

# ANNUAL REPORT

2020 INCLUDING  
FINANCIAL  
INFORMATION





# WELCOME TO OUR 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT PAUL ROBSON



During the course of a normal summer season the Presidential team would be travelling the length and breadth of the country visiting clubs and associations to celebrate a significant event or anniversary. We would also be attending the four British Isles events and spending a whole month at the National Championships at Victoria Park, Royal Leamington Spa. Unfortunately, in 2020 none of that happened.

When the first lockdown was announced I was about to embark on a tour of Spain with 75 other bowlers from all over England. I am now quite relieved we never left our shores and everyone has remained safe from the virus.

The Bowls England team was quick to act and the whole competitive season was cancelled. We were due to play 38 celebration matches in 2020, many of which were centenaries. With this in mind, it was decided to offer a 'rollover' to all the clubs and associations who would like to move their match to 2021. Around twenty of them applied and I am very pleased to say we will be able to accommodate them all. We now have 46 matches planned for this summer, starting at the beginning of May, with a very ambitious schedule almost 50% more than we would normally expect.

During the past ten months there has been lots of work going on behind the scenes to ensure our clubs and associations survive this pandemic. I would like to thank the Bowls England Board, Staff and all of the volunteers within our clubs and associations for your hard work and perseverance. There appears to now be light at the end of the tunnel, but we must remain vigilant and take all of the necessary precautions.

Along with Senior Vice President Terri Keen (Buckinghamshire), Junior Vice President Deepak Tanna (Leicestershire) and Immediate Past President Hazel Marke (Hampshire), we are all looking forward very much to getting back out onto the green and meeting as many of you as possible.

**ADAPT AND  
OVERCOME**

## CHAIR'S REPORT DAVID TUCKER

Since my appointment at the Annual General Meeting back in February 2020 so many things have changed. We need to reflect on all that has happened and how Bowls England has adapted to the pandemic and how we plan to move forward in 2021 and deal with the new environment in which we find ourselves.

At the Annual General Meeting we welcomed two new Directors, Foster Johnson (Governance) and Harry Nijjar (Marketing and Communications).

When the pandemic took hold in March two key decisions were made. Motivated by a desire to safeguard the well-being of clubs and the sport, the Board chose to return affiliation fees and National Championship income and not to furlough the staff team.

The past year saw significant change in leadership at Bowls England as we said farewell to our long-standing Chair and Chief Executive.

David Mitchell-Gears MBE, who became Chair when Bowls England was formed in 2008, retired from his post in November 2019. A bowls player since 1965, he helped to form Bowls England when the English Bowling Association (EBA) and English Women's Bowling Association (EWBA) amalgamated. He was awarded the MBE for services to the sport of lawn bowls in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2014.

Tony Allcock OBE retired from the post of Chief Executive in March 2020. Following his competitive retirement from the sport, Tony became Chief Executive of the English Bowling Association in 2003 and then Bowls England following its formation in 2008. He was awarded the OBE for services to Lawn Bowls in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2019.

On 1 June 2020 we welcomed our new Chief Executive Jon Cockcroft who came to us from England Hockey.



The Board has continued to meet virtually on a regular basis and the Chief Executive's report sets out the highlights of our work and proposals for the future. I would like to refer to two Board decisions. Firstly, it was decided that until the general picture is clearer, the proposal for a new headquarters should be put on hold. Secondly, a new five-year strategic plan, together with the additional staffing resources required to implement the plan was approved.

In August, I was saddened to learn of the passing of the man regarded by many as the greatest lawn bowler of all time, David J. Bryant CBE. David was an icon for many decades, whose name was synonymous with our sport. He was well-respected by all who knew him. I was fortunate to compete against David on the green on many occasions, often coming on the wrong end of the scoreline, but a match against him was always a pleasure and includes many memories that I will never forget. We pay tribute to David and many other stalwarts of our sport who we lost in the past 12 months on pages 20 and 21.

We have a great staff team, currently working from home, who have supported us all and have given great help and guidance during the past year. As a result, our engagement with members has improved through better communication channels and we are working to develop this even further.

The last few months have been challenging and I thank the Board, Staff team and our many volunteers at both county and club level for the dedication and hard work that they have put in to keep our sport going. It is important that some form of normality returns for the start of the 2021 season.

**ONWARDS AND  
UPWARDS**



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

## JON COCKCROFT



“It is a pleasure to pen my first Chief Executive Report having joined Bowls England back in June. I would firstly like to pay tribute to my predecessor Tony Allcock OBE for his stewardship of Bowls England since its inception and thank him for the encouragement he has provided me. It is also appropriate to record my gratitude to Alistair Hollis and Penny Maguire who oversaw the organisation commendably through an unexpectedly challenging interim period last spring.

When reflecting on 2020, it's almost impossible to look beyond Covid-19 and its impact on our sport. Many outdoor bowls clubs remained closed, thousands of bowlers did not pick up a bowl in anger, the competitive season as we know it did not happen and the sport was affected financially at all levels of our game.

It was with deep sadness that we learnt of members of the bowls community directly affected by the coronavirus and of clubs who feel they cannot continue operating in the current conditions. In this context, it might be challenging to find many positives but, as we look to drive our sport forwards, I believe the difficulties faced in recent times have been both cathartic and defining.

The decision not to take advantage of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme enabled our staff to provide valuable Coronavirus guidance and help clubs access over £2m of government financial support. Moreover, the time freed up from the cancellation of the normal summer programme, afforded us the time to deliver an extensive insight and consultation programme, which will inform a new five-year strategy to be launched in early 2021.

Thank you to the thousands of bowlers, club volunteers, county officials and many more who have contributed through a combination of surveys, emails and focus groups. The input has been both informative and inspiring, and the wealth of knowledge and passion for our sport came through loud and clearly. Some of the findings are detailed on page 27 of this report with an overview of the strategy also detailed.



A number of recurring themes have come through the research and it is apparent what the task at hand is. In short, whilst nurturing the authentic and intrinsic qualities of our sport, bowls must become more relevant, appealing and accessible to a broader range of people. With the digital revolution, evolving family lifestyles and greater choice, the way in which people consume sport is changing fast and, in this competitive landscape, bowls must provide a compelling proposition. The silver lining of the Coronavirus cloud was that the opportunity bowls has was illuminated, the need to evolve became more necessary and a culture of adaptability was borne.

The next few pages will look back in more detail about Bowls England's endeavours throughout 2020. In spite of the circumstances, it was a productive 12 months with notable highlights being the number of clubs who managed to get up and running creating Covid-19 safe environments, the Let's Roll marketing campaign and the greater engagement of bowlers across our social media channels.

On a personal level, it has been fantastic to meet so many new people since I joined the organisation back in June. Although this has largely been through the medium of a computer screen, I have been encouraged by the warm welcome I've received and the huge passion there is for our sport to flourish. I am highly motivated to create an environment where all the energy of those who care about the sport is harnessed in an effective and integrated manner. It's only through a culture of togetherness that our sport will reach its true potential.

That sense of team was evident when attending the Disability Bowls England trial day at the picturesque Waddesden Bowls Club in Buckinghamshire, a real highlight of my first season. On a beautiful day in September, a group of inspiring players, enthusiastic support staff and superbly helpful club members came together for a great day of bowls. During a summer short of these sorts of opportunities, it was a wonderful reminder of what sport is all about – people striving to do their best, shared experiences and having fun. Supporting the event were Ellen Falkner and Maggy Smith, who have both given so much to our sport, and it was fantastic a few weeks later to see their efforts rewarded in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

I would like to thank the staff team for their commitment and adaptability through the strangest of years, David Tucker and the board for their support and counsel and all those in the bowls community who have helped advance our sport during these challenging times.

**I look forward with optimism to a better 2021 and hope to meet many more of the bowls community over the coming months.**



## CLUB SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT

A constant focus of our work is to help support the 2,000 clubs up and down the country who affiliate to us. Affiliation provides clubs with a range of services and our aim is to increase the awareness of the support that is already available and develop new benefits that will add further value.

We also work alongside our development arm, the Bowls Development Alliance (BDA), to provide additional help to clubs through its funded projects and dedicated resource for club support.

A full list of benefits of affiliation are detailed on page 34 and 35 and this section gives a flavour of the key work we've undertaken to support clubs this year.

### COVID-19 RESPONSE

Our Covid-19 response dominated our interactions with clubs in 2020. In total we published more than 20 iterations of the Covid-19 guidance to help clubs meet requirements for essential greens maintenance, playing conditions and latterly social activity, adapting the generic information provided by government to a bowls setting in response to an ever-changing situation.

We received a significant volume of enquiries throughout the year, helping provide clarity and empowering clubs to open in a safe manner. We were delighted that many of our clubs reopened to enable those members of the bowls community who wished to return to the green to do so.

Motivated by a desire to protect the well-being of clubs and the sport from the start of the pandemic, we chose to return approximately £500,000 of club affiliation income. In itself this was a significant administrative undertaking and the impact on the Bowls England's finances are detailed elsewhere in this report, but we very much hope this has played a part in minimising the impact of Covid-19 on the overall well-being of the sport.

Alongside the affiliation fee 'holiday', and with additional support from the BDA, we communicated all the funding opportunities that were made available by government and it was hugely satisfying that bowls was one of the key beneficiaries of this support.

