



Board Minutes

Friday 18th November 2022 at 2:10 p.m.
The DoubleTree by Hilton, Coventry

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)
Director of Finance: Stephen Hemsley (FIN)
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)
Head of Sport Development: Alistair Hollis Item 9 only.

Apologies

President: Terri Keen

2. Previous Minutes – accuracy/matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th September were approved to be signed as a true and correct record. JC updated the board re. WDC meeting which was pending. There were no other 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, delivered by both Board members and the Bowls England staff.

The report included an update on the late affiliation process which had delivered higher results than in 2021. In total, there was a rise of 4% in affiliated members from last year. This is positive, but the affiliation figures are still lower than pre-Covid. An Affiliation Working Party had been set up, led by the Director of Finance, and meetings had already started taking place.

IND questioned whether a reason had given by the Counties who did not return any late affiliation data. The CE gave a brief overview of the process, and COM and GOV



suggested counties advised clubs, but many didn't engage with the process. There was a discussion about waiving of affiliation fees for new members generated from the Bowls' Big Weekend and the regressive nature of affiliation fees being paid by a member who may have joined mid-season. It was agreed the Affiliation Working Party would discuss.

It was reported the Awards Night nominations had gone live. The Board were informed of number of nominations that had been received. The Story of the Year award had been amended to the Fit for the Future award which embraces the theme of growing the game and ensuring that it is more inclusive. Tickets for the event are due to go on sale 21st November. DEV discussed the importance of regular reward reviews, suggesting a refresh of categories to keep the event current.

It was noted that, following feedback, Bowls' Big Weekend has had the dates extended to include the Bank Holiday Monday.

The Champions Dinner, had sold out ahead of the closing date with 300 in attendance, with Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist Nick Brett taking part in a Q&A session. With John McGuinness unavailable for the event, Sophie Tolchard and Helen Wall had agreed to join the Q&A panel for the evening.

An update was provided on the new look International Series with final detail to be agreed before a joint announcement by all the home nations National Governing Bodies. The Board were also given the attendance list and details of the performance summit, which had been put together to cover four key areas namely player development, talent ID and selection, domestic competition structure, people and culture.

The C and CE gave an update on the funding application of World Championships, in relation to the para bowlers. A discussion then took place by all members on the future relationship between DBE and Bowls England.

It was reported that the Riviera Travel relationship was launched on 7th November and that the team is exploring a Bowls England bespoke cruise package, which would include England players being on board to give talks and interact with customers. The CE verbally updated the Board on other sponsorship opportunities that were on the horizon, highlighting the importance of having team members in place to manage the activation of the new partnerships.

The status of the kit tender was discussed. The CE had created a short list to present their tenders and the Board would then be advised of the recommendation prior to making a final decision.

The HBO gave a verbal update on the current status of Safeguarding cases. There are currently 28 open cases, with four new since the last meeting. It was noted that there are currently nine suspended members and eleven members with conditions place on them.

Wider work on safeguarding included completing the CPSU framework for review in December and the new ACT framework for review in February. The new framework covers six main areas governance, responsibility, training, recruitment, code of conduct and case management at all levels of the Organisation. FIN questioned whether all clubs needed to have a mandatory safeguarding officer, or whether they could get a collective



safeguarding officer for a number of clubs. This was discussed in full by the Board, taking into account the current framework and guidance. Following the discussion, it was to remain mandatory for clubs to have a safeguarding officer in place by 2025. It was resolved that in the meantime there should be a positive emphasis on safeguarding, with education and support offered to clubs.

The HBO gave a further verbal update on the current disciplinary cases. There are currently 63 cases, with 52 open and being worked on. The key updates since the previous meeting was that two national panels were schooled to take place before Christmas, with two more appeals currently undergoing preliminary investigations.

Wider work on disciplinary included a brief update on the interview process for the National Disciplinary Officer. An offer had been made and accepted, with discussion on going in relation to terms and start times. In addition, three new panel members have been appointed to the National Disciplinary Panel.

The Chair updated the Board on the current Junior Vice President Election process, with the ratification of the votes in favour of Sheila Storey, Northumberland. The Board discussed the involvement of the current Presidential Team within the election process, and it was **resolved** that an addition be made to the Presidential Protocol reading: 'The current Presidential Team should remain neutral in the election process of all positions'.

The CE advised the Board, that following consultation with the staff team there would be a mandatory office closure from 5 p.m. on the 21st December to 9 a.m. on the 4th January. This would allow the staff team to catch up on accumulated annual leave.

