



Board Minutes

Wednesday 22nd March 2023 at 1.30 p.m.
The Ashorne Hill, 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)
Director of Finance: Stephen Hemsley (FIN)
Independent Director: Dr Anna Molony (SIND)
Independent Director: Jo Doust (JD)
Independent Director: James Wurr (JW)
Chief Executive: Jon Cockcroft (CE)
Head of Business Operations: Helen Slimm (HBO)

The Chair welcomed James Wurr to his first Board Meeting as Independent Director.

2. Previous Minutes – accuracy/matters arising

The minutes of the meetings held on both 18th and 30th January 2023 were approved as a true and correct record.

There were no other matters arising.

3. Declaration of Interest

The SIND declared an interest for item 9, as a resident of Leamington Spa and a bowler of a local club.

There were no further interests declared.

4. Operational Report and RAG Status

The CE, in advance of the meeting, had circulated an operational report to all Board members. The operational report provided an overview of the operational activity, both by the Board and team members, since the previous Board meeting. During the meeting the following further discussions took place:



Member Services and Development

The CE informed the Board that since the report had been circulated, he had attended a meeting with clubs in Buckinghamshire, which was enjoyable and informative. The Board were advised that Bowls' Big Weekend registrations were set to go live on or before the 23rd March.

DEV complimented the approach that the Bowls England team had taken in hosting the ULEX Emission Zone meeting. The CE informed the Board that the impact on bowlers in the area was being researched, so that we can make representation on the sport's behalf.

COA mentioned that questions had been asked of him about the Bowls England finances in relation to sponsorship, affiliation fee increase and the English Indoor Bowling Association. JD asked the feasibility of providing an infographic presenting the benefits of affiliation to be sent direct to clubs. CE confirmed that a quote had been obtained for a mail out to all clubs at the start of the season, and this will be included.

The CE advised the Board that discussions had taken place with various governance companies in regards to Board Evaluations.

Championships and Competitions

A discussion took place, following the Counties Drop-in Session where Bowls England were aware that figures had been released via social media of the number of Competition Entrant numbers. The figures that had been circulated were not released by Bowls England, and were not correct.

The Board gave credit to Lee and Dan, as the extra promotion this year had led to a £7490 increase in competition entries. JD asked what data we currently had around the entries for the Championships, as the entrant numbers had reduced. GOV explained that Counties should have the data behind their entries. CE confirmed that exploring trends would be covered in the remit of the Competition Working Party and that a survey would be undertaken on both Competitions and Championships.

An update was provided on a meeting held with the EBUA. The EBUA receive a sum of money annually from Bowls England, allocated for umpire development. SIND felt it was important for the EBUA to demonstrate how this financial support was being used for development. Until this was provided, it was agreed no further funds should be allocated to the EBUA. In the meantime, it was resolved that the allocation be put on hold, and consideration given for its reinvestment into supporting the EBUA at the National Finals.

International Success

DEV provided an update on Junior Development following a meeting with Mo Monkton.

COA questioned, following the successful Performance Summit last November, what actions were put in place to move the work on. The CE explained that this project has slowed with John McGuinness stepping back from the Performance Director role for the time being, and now Mo Monkton and the team being in season delivery mode. Currently the bandwidth is not in place for this operational year.



COA asked the CE to issue a holding statement, so players can understand the rationale. SIND asked what is the absolute minimum was we could do, to enable us to still take the project forward. The CE agreed to take the discussion away, and present back at the next meeting.

The CE informed the Board that the British Isles planning was moving forward, and that streaming options were being explored. SIND suggested discussions with Sport Scotland and BBC Scotland as they had approached Bowls Scotland about additional bowls coverage.

The Board resolved to not put in a bid for hosting the World Champion of Champions, as at this stage efforts should be concentrated on the hosting of World Bowls 2027.

Brand and communications

DEV congratulated the staff team on the electronic reach of the annual report of 11.5K views. It was the best reach to date, but it was questioned what we can do in future years to reach more of the membership. FIN suggested getting an announcement or link from County/Club websites to the Bowls England website, so that Bowls England announcement would feature on more pages.

The CE updated the Board on a recent meeting held with Goodform on how we better manage our data and communicate with individual players. A discussion took place between SIND, JW, JD, FIN and the CE on how we can better engage players and it was acknowledged that this would feature as a key part of the 2023/24 Operational Plan.

Governance

It was noted that the departure of Harry Nijjar from the Board had left a vacancy for the UK Anti-Doping Board Representative. The role involves championing our commitment to clean sport. It was noted by the Board that JD had offered and had taken on the role.

A discussion took place on the position of World Bowls Regional Director. It was resolved that Board would think of suggestions of who would be best to be represented at World and European level in the future and provide options back at the next meeting.

A discussion took place on the status of Safeguarding Officers within clubs. It was encouraging to see the increase a 15% increase in clubs registering safeguarding officers since the last meeting. The HBO informed the Board that some clubs were commenting that as they had no youth or junior players, they did not need Safeguarding Officers. In the past 12 months, only two of the 53 cases directly involved junior bowls. The concerns mainly included historic criminal charges, internet usage, adults at risk and harassment. It was noted that education to clubs was ongoing in the form of the Bulletin and County Updates.

The C reflected on the AGM and the vote of confidence during the voting process. It was resolved that an email go out to all County Associations detailing James' appointment onto the Board.