A total of **1,062 clubs** were awarded a cash grant via the Sport England Community Emergency Fund, with the overall value of approved funds for our sport **totalling £2,404,765** – an average of almost £2,250 per club.

Time will tell on the short-term impact of the global pandemic on bowls participation, but it does feel very important that the bowls season can start in earnest in May. Our Club Survey said that, despite the pandemic, 77% of clubs received membership income in 2020, however 35% of respondents did state that they felt the pandemic put the long-term future of the club 'at risk'. We are working with the BDA to provide direct assistance to all those clubs that have raised a concern, and would further urge any clubs

who feel that they may fall within this category to contact us for assistance at the earliest opportunity.

The affiliation process has been changed to reflect the circumstances but also it makes more sense to receive affiliation fees once clubs know their membership numbers and have received their membership income. We are pleased with the positive feedback this move has received.

We started bowling on Monday, singles only at present. The guidance from Bowls England has been excellent and we all thank you for your ongoing support.

Mike Nye from Lyndhurst BC, Durham

### LET'S ROLL PARTICIPATION CAMPAIGN



As clubs reopened in June, it was encouraging to learn that many were welcoming an influx of new bowlers, in part because of other leisure options not being possible, but also because the more social bowls that was being offered was attractive and accessible. The Let's Roll marketing campaign delivered in August and September aimed to capitalise on that interest and encourage existing

## ROLL UP! ROLL UP!

THIS SUMMER, INTRODUCE  
A FRIEND TO BOWLS, FOR FREE



In total 402 clubs signed up and received the campaign resources and committed to provide opportunities for new, social bowlers. Clubs used the attractive marketing resources locally, largely through their digital and social channels, and this effort was supported by a national marketing campaign primarily through Facebook.

The digital marketing campaign ran for 36 days and reached over 360,000 people. It was a highly engaged campaign and, of the 60 clubs who returned results, 506 new people took part in bowls activity, and 227 of those became new members of clubs. The lifetime contribution of these new members will be hugely beneficial for those clubs who took advantage of this. We will look to do similar campaigns in the 2021 season and are planning a National Open Weekend between Friday 28th and Monday 31st May 2021. More details on page 33 of this report.

We used the Let's Roll ads on local Facebook groups. 21 people attended sessions, aged between 10 and 80. 10 people have joined. From the feedback everyone enjoyed the sessions. We hope we can use the material again in the spring next year, we are very hopeful we will have even more success. Thank you for the support.

Brenda Grout from Fleet United BC, Hampshire



## WEBINARS AND PODCASTS

We are determined to inform and entertain our members and significantly increased our communications activity over the past year. Our YouTube Channel is home to our official podcast 'The Extra End' and the 'Bowler's Lockdown Workout', as well as a series of club services webinars covering topics including communications, social media and funding. This content will be further developed over the next 12 months.

## LOANS, BURSARIES AND FUNDING

All affiliated clubs are eligible to apply for an interest-free Club Loan to enable them to make an important capital investment. As at 30th September 2020 £415,582 was out 'on loan' to support clubs.

We also invested in a Grant Finder service, enabling clubs to identify potential funding opportunities and unlock new pots of money, with over 450 clubs signing up to use the free service.

CLUB LOANS			
Year	New Loans		Outstanding at Yr End
	Number	Value	
2018	15	£144,000	£341,595
2019	7	£102,000	£347,462
2020	16	£199,000	£415,582

BURSARIES				
YEAR	NUMBER AWARDED			TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED
	COACHING	GREENS MAINTENANCE	SAFEGUARDING	
2018	119	22	25	£13,706
2019	97	14	33	£10,142
2020	59	4	17	£5,608

Volunteers are the backbone of our sport at all levels, and we are therefore pleased to offer bursaries in support of members of affiliated clubs who wish to obtain Coach Bowls coaching qualifications and EBUA umpire qualifications. More than £6,000 was paid out in the last year.

## GREENS MAINTENANCE

We recognise that a quality playing surface is vital to the enjoyment of our sport at all levels and are keen to ensure that our clubs have access to specialist advice when they need it most via our Greens Maintenance Advisory Service. Club green-keepers can also apply for a Greens Bursary of up to £200 per year in support of an approved greens maintenance qualification.

## CELEBRATION MATCHES

Unfortunately, Covid-19 meant we were forced to cancel the Celebration Match programme for 2020. A number of these games were rolled over to 2021 and, in total, 46 Celebrations Matches are scheduled for this summer. We hope that we will be able to deliver a full programme and that Paul Robson, and his Presidential Team, will have the pleasure of meeting as many people as possible throughout the summer.



Celebration Matches were forced to be cancelled due to Covid-19

## MEMBERSHIP REGISTER

In January 2020, we added additional resource into the development of a database of members to help achieve our ambition of knowing and engaging all those in the country who play bowls.

There are a number of reasons we want to do this. Understanding our participation base will inform how we develop our game, offering appropriate products and services to players and identifying ways of growing participation.

Furthermore, data allows us to communicate effectively with the many players who wish to be informed, entertained and excited about our sport. The data and trends are critical to reporting back to Sport England, who fund our work through the BDA. Data is also important if we are to grow commercially and be less reliant on affiliation income because it allows us to promote things that people may want, and provides value to sponsors who could communicate to our audience through Bowls England.

As we worked on this project, it has become clear the purpose of this project had not been communicated effectively and the method of achieving the end result was not going to prove successful. We therefore have adopted a different approach. As part of the 2021 affiliation process, affiliated clubs must supply the contact details of their key officials in order for Bowls England and the counties to communicate directly to them about matters of club management. We will begin to deliver communications, which will help club leaders take full advantage of all the benefits of affiliation.

In terms of the broader membership, we will be working on ways to offer value to individuals that motivate them to share their data, in the same way that competition entrants share their data with us so we can facilitate their enjoyment of our competitions. We already have over 15,000 individual bowlers who have opted in to receive our e-newsletters and we will be ramping up the content we produce to enhance their enjoyment of our sport.



## BOWLS DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE (BDA)

2020 saw the BDA recruit a new Managing Director, Lisa Graham. Lisa comes with a wealth of sports development experience from her time at British Cycling. A key focus for 2020 has been aligning our work programmes and collaborating more effectively. This has been evident through projects such as National Open Weekend planning and our work on safeguarding, and we will build on this over the coming months. Sport England, whose funding is channelled through the BDA to support the bowls codes, is the sport's most critical stakeholder and this integrated approach is imperative if we are to give them confidence and see more public investment into our sport.



Lisa Graham joined the Bowls Development Alliance in August 2020 as its new Managing Director



# COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS

Competitions are a key part of our work providing opportunities for player to test themselves on the national stage.

## NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS AND COMPETITIONS CANCELLATION AND REVIEW

Covid-19 dictated that the normal competitions season could not take place. All those who had entered competitions had their entries rolled over to the 2021 season. In the meantime, we have invested time in advancing the Competitions Portal in order to improve the experience for competition entrants and are planning more engaging communications for the coming.

We have also begun reviewing our competitions following feedback during the consultation phase. Whilst broadly our competition offer is well received by those who compete, the view is the volume of competition is too great and the landscape is quite confusing. It is increasingly challenging for teams to be assembled and younger, working people are finding it difficult to commit the time. We need to evolve the competitions so they appeal to a wider number of people and, for those more elite players, link effectively with our performance strategy.

Furthermore, we have an opportunity to evolve the National Finals into a higher profile event and there is a huge potential to create a step change around our spectator experience off the back of the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

## VICTORIA PARK GREENS

A programme of significant improvement work is underway at Victoria Park in preparation for the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Our partners at Warwick District Council, with our support, secured £1.8million towards a series of improvements including enhancement of the existing bowling greens and buildings within Victoria Park to provide world-class facilities for players, officials and visitors alike.

All four greens that will be used during the Games (A/B/C and D) have now been levelled and re-laid, with additional work on the banks surrounding the playing area. This will provide a great Games legacy for future generations of bowlers.

Visitors will also see improvements at Royal Leamington Spa Railway Station and improved links from Victoria Park to the town centre as a result of the additional investment.



## BRITISH ISLES BOWLS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Whilst the 2020 events were cancelled, the year saw a decision to introduce a 'Top 10' style event featuring singles, pairs, triples and fours disciplines for the 2021 Women's Senior and Junior Championships in place of the traditional team events.

Two teams per nation will be eligible to participate, meaning the new-look will continue to provide access to international bowls to players in line with the current format. The new event will mean shorter, faster games with players participating in a range of disciplines that mirror the formats utilised at Commonwealth Games and World Bowls. It will also provide the potential for top players and teams in each discipline to compete directly against each other – an opportunity that does not currently exist in the UK.

Whilst we supported a moderately different format proposal, we respect the decision which was made democratically and are working collaboratively to help make the new event a success on and off the green for players and spectators alike.

## ANNUAL DINNERS

The Hilton Hotel proved to be an excellent venue once again for our Annual Presentation Dinners. More than 300 guests in total attended the Men's event in February to pay tribute to those who had achieved national success on the green in 2019.

## POTTERS

Our annual week at Potters Resort in January 2020 was enjoyed by more than 400 members who not only took part in the regular bowls competition but enjoyed a variety of activities led by the Bowls England team including quizzes, coaching and a pro-am match.

