

BOWLS DORSET

(THE UNIFIED GOVERNING BODY FOR THE SPORT OF FLAT GREEN BOWLS IN DORSET)

Administrator

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MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON Friday 24 March 2023 at 10.00am AT DORCHESTER BOWLING CLUB

- E 041/23** **PRESENT-** Shirley Bowley, Bill Fox, Harry Hovenden, Sue Maggs, Janine Scola, Alexander Wilson
- E 042/23** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE-** Ann Allman, Margaret Clapp, Marion Clements
- E 043/23** **OBITUARIES:** - Stan Harland (Dorchester); Ray Brinsden (West Moors); Dick Hall (Blandford); Mick Rowberry (Broadstone)
- E 044/23** **MINUTES of MEETING HELD 28 February 2023**
Agreed - proposed by Bill Fox seconded by Harry Hovenden signed by Alexander Wilson
- E 045/23** **MATTERS ARISING from Minutes not already on the agenda**
i) **E 027/23 i) Dorset Youth Bowls Sponsorship.** On going. The Committee agreed unanimously to continue to support the Youth Academy with an annual payment of £1000.
ii) **E 027/23 ii) Sponsorship on website-** On going
iii) **E 027/23 v)-Stickers** – ongoing -awaiting artwork to be completed
iv) **E 027/23 vi)- 150 match Flashes- Flashes** now in stock
v) **E 027/23 viii)- Rules and Regulations/ Constitution-** Regulations that have been completed had been sent to Clubs on Tuesday 21 March 2023 for confirmation of approval or objections (within 30 days i.e. 20 April) - to be introduced by Bye Law. They had been “walked through” at both the Ladies and Men’s recent delegates meetings, and Club Secretaries had acknowledged receipt of the documents.
vi) **E 039/23 iv) National Competition Areas-** These had been discussed at the delegates meetings, but in view of the extra travelling to be considered, it may remain as it is. However, it will be reviewed in October at the next delegates meetings.
- E 046/23** **CORRESPONDANCE-**
i) All Bowls England correspondence had been circulated, including the Counties update newsletter, advising of two qualifiers in each discipline for Dorset in both men and Ladies, except the Senior Fours and Junior Pairs
ii) Celebration matches had been selected and all players selected had been informed by B.E.
iii) An invitation had been sent to B.E President Deepak Tanna, for the U18 tournament at Poole Park on 31 July.
iv) Verwood had requested information on coaching within the County. Unfortunately, the County no longer has a Coaching Co-ordinator, but local clubs may have coaches that may be able to help.
v) Kew Green Hotels, e mailed with deals for hotel accommodation- will ask if they have anything for Leamington Finals period
vi) Safeguarding- A request had been to B.E. for details of clubs who have registered their officers.

E 047/23 TREASURERS REPORT

Nothing to report.

E 048/23 LADIES SECRETARY REPORT

Sue advised that the Ladies Code meeting had discussed and reviewed the proposed new Regulations-9 (Selection and Honours), 10 (Dress Code), 13 (DWBL rules) and 15 (E.P Rules). These had also been circulated to the delegates. No alterations had been requested.

The delegates had discussed the National Competition areas and after discussing with their club members who participate in them, they would come to the Autumn meeting with the outcome. Competition prizes were discussed, and the consensus of opinion was to have Mugs in place of the glasses.

E 049/23 LADIES MATCH SECRETARY REPORT

In the absence of Margaret- Sue Maggs reported that all matches had been confirmed and coach prices were being sought for two games, from Barry's Coaches, Bluebird Coaches and Destinations Coaches.

E 050/23 MEN'S SECRETARY REPORT

Following the announcement that Bowls Dorset men would have two qualifiers- **the draws for A and B qualifiers was discussed and the Committee agreed unanimously that the draws be carried out for both Men's and Ladies qualifiers before the finals are played.**

Alexander had attended a "drop in" which had covered Registration of clothing, use of a "Pop up" rink, Bowls Big Weekend, Championship and Competition entries and Competition Working Party update. The report from the drop in will be circulated when available.

In the meantime, Alexander reported Drop-In Notes from 22/3/23:

- Discussed Somerset's request to remove requirement for County/BE approval/recording of Club Shirt designs. John Cockcroft indicated that BE needed to evolve guidance.
- BE still has a little Sport England funding to support use of portable rink at shows etc to attract potential bowlers. Would need certain level of predictable foot fall and commitment from Clubs volunteers to operate. BE experience that 10k foot-fall gives 1k trying, 10% of which might follow up at Clubs.
 - Big Bowls Weekend link not yet live on BE website (delays with their web-designer)
 - Bowls Bash - 21 Clubs signed up since January giving 81 in total across country. 20 more Clubs have registered interest. To use Bowls Bash, have to sign up on Play Bowls platform.
 - Majority of BE National Competition entries up this year but Championships slightly down on 2022. National Championship draws to be available end May.
 - Competition Working Party now up and running and had had 2 meetings. First meeting agreed key principles for decision making. Second sorted members to look at other sports and what does and doesn't work there. Third scheduled for 27 March. Some Counties mentioned at Drop-In that there is a reluctance to travel for Championships/Competitions rounds, particularly among ladies.
 - BE through Sport and Recreation Alliance in dialogue with DEFRA with the objective of latter extending its Emergency Authorisation for Acelepryn (insecticide for leather jackets, currently banned) to include bowling greens. Emergency Authorisation currently covers parts of golf courses, horse race courses and airfields. Nothing definitive yet.
 - Sport and Recreation Alliance still waiting for legal advice regarding obligation for unincorporated clubs to register their trust with HMRC - majority of Clubs will need to register.
 - BE will be producing explanation of reason for Affiliation Fee increase to go out to Clubs.
 - Affiliation Working Party still progressing, including researching other governing bodies and looking at individual membership vs affiliation model. Summary to be circulated as to where Working Party have got to.
 - Confirmed that Club Safeguarding Officers can't do more than one Club, even if member (eg honorary) of more than one - CPSU policy. If a Club doesn't have Safeguarding Officer, won't be able to affiliate in 2025. Each County also has to have a Safeguarding Officer.

- Fourth Edition of Laws of Sport now available for purchase. Laws in effect from 1st April 2023.

E 051/23 MEN'S MATCH SECRETARY REPORT
Bill advised that he is obtaining prices of coaches from various firms, but they looked very expensive, especially to the I.O.W

E 052/23 LADIES COMPETITION SECRETARY-
Nothing to report but delighted that all disciplines would have two qualifiers.

E 053/23 MEN'S COMPETITION SECRETARY-
Nothing to report.

E 054/23 WEBSITE-
On going.

E 055/23 UMPIRES FEES
Many the Umpires we have for county competitions and matches are not eligible for reimbursement through the EBUA expense claim channel.
The Committee agreed unanimously that in these instances umpires should be paid £5.00 and refreshments for the day, funded by the County.

E 056/23 ANY OTHER BUSINES

i) Championship Prizes and League winners' prizes-

With the cost of glasses and the non-availability of the "swingers" the Committee discussed replacement for both prizes. It was considered to give vouchers would be unreasonable as not a memento of the "win" and would need to increase in value every year. Alexander had researched items that could be personalised, and the Committee agreed unanimously to present mugs with photos of the B.D crest on one side and relevant Competition details on the reverse, as the glasses had. The "swingers" were bought from Anglia Bowls who had ceased trading- and the Committee agreed unanimously again, to replace these with coasters with the crest and detail of league won.

These would be presented to league winners of County League, Percy Baker League, DWBL and Edna Paisley- all division winners and overall winners. It would mean that if a club wins a division of Percy Baker or Edna Paisley and then the overall final the individuals of those teams could have more than one coaster.

ii) Group West Meeting-

Sue and Alexander attended this very interesting meeting for the counties within the west region. (Minutes attached)

E 057/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of the next meeting of the Executive Board. Was to be 20 April subsequently amended to 24 April 2.00pm

Meeting closed 11.55am

SIGNED.....

Date.....

GROUP WEST

Minutes of meeting of Tuesday 14th March 2023: 10.30 am start Clevedon Bowling Club

Chair Mrs June Bell (Worcestershire Administrator)
Secretary Mrs Lindsay Collin (Gloucestershire Administrator)

Attendees

Devon Paul Debnam (A)	Somerset Ross Turnbull (A)	Wiltshire Adie Lloyd
Dorset Alexander Wilson	Warwicks Donna Kerr	Worcestershire June Bell (A)
Dorset Sue Maggs (A)	Warwicks Michael Jackson (A)	
Gloucester Lindsay Collin (A)	Wiltshire Kath Lloyd	(A) Administrator

Apologies

Cornwall Christine Hoare (A)	Hereford Clive Handscombe	Wiltshire Gerald Webb (A)
Cornwall David Parr	Hereford Jill Bowen (A)	Worcestershire John Weston
Devon Sue Silcox	Somerset Carolle Skeates	

- Welcome by Chair** (June Bell) Welcome to attendees and particularly to Paul Debnam on his first occasion.
Thanks to Clevedon BC for their hospitality.
- Minutes of the meeting held at Clevedon BC on 1 November 2022** Approved as a correct record.
- Matters arising not covered by the Agenda**
 - Updates after recent BE developments :
 - Competitions and National Championships
Lengthy discussion, raising many points, but including (in no particular order) :
 - At the Bowls England AGM, outcome of Bowls England proposal re number of qualifiers for 2023 fully accepted, including by Dorset.
 - Secretary produced a summary table for the 9 Group West counties, as background data for the discussion, re clubs, membership and levels of entry, and fairness of allocation.

