



# Bowls England Board Minutes

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024

Venue: Ramada Hotel and Conference Centre, Leicester City Centre

## 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 – item 7: Jon Austin (Consultant for Performance Strategy)  
Visitor – item 7: Mo Monkton (Performance Director)

### 1. Apologies

No apologies.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were approved to be signed as a true and correct record.

BOARD MEETING ACTION LIST was discussed and updated.

### 3. Declaration of Interest

No further/new Declarations of Interest noted.

### 4. Operational Report

The CE, in advance of the meeting, had circulated the January 2024 Operational Update Report to all Board members. This provided an overview of the day-to-day business activity since the previous Board meeting being delivered by both board members and Bowls England staff.

## CLUB SERVICES

**Bowls Bash** is proving once again to be a great way to engage new members into the sport with 106 clubs signed up so far in 2024. Future actions to increase these numbers year on year include:



- Engage Awards nominees with Bowls Bash
- Develop website and customer journey.
- Identify Bowls Bash Champions

**play-bowls.com.** The transition of the PlayBowls platform to an all-inclusive Club Finder is well underway. The site will shift from its singular purpose of booking casual sessions, to a site whereby anyone can find a club within their area, and see what that club offers (casual sessions, memberships, Bowls Bash).

**Bowls' Big Weekend.** 196 clubs have so far signed up to participate in Bowls' Big Weekend with 210 events registered. We are therefore on target to exceed the target of 600 clubs.

**Bowls Development Alliance.** Relationship is progressing with some excellent joint work in the areas of Bowls' Big Weekend, Week of Learning and Awards Nominations.

**BD Awards:** A total of 353 guests will be attending the Awards event. 19 Awards will be presented on the night.

**Celebration Matches:** 13 Celebration Matches are due to take place this summer with a total of 207 individuals representing the Bowls England team across all matches.

**Greens Maintenance Advice:** The first greens seminar of 2024 will be held at Victoria Park, Royal Leamington Spa, on Thursday 22 March.

## COMPETITIONS

**Championships and Competitions:** Entry numbers are all tracking at a level equal to or above last year. SIND suggested that team entries require details of all members as opposed to just one so that they can all be contacted.

## INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE

**World Bowls:** World Bowls has shared a proposed new constitution, which is a much more contemporary approach. We have fed back and had sight of other feedback from major nations, notably Australia.

**British Isles Planning:** British Isles format has been published, dates have been confirmed and will be shared jointly in the near future.

## Commonwealth Games

A working party of sport CEOs has been established to explore what sports could do if it was decided that the 2026 CWG Games were not to take place.

**Major events bid:** The application to be on the UK Sport Major Events roster was unsuccessful.

## COMMERCIAL AND FINANCE

### New Business Development

A new partnership deck has been created and the team will be starting a series of communications, primarily on LinkedIn, to generate awareness and leads, and will reach out to some sponsorship agencies to advise them of the opportunities.



## **BRAND AND COMMUNICATIONS**

**Communications:** CE discussed the challenges of getting TV coverage of Bowls due to the viewer numbers being limited. We have had an outline conversation with the Sports Rights Manager at BBC to better understand what we need to do to get more coverage for bowls. It was suggested that we approach other TV channels such as Eurosport.

## **GOVERNANCE AND OVERHEADS**

### **Presidential Team**

Deepak Tanna and David King Taylor attended the Bowls England week at Potters and that was positive for relations with staff. Plans for the year have been set and the investiture at the AGM is prepared.

**Governance:** Juliette Maggs-Bowen, Governance and Compliance Officer, will join the organisation on 4th March 2024.

Annual Past President gathering funded by BE at the ANF was not approved by the Board.

**Safeguarding:** We are receiving a high level of safeguarding enquiries as content about safeguarding is more visible and the requirement of having a safeguarding officer in each club nears.

The Board were updated on Case 48 and the challenges that were being faced due to an unsatisfactory report from Sports Resolution. BDA are leading this case. The Board were made aware of the increasing costs associated with this case.

**Nominations Committee:** Urgent requirement to finalise the details of the Nominations Committee so that they can be discussed and agreed at the next meeting.

**BE WDC Site Sketchbook:** CE presented the Sketchbook with concept images for potential expansion of the Victoria Park site. WDC (Warwickshire District Council) are considering the development of a community sports hub of which Bowls could factor in. Discussions in initial stages, and more detail with regard to dimensions of each space, number of seats in the spectator seating and capacity of facilities are required. Question was raised about adding an indoor facility to enable both codes to be played.

CE updated the board on the situation with TinyWizard since their forced closure. Safeguards are being put in place within BE to mitigate this type of issue happening again. This will include credit checking and references.

**Commercial and finance:** It is suggested that the board are more active in their support and sharing stories on platforms such as LinkedIn.

## **5. Risk Register and Internal Control Systems**

The following risks were identified as the highest priority and were covered in more detail in the additional paperwork.

- Safeguarding Incident
- Disciplinary
- Reputational damage
- Health and Safety Compliance at Events
- Bowls CWG Status



## 6. December Management Accounts, Investments and Club Loans

FIN happy with the reports and the way in which they are being presented and interpreted.

### All Approved

**Summary of December 2023 Management Accounts:** Budget has small overspend for this first 3 months. There is an overall deficit of just under £35k which demonstrates a controlled spend and close scrutiny of overheads and expenses in general. The £10k overspend to budget is a direct result of timings related to commission and Sponsorship invoicing.

**Club Loans:** These loans are a strong benefit of being affiliated to BE. Most of the loans are taken up by clubs that wouldn't ordinarily be able to access a loan. No club has ever defaulted on payment to date. Current limit capped at £400k this financial year, Board have approved an increase of £25k taking the limit up to £425k.

FIN supports the Investment Strategy and suggested that the funds generated each year are added to the operating costs.

Chair discussed level of risk involved with investing through a single company. Risk was set at a scale of 2/10.

## 7. Performance Strategy

Jon Austin (JA) presented the Performance Strategy to the Board. Mo Monkton was also present. The presentation was discussed by the Board, and all agreed that the strategy was accepted in principle and that further planning could take place.

### Background

Our Fit for the Future Strategy commits to us –

1. Supporting and showcasing our winning England teams by effectively managing and maximizing our international programme.
2. Introducing a Performance Pathway to stretch our talented athletes and retain more young people in the sport.

Approval was given to the following actions:

- Plan how we approach building a systemically successful performance programme in the future.
- Develop proposals to Sport England about how they may support this.

## 8. Anti-Doping

Bowls England is formally recognised by UKAD as a sport that has met the 24 requirements of the assurance framework (latest update November 2023).

The Board has approved the following recommendations for 2024.

- 1.1. To ensure the annual updating and communication of anti-doping information is completed.



- 1.2. To review and update the Education Plan in accordance with the latest UKAD requirements, which have been designed to ensure that all education delivery monitoring is now consistent across all sports.
- 1.3. To use UKAD Clean Sport Week in May to boost communication across all four tiers of bowling.
- 1.4. To ensure all coaches and staff involved in Tier 1 (international level) bowls have up-to-date training.

#### **9. Disability Bowls England (DBE) Proposal**

CE updated the Board on ongoing discussions on the future of DBE. The board talked about the importance of disability bowls, the opportunity for growth and the valued work of the DBE volunteer network. All members agreed in principle to move forwards with the proposal to assume responsibility for disability bowls activity should DBE cease trading. CE was tasked to discuss with the DBE Trustees.

#### **10. Any other business**

No other business.

The meeting was closed at 5.30 p.m.