## BIRMINGHAM 2022 – A HOME COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Towards the end of the year both the daily schedule and medal event programme were unveiled. The publication of the latter confirmed that history will be made by not only having the biggest ever integrated parasport programme, but also the first ever major multi-sport event to award more medals to women than men. The BBC was also announced recently as the domestic broadcast rights holder for the Games.

In 2021, the Organising Committee will make a start on the recruitment of more than 12,000 volunteers and the launch of ticket sales, whilst the Queen's Baton will also begin its journey around the Commonwealth nations and territories.

Alistair Hollis has been appointed as Team England's Lawn Bowls Team Leader for the 2022 Games. He will act as our liaison with Commonwealth Games England (CGE) on key areas of team preparation including playing kit, maximising home advantage, accommodation, anti-doping and safeguarding education.

During 2021 we will be fleshing out plans to take advantage of a home Games and will be looking to work with our affiliated clubs across the country to ensure the event touches the whole Bowls nation, and inspires new people from all corners of the country to get involved in our sport.

**TO INSPIRE  
NEW PEOPLE  
TO GET  
INVOLVED**



# INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Like the domestic season, no competitive international bowls was possible throughout the 2020 season. The World Championships, due to take place in Australia in June, has been postponed to September 2021 - but even the rescheduled time is looking uncertain.

Behind the scenes the time was used effectively as we progressed our preparation for Birmingham 2022. Building on a new Performance strategy, we submitted our funding application to Sport England to help support the athletes prepare for the home Games. Aside from funding international training and competition, we are looking to make positive strides in areas such as team building and mentoring, sports science and medicine and coaching. We have been awarded a £200,000 grant by Sport England to support this work, which will also cover the final preparation of the para-athletes whose preparation will be fully integrated with the able-bodied squad early in 2022.

In September, our High Performance Director John McGuinness, with assistance from International Team Managers Kirk Smith and Mo Monkton picked their 16-strong Commonwealth

Games Squad from which the Birmingham 2022 athletes will be chosen. Despite the challenges of Covid-19, the group gathered at Loughborough University in September to kick off the programme and, since then, have been working locally largely on fitness work and tactical planning given limited access to the greens.

More broadly, we have been discussing a more holistic approach to elite performance with more integration between what has historically been termed 'high performance' and 'international', greater integration with other Bowls England activity such as media work and grassroots activity and more operational support to the players and management team. A Performance Summit is planned for later this year to explore this further with players, selectors and management.

## COMMONWEALTH GAMES SQUAD

MEN		WOMEN	
Nick Brett (46)	Brampton BC, Huntingdonshire	Natalie Chestney (31)	Kings BC (Torquay), Devon
Jamie Chestney (34)	Culm Vale BC, Devon	Ellen Falkner MBE (41)	Littleport BC, Cambridgeshire
Andrew Knapper (39)	Tilehurst BC, Berkshire	Amy Gowshall (41)	Cleethorpes BC, Lincolnshire
Edward Morris (33)	Essex County BC, Essex	Sian Honnor (33)	Appleyard BC, Kent
Robert Paxton (42)	Crediton BC, Devon	Lorraine Kuhler (30)	Oxford City & County BC, Oxfordshire
Louis Ridout (31)	Kings BC (Torquay), Devon	Katherine Rednall (25)	Norfolk BC, Norfolk
Sam Tolchard (31)	Kings BC (Torquay), Devon	Sophie Tolchard (29)	Kings BC (Torquay), Devon
Jamie Walker (29)	Northampton West End BC, Northamptonshire	Jamie-Lea Winch (30)	Kingscroft BC, Leicestershire

Commonwealth Games Squad - Loughborough Weekend



The Elite Athlete Centre and Hotel is a unique specialist hotel environment, designed specifically to meet the needs of elite athletes and their support staff.



ELITE ATHLETE  
CENTRE  
AND HOTEL

The two world-class gyms on campus provides our Commonwealth Games squad with an excellent sporting experience in the fantastic gym facilities.



Our athletes also received one-to-one sessions with our High Performance Director and International Team Managers to address optimal performance and well-being.



The highly specialist practitioners ensure our athlete's robustness meets the demands of sport and to compete at the greatest of their abilities and prevent injury.



Our squad were supported by well qualified and specialist conditioning coaches instructing them in safe and effective techniques for achieving their training goals.





## COACHING

September 2019 through to March 2020 was promising to be a stable and successful year for our coaching arm, Coach Bowls. 44 courses had been delivered and many more were booked for the remainder of 2020. However, Covid-19 restrictions were introduced and Coach Bowls needed to adapt and develop new ways of offering services to its members and the wider bowling community.

Coach Bowls continued to demonstrate our wider commitment to promoting our sport as open to all with the 'Supporting Inclusion - Including Disabled People in Bowls' course developed and successfully delivered four times before the Coronavirus restrictions.

Coach Bowls provides a range of training to enable our clubs and county associations to provide a safe environment for all participants.

A new Online Safeguarding Adults course was developed during the initial lockdown. The majority of these courses run at capacity and demand continues to be high. The Basic Safeguarding Children and Young People course, which had previously been delivered as a part of the Time to Listen course, was also developed. However, this new format means that more club volunteers can attend and gain the information without needing to attend a full course designed for Club Welfare and Safeguarding Officers. The revised Time to Listen course has also been launched online, developed by the NSPCC, and we were delighted that bowls was one of the first sports to offer a sport-specific option.

Work progressed to develop a new format for the delivery of Level 1 and Level 2 courses to allow courses to continue despite continuing restrictions in face-to-face delivery. Course



developments have been completed and will be rolled out through 2021. There was also a new membership structure with benefits offered on a two-tier scale (Full and Associate membership).

An online standardisation event was delivered for all tutors, assessors, verifiers and coordinators, where full updates of all developments were provided along with training on tutoring and assessing online. Online assessment was developed, offering a new, cutting edge option for candidates to be assessed from the comfort of their own club environment using a virtual feed to an independent assessor.

Dementia Friends Awareness Information sessions were launched for delivery from October 2020. This new module is to be delivered free of charge to any Coach Bowls member as one of the benefits of their membership.

Coach Bowls has continued to adapt to the digital-age and has launched profiles on Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube. The Coach Bowls YouTube channel features four Q&A sessions with elite players, coaches and umpires, and this will continue to be developed as we move forward.

## COMMUNICATIONS

At the start of the coronavirus pandemic, we agreed two main objectives for our communications activity – inform and entertain.

Understandably, we were inundated with enquiries from Clubs and County Associations regarding the outbreak, and we produced a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document in response to the first wave of enquiries, which were similar in their nature. This continued to be updated as we dealt with this ever-changing situation, and we will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Clubs, county associations and Bowls England continue to face a period where there is the loss of regular income whilst there are overheads and bills to be paid, so we felt it was imperative to advise our members what support was available for them. Sport England and the government put in place a number of initiatives to assist clubs and small companies during this period of uncertainty, so we collated all various opportunities and provided it all in one place.

The provision of a quality playing surface is vital for our sport. We worked in conjunction with the Grounds Management Association (formally Institute of Groundsmanship) to produce guidance for our member clubs regarding ongoing maintenance and what essential work may be carried out in order to provide a fit for play surface when sport resumed.

We recognise the need to interact with our members using a variety of methods suiting each individual, therefore the majority of our news is shared on a number of our established platforms including our website, Facebook, Twitter and e-newsletter broadcasting tool. Additionally, we created accounts on YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn and in order to further support our increased communications output.

A new initiative that we have introduced is 'The Extra End' Podcast. These were already in the pipeline prior to Covid-19, but proved to be an ideal way to keep our members engaged whilst being unable to bowl. This was the primary purpose for creating our YouTube Channel, but obviously gives us scope to expand in the future, which we already have with the three workout videos and club support webinars.

The workout videos were created especially for our member by an experienced personal trainer and to motivate and support our bowlers with the fitness and wellness services we need whilst in lock-down and unable to play, with the club support webinars focusing on improving club communications and funding opportunities.

We have continued to adapt our tone on our social media platforms over the last 12 months. Improved engagement has been noted as a result of the various games, quizzes, videos and polls, positive messages in support of the NHS from a number of our elite athletes, as well as sharing good practice from our clubs who did manage to return to the green in a Covid-secure way.



**7,908  
LIKES**



**4,458  
FOLLOWERS**



**1,279  
SUBSCRIBERS**



**926  
FOLLOWERS**



**283  
FOLLOWERS**



# GOVERNANCE

## BOARD POSITIONS

There have been a number of changes to the Board throughout the year with **David Tucker replacing David Mitchell-Gears MBE as Chair of Bowls England in February 2020**. David Tucker has served on the board for over a decade and brings a wealth of experience as a player and administrator.

Foster Johnson was elected as Director of Governance. Foster is no stranger to us, carrying out successful reviews of the Management Accounts, Risk Register and Business Continuity Plan amongst others in his previous role as Chair of the Audit and Review Committee. He was on the English Bowling Association's Policy Committee and our Policy and Management Committee and is currently leading our Governance Working Party's work.

Harry Nijjar was appointed as Independent Director (Marketing and Communications) following an external recruitment process. Harry runs a successful brand and communications agency, and has been a key part of the marketing working group's projects in 2020.