5. Management Accounts

The CE presented the Management Accounts. A discussion took place on the forecasted sales for BENF tickets opposed to the tickets sold, in correlation to the sales for Commonwealth Games tickets.

The Management Accounts and Year End Report was approved by the Board.

6. Risk Register and ICC

It was noted that four risks had changed in value since the last meeting. With six risks now sitting in the amber and red category. The two additional risks added since the previous meeting were changes to the loss of commercial partners or sponsors, which had been added pending a signed contract for a new Principal Partner and the current Bowls England Offices at Riverside House, which are threatened with closure. The SIND asked for the top five risks to be added to the main Agenda.

The IND discussed the local councils putting local clubs under pressure, questioning whether it was a national risk as the situation was growing. The CE agreed it was a national risk and going forward a facility strategy or facility register was needed to be considered and drafted, with further discussions taking place with Sport England.

A Board discussion took place on the future of umpiring in relation to the National Finals, which would be reviewed with the County Associations at the Counties Conference.

7. MAR

The SIND had provided the Board with a report and the minutes from recent Management Audit and Review meetings. The MAR Committee had been tasked with assessing the role of the Counties in fulfilling the Fit for the Future Strategy. A questionnaire has been sent to all County Associations to fill in, and the results were discussed by the Board. The IND questioned whether it was feasible for the Counties to increase their way of working to offer the service required, taking into account resources and capabilities. Following discussion it was **resolved** to support the two recommendations from the MAR committee as follows:

- The GWP to prepare a draft Counties Governance Code, with a cross reference to Sport England's Code of Sports Governance Tier 1. For the MAR Committee to review the code and submit to the Board for discussion and approval before presenting to the Counties at the Conference in 2023.
- For the Counties Governance code to be placed as a proposal for the 2024 AGM.

8. Anti-Bullying and Whistleblowing Policies

The HBO had prepared two new policies for approval. These had been sent to the Board in advance. These were an Anti-Bullying policy and a corporate whistleblowing policy. The IND suggested slight amends to the Whistleblowing policy, and a discussion took place on the order of the information. Subject to the amends being made, it was **resolved** that Bowls England adopt both policies.

9. National/Regional Finals 23 and AGM Propositions

The Head of Sport Development had prepared a paper which detailed a number of potential solutions for the Board to consider in relation to the 2023 National and Regional Finals following feedback from 2022. Whilst Bowls England has committed to formally reviewing all competitive events in consultation with our stakeholders in 2024, the paper had been prepared in with cognisance of two AGM propositions received from Dorset and Worcestershire.

The paper contained four separate options for the Board to review, before putting the preferred option to the County Associations at the Counties Conference. A discussion took place between the Board Members on the differing options. IND highlighted the need to demonstrate the consequences of mass participation, to ensure that Counties and Players were aware of the benefits to having a streamlined competitive event structure.

It was **resolved** that the Board proposition would be for sixty qualifiers in all national championship events, with the exception of the Senior Fours and Junior Pairs, which remain at one per county. The removal of regional finals in the National Competitions, with all area winners proceeding to Leamington and the inclusion of Top Club Finals within the National Finals. The proposal would be put to the County Associations for feedback at the Counties Conference.



The Board discussed the challenging ramifications of the Dorset proposal being passed, notably the reintroduction of Regional Finals.

10. Affiliation Working Party

The Director of Finance, gave the Board a verbal report on the recent two meetings of the Affiliation Working Party. The necessity behind the review of affiliation fees, is that there has been no increase in the last ten years and therefore the affiliation fee had reduced significantly in real terms. Bowls England's long-term forecasts aligned to the Fit for the Future strategy planned for an increase over the strategy period in order to reinvest in activity to grow the game.

There had been three options drafted for consideration by the County Associations at the Counties Conference. The first options was to keep affiliation costs the same, but to cut services offered to clubs and counties. The second was to increase the fee to £6, which would be a £1 increase, and to index link affiliation fees going forward. The final option was to raise the affiliation fee to £7.50, which would get the fee to where it should have been taking into account inflation since Bowls England was incorporated and then index link affiliation fees going forward. The latter option would enable Bowls England to invest more than originally budgeted back into the game.

The three options would be put to the Counties Conference for discussion.

11. County Conference and Dinner briefing

The CE gave a run through of the County Conference and Champions Dinner including the logistics and agenda.

12. Any other Business

DEV informed the Board that he would be taking a trip to Australia during the summer of 2023. Whilst he was there, he would be happy on behalf of the Board to attend the Australia Open and any other events they would like him to explore.

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