



Bowls England Board Minutes

Date: 24th April 2024

Venue: Ashorne Hill Hotel and Conference Centre, Warwick

Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

Meeting Chair: Dr Anna Molony (SIND)
Board Chair (via Teams): David Tucker (Chair)
Director of Development: Adam Tanner (ME AT)
Director of Finance: Stephen Hemsley (FIN)
Director of Governance: Foster Johnson (GOV)
Independent Director: Jo Doust (IND JD)
Independent Director: James Wurr (IND JW)
Director of Coaching: Mal Evans (ME ME)
Chief Executive: Jon Cockcroft (CE)
Head of Business Operations: Victoria Underwood (HBO)
Visitor – item 7: Amanda Scriven-Purcell (Coach Bowls)
Visitor – item 8: Charlotte Emmanuel & Bernie Hill (EBUA)

1. Apologies

Director of Competitive Events: Margaret Docherty (COM)

2. Previous Minutes – accuracy/matters arising.

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2024 were approved to be signed as a true and correct record.

3. Declaration of Interest

No further or new Declarations of Interest noted.

4. Operational Report

The CE, in advance of the meeting, had circulated the latest 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

A total of 118 clubs are now accredited to deliver Bowls Bash with 61 having expressed interest since the recent roadshows and campaign.

play-bowls.com

Play Bowls is progressing in line with expectations to become the new club finder, providing a multi-functional platform whereby individuals can find clubs in their local area and book casual sessions.



All clubs will be listed, with the ability to include names and email addresses of club roles and opt in to relevant Bowls England news. Counties will have access to clubs within their relevant areas, whether the club is Bowls Bash affiliated or set up for casual sessions.

The status is that designs have been signed off, development is underway and test site due to come next week for review. Updated lists have been returned from County Associations for mass upload to the system when ready.

Bowls' Big Weekend

A total of 666 clubs registered to participate in Bowls' Big Weekend by the deadline of 2 April, with a total of 871 events listed. Participant sign-up opened on 9 April. Phase 2 will see resource packs distributed to clubs during April, plus webinars to provide guidance to clubs on pre/during and post-event activity.

Bowls Development Alliance

Collaboration is continuing to improve with the Bowls Development Alliance, with joint sessions, planning and roadshows. Access to data continues to be a major issue with no single view of a club, insufficient training on BE initiatives and inconsistency of process on approach with clubs. These are being addressed to build on recent positive results.

March Week of Learning

15 sessions were delivered, up from 11 in the January equivalent with 447 members registering to attend. The most popular topics were 'How to Access Funding for Your Club', 'How to Make the Most Out of Open Days', 'What High Quality Coaching Looks Like' and 'Safeguarding – Enabler vs Bystander Behaviour'.

Bowls England and BDA Roadshows

Representatives from Bowls England and BDA's Club Development and Safeguarding teams attended six roadshows across a two-week period. 132 members attended in total. The face-to-face approach was well received. There needs to be planning further in advance and more clarity on how these fit in with the online learning programme to fully maximize the time and effort.

A discussion was had around how to increase the number of attendees to each session as this is still a small fraction of affiliated clubs. Planning earlier and better club data were mentioned.

2023 Annual Awards Event

Final numbers show a healthy growth in ticket sales and overall numbers.

	2022	2023
Sold	156	255
Comp	130	101
Total	286	356

The guest feedback summary was overall very positive with overall event satisfaction being 8/10.



Celebration Matches

18 clubs have applied to host matches in 2025 (13 of these are centenaries). There will also be 4 additional matches added to this taking the total to a possible 22 matches.

County Engagement and AGM Proposition

We held the monthly County Association zoom meeting in March which was productive and was dominated by a safeguarding discussion. Bowls Suffolk has sent in a proposition for the 2025 AGM which is that all BE propositions must be shared with counties 42 days before the AGM, not the current 14. This will be discussed at the County Conference in November.

CHAMPIONSHIPS AND COMPETITIONS

National Championship and Competitions Entries

Draws for the National Competitions were published w/c 1 April, and all counties have been informed of their qualifier numbers in National Championships for 2024 based on entries.

Competitions Review and Implementation

Work on the implementation following the review is underway. A presentation will be given to counties at the next County Association zoom meeting on Wednesday 24 April.

Following the AGM outcome, a discussion was held around a BE representative in a position of responsibility, acting inconsistently with the position of BE. It led to a discussion about creating a new Code of Conduct, contracts and induction process with all BE representatives.

AVIVA NATIONAL FINALS

Tickets will be launching at the end of May and the plans for the Club Zone are developing. The volunteer recruitment programme will be opening later this month, and along with recruitment of volunteers we will also be recruiting for a number of Super Volunteers, individuals who are given a greater level of responsibility and become an extension of the staff team.

Similarly to 2023, there will be 3 days across the event which County Administrators will be invited to attend (one day of hospitality) and consultations will take place in Club Zone, there will also be 2 days during the event where BE stakeholders are invited to attend.

INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

Performance Strategy

Following Board approval of the Performance Strategy, we have developed a roadmap for implementation. Work streams include internal engagement (internal, Bowls Family and external), PR and communications, resourcing and policies/processes.

Performance Planning

The trials in May are being planned, players have been nominated and a selection process has been undertaken to invite people to attend.



World Bowls Constitution and Governance

World Bowls have drafted a new constitution, which has evolved based on feedback from nations including us.

British Isles Planning

We have met a couple of times to identify opportunities in relation to hosting the event, and how to deliver a great player experience is given we want to host a good event but have limited budget to do so.

Commonwealth Games

We have been kept up to speed by World Bowls and CGE on prospects for 2026. The mood music is more positive with three possible hosts. We continue to be part of the cross-NGB group which is discussing possible alternatives should the 2026 event not take place.