Finally, the CE updated the Board on the changes on the Operational RAG rating, with Bowls Bash and Strategic Projects such as performance, WDC and some of the working parties falling into Amber.

5. Management Accounts

The February management accounts and supporting paper had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The P&L is currently on track with no major variances. The CE and FIN updated the board that there was nothing further to add to the paper that had been prepared and circulated by the finance manager.

6. Risk Register and ICC

The Board had been provided with the risk register, highlighting the top five risks to Bowls England, with one risk changing in status. Following the AGM, the risk of the Counties voting against a Bowls England proposal had reduced.

FIN questioned the risk to loans, where the risk after the control was higher than the risk before it. This was an error in the register which would be rectified ahead of the next meeting.

A discussion took place between JD, CE, FIN and SIND on facility stock. It was noted that there was growing pressure on local councils to manage their costs. Currently there is limited data on greens and facilities, with little funding compared to many sports. It was noted that the lack of an audit left us with no visibility of the risk of closing greens and the quality of the greens that are remaining. It was resolved that a proposition be drafted for council owned greens to use both Bowls Bash and PlayBowls to aide the future sustainability of the clubs and that the CE picks up with BDA.

The meeting paused at 2.36 p.m. and reconvened at 3 p.m.

7. Working Parties Review

The C had requested a review of the various working parties, with the aim of getting a better understanding of the progress of the projects and timescales.

FIN gave an update on the Affiliation Working Party, on a back of a successful two day meeting the week before. The Board were advised that the October deadline was challenging. It was noted that following the resignation of John Tucker, the decision had been made to not co-opt anyone else onto the group. The plan going forward is to undertake a process of research and consultation before developing a draft proposal. It was noted, given that the affiliation fee had just increased, that extra time could be provided to the group if needed.

A discussion took place between FIN, GOV, JD and SIND on the prospect of a membership database. It was resolved that MAR could provide assistance to review a membership database from the Counties' perspectives.

GOV updated the Board that the work of the Governance Working Party had been paused, but would restarting again with a meeting between GOV, JD, SIND, CE and HBO



scheduled to get an action plan in place. A discussion took place between SIND, FIN and HBO on the timescales and ensuring we bring stakeholders with us. FIN asked for GWP to work closely with the other working parties where their work impacts other projects.

COM provided an update on the Competition Working Party, stating that there was a lot to review and work through. JD asked for an update on the six key principles that had been provided by the CWP and how they relate to the National Finals. The C advised that the Board need to provide a steer and guidance for the CWP, and it was resolved that the National Finals in future years must not exceed 18 days. Given the emerging breadth of the project, a discussion took place between C, CE, COM, SIND and GOV on the timescales of the CWP and the change management process on bringing counties and players on the journey. The C asked for the view on timescales to be sought from the CWP and reported back at the next Board Meeting.

DEV updated the Board on the work of Disciplinary Working Party, which was similar to that of the Governance Working Party. An update was provided on the National Disciplinary Officer who joins the team on the 31st March. A report would be prepared in advance of the next meeting, detailing action plan and timescales.

A discussion took place between all Board members highlighting that the Governance Working Party and the Competition Working Party were the highest priority, whilst the Disciplinary and Affiliation Working Parties were strategically important the timescales could be delayed if needed.

8. Honours Nomination and Bereavement Process

The C, CE and HBO had prepared a paper detailing proposed Honours Nominations and Bereavement Process.

The Bereavement Process was approved, noting that Counties would be advised and continue in their role of providing relevant details to Bowls England. The bereavement policy would be added to the website to aid with transparency around the process.

Discussion took place between CE, C, SIND, JW and GOV on the proposed honours' nomination process. It was resolved that a Nomination Committee be established. The Committee will be Chaired by the C and includes JW and SIND. Aided by a scoring system of potential nominees, the Nominations Committee will be responsible for honours' recommendation, and will inform CE and HBO of who should be put forward. This process would be strictly confidential.

9. WDC Relationship

The CE positioned a vision for the future relationship with Warwick District Council (WDC). Over the past few years, Bowls England and WDC have been in discussions regarding the future venue at Victoria Park and the development of bowls in the region. With the initial agreement coming to a close, personal changes in both businesses and the closure of Riverside House, it is a pertinent time to explore our partnership and look forward to its next phase.



A proposal had been drafted which features the development of Victoria Park as a National Venue, hosting more major events scheduled, activity to increase participation in the local area and how bowls can provide a positive impact on the local community. The Board reviewed the proposal alongside the economic and financial impact data.

SIND commented that whilst the proposal looks excellent for the club and local community, it is a concern for other local bowls clubs. The CE reassured the Board that the objective is for Victoria Park to be a beacon of all that is good about our sport and that all bowls clubs should benefit by having the HQ in the area.

JD asked whether Leamington was equipped to support the growth of bowls events. In terms of audience and spectators, it would be important to ensure that we attract audiences from further distances and that the local infrastructure could provide hotel accommodation. JD further highlighted that the vision could fit in well with an Active Leisure strategy within WDC. The C discussed the benefits of discussions with all the major political parties within the area.

The Board asked for an update on the office, with the CE confirming that the team have been asked to leave Riverside House this summer. Discussions were going with WDC on other potential locations, with the team going to visit the tennis pavilion in Victoria Park. It was resolved that the team must be happy with the new office accommodation, and that Bowls England investigate the financial impact of the commercial rates associated with Riverside House should they need to stay at the building longer.

With no other business, the meeting closed at 17.37 p.m.