



Bowls England Board Minutes

Date: 17th January 2024

Venue: Ashorne Hill Hotel and Conference Centre, Warwickshire.

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.

1. Previous Minutes – accuracy/matters arising.

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2023 were approved to be signed as a true and correct record.

BOARD MEETING ACTION LIST was discussed and updated.

2. Declaration of Interest

The Board discussed the uncertainty around what constitutes a Conflict of Interest and how to decide on which items on the agenda ensuing restrictions may apply.

IND JD has started to draft a paper that will be completed and shared prior to the next Board Meeting for discussion.

The table below outlines some of the Declaration of Interests of the Board provided to date, however it is not a full or complete picture.

ACTION: Conflict of Interest paper to be added to the agenda at the next Board Meeting on the 23rd February 2024.



Board Member	Conflict Description	Additional Information	Dates Applicable
Chair	General Secretary	Topsham Bowling Club	Current
Chair	Life Member	Devon Bowls	Current
COM	County Admin	Cumbria	Current
FIN	Club Secretary	Bolton Flat Green Bowling Club	Current
FIN	Treasurer	Bowls Lancashire	Current
FIN	Competitive Bowler	Bolton Flat Green Bowling Club / Bowls Lancashire	Current
IND JD	Chair	Chair of Gildredge Park Bowls Club Eastbourne, a local bowls club which is affiliated to BE	From November 2021
IND JD	Vice President	Eastbourne Men's Bowling League. No conflicts	From March 2023
IND JD	Relationship	Wife is Vice President of Sussex County Women's Bowls Association	Then President to Nov 2025
IND JD	Member and part Chair	British Association of Sport and Exercise Science	On-going

3. 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:

BDA and DBE: A discussion was held about the current financial position of Disability Bowls England (DBE). The Bowls Development Alliance (BDA) is applying for a Sport England fund to support disability bowls in England although there is no guarantee they will be successful. Furthermore, that fund would not support many of DBE's activities.

The Board was in full agreement that the development of disability bowl should be supported and would commit to looking at the options of how to make this happen.

ACTION: CE to present options for Bowls England to manage DBE activities, should DBE not be financially viable, at next Board meeting.

CE to write statement on the BE position that can be sent out if DBE announce future closure before the next Board Meeting.

Conference and Champions Dinner: The Board was unanimously pleased with the organisation and delivery of the 2023 County Conference and Champions Dinner. All agreed that in 2024 it should remain at the same venue with the same number of tickets.

The following suggestions were made and approved for further investigation:

- Use of external speakers in the county conference



- Platform to promote new candidates onto the Board and Committees – Governance Working Party to review the Articles relating to this.

Safeguarding: Case 48 requires addition financial resources to bring it to an outcome. This was approved.

BE Awards: The Board was delighted with the communications and marketing for the Awards Dinner with 250 tickets having already been sold.

International success: World Bowls have proposed that 8 greens are required by any nation that wishes to bid to host a World Championships, however there is potential that this could be across multiple venues. Concerns were raised in terms of creating a world-level event environment over multiple sites.

ACTION: CE to share the sketch book with the Board.

4. Risk Register and ICC

ACTION: HBO to provide top 5 risks in the meeting agenda as per Sport England recommendations, and archive low risk or redundant items.

5. November Management Accounts

The November Management accounts were reviewed and accepted.

6. Audited Accounts

EH presented the audited accounts to the board and highlighted areas of challenge and those of merit. The BE Auditors, Daffern's, have been incredibly thorough and came back with a small number of recommendations for improvement that have all been actioned. Areas for improvement were to ensure more rigour over the purchase order system and to reduce the numbers of prepayments made at the end of the financial year.

It is the intention of the company to financially break-even towards the end of the Fit for the Future strategy period, although some of the circumstances have changed since those forecasts were developed in 2021. FIN and CE will be reviewing those forecasts.

Inflationary increases for 2024 were discussed to ensure that they were correct, timely and proportionate. It was suggested that the inflationary increases happen on 1st October which is close to start of the financial year and when the affiliation process starts. The RPI will be taken from the 1st October rate.

ACTION: EH to produce a report for all orders without a PO each month.

ACTION: Inflationary increases to be considered off-line and supported by a communication from CE. This proposal will be raised at the AGM.

Audited accounts adopted.

The Board thanked EH and Moira Durst for their hard work on the financial and accounting practices of BE.



7. Future Board Meetings and Expenses

Board meeting dates and timings were approved through to June. The Board discussed the practicality of a Board meeting during the Aviva National Finals, however there was a consensus that if this was held 'off-site' then it would be acceptable as it helps to consolidate the staff team with operational planning for the next financial year.

Board Meeting timings, 10.00 – 15.00 were approved, with a dinner the night before for those that are staying overnight.

The Board Honorarium and Expenses were discussed. It was questioned if Honorarium is the correct term (rather Allowances so that it is aligned with the Articles) and how tax can be managed. Some members of the Board are required to take unpaid leave to attend board meetings and they use the Honorarium to cover this cost.

The Board agreed to identify if there are areas in which related expenses can be reduced, however, to do this they required a breakdown of all costs.

Board presence at the Aviva National Finals is to be considered. Currently all members are encouraged to attend for a minimum of 7 days. This is costly and overly onerous for those Board members that have other commitments such as work and family obligations. A more consolidated approach should be taken with a minimum of 2 Board members present on each day.

ACTION: Produce a list of full costs of the Board and present to the Board at the next meeting for discussion on expenditure. Comparative analysis of Honorariums across other NGB's should also be identified.

ACTION: Discussion on how Board can maximise their presence at the Aviva National Finals. Roster to be created prior to next meeting.

8. JVP

The Board discussed the impact of not having the JVP role in 2024. This year the number of celebration matches (12) is low and the incoming President and Vice President have confirmed availability for all of these.

The Board agreed to support the Presidential Team at county luncheons and the Aviva National Finals.

The Governance Working Party has been tasked to review the model of the Presidential Team, their protocols and requirements at a future board meeting.

ACTION: Paper to be prepared for August Board Meeting with input from current and past Presidents.

9. Competitions Review

AH presented the revised Competitions Plans for 2025, which took into account feedback from the Board and Counties since the Competition Working Party's initial recommendations were presented in November 2023.



The recommendations were approved, subject to minor additions and clarifications with regard to recommendations 1,11, 17, 18 and 19.

It was resolved that the final recommendations be presented to counties at the drop-in session on Wednesday 24 January. The CE was requested to confirm voting process for AGM with the Bowls England solicitor.

Competition entry fees were discussed. It was noted these fees had remained static for a considerable period, and they had fallen behind inflation. It was therefore resolved that the Board would review Competition Fees annually, taking account of market forces, and that any increased income from entry fees should be utilised to further develop competitions and national finals. The Board also requested more information on the level of top-up to National Championship fees by county to see if this has any impact on entry numbers.

The Board expressed its thanks to all involved in developing the final recommendations, in particular the Competitions Working Party.

ACTION: CWP/CEO to provide clarity on what any additional increase in competition fees would be used for.

ACTION: Data to be sourced on amount of county top up across the country.

ACTION: CE to discuss amendments and voting at AGM with BE solicitors.

11. Any other business

No other business.

The meeting was closed at 4.10 p.m.