COMMERCIAL AND FINANCE

New Business Development

Marketing activity has begun across LinkedIn with positive engagement.

BRAND AND COMMUNICATIONS

Communications

It was reported that there has been a continued but steady growth across social media.

Silver Marketing Association

We have joined this membership organisation to open some doors for sponsor conversations.

GOVERNANCE AND OVERHEADS

Warwick District Council

WDC confirmed that they were fully supportive of the vision developed and the desire for the Victoria Park facility to be used by more people in the local area. Jim Sinnott, the Cabinet member responsible for sport and leisure, was particularly keen on seeing more bowls being played by a wider cross section of the community.

Governance

The Governance Working Party met in March and set new timelines and gap analysis to ensure progression towards Tier 3 compliance. Progress includes: Finalisation of Nomination Committee Terms of Reference (TOR); Drafting of the Remunerations Committee TOR, Audit Committee TOR and Governance & Risk Committee TOR; Presidential Team Review.

Documents being developed include: Complaints procedure; Whistleblowing policy (re-developed); DBS application guidance; Member Welfare guidance; GDPR guidance; DIAP; Conflicts of Interest Policy.



Worthing Property

Marshall Clarke have surveyed the property to identify its current rentable value. This is marginally higher than the previous review and the company will continue to work with us towards a new contract.

Disciplinary

The Disciplinary Working Party is progressing well with new Regulation 9. It has been shared with our Solicitors and received positive feedback and next is to share, case conference and discuss with Disciplinary Panel, County Admins and County Disciplinary Officers.

A Disciplinary Panel Hearing is set for 2nd May at Leamington Spa.

Safeguarding

BE Safeguarding Bulletin re-established on monthly basis. We also distribute BDA Safeguarding Bulletin monthly. Case Management Group (CMG) continue to meet monthly to discuss safeguarding across the codes. A Safeguarding Guidance Pack is being developed to clearly guide clubs through BE's expectations in relation to the deadline set by BE; 'all clubs to have a Safeguarding Officer in place by May 2025'. This includes guidance on required training, DBS checks, responsibilities, committee duties and resources.

Cases update: 78 cases on file, 12 active across codes, 3 new ones in last few weeks.

Customer Service

The Business Operations Team is now fully staffed and working through the induction process to embed the knowledge, processes and policies into their working practice.

Disability Bowls England

Conversations have continued with DBE.

It was reported that the Bowls Development Alliance bid for Disability funding was unsuccessful.

5: Risk Register and Internal Control Systems

The Board reviewed the Risk Register and discussed the higher-level risks. The Board were pleased that the work being undertaken on disciplinary and safeguarding was reducing the risks in this area, and acknowledged that the risk around bowls' Commonwealth Games status was real but largely out of Bowls England's control.

Discussion ensued about the development of a Facility Strategy, in particular to support clubs with current and future challenges of being in local council owned facilities.

6: March Management Accounts and Right-Off of Outdated Stock

Financial Highlights:

- **Overall:** We have a year-to-date deficit of £68,000, which is favourable by £30,000 compared to the budget. This is primarily due to timing differences rather than identified cost savings.



- **Deficit:** The March accounts show a deficit of £57,000.

Following a clear out of the BE storage area, the Board approved the right-off of outdated stock to the value of £1600.

7: Coach Bowls Update

Amanda Scriven–Purcell (AS-P), Coaching Manager at Coach Bowls, delivered a presentation on the current status of Coach Bowls, its courses for coaching and safeguarding and some of the challenges that it faces.

The Board thanked Amanda for her insights and acknowledged how stretched the organisation was in trying to deliver some of its initiatives. The Board requested sight of the Coach Bowls Strategic Plan and also the Culture Plan mentioned in the presentation in order to identify where BE is able to support. Regular Coach Bowls updates are also sought by the Board in order to become more aligned.

8: English Bowling Umpires Association Update

Charlotte Emmanuel (CEmm) (Chair, EBUA) and Bernie Hill (BH) (Secretary, EBUA) presented the Board with an update on the EBUA. The Board thanked them for an enlightening and excellent presentation demonstrating great progress over the past few months.

Collectively the following areas of support were identified for further discussion:

- Support promoting to the 'cold spot' areas of the country through our marcomms.
- Link EBUA with BDA
- Link EBUA with HBO for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion support
- Consider promoting Women in Sport to get more females into umpiring
- Ensure player conduct towards Umpires is addressed in the Codes of Conduct that we are compiling.

9: Governance Working Party (GWP)

Tier 3 Gap Analysis: The GWP gap analysis has been revisited and refreshed to make it easier to work on specific sections. Board reviewed the Level 3 items which focus on the actions that will require Member approval at the February 2025 AGM.

Board approved all items to be added to the 2025 AGM proposals and to introduce these to the County Admins at the County Conference in October.

Nominations Committee TOR: The Nominations Committee TOR was presented and discussed. The Board agreed that it is imperative that this committee is set up so that we can progress with functions including the recruitment of new Board Members and the Presidential Team for 2025, the Governance United recommendations, and the #Bowlswithoutbias requirements on recruitment and retention.

Board confirmed that the Nominations Committee will be formed by three members: one nominated and two independent directors. These members will be David Tucker (C), James Wurr (IND JW) and Anna Molony (SIND). The SIND will chair the Committee.



Board Approved the Nominations Committee ToR once minor changes had been made.

Presidential Team Review

There is significant support for the Presidential Team to remain a key function within the organisation, however it has been agreed to review their scope going forwards and increase the pool of suitable candidates. The GWP propose that the first stage should be to gather information from key stakeholder groups about their thoughts and perceptions of the role. This will be done in the form of a survey.

The Board approved this plan.

10. Any other business

No other business.

The meeting was closed at 15.00