



## **Minutes of an Annual General Meeting of the Company Bowls England**

(Company No. 06297656 England & Wales)

Held at 12.40 p.m. on Saturday 25th February 2023 at Goodwood BC, Leicestershire

### **1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting of the Company, Bowls England.

All were reminded that it was a formal Company Meeting and that only County Authorised Representatives and Board members are entitled to vote. Life Members, Presidential Team and Team Members of the Company were invited to attend.

The Chair thanked all the Counties for their contributions over the past year.

The Chair introduced the Board in attendance alongside the Presidential Team and the Staff Team who had all received invitations on behalf of the Board to attend.

The Chair proposed, and the company agreed that Alistair Hollis and Jasbir Batt act as the official tellers during the voting process.

The Chair read the following welcome to those present:

'2022 marked the first full year of our 'Fit for the Future' strategy, which was developed to address the decline in the participation of our sport. Throughout the year, two initiatives were launched - Bowls Bash and PlayBowls.

We hope those Counties that attended yesterday's session, enjoyed playing our new form of Bowls and left enthused at the possibilities of welcoming a new audience into the sport.

Some members will not like change, so it is important that we all work together to show them the benefits this will bring.

We are a business, and must operate as a business in order to ensure our sport is sustainable for many years to come. If the sport is to succeed we need to adapt and gain a wider, more diverse audience.

Looking ahead for 2023, we will be building on these foundations to ensure that Bowls' Big Weekend, Bowls Bash and PlayBowls get more people into our clubs, and experiencing Bowls.

From a business level, we must remain transparent, professional and demonstrate good leadership within the sport. From our 35 Counties we currently have 18 represented by 24 individuals on various Bowls England Working Parties, ensuring that the best interests of the wider Bowls Community are taken into account.

On a personal note, I have played Bowls for 57 years. 2022 presented me a once in a lifetime experience. I was able to witness the best of players, from all over the Commonwealth, attend our home greens at Victoria Park and compete at the very highest standard. I am so proud of our elite athletes, who between then won seven medals. The highest total ever. I would like to, on behalf of the Board express our



thanks to John McGuinness, his team and the elite squad for their magnificent achievement’.

## **2. Notice convening the meeting**

The Chief Executive read the notice:

‘This is the 16th Annual General Meeting of the Company known as Bowls England whose company number is 06297656 which was convened by notice dated 24th January 2023. This meeting has been called in accordance with the Articles of Association. The Notice of Meeting will have provided you with the business that is to be dealt with on this occasion’.

## **3. Apologies**

There were apologies submitted from the full member counties of Cornwall and Isle of Wight. Board Members Mal Evans and Foster Johnson alongside six life members had also registered their apologies.

The Chair welcomed Life Member John Bell to the meeting.

## **4. Minutes**

It was resolved to approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Bowls England held at the Athena in Leicester on Saturday 19th February 2022, already circulated, as a true and correct record.

## **5. To receive the 2022 Annual Report**

The 2022 Annual Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Chief Executive addressed the members and gave a brief presentation. The Presentation linked to our ‘Fit for the Future’ Strategy:

### Building the Brand

**Commonwealth Games:** Bowls England maximised Birmingham 2022, providing the best ever summer for our England bowlers. Seven medals were achieved on the green, our highest ever medal haul, achieving more medals than any other nation and returning with two gold medals. 15.6% of the UK population, became aware of Bowls through the BBC coverage and 40,000 attended the venue to spectate in person.

**Other Internationals:** Sam Tolchard won the Champion of Champions and was featured on BBC Sport, the European Championship team returned with Gold and the Junior British Isles team was victorious in Ireland.

**Media Engagement:** The Commonwealth Games had provided Bowls England with the opportunity to grow the brand. A new AllToPlayFor hero video was released for the sport, player stories were created and shared, during the games we had over 47K reactions on Facebook and the website peaked at 30,000 unique users. Media content reached 2 million in print and 235 million online.



### Making Bowls Truly Accessible

Away from the Commonwealth Games, 735 clubs took part in Bowls' Big Weekend, with 2997 attendees and the have-a-go activity at Victoria Park saw 5074 participants try our sport. Bowls Bash has been developed and 60 clubs are currently up and running, with support for 400 financed club packs. PlayBowls was designed, developed, and launched with 109 clubs registered.