In the latter part of the year, Adam Tanner and Mal Evans were re-elected to their positions of Director of Development and Coaching respectively.



## 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM took place in Coventry in February 2020, with 61 Delegates representing 33 Counties in attendance. It was resolved that no change would be made to the Membership Affiliation Fees and National Championships and Competition Entry fees for 2021.

A proposition was received from Norfolk Bowling Association that 'the first game losers of the Amy Rose Competition play for an Amy Rose Plate.' Following discussion and a formal vote, the motion was carried, offering a further opportunity for our younger bowlers to experience competitive competition.

## COUNTIES MEETINGS

Birmingham 2022 will be pivotal to the future success of our sport, and the Counties Meeting in November 2019 presented an opportunity for members to find out more about the plans from the Organising Committee's Director of Sport, Matt Kidson. The Games will necessitate changes to our competition programme in 2022, including our national finals, and the Counties Meeting enabled us to highlight some of the opportunities as we began plans for the future. 12 months later, we reconvened through the medium of Zoom and had a productive session with the Counties exploring our future strategy and how we can collaborate on its delivery. We also discussed our approach to the National Open Weekend in 2021.

## GOVERNANCE WORKING PARTY

We recognise the importance of good governance in operating effectively, ensuring we are relevant in today's society and securing the confidence of our stakeholders. We are committed to make positive change in this area and, to that end, a Governance Working Party was formed to conduct a thorough review of our performance against the requirements of the Sports England Code for Sports Governance.

The group is chaired by our Director of Governance, Foster Johnson, and we were delighted to welcome Lindsay Collin, Jonathan Doust and Loretta Spridgeon to the group along with our Independent Director Anna Molony. Initial recommendations to the board will be made in the first quarter of 2021.

## MANAGEMENT AUDIT AND REVIEW (MAR) COMMITTEE

The Committee has held three meetings over the past year, each split into two virtual sessions. Following Foster Johnson's election to the Board, Steven Walker (North) was elected to the Committee and became Committee Chair in April. The Committee has reviewed and made recommendations to the Board on: Risk management plan and risk register; company policies list and review process; disaster plan; COVID 19 response; the Committee's remit and terms of reference; progress of recommendations made to the Board; and Company governance structure. Sadly, we lost Ken Woodcock in December – his insights and contribution to our discussions will be missed.

## DISCIPLINE

We recognise the importance of empowering clubs to provide safe environments for our sport to flourish. Over the last 12 months we have continued to support clubs and county associations in managing disciplinary matters, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. All Clubs and County Associations are reminded, to ensure that the rules of natural justice are followed, that they must use Bowls England Regulation 9 (Misconduct) when dealing with all disciplinary matters and include due reference within their governing documents.

## SAFEGUARDING

We have also been working in partnership with the Bowls Development Alliance and other bowls NGBs, through the Safeguarding Bowls Panel, to increase our support of safeguarding processes to keep all young people and adults at risk safe. In addition to the guidance and templates that can be utilised by Clubs and County Associations, we introduced online safeguarding training in order to increase the availability of education to our volunteer workforce.

## OFFICE WORKING

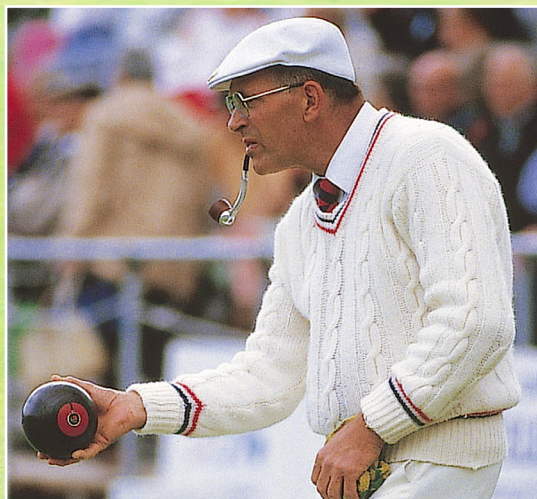
The Covid-19 situation necessitated the staff team to work remotely, introducing new systems and processes in order to function effectively as a team and also deliver good quality service to our stakeholders. Investment has been made to our IT capability to enhance productivity and to boost our security levels.

This experience, and the challenging financial situation, has led us to put the relocation of the Bowls England offices to Victoria Lodge on hold. In the short term, we will continue to be based at Riverside House and will make some investments to improve the office environment for the staff team.

Throughout 2021, we will be exploring ways in which the staff team will embrace our new cultural values detailed in the strategy, and also make a step change in areas such as our induction programme. **We will work with volunteers at county and club level to help support those giving so much to the sport maximise their potential.**

**HELPING  
MAXIMISE  
POTENTIAL**





DAVID J. BRYANT CBE 1932-2020

## IN MEMORIAM

In August, we said goodbye to the gentleman regarded by many as the greatest lawn bowler of all time, **David J. Bryant CBE** (Somerset), at the age of 88.

David won five Commonwealth Games gold medals, eleven World Outdoor Bowls Championship medals and nine titles at the World Indoor Championships during an illustrious career.

He was widely recognisable as the face of bowls and was renowned for using a tobacco pipe whilst playing. He was awarded the MBE and then CBE for services to lawn bowls.

David claimed his first Commonwealth Games successes at the 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Perth, Australia, where he secured Gold in both the singles and fours. He went on to claim singles gold in 1970, 1974 and 1978.

He won the inaugural World Outdoor singles title at Kyeemagh, Australia, in 1966 and went on to win a further four gold medals at the World Outdoor Championships, securing eleven medals in total (five gold, three silver, three bronze) between 1966 and 1988.

He also helped his county, Somerset, win the Middleton Cup on numerous occasions, as well as

being crowned National Champion on 16 further occasions.

**NANCIE COLLING MBE (SOMERSET)**, former President of the International Women's Bowling Board and the English Women's Bowling Association, passed away in July at the age of 101.

Nancie was respected across the world of bowls for her many dedicated years of service to the sport. She was the driving force behind the hosting of the 1996 Women's World Championships at Victoria Park, Royal Leamington Spa, and in the same year received the MBE for services to bowls.

Nancie won the first of her three National Singles titles in 1956, before becoming President of the English Women's Bowling Association in 1976. She won two outdoor World Championship medals at the 1973 World Championships in Wellington, New Zealand, securing a silver medal in the women's fours and the overall team bronze medal.



Nancie Colling MBE received the Torch Trophy Trust Award from Sir Bobby Charlton in 2002

**BILL HATTO (SURREY)**, who was President of the English Bowling Association in 1998, passed away at the age of 88. Bill was a tremendous supporter of youth bowling and generously supported the English Bowls Youth Development Scheme for many years, and served on a number of Committees at Club, County and National level, for both the EBA and Bowls England.

**JOAN LEON (ESSEX)** dedicated many years to the English Women's Bowling Association, volunteering in the Tournament Office during the EWBA National Championships. Joan was also part of the administrative team that assisted at the Women's World Bowls Championships that were held at Victoria Park, Royal Leamington Spa in 1996 and 2004, in addition to being the Secretary for Essex County Women's Bowling Association for 23 years from 1984 to 2007.

**ROY THOMAS (ROYAL COUNTY OF BERKSHIRE)**, held a number of roles at Club, County and National level, which included as the President of the EBA in 1991. Roy was a great supporter of our sport and a major figure in the history of Maidenhead Town where he held the positions of President from 1970 to 1985 as well as Chairman, Life Member and Trustee. Roy was also a Life Member of the Dennyside Bowling Association.

## OFFICIALS

**FRED INCH (DURHAM/NORTHUMBERLAND)** - former Assistant Secretary of the EBA

**KEN WOODCOCK (SUSSEX)** - former Deputy Chief Executive of the EBA, treasurer for the British Isles Bowls Council and a member of the Bowls England Management and Audit Review Committee

**DON DRAPER (DURHAM)** - former International Selector and EBA Executive Member

## INTERNATIONAL PLAYER

**DEREK JOHNSON (SUFFOLK)** - 1971-1972, 1977

## COUNTY PRESIDENTS

Pauline Adams – Isle of Wight 2001  
 Ray Aldridge – Dorset 2001  
 Sheila Ashenhurst – Essex 1993  
 Maureen Ayling – Middlesex 2005  
 Joe Barrass – Sussex 1998  
 Nancy Bennett – Dorset 2000  
 Mike Birch - Devon 2018  
 Geoff Bladen – Lancashire 1999  
 Bette Bolton - Leicestershire 2001  
 Alice Boon – Leicestershire 1981  
 George Bridge - Somerset 1998  
 Sheila Brownrigg - Isle of Wight 2005  
 Rhiannon Butler - Kent 2015  
 Jill Cook – Hampshire 2003  
 Dennis Cousens – Bedfordshire 1992  
 Chris Eales – Dorset 1996  
 Eddie Evans - Surrey 2003  
 Mick Fulbrook - Yorkshire 2010  
 John Goble - Hampshire 2000  
 John Greaves - Devon 2001  
 Barbara Harsant - Warwickshire 1999 & 2012  
 Rod Harvey – Buckinghamshire 2015  
 Bill Hatto – Surrey 1991  
 Tony Hutley – Hampshire 2001  
 Cliff Jeffrey – Northamptonshire 1996  
 John Jenkins - Leicestershire 2015  
 Tom Kenny – Northumberland 2004  
 George Kent - Bedfordshire 1985  
 Donald King BEM – Hampshire 2002  
 Elisabeth Kirkpatrick - Leicestershire 2002  
 Joan Leon – Essex 1981  
 Margaret Lloyd – Kent 1990  
 Jean Lyons-Hill - Berkshire 1998  
 Charles McCain - Durham 2000  
 Lew Mockett – Sussex 2006  
 Julia Perry – Oxfordshire 1995  
 Ellen Phillips – Kent 2020 & 2021  
 Ingrid Robinson - Yorkshire 2000  
 Lea Robinson - Leicestershire 1991  
 Margaret Seabrook - Yorkshire 1993  
 Jean Simmons – Warwickshire 2004  
 Colin Smith – Middlesex 2006  
 Bill Stoker - Northumberland 1998  
 Roy Sylph - Northumberland 2001  
 Keith Taylor - Hampshire 2019  
 Roy Thomas – Berkshire 1988  
 Gordon Walker - Yorkshire 1999  
 David White – Herefordshire 2000  
 Ted Wilks - Lincolnshire 1999  
 Mavis Withers – Yorkshire 1999  
 Ken Woodcock – Sussex 2005

