**Cheshire 50 & Over Mixed Doubles County Championships 2024**

The first County Championship event of the year was held at David Lloyd, Cheshire Oaks on Saturday 20th January and was refereed by Tom Brown with his usual efficiency.

It was pleasing to have a full complement of 16 pairs taking part in this half day tournament.  The pairs were placed in boxes of 4 and competed in a series of round robin matches leading to the top 2 pairs in each box going through to the play offs for positions 1 - 8 and the other 8 pairs also competed against each other to decide upon positions 9 - 16. The favourites were defending champions **Nicola Herbert** and **Seb Jackson**.

There were a number of close round robin matches in all the groups, however, Nicola & Seb, Jannette Harris & Peter Wilkinson, and Jenny Dawson & Mark Green were all undefeated. Larysa Walls & Martin Walker topped their group. The other worthy qualifiers were Steve Pownall and Helen Barker, Barbara Bloor & John Turner (finalists from the 60 & Over Mixed event), Ann Rutter & Ian Wade, and Pippa Brough & Brian Green.

Once the group matches had been completed a compass draw format was used in deciding both the 1st - 8th and 9th - 16th positions. So, all pairs were guaranteed more matches even if they lost their next match. After the first round of matches the semi-finalists were lined up with Nicola & Seb playing Jenny Dawson & Mark Green, and Jannette Harris & Peter Wilkinson against Helen Barker & Steve Pownall. Both semi-finals were very competitive, however, the strongest pairs of Nicola & Seb and Jannette and Peter deservedly won.

The final was very well contested, however, Nicola & Seb converted the break points and held serve well which meant they deservedly retained their title.  Many congratulations to them and thanks go to all the players who took part and who created a very competitive but friendly atmosphere.

John Hilton (Chair - Competitions & Tournaments Committee)