### Creating Positive Playing Experiences

2022 saw a membership increase of 4%, we delivered a competition programme that had growth in the Championships and mixed events. We staged the National Finals, with improved infrastructure and volunteer programme that saw 16,000 attendees at Victoria Park. Finally we held our first Junior Talent ID day, with 70 attendees.

### Support our Communities

Support within our clubs continued, with the launch of the new club health checker, alongside existing support with Loans, Disciplinary and Safeguarding. 600 new coaches qualified during 2022, with 68 new mentors. There are now 14 Coaching Centre of Excellences around the Country. 2022 also saw the inaugural Annual Awards event, recognising the hard work and commitment by volunteers throughout the Country.

### Lead with Purpose

Bowls England remained committed to good governance, with the Rules and Regulations undergoing an update and the MAR committee re-established. Over 2022 we have diversified our income streams receiving a record amount of Sport England Funding and new sponsorship income. We remain committed to collaborating with the County Associations, introducing a new Board buddy scheme and monthly drop in sessions, as well as working closely with the Bowls Development Alliance and Disability Bowls England.

Overall 2022 had seen unprecedented investment into the sport, which showed the confidence that many have in Bowls England and the sport.

The Chief Executive closed by looking forward; embedding Bowls Bash and PlayBowls, leveraging the new partnerships, progressing our strategic work through our working parties and begin the journey to Victoria 2026.

## **6. To receive any additional comments from the Board Chair**

The Chair had one addition to the comments in relation to the Annual Report. He stated that Thursday was a momentous day for Bowls England, announcing the sponsorship with Aviva. The partnership with Aviva, together with the sponsorship from Riviera Travel and Dennis Mowers, combined with the support from Sport England, will enhance the Fit for the Future Strategy.

The Chair remarked that these are unprecedented levels of sponsorship and support. He took the opportunity to pay thanks to Chief Executive, Jon for his input securing these partnerships.



He finished by informing Counties that the money had been included within the budget, which together with the proposed increase in affiliation fees, will support further expansion of our fit for the future strategy to develop and increase participation in our own sport.

## **7. To receive the 2022 Directors Report and Audited Financial Statement**

The 2022 Directors Report and Audited Financial Statement had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Director of Finance gave the meeting a full breakdown of the details behind the figures within the Annual Report.

As an overview he reminded those present of the importance of leveraging the opportunity of Birmingham 2022 that the organisation had £300K invested within reserves and that the spend was in line with the long-term financial planning.

Members were given a detailed breakdown of the figures behind the income and expense figures presented within the accounts and the annual report. Major expenditure came from investments in Bowls Bash, PlayBowls and the Pop-Up Green, with additional investiture in marketing and content.

The Director of Finance, informed the meeting that the increased debtors expense listed within the accounts, was due to an increase in club development loans.

Looking forward to 2023, we have income from the Sport England Grant and increased Sponsorship income. Major expenses are continually investment in Bowls Big Weekend and Bowls Bash, International Expenses and increased expenditure to deliver the service expected with our new sponsors.

He concluded in reassuring the membership that Bowls England remains in a healthy financial position and reminded the membership that we are a not-for-profit organisation, with the Board committing to continue investing back into the sport.

Following discussions which included the new sponsorship announcement, Sport England funding, head office premises and the affiliation structure the Company **resolved** to adopt the 2022 Directors Report and Audited Financial Statement.

## **8. To ratify the following for 2024**

### **8.1. National Championship Entry Fees**

It was resolved that no change would be made to our National Championship entry fees and that they would remain at £2.50 per head.

### **8.2. National Competition Entry Fees**

It was resolved that no change would be made to our National Competition entry fees and that they would remain at £4.50 per head.

Team events would remain as follows:

- National Competitions (side events): £30



- National Champion of Champions: £6.50 per person
- Johns Trophy/Middleton Cup: £70 per entry
- White Rose Trophy: £30 per entry
- Amy Rose Bowl: £16 per entry

## **9. To formally ratify the following appointments**

### 9.1. Bowls England Director – period 2023-26

David Tucker (Board Chair)

The Chair took this opportunity to thank the County Associations for the confidence shown in him.

### 9.2. Selectors – period 2023-26

It was noted that Di Wilson-Rogers (North) and Kevin Philips (West) have returned to the selection committee unopposed.