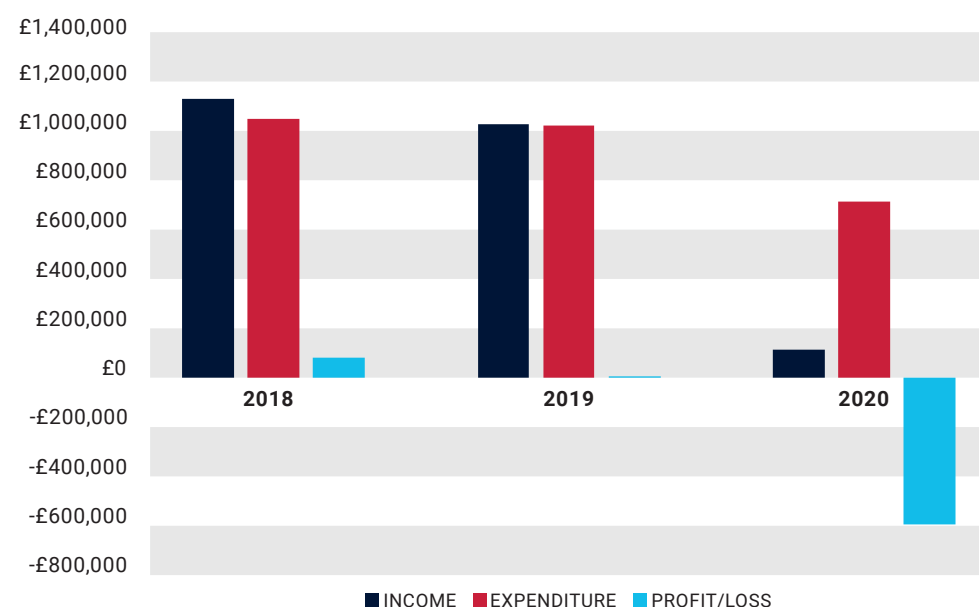


# FINANCES

(All dates refer to the year including year-end – our financial year being from October-September)

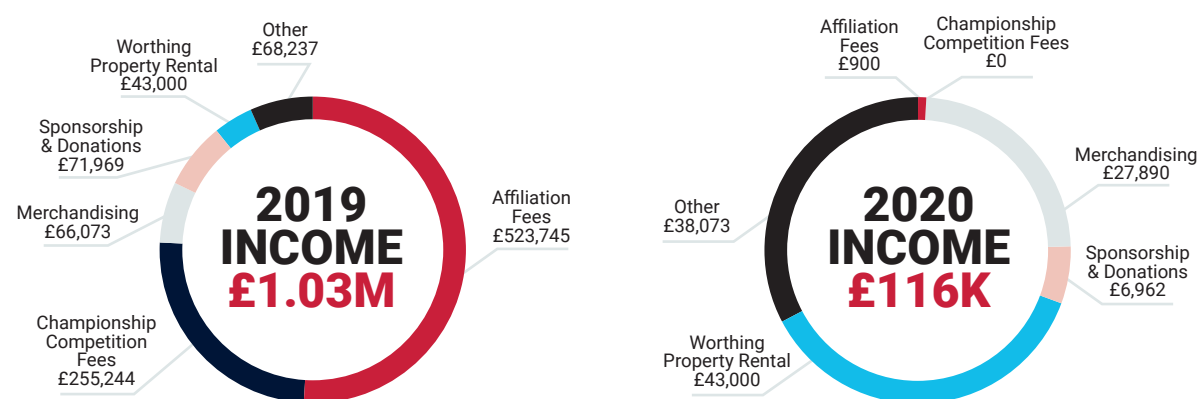
2020 has been an unprecedented year for our sport.

The decisions made in relation to affiliation and competitions detailed in this Annual Report are reflected in our finances outcomes. Compared with previous years, income was **down 90%**, expenditure **down 30%** and the surplus we have enjoyed in recent years became a large loss.



## INCOME

Our 2019 income was £1.03m. The major sources were, as usual, Affiliation Fees and Championship and Competition entry fees.



In 2020, we generated just £116k of income after:

- £500k of Affiliation fees were returned to our clubs in order to assist their financial stability
- £140k of Championship Entry Fees were returned to counties
- £120k of Competition Entry fees were held over for 2021

## EXPENDITURE

In 2019 Expenditure was £1.02m. In 2020 this reduced to £712k largely, but not entirely, due to the cancellation of Championships and Competitions. Savings were also made owing to the lack of international bowls, whilst our salary bill remained as budgeted owing to the decision not to take advantage of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The result was a £595,576 loss for the year. However, since unification we have built up our reserves, were able to absorb this year's loss and remain in a relatively healthy financial position.

### THE BALANCE SHEET

FIXED ASSETS	2017	2018	2019	2020	NOTES
Tangible Assets	10,280	5,860	24,057	22,960	
Investment Property	600,000	600,000	863,000	863,000	1
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stocks	22,451	18,882	9,695	9,084	
Debtors	84,770	427,607	437,549	517,537	2
Cash at Bank / In Hand	1,887,719	1,985,070	1,941,215	1,339,265	
Creditors	-118,096	-151,863	-120,052	-189,445	
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>2,487,124</b>	<b>2,885,556</b>	<b>3,155,464</b>	<b>2,562,402</b>	

### NOTES

- The old EBA Office in Worthing. Value at Unification: £222.758. Generates £43k per annum
- Includes Club Loans totalling £415k

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE IN AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

To reflect our new strategy and to ensure that financial information better follows our activities, the format in which financial information is reported has been changed and we will report now under new headings.

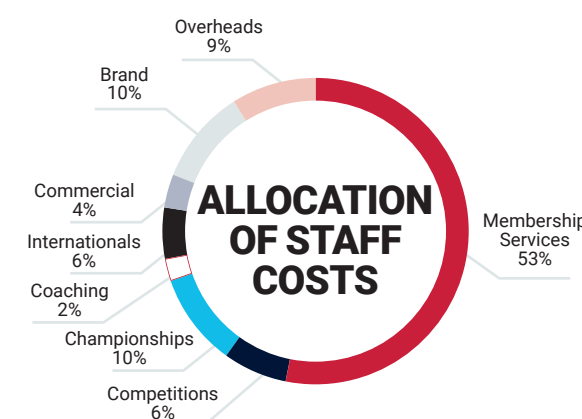
It has not been our practice in recent years to allocate staff costs against the various activities of Bowls England, they are simply included within overheads.

This will change going forward so that we can ensure our staff time is apportioned effectively and we can communicate the time being spend on specific areas of work.

As part of the work on our strategy, and resultant restructuring to reflect our strategic objectives, staffing cost will, in future, be allocated against the various parts of our activity.

In 2021, the picture is detailed here, which demonstrates the emphasis we have, and will continue, to place on member services to support our affiliated clubs and counties. Our recent reorganisation will also place more emphasis on resource to promote the sport and also generate commercial income.

