bourne were finally realised in 2022 and the Skatepark opened on 26 May 2023. The Skatepark was funded by local individuals as well as local and national establishments. Its use is free of charge and it is intended for all people over age eight. It is suitable for skateboards, quad skates, rollerblades, BMX bikes, wheelchairs and scooters. The full conditions and advice for users are displayed at the Skatepark entrance. Bourne Town Council is the owner and responsible body for the facility.



Further information and contact details for individual clubs can be found on their Facebook pages.



5 Bourne Abbots Petanque Club

bournepetanque.weebly.com

The Petanque Club started in 1986 and gained popularity after Bourne was twinned with Doudeville in Normandy in 1989. The French 'boule' game originated in the south of France in 1907 and is now enjoyed the world over. It's played with metal boules and a small wooden ball called the 'cochonnet'. You can play in singles, doubles or triples. The rules are simple but it can become highly skilled and strategic.

If you're interested in joining, check out the website for more information.



6 Bourne Cricket Club

bourne.play-cricket.com

The cricket ground is among the most attractive in Lincolnshire. The present Cricket Club was founded in 1882, although the town's cricket activities date back to 1803. The work of levelling the grounds was carried out in the 1930s by trainees from the local Ministry of Labour Instructional Centre. These centres aimed to alleviate the problem of high unemployment. The Club welcomes new players, volunteers and supporters.



7 Bourne Lawn Tennis Club

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clubspark.lta.org.uk/BourneLawnTennisClub

The five grass courts located in the old Monk's Garden are reputedly one of the best grass court venues in Lincolnshire. In addition there are three all-weather floodlit hard courts enabling the club to operate all year. The clubhouse has changing and kitchen facilities. It is open to members of all ages and abilities and offers social play as well as competitive tennis. Coaching is also available.



4 Bourne Town Football Club

The Football Club was formed in 1883 and has acquired the nickname 'The Wakes' after Hereward 'the Wake' (1035-1072), the Anglo-Saxon nobleman and leader of the local resistance to the Norman conquest of England. The stadium has a capacity of approximately 3,000.



Trains going to Sleaford and Spalding would have used these lines between 1866 and 1964. The tracks were removed c.1964/5. Local man Jeff Sharpe remembers that when playing football as a young man, train drivers would stop to watch the match. One time the steam was interfering with visibility so much that the referee waved the train on.

