



Board Minutes

Wednesday 28th September 2022 at 1:30 p.m.
Holiday Inn, Royal Leamington Spa

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

Board Chair: David Tucker (Chair)
Director of Coaching: Mal Evans (COA)
Director of Competitive Events: Margaret Docherty (COM)
Director of Development: Adam Tanner (DEV)
Director of Governance: Foster Johnson (GOV)
Independent Director: Dr Anna Molony (SIND)
Independent Director: Jo Doust (IND)
Independent Director – Marketing and Communications: Harry Nijjar (MAC)
Chief Executive: Jon Cockcroft (CE)
Head of Business Operations: Helen Slimm (HBO)
High Performance Director: John McGuinness (HPD) Item 7 only.

Apologies

Director of Finance: Stephen Hemsley (FIN)
President: Terri Keen

2. Previous Minutes – accuracy/matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th July were approved to be signed as a true and correct record. There were no matters arising.

3. Declaration of Interest

No interests declared.

4. Operational Report and RAG Status

The CE had circulated an operational report, in advance, to provide all Board members with an overview of activity since the previous meeting. During the meeting the following further discussions took place.

The CE gave a verbal update on the Big Stones, which started with the Pay and Play Platform. As of the date of the meeting, 109 clubs had registered on the platform and there had been 3803 available sessions loaded. 97 new participants enjoyed our sport after using the system through the Commonwealth Games. It was acknowledged that there have been slight challenges, despite the training and guidance, with clubs setting up their accounts and having login/payment problems. When the new Clubs and Participation Officer is in place, it was agreed that we need to be clear how we manage this effectively from a customer service perspective. The SIND commented that the



negative feedback stems from a lack of understanding about the habits of the casual sports market against the traditional membership model.

A discussion took place on the education piece on the adaption of the current business model of the game. In terms of the future, the need to spend more time to bed the new innovations at the start of next season was highlighted. SIND provided feedback from the recent MAR meetings with the suggestion that champions were nominated to push the message to all clubs.

Positive feedback had been received in relation to Bowls Bash with clubs reporting that the existing membership had also been enjoying the new format. Over 60 clubs have signed up to the programme and have received the free resources. COA highlighted that change management process in terms of culture to be key in this area with members starting to think what was best for the clubs long term sustainability rather than the current day-to-day fixtures. MAC illustrated the importance of recognising the difference between a volunteer mind-set and a business mind-set at club level.

The spectator legacy following the Commonwealth Games was analysed in detail. The C suggested that the cost and timings of the Commonwealth Games might have meant that some spectators had to choose between attending the Commonwealth Games or the National Finals and that attendance should pick up in future years. The IND asked for further demographics in relation to the spectators, whether there was any geographical data or an insight into the reasons for attendance. The CE informed the Board that there would be a traditional mail out to all clubs, via post, at the start of the next season. This would include lots of information for the club noticeboards such as Bowls Bash, National Final Tickets and Club Service/Safeguarding information.

The CE provided feedback and numbers on the content over the Commonwealth Games period. The hero 'All To Play For' video had been viewed over 42,000 times and the three player videos had received over 30,000 views each. DEV commented positively on the balance of the videos, covering both grass root and high performance bowls. It was noted that we were hoping for details from the BBC on viewing figures.

The pop up bowls activity ran for 12 days of the Commonwealth Games in the Pump Room Gardens. There were almost 5000 people take part in this activity, with 1040 providing contact details to be signposted to other future opportunities to bowl. DEV highlighted that the number would have been higher, if there was more capacity as some days the queue had been too long for the pitch. SIND commented that the process of getting people to play was sometimes timely and future thought should be given to getting people playing rather than talking through the activity. A discussion took place on where the experiential activity could be best positioned for the National Finals in future years.

Two events were run during the Commonwealth Games period for the purpose of stakeholder engagement. The guest list included key stakeholders and it provided a great opportunity for us to educate, engage and influence. The feedback from these events was presented to the Board and it was agreed that events like these should take place more often with the external stakeholders of our sport.



Member Services and Development

The CE presented a breakdown on the BDA Relationship and Community Activator work, this work had been invested in via the Birmingham 2022 fund. In total 314 hours had been worked by activators who had delivered 84 sessions. A full breakdown and analysis was provided to the Board which emphasises the diversity of the groups sessions around the country.

Competitions

The C addressed some of the feedback that had been received in regards to the Regional Finals, this included comments on introducing regional final badges and ensuring regional final clubs were in central locations. COM clarified that the previous participation survey have highlighted that players were not entering the championships due to the travel and would prefer regional events in some of the competitions. It was acknowledges that the location of the clubs hosting could have been selected better. A discussion took place by all members of the Board as to whether they should remain as part of the fixture or whether they should be included back within the National Final calendar. COA and GOV suggested that a paper should be prepared for the Counties Meeting that asked Counties to feedback whether they would prefer shorter ends in games so that they can be fit back into the National Finals or whether they would prefer regional finals to remain in place. This could then inform the Competition Review ahead of the 2024 season. It was **resolved** that central location clubs be approached as soon as possible and booked, so that the locations can be selected that are best for all players.

The Board expressed their thanks to all of the staff team that were involved in the rearrangement of play on the day following Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's death.

Commercial and Finance

The CE gave the Board an update on the recent sponsorship discussions, contracts are currently going through various legal teams but would be made public at a later date. In addition, it was noted that an apparel partner tender had been issues publically.

Governance and Overheads

The SIND gave the Board an update following the recent meetings of MAR which included the circulation of the minutes and actions. In addition, the CE gave the Board an update on various meetings that had taken place with other National Governing Bodies through the National Finals.