INCOME	2018	2019	2020
Member Services	£556,345	£547,973	£7,943
Competitions	£159,970	£144,314	£6,196
National Championships	£193,828	£196,758	£0
Internationals	£88,268	£2,953	£766
Commercial	£120,729	£122,412	£96,322
Overheads	£12,721	£13,858	£5,597
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,131,861</b>	<b>£1,028,268</b>	<b>£116,824</b>
EXPENDITURE			
Member Services	£64,209	£65,727	£42,031
Competitions	£57,296	£55,567	£2,506
National Championships	£119,891	£130,779	£575
Internationals	£224,793	£151,466	£69,111
Coaching	£671	£19,864	£30,470
Commercial	£41,506	£43,217	£37,548
Brand, Communications and Marketing	£490	£25,096	£10,925
Overheads	£540,109	£529,517	£519,237
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,048,965</b>	<b>£1,021,231</b>	<b>£712,403</b>





INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2020

COMPARISON 2019/2020		2019		2020	
		INCOME	EXPENDITURE	INCOME	EXPENDITURE
Member Services		547,973	65,727	7,943	42,031
Competitions		144,314	55,567	6,196	2,506
Championships		196,758	130,779	-	575
Internationals		2,953	151,466	766	69,111
Coaching		-	19,864	-	30,470
Commerical		122,412	43,217	96,322	37,548
Brand Communications & Marketing		-	25,096	-	10,925
Overheads		13,858	529,517	5,597	519,237
TOTAL		1,028,268	1,021,231	116,824	712,403
Profit/(Loss)		7,037		(595,579)	

MEMBER SERVICES					
INCOME	2019	2020	EXPENDITURE	2019	2020
Affiliation Fees	523,745	900	AGM	6,552	6,654
Celebration Matches Income	11,501	104	Counties Meetings	4,512	5,440
Other	12,726	6,939	Regional Meetings	7,551	2,149
			Celebration Matches Expenses	6,531	1,440
			Donations BDA	17,500	5,230
			Bursaries	9,817	4,141
			Go Membership	7,550	12,000
			Greens Maintenance Advisory Scheme	3,450	4,225
			Other	2,264	753
TOTAL	547,973	7,943	TOTAL	65,727	42,031

COMPETITIONS					
INCOME	2019	2020	EXPENDITURE	2019	2020
Sponsorship / Donations	28,162	6,196	Competitions Prizes	20,225	0
Entry Fees	116,152	0	Competitions Travel	24,322	0
			Other	11,020	2,506
TOTAL	144,314	6,196	TOTAL	55,567	2,506

CHAMPIONSHIPS					
INCOME	2019	2020	EXPENDITURE	2019	2020
Sponsorship / Donations	40,854	0	Prizes	19,000	0
Entry Fees	139,093	0	Travel & Subsistence	34,811	0
Other	16,812	0	Sponsors Tent / Other Sponsor Costs	20,731	575
			Other	56,237	0
TOTAL	196,758	0	TOTAL	130,779	575

INTERNATIONALS					
INCOME	2019	2020	EXPENDITURE	2019	2020
Sport England / CWG	0	0	Atlantic Championships	23,780	0
Sponsorship / Donations	2,953	766	CWG Expenses	1,033	8,059
			Junior International / BIBC / BIWBC	22,374	2,174
			Senior International / BIBC / BIWBC	47,960	3,319
			World Bowls Ltd. Fees	45,045	45,946
			European Championships	3,555	0
			Other International Costs	7,718	9,613
TOTAL	2,953	766	TOTAL	151,466	69,111

COACHING			
EXPENDITURE	2019	2020	
BE Contribution to Coach Bowls	18,161	30,470	
Coach Bowls (BDA)	1,687		
Coaching Meetings	15		
TOTAL	19,864	30,470	

COMMERCIAL					
INCOME	2019	2020	EXPENDITURE	2019	2020
Commission / ACEIT Royalty	22,106	7,448	Annual dinner expenses	21,302	21,751
HQ Rental & Insurance Income	44,150	44,189	Merchandise - Cost of Sales	7,804	2,086
Annual Dinner Income	17,616	15,523	Potters - contributions to clubs / expenses	5,605	5,463
Merchandise Sales	11,331	3,341	Year Book Costs	8,505	8,248
Potters Income	9,240	8,720			
Year Book Sales	17,968	17,101			
TOTAL	122,412	96,322	TOTAL	43,217	37,548

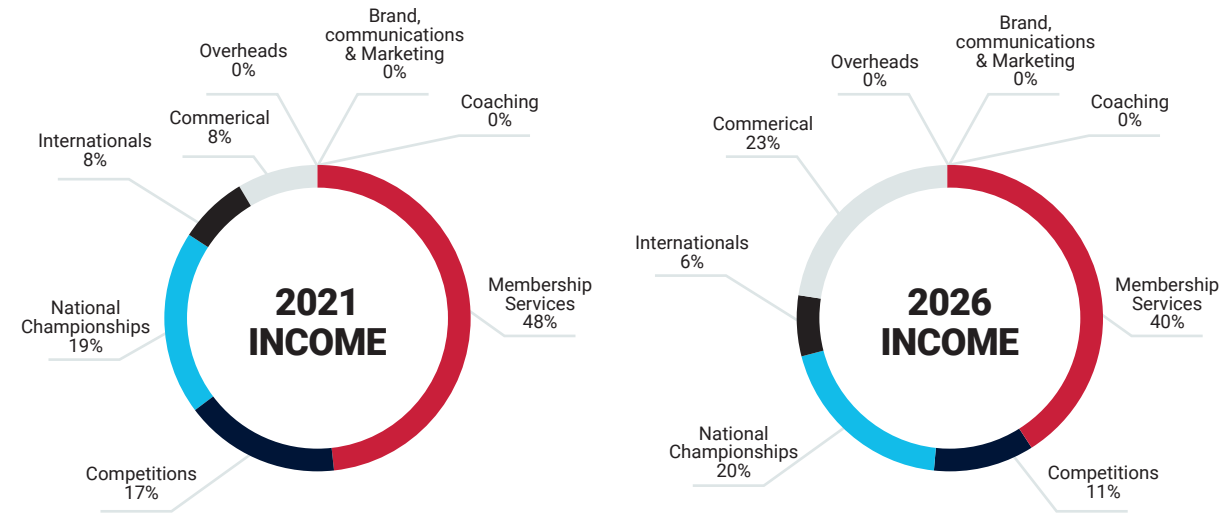
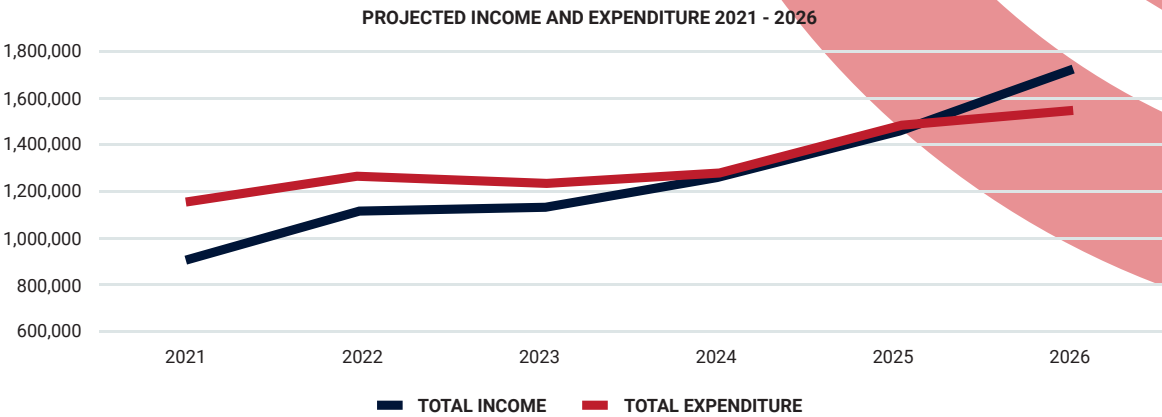
BRAND COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING			
EXPENDITURE	2019	2020	
Marketing		9,815	
Website Development & Maintenance	25,096	1,110	
TOTAL	25,096	10,925	

OVERHEADS					
INCOME	2019	2020	EXPENDITURE	2019	2020
Sundry Income	13,858	5,597	Accountancy & Audit	12,047	11,656
			Board Meetings	12,399	10,388
			Staff Costs	315,220	379,968
			Ceremonial Officers Allowance / Regalia	14,899	564
			Office / Administration Expenses	27,251	15,373
			Safeguarding	161	20,934
			Service Contracts	16,840	2,366
			Bank Charges and Interest Paid	10,869	8,856
			Other	50,309	16,689
			Corporation tax	5,140	4,145
			Depreciation	15,243	15,944
			Insurance: Office	11,957	11,800
			Irrecoverable VAT	37,181	20,555
TOTAL	13,858	5,597	TOTAL	529,517	519,237

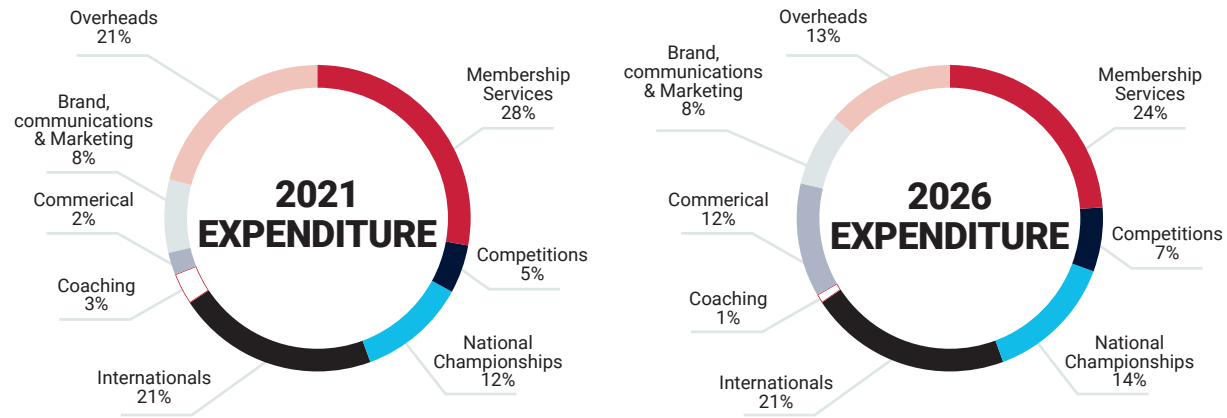
LOOKING FORWARD

Our Strategy for the next 5 years will see some changes to the volume and sources of our income and expenditure as we invest in developing and promoting our sport and developing new income streams.

