



## Board Minutes Nov 2023

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 14.00

**Venue:** Double Tree by Hilton, Coventry.

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

Board Chair: David Tucker (Chair)

Director of Competitive Events: Margaret Docherty (COM)

Director of Development: Adam Tanner (DEV)

Director of Finance: Stephen Hemsley (FIN)

Director of Governance: Foster Johnson (GOV)

Independent Director: Dr Anna Molony (SIND)

Independent Director: Jo Doust (IND JD)

Independent Director: James Wurr (IND JW)

Director of Coaching: Mal Evans (COA)

Chief Executive: Jon Cockcroft (CE)

Head of Business Operations: Victoria Underwood (HBO)

Visitor: Alistair Hollis, Head of Sport Development, BE. (HSD)

### Apologies

No apologies.

### 2. Previous Minutes – accuracy/matters arising.

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th September were approved to be signed as a true and correct record.

### 3. Declaration of Interest

Declarations have been added to the Declarations of Interest Register.

### 4. Operational Report and RAG Status

The CE, in advance of the meeting, had circulated the 2023/24 Operational Report to all Board members. This provided an overview of



the day-to-day business activity since the previous Board meeting. Further discussions took place on the following areas.

- The CE advised that affiliation numbers had increased by 1.4% in 2023. Depth and scope of affiliation data was discussed to identify if it was sufficient to detect trends, particularly in terms of regional variations.
- CE updated on discussion with World Bowls on Commonwealth Games (CWG), World Championships (WC) and other competition formats. WC will not happen in HK in 2025. WB Super League has not received much support so unlikely to happen. CWG 2026 future uncertain. World Bowls also plan to integrate Disability / Para Bowls sections into all competitions.
- Local authorities are struggling to support the clubs with fewer members. 20% of clubs have fewer than 20 members and some councils are starting to challenge their viability.
- Performance Strategy will be shared at a Board Meeting in Feb 2024.
- Coach Bowls have shared their strategic plan. Amanda will present this to the Board in Feb.
- Relationship with Aviva was discussed as current contract has a break clause in 2024. CE reported that relationship is positive, the Aviva National Finals received significant coverage and hugely beneficial to BE.
- Recruitment of JVP, volunteers and committee members was discussed. There is a challenge to attract people to these roles. Further investigation required and Nominations Committee to be established.
- Disciplinary Working Party are progressing well. New Governance and Compliance Officer will support this work.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- *Correlate affiliation data against other relevant, available data sets (CE)*
- *Four-year international competition cycle map to be created. (CE)*
- *Additional information required from World Bowls with regards to new competition formats and rankings. (CE)*
- *Metrics and plan to retain sponsors and identify new sponsorship opportunities to be shared with the Board. (CE)*
- *Nominations Committee papers to be signed off by the Board (GOV to confirm if these need to be presented at the AGM).*
- *Recruitment and Retention Strategy for volunteers to be created in 2024. (HBO)*

#### **5. Management Accounts**

The CE and FM presented the Bowls England Management Accounts for July which were discussed by the Board. Accounts were approved.



Year End deficit will be around £245k, £60k worse than originally budgeted. This was due to a few factors: Play Bowls didn't deliver expected revenue; British Isles Championships exceeded the budget; Aviva National Finals costs were higher than anticipated due to additional infrastructure charges; irrecoverable VAT and depreciation were very high. Additional costs such as the Governance United Audit and Performance Strategy, approved by the Board during the year, were included.

Discussion on how we generate additional income or reduce our costs by cutting activity. Suggestions to increase income included applying the inflationary increase to affiliation agreed at the 2023 AGM, generating growth in competitions and Aviva National Finals ticket sales and gaining SE funding to support international programme.

**ACTION:** *CE and FIN to review the long-term forecasts developed in 2021.*

## **6. Investment Paper**

A paper was presented providing a recommendation on the investment of cash reserves. IND JW raised a query in relation to interest rates and fees.

Paper to be checked and re-presented.

**ACTION:** *CE to discuss with Finance Manager and resubmit to Board.*

## **7. Risk Register and ICC**

The risk register was presented by the CE. Approved.

**ACTION:** *Opportunity to reduce size and move standing low-level risks to another sheet. (HBO)*

**Alistair Hollis (AH) joined the meeting.**

## **8. Competitions Review Recommendations**

Paper presented by AH. It detailed the work of the Competitions Working Group including research, strategic positioning of our various competitions and a series of recommendations.



**Blue Riband** – Approved.

**Performance** – Approved.

FIN reminded Board that Talent ID/Pathway is open to all ages due to wide range of ages starting the sport.

Note: Selectors need to ensure that they are attending the right competitions and are visible. A selection strategy, plan and policy need to be in place.

**Team Spirit** – the following areas were discussed:

- Round robin format or knock out in Middleton/Johns – counties to advise.
- Ranking system?
- Open vs. mixed definition
- Reduce the number of competitions overall? Can the calendar cope with additional competitions?
- Definition of 'novice' bowlers?
- Changing age limit to 65 – what is the economic impact of this?
- National League

**Competition Management** – discussion over how to administer the competitions from a fees' perspective. Players want a simple straightforward single platform to make and pay for entries. Need to ensure that Counties can reflect their individual needs and it be easily configured.

**Player Centric** – all in agreement

**Business case** – FIN – suggest the family pairs actually become a generational pair and there was a discussion about whether it had a purpose more generally.

**Operational** – Some financial figures for operational plan were presented but more detail required and budget to be presented to the Board in January.

**ACTIONS:**

- *All papers to be discussed with the County representatives. (HSD, CE)*
- *Updated paper and financials to be presented to the Board at next meeting. (AH, CE)*

## **9. County Propositions 2024 AGM**

The Board discussed three propositions received by County Associations ahead of the AGM. The Board agreed a position on these propositions, which would be shared with delegates at the Counties' Conference.



## **10. Governance United Paper**

The board discussed a series of actions that came out of an independent evaluation of the Board's performance. Paper approved (just need to ensure language used is consistent). Nomination Committee to pick up on areas of recruitment and retention.

## **11. Board meeting and expenses**

Board discussed: virtual vs in person meetings; timings of Board meetings; attracting new members on to the Board; honorarium.

Board agreed that reducing the time commitment (length and time of day) and replacing a small number of in-person meetings with virtual meetings could work. This would primarily support those that have to fit meetings in around other commitments and travel long distances. It may also encourage prospective Board Members to apply.

Honorarium was discussed as it covers expenses, therefore it is not equitable across members due to differences in costs incurred. Further discussion required.

### **ACTIONS:**

- *Nominations Committee will review and suggest action plan.*
- *January meeting will be in person and will be for 5 hours 10.00 – 15.00.*
- *Discussion / confirmation required: Board requirements for National Championships (Chair)*

Dates and times for Board Meetings from Jan to August 2024.

Jan 17 <sup>th</sup>	In person	10.00 – 15.00
Feb 23 <sup>rd</sup>	In person	14.00 – 18.00 (AGM and Awards)
April 24 <sup>th</sup>	In person	10.00 - 15.00
June 26 <sup>th</sup>	In person	10.00 – 15.00
August	TBC	

## **11. Any other business**

No other business.

The meeting was closed at 4.10 p.m.