The company **resolved** to formally ratify both positions.

## **10. To receive propositions or amendments/additions to the Articles of Association**

### Bowls England Affiliation Fee

The CE presented the following proposal:

“That the annual affiliation fee to Bowls England (as detailed in Article 15) is increased from £5 to £7 for the 2024 season with an annual increase broadly aligned with inflation to be applied in subsequent years. Any annual increase to be ratified at the AGM.”

In his proposal the Chief Executive dwelt on the following key points:

- That the increase was in line with the long term budget and investment plan
- That affiliation fees had been unchanged since 2010 and are £3.20 in real terms
- That costs were going up in all areas
- That 20p a month will not stop someone playing bowls
- That the change coming in 2024, allowed more time to promote change and for clubs to plan
- That by investing in participation growth now, will keep the cost of playing bowls low in the long run

The Chair asked if anyone from the floor would like to ask any questions, Hampshire commented that they thought the proposal would be for a £1 increase and not £2. With no further questions a vote took place.

The proposition was passed.



## **11. To receive propositions or amendments/additions to the Rules and Regulations**

Before the proposals were presented the Chair advised the meeting that Bowls England had liaised with their lawyers, and it had been confirmed that should the Bowls England proposal be agreed then both the Dorset and Worcestershire proposals would fail.

### **Bowls England Championships and Competitions Programme 2023**

The CE presented the following proposal:

#### **11.1. Bowls England**

“That the Bowls England Board’s plans for the 2023 National Championships and Competition programme published on 1 December and detailed in the attached paper, including increasing National Championships qualifiers to 62, are ratified.”

In his proposal the Chief Executive highlighted that Bowls England had listened to the feedback and made the following changes:

- Removed regional finals
- Increased qualification places to 62
- That the format delivers in terms of scheduling, green capacity, partners, commercially and workforce welfare.

He further indicated that changes now, would mean that the Regional Finals would need to be reintroduced and could impact the expenses. He also reminded the Counties of the Competitions review that had been introduced.

The Chair asked if anyone from the floor would like to ask any questions. Dorset and Worcestershire raised a query with the advice obtained from the Bowls England lawyers. Lancashire commented that they felt the work of the Competitions Working Party should take place rather than voting against the work. Leicestershire commented that players had already entered on the basis of the formats already released. With no further questions a vote took place.

The proposition was passed.

#### **11.2. Bowls Dorset (Dorset to propose)**

“In the Final Stages of each National Championship (as defined in Bowls England Regulation 50 paragraph 1.4 dated April 2022) played at Victoria Park, Royal Leamington Spa, all Counties shall have at least two qualifying places for the 2023 season onwards.”

As 11.1 was passed, this proposition was not voted on.

#### **11.3. Worcestershire Bowls Association (Worcestershire to propose)**

“That Bowls England reinstate two qualifiers for all counties in the National Championships for 2024, with those counties with higher levels of entries, having three qualifiers.”



As 11.1 was passed, this proposition was not voted on.

## **12. To announce Board appointments**

### **12.1. Independent Directors**

The Chair announced that Harry Nijjar's term as an Independent Director expires today. Due to business commitments Harry was unable to give the future input required and had decided not to seek re-appointment. The Chair thanked Harry for his energy and support over the past three years and wished him well.

The Interview process to find a successor is underway and the Board will advise in due course who has been appointed.

### **12.2. Bowls England Lawyers (Blythe Liggins)**

It was **resolved** to appoint Blythe Liggins as the Bowls England Lawyer.

### **12.3. Bowls England Accountants and Auditors (Dafferns)**

It was **resolved** to appoint Dafferns as the Bowls England Accountants.

## **13. Chair's Closing Remarks**

The Chair thanked all attendees, on behalf of the Board, for their attendance and Goodwood Bowls Club for their hospitality. He thanked the Presidential Team, Board, Chief Executive and his colleagues alongside the many volunteers at County and Club level for their dedication and hard work in keeping our sport thriving and healthy.

Counties were reminded that Bowls England would be paying tribute to our volunteers at the Bowls England Awards Night. He wished all those attending a very enjoyable evening.

He informed those in attendance that once the meeting had officially closed there would be presentations to share plans for the 2023 season.

Meeting closed at 13.51