This will see changes in the sources of our income as we aim to grow our commercial income and event related revenue streams, and become less reliant on affiliation fees and competition entry fees:



Where we spend will also change due to costs associated with new income generation and making the National Championships more of a spectator event. We also hope to reduce our subsidy of Coach Bowls.



Full details of the 2019/20 Statutory Accounts are available on the Bowls England website.



# 2021-26 STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

## BACKGROUND

One of the benefits of Covid-19 and getting off the 'hamster's wheel' of our normal work was the capacity freed up to explore the future direction of Bowls England and our sport. We hope our new strategy will:

- Bring our sport and our stakeholders closer together, united behind a compelling vision and a clear plan. It will create a sense of belonging to something bigger and we hope it will help to inspire our volunteers.
- Frame and guide our operational activities, facilitate prioritisation and allow us to better allocate resources to the important areas. It will create a clear sense of direction and focus for the staff team.
- Explain the broader direction of travel to help bring about positive change. It will put issues and problems into context, helping engender a more can-do, optimistic culture.
- Build confidence and enthusiasm amongst current partners and stimulate opportunity in the minds of prospective partners, thus increase the chances of building new relationships.
- Enable us to articulate why we exist, what we are trying to achieve, why we can make a difference and why anyone should care. As a sport we will be able to talk with one voice, building awareness, equity and trust.

The strategy development has involved a significant research phase with a flavour of the findings detailed here. In conjunction with key stakeholders, we have worked up the contents of the strategy and checked and challenged

it. Alongside a long term budget, we have also undertaken a reorganisation of the staff team and are recruiting for new roles in order for us to add the necessary capability to the team. We will recruit sympathetic with the work we have done on our culture and values. The key pillars of the strategy are detailed here and we will be developing a more detailed document for launch before the season starts. We very much hope that the bowls community will get behind the new strategy and that, together, we can grow and progress our sport.

## INSIGHT AND CONSULTATION

We believe that together we can achieve more and that a culture of feedback will be integral to our long-term success. We will listen to all stakeholders and make decisions based on that insight.

We have already made significant progress on this journey with high levels of consultation over the last few months – seeking the views of players, clubs and county officials plus those from the outside looking in.

We undertook this work through a series of surveys, workshops, focus groups and one-to-one sessions. The research included:

- Participant Survey (August 2020): **3,420 responses**
- Non-Participant Survey (August 2020): **1,175 responses**
- Club Survey (September 2020): **974 responses**
- Player, Club and County Workshops
- 'Our Future' e-mail

We really appreciate the support and value the contributions of all those who have shared their views to date. Many common themes came through from the consultation process and the results will inform the development of our strategy.

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Below is a taste of the survey findings. More detailed reports will be made available on our website.



### PARTICIPANT SURVEY

- **Encouragement from friends/family** was the biggest motivator to take up bowls
- A higher proportion of those who play social bowls took it up through **attending a club open day**, whereas picking another sport to stay active was a much bigger driver for those who play competitively
- Many current participants had **taken a break from the sport due to work/family commitments** and returned when they had more time
- **Sociable, friendly, competitive and challenging** are words associated most strongly with bowls
- Two thirds of participants are **interested to hear more from Bowls England**, predominantly via e-mail/newsletter
- A more **relaxed dress code, getting younger people** into the sport and **increase of awareness** in the sport are highlighted as priorities

The average amount played per week by current participants is  
**10hrs**



### NON-PARTICIPANT SURVEY

- The three biggest barriers to participation in sport are **time, work commitments and family commitments**
- **55% of respondents would wish to play bowls once a week**, and of these the majority would want to play for no more than two hours and would be willing to pay up to £5 per session
- Compared to other sports, bowls tops the list for association with '**sociable**', '**friendly**' and '**inclusive**'
- 69% who are considering trying Bowls said they would be encouraged by **Open Days or free trial sessions**, with 66% encouraged by taking part alongside like-minded friends or family members

**58%** think bowls is mainly for older people  
**35%** think it is too slow

Despite these potentially negative perceptions, the majority agree that bowls is a sport suitable for all gender, ages, ethnicities and disabilities



### CLUB SURVEY

- **Recruitment and retention** of participants are the top two priorities for clubs
- There is a very **limited membership offer with little flexibility** for new participants – particularly a 'pay as you play' introductory offer
- Annual income for the vast majority of clubs does not exceed **£20,000 per annum**
- There is significant support for the **wider use of technology** to assist club management including online rink booking and cashless payments

**25%** of club's state that they are not sustainable at current membership levels



# STRATEGIC CHALLENGES AND OBJECTIVES

During this discovery phase it became clear that there are a number of big strategic challenges that we face and which need to be tackled head on in our strategy.

Even without considering the impact of Covid-19, as a sport we have been in slow decline with the numbers of clubs and participants reducing year-on-year, and the average age of our participants increasing. If nothing is done, this trend will only accelerate causing the economic model of our sport to become even less viable and place significant strain our volunteer base. Simply, our sport needs to be more relevant to more people which means creating ways in which a broader number of people can enjoy our sport. It means creating more choice for people wanting to play bowls, it means securing more commercial revenue, it means making a case for greater government funding and it means changing perceptions.

All this is achievable. It will take hard work, a preparedness to evolve and real belief. The research proves why we should have huge confidence. Those who play the sport tell us they love it and there is a market of non-bowlers out there who would happily give bowls a go.

So, to overcome these challenges and take advantage of the opportunities, we have identified five objectives.

## 1. BY CELEBRATING ITS VALUES AND QUALITIES, INSPIRE PEOPLE TO FEEL BOWLS IS A SPORT WHERE THEY'D BELONG

For it to grow, bowls must be perceived as relevant in today's society and people outside our sport should consider it a credible option for their valuable leisure time. This requires our sport to be more visible and for more people to understand the benefits it may bring.

We will measure success by the sport's awareness amongst prospective audiences and the level of positive public sentiment towards our sport.

## 2. TO OPEN UP THE GATEWAYS TO OUR SPORT, TO EMBRACE MORE PEOPLE IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR BACKGROUND OR CIRCUMSTANCE

Despite its uncomplicated nature, there are too many practical and perceived barriers to getting involved in our sport. We must evolve to complement 21st century lifestyles, have more to offer potential new players and help tackle deep-rooted inequality in sports activity.

We will measure success by the numbers of new people engaging with our sport and the diversity of our sport's participant-base.



## 3. TO SATISFY THE EVER-CHANGING NEEDS OF OUR PARTICIPANTS TO HELP THEM ENJOY A FULFILLING RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR SPORT

Our sport will thrive if existing participants are enjoying life-affirming experiences, extracting maximum enjoyment from their sport, broadening their involvement with bowls and advocating it to friends and family.

We will measure success by the satisfaction levels of its participants.

## 4. TO NURTURE OUR VOLUNTEER WORKFORCE TO HELP CULTIVATE VIBRANT AND SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FOR OUR SPORT TO FLOURISH

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of the sport and their endeavours directly affect the experience of its participants. We have a duty to provide them the support and guidance commensurate with this responsibility.

We will measure success by the number of engaged volunteers and participant feedback on volunteer delivery.

## 5. TO BE AN ADMIRER AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY

Bowls England is the ultimate custodian of our lawn bowls. The effectiveness of our leadership enables the sport's voice to be heard, to foster positive change and harness the capabilities of those who care about its future.

We will measure success by the reputation and levels of confidence our stakeholders have in Bowls England.

Over the coming 5 years our work will be shaped by these over-arching objectives, which will enrich the lives of more bowlers, help connect communities and improve the health of our sport for future generations.

**IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF OUR SPORT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**



# OUR VALUES

What we do is critical, but how we go about it is just as important. We have listened to people and reflected on the way we have gone about our work in the past. At times we have been somewhat distant and cold, and maybe on occasions a little officious and bureaucratic. As a sport we have not always been confident to embrace change and so we have been left behind. We have overseen a fragmented environment, rather than leading a culture of togetherness.

*We will be producing a separate document with full details of our 2021-26 Strategy. If you would like to receive a digital copy, please sign up to receive our newsletters on the Bowls England website.*

*Led by our Board and Staff teams, we have developed a set of BEHAVIOURAL VALUES which we plan to live and breathe. We won't always get it right, but we will BE...*



## COLLABORATIVE

We believe that together we can achieve more. We share perspectives, seek out common goals and perform tasks with a mind-set of respect, trust and co-operation. We appreciate the varied contributions of those around us and are prepared to challenge those who do not have the wider interest of the sport at heart.



## ADAPTABLE

We will strive to be relevant in the ever-changing environment in which we live. We will be open-eyed and open-minded to the opportunities ahead of us, we will listen to others and we will display a can-do attitude. Whilst we remain steadfast in our purpose, we recognise the importance of being flexible in our approach.