It was noted that Warwick District Council had meet with Bowls England to discuss the closure of Riverside House. Following a full Board discussion it was **resolved** the C and CE meet with WDC as soon as possible, to discuss the relationship between WDC and Bowls England going forward.

An update was provided on the Disciplinary and Safeguarding functions, with 43 open disciplinary cases and 15 open safeguarding cases.

5. Management Accounts

The SIND and C discussed the value of the Worthing Property. It was noted that the current contract was due for renewal in September 2023 and that the review of contract should take place in early 2023.

The Management Accounts and Year End Report was approved by the Board without comment.

6. Risk Register and ICC

At the previous meeting, the board reviewed the Risk Management and Internal Control systems process. Following this review the risk register has been adapted as follows:

- A new column has been added entitled 'implemented mitigation'
- A new column has added entitled so that both 'Current Risk' and 'Future Risk' is identified.
- Business Area has been amended to match the operational plan with subcategories provided.
- Two tabs have been set up for the risks:
 - Tab 1: Amber and Red Control Risks, ranked in order of risk.
 - Tab 2: Remaining risks that have a Green Control Rating.

It was noted that six risks had changed in value since the last meeting. With four risks now sitting in the amber and red category. These were credit rating checks on guarantors for loans, local authority's withdrawal of support, the disciplinary function and any unforeseen changes to Sport England Funding. These were discussed at length by the Board, SIND suggested that green standards and EBUA relationship be added under Club Services.

7. CWG Performance Review

The Performance Director attended the Board Meeting and gave Board Members a review of the Commonwealth Games Performance Programme. It was noted that Birmingham 2022 was the most successful Commonwealth Games for England to date, winning medals in 7 out of the 11 events, with 21 individual athletes' medals.

The review included aspirations that had been outlined to Sport England ahead of the event, which it was noted we had over-delivered on.

- We will showcase our sport and our inspirational athletes.
- We are proud of bowls' authenticity as an accessible, inclusive sport.
- We want and need to be working truly in collaboration with our partners.
- Our target is to have best medal success since Manchester 2002
- We plan to have the best prepared team we've ever had
- It's critical our gains ahead of Birmingham 2022 build the foundations for future success.

A discussion took place over the future of the performance programmes, with a Bowls England Performance Summit scheduled to take place in November to obtain wider views from key stakeholders.



Thanks were expressed to the whole Performance Team for everything they have achieved.

Before continuing with the agenda, after the HPD had left the meeting, the Board discussed the contract and terms of the High Performance Director. It was **resolved** that the current High Performance Director be approached about reappointment through to the end of the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

8. 2022/2023 Operational Plan and Budget

The CE presented the Board with the 2022/2023 Operational Plan and Budget. This included new initiatives such as the performance strategy, affiliation review and the competition strategy. Maximising the 2022 legacy by embedding Pay and Play, Bowls Bash, Annual Awards, EDI Strategy and the Junior Talent Day. Accelerate the work of the Governance Working Party, Disciplinary Working Party and MAR alongside the business as usual work streams such as competition management, club services and communications.

The importance of the Business as usual and the embedding of the 2022 initiatives were discussed by the whole Board, before reviewing the allocated budget in review of the Bowls England reserves. It was **resolved** that the affiliation package needs an urgent review, with an affiliation working party being established with the aim of presenting an initial report to the Counties Conference. It was further **resolved** that any recommendations should include a yearly uplift in line with the retail price index in both affiliation and competition fees going forward.

9. Board Skills Matrix

Following the previous Board Meeting the Board had been asked to complete a comprehensive skills matrix. This covered the experience and skills that a typical sport's National Governing Body would want covered in terms of board composition. The matrix also included the Bowls England behavioural values, as it is important that these are role modelled from the top.

Following a review by the Board Members it was **resolved** that the C and SIND review the matrix, from the position that we would shortly be advertising for the position of Independent Director and present back at the next Board Meeting on what gaps were to be addressed within the job advert.

10. County Buddy Update

A County Buddy system had been put in place during the summer season, this included Board Members having an active role in the management of County relations and communicating directly with each County over any area of the Bowls England/County relationship. Each member of the Board gave an overview of the discussions that had taken place with their respective County Administrators. The majority of feedback was that the new buddy system had been well received and that relationships would continue to be progressed during the winter season.

11. Presidential Team Update

The C and GOV updated the Board on a meeting that had taken place during the National Finals with the Presidential Team. The aim on the meeting was to review the new Presidential Team protocol ahead of the 2023 season and to hear any feedback the Presidential Team may have. At the request of the Presidential Team, three ideas were presented to the Board for a wider discussion:

The Presidential expenses be split equally over the years, so that the same amount is received each year. It was resolved that the principle be discussed with the accountants and should there be no additional tax implications for either Presidential Team or Bowls England then the principle be supported.

The Presidential Team be reduced to three members, removing the Immediate Past President Position. This suggestion had been made by the Presidential Team to reduce the time and financial pressure of the position. The Board supported the suggestion in principle, and asked the Governance Working Party to include it within their review.

Finally, the Presidential Team asked the Board to review the Presidential apparel with a more modern approach. Ideas had been put forward by the Presidential Team in regards to future apparel. The Board supported the suggestion, and resolved to include the request in the apparel tender.

12. Any other Business

The COA and SIND updated the Board on a request from the Falkland Islands over becoming 'coaching buddies' with Coach Bowls. The Board discussed the situation, and resolved that this should be a suggestion that goes directly to the Coach Bowls Board.

The C discussed the current Board Elections, informing those present that he was intending to stand for another term but only if he had the support of the current Board Membership. Board Members were advised they could do this in person or through the SIND.

With no other business the meeting was closed at 6:15 p.m.