## RESPONSIBLE

As custodians of our sport, we are committed to leaving it in a better place than we found it. We will be focussed in our mission, we will be proactive, we will be accountable for the decisions we make and we will be conscientious in our duties. We learn from our bad days and celebrate our good ones, knowing we will start afresh tomorrow.



## ENCOURAGING

We will harness the energies of those around us through our friendly, positive yet resilient demeanour. We will enable others to imagine what is possible, empower them to fulfil their potential and support them at times of need. Our words and actions will be motivational and embolden our sport in its future endeavours.



## THE YEAR AHEAD

As we look towards the spring and the Covid-19 vaccination programme being rolled out, we are hoping the 2021 season will be able to start as normal.

It is likely that there will be restrictions in some form for the foreseeable future, and we are planning for a number of scenarios, but we hope you will all be able to start bowling and that competition will resume. We have an ambitious work programme for 2021 and below are some of the key areas of focus.

### CLUB SERVICES

- Deliver a quality service to club leaders on core current offer, introduce new club services and improve the communications to clubs
- Develop and deliver a National Open Weekend encouraging 4000 new people to try bowls
- Introduce a National Volunteering Strategy including an annual Awards event
- Develop a new Bursary policy linking to strategic outcomes
- Advance our knowledge and delivery in safeguarding
- Enhance relationships with key partner organisations such as the BDA, DBE, EIBA, and BCGBA
- Develop a Diversity and Inclusion strategy

### COMPETITIONS

- Effectively manage the competitions season maximizing player experience
- Effectively manage the experience of National Championships and Competitions qualifiers
- Develop a new competition structure for 2022 with implementation plan
- Nurture our relationship with EBUA to ensure supply of quality officials for competitions



### NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Deliver the National Championships providing a great player experience
- Scope a new spectator experience for 2022 implementation
- Plan contingency arrangement and Covid-19 related delivery
- Develop a new long-term partnership with Warwick District Council
- Enhance media content from the event

### INTERNATIONAL BOWLS

- Deliver BIWBC 2021 effectively and efficiently
- Compete successfully in BIBC/BIWBC Seniors and Junior events, and the World Championships
- Explore the development of a Talent Pathway strategy
- Improve Performance structures, processes, culture and funding
- Deliver Performance Operations effectively
- Increase awareness and perception of bowls through international bowls

### COACHING

- Develop new courses and qualifications for existing and new markets
- Evolve and grow Coach Bowls membership scheme
- Raise awareness of Coach Bowls through improved marketing and content

### COMMERCIAL

- Generate new sponsorship income
- Scope Bowls England Supporters Club concept ahead of Birmingham 2022
- Enhance retail range and marketing around key periods

### BRAND, COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

- Develop a brand and communications strategy and refresh Bowls England templates
- Develop and deliver an annual communications plan
- Evolve website site structure and improve website content
- Secure e-newsletter platform and begin expansion of e-communications

### OVERHEADS

- Progress policy updates as approved by board in July 2020
- Progress Governance Working Party work and recommendations
- Develop and implement a three-year IT Plan
- Develop and implement an HR Strategy
- Drive down costs on non-strategic items
- Maximize Board effectiveness

### OTHER

- Launch and implement Bowls England 2021-26 strategy
- Develop Commonwealth Games engagement plan

At each Board meeting we provide a progress update for discussion and some of this detail can be seen in the Board minutes and accompanying synopsis, which are published on our website.

## SAVE THE DATE

### NATIONAL OPEN WEEKEND – FRIDAY 28TH TO MONDAY 31ST MAY 2021

Our research shows that over 20% of bowlers begin playing off the back of club open days. With this insight, support from counties and following the success of our Let's Roll marketing initiative, plans are already underway for a national recruitment initiative for the Spring Bank Holiday of the 2021 season.

Our insight suggests that this is the optimal time as it will give clubs a few weeks of the season to prepare and promote their activity, greens to be up to speed to ensure a better experience for potential new recruits and (hopefully) warmer weather than is usually experienced earlier in the season to attract the widest possible audience.

With a window of four days for the national campaign rather than a single day, we trust this will enable clubs to organise activity that best fits within their club's calendar. For example, any activity on the Friday night could lend itself to a 'social' event whilst a Saturday or Sunday morning session may be more attractive to families.

It will be for clubs themselves to determine exactly what day/times suit them – there is no expectation that clubs will organise activity on every day. Our role will be to provide guidance on how to run your National Open Weekend experience, resources to support every affiliated club that signs up and training for club volunteers. We will support your efforts with a national media campaign so together we can grow participation within our clubs.

To ensure we make the most of this initiative and with our support, clubs will be expected to host a great event, inform us about the new recruits that are introduced and put on sessions appropriate for new players in order to ensure they return after their Open Weekend experience.

**Club resources and additional information will be available very soon.**



# BENEFITS OF AFFILIATION

Over 2,000 lawn bowls clubs affiliate to Bowls England and each receives a series of exclusive benefits empowering club leaders to provide the best possible environment bowlers. Affiliation also unlocks benefits that are delivered through our development arm, the Bowls Development Alliance.

The Club Services section on our website explores all these benefits and explains how clubs can make the most of affiliation to Bowls England. A summary of these benefits can be seen below:

## PLAYER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Opportunity to be part of the sport's National Open Weekend in May 2021 and access free resources, guidance and training. Use of the National Open Weekend brand and have your event promoted through a national marketing campaign.
- Opportunity to access Play Bowls packages providing funding and resources to run bowls taster sessions.
- Access to national marketing and PR campaigns and initiatives including Let's Roll and Women Can to help grow your club.
- Grow your junior membership with access to Junior Development resources, ability to enter Bowls England Junior competitions and be part of the Junior Academy programme.
- Your club featured on Bowls England's online Club Finder so newcomers can easily locate your club.
- Access to Diversity and Inclusion support to help your club broaden its playing base.

## DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

- Opportunity to benefit from a Club Development Programme delivered by experts from our development arm, the Bowls Development Alliance. The tailored programme supports clubs across a whole range of areas such as club management, volunteering, recruitment and coaching.

- Access to Club Matters providing free, convenient, practical resources to help your club to develop, grow and become more sustainable and successful.
- Access to a wide range of officially recognized coaching and umpire courses and qualifications through our delivery partners Coach Bowls and the English Bowls Umpires Association.
- Access to Bowls England webinars and podcasts providing club leaders with advice and best practice on topics that have been identified as important.
- Opportunity to nominate individuals or your club for National Awards such as the Merit Award so we can celebrate the unsung heroes within our sport.

## FINANCE AND BUSINESS

- Heavily discounted Civil and Employer's Liability Insurance through trusted partner Sutton Winson, saving money on this essential requirement.
- Access to an interest-free Club Loan to enable clubs to make that important capital investment.
- Access to a free Grant Finder service enabling clubs to identify potential funding opportunities and unlock new pots of money.
- Opportunity to access bursaries delivering significant savings for affiliated clubs on Coach Bowls coaching qualifications and EBUA umpire qualifications.



## GOVERNANCE

- Free Legal Helpline to assist clubs across a range of issues for example leases, constitutions, disciplinary matters and employment law.
- Guidance and support on club disciplinary matters disputes, complaints and grievances to help you navigate through challenging situations.
- Access to up-to-date Health and Safety guidance and support to avoid your club tripping up.
- Access to the latest Covid-19 guidance, support and resources to help your club get back to bowls.
- Support, template policies, training and guidance in relation to safeguarding in order for your club members to enjoy our sport safely.

## FACILITIES

- Access to our Greens Maintenance Advisory Service providing free, practical and independent advice to give your club the best possible playing surface.
- Opportunity to access a Greens Bursary saving successful clubs up to £200 per year on a Greens Maintenance qualification.
- Access to our quarterly e-newsletter for green-keepers called Cutting Edge providing insight, advice and offers to those who look after your green.

## COMPETITION AND EVENTS

- Ability to enter National Championships and Competitions and compete in the National Finals at Victoria Park, Leamington Spa, venue for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.
- Opportunity to access a Celebration Match, in which a Bowls England team led by its President will play a club team to mark your special occasion or anniversary. Celebration Matches give clubs an opportunity to raise awareness and generate income.

- Ability to apply for a Tournament Licence to ensure your club's events are run properly and prize funds are handled appropriately.
- Discounted access to Bowls England events such as dinners and awards ceremonies.

## CLUB SUPPORT NETWORK

- Access a team of Bowls England and Bowls Development Alliance experts who can help you make the most of affiliation.
- Access to our monthly e-newsletter for club leaders providing insight, advice and news related to club management.
- Access to Facebook Groups to share best practice and network with other club leaders.

## COMING FOR THE 2021 SEASON...

Informed by the Club Survey, the Bowls England Club Services Team is currently exploring other benefits as we always look to provide more support to our clubs.

These include:

- Ability for clubs taking part in the National Open Weekend to access an appearance from a Commonwealth Games Squad member.
- Improved club resources to help you to run your club including updated Model Constitution, job descriptions for key club officers and financial management advice
- Opportunities for your members and their friends/families to raise funds for your club when they do their weekly shop.
- An online club membership management system
- Online rink booking and cashless payment services.

For more details on these services, please take a look at the Club Services section on our website which will be evolving over the coming months.





Facebook: @bowlsengland

Twitter: @BowlsEngland

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YouTube: BowlsEnglandTV

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