West Region County	Affiliated Clubs	Membership 2022	Members per club	Championship entries 2022 Men *	Championship entries 2022 Women *	Qualifiers BE	Clubs per BE Qualifier	Entries per Qualifier BE (men)	Entries per Qualifier BE (women)
Cornwall	47	2387	51	496	279	2	24	248	140
Devon	99	5014	51	625	343	2	50	313	172
Dorset	23	1605	70	251	174	2	12	126	87
Gloucestershire	56	3145	56	461	201	2	28	231	101
Herefordshire	17	667	39	120	59	1	17	120	59
Somerset	75	4478	60	354	131	2	38	177	66
Warwickshire	52	2263	44	392	209	2	26	196	105
Wiltshire	44	2601	59	351	204	2	22	176	102
Worcestershire	28	1449	52	192	91	2	14	96	46

For Comparison

Surrey	120	5761	48	770	368	2	60	385	184
Essex	139	7323	53	488	381	2	70	244	191
Derbyshire	7	143	20	58	30	1	7	58	30
Lanacashire	3	171	57	99	28	1	3	99	28

- Discussion on the figures in the tabulation and the fairness or otherwise of the 2023 process in relation to various groups of counties. Greatest unfairness to the very large counties. Very small counties do much the best in statistical terms, but nevertheless felt that all counties should have at least one qualifier, though noted that – as in some of the National Competition ‘areas’ – counties with small entries have sometimes been combined with larger neighbours.

- Questions re the exact remit of the Competitions Working party. Would be interesting to know in more detail.
- Finances referred to. RT noted his county's 14% decline in competition entries (and 10% in Affiliations too, as it happened). Several counties in Group West are – conversely - seeing regular increases in competition entries.
- Comparisons with other sports with a similar qualification process for their National Finals sought, though nobody could think of any similar sport ! Bowls Scotland's approach to National Finals qualification apparently completely different.
- Stressed again that just qualifying for Leamington is actually the Holy Grail for 'ordinary' county bowlers, and that most of the people who attend the National Finals are coming to support their colleagues and friends, not necessarily to marvel at the top level of our sport.
- Debate about the length, the organisation and the commercialisation of our National Finals. Accepted that lots of factors need to be weighed by BE, including costs of the greens and facilities, time span involved, scheduling constraints, how far a profit is being sought, and the completely different perspectives of the various people and bodies involved.
- Felt that the Friends of English Bowling are no longer shown the respect that they deserve, given the magnitude of their ongoing financial support for the National Finals and our sport. Though the 2022 Sponsors' Tent a useful step-up from the barren offering in 2021.

b) Bowls England events – Dinners

- Awards Night applauded by those who had attended as a very successful innovation, more perhaps than some people had anticipated. 2023 had been a step-up on 2022. However, some suggestion that once the pool of most obvious award winners had been exhausted, in perhaps a few years' time, it might conceivably somewhat degrade the quality of award entries.
- Conversely, the Champions' Dinner was described very unfavourably indeed. The Secretary indicated that she still intended to give an entirely objective and honest assessment of the Dinner to Bowls England, bearing in mind that she had attended virtually every dinner (men's and women's) since 2010, in a particular capacity, so the matter was left at that. More specifically, felt that the room overcrowding was so extreme last November that the fire safety implication was appalling.

c) Affiliation 2023, 2024. BE finances

- General support for the £2 Bowls England Affiliation Fee rise in 2024. Very small in relation to the 16 years (from pre-BE) that the national Affiliation Fee had been unchanged. A small rise every year would have been better; that is the situation henceforth, and that was also supported.
- Noted from the accounts that championships and competitions generated a surplus of £142K, and the National Finals made a loss of £136K, so that central part of our national activities effectively paid for itself [the crucial £38K of competition sponsorship of course included].
- Bowls England were applauded on the new £170K of sponsorship they have gained, but noted that the sponsors would expect to see the effect of their generosity and that needed to be supported by actual data, so clubs in particular would need to be providing clear feedback on the success of initiatives.

d) Bowls England communications

Diverse range of broadly 'communications-related' matters :

- Success of Bowls England 'Administrators' drop-in sessions' noted.
- Importance of new Safeguarding regulations and guidance also clearly conveyed, but still work to be done – including by counties – before the 2025 deadline.
- Concern that the Bowls England Disciplinary Review had been put on the 'back-burner' during 2022, with the regulations badly in need of both updating and much enhanced guidance. Some GW attendees seemed better informed than others, perhaps because of the number of cases they had had to deal with recently. Still much misunderstanding at club level of just who should be involved at various stages in cases and potential cases – club, county, and Bowls England. Bowls England would not wish to be involved in any of the early stages and would always reply thus to clubs who attempted to circumvent the process. Clubs need to invoke Regulation 9 first, in the majority of cases, with counties able to give procedural advice, but normally not becoming actively involved until a review hearing, re-hearing or appeal hearing. Bowls England normally wanted no part of any of the early stages. Suspected that the Disciplinary Review would clarify all of these matters.
- Clearer advice to clubs on how to keep their Bowls England Website club page up-to-date, needed. It is there, apparently, but difficult to find.

- LC noted that she had had to point out recently to Bowls England that 19 club contacts in the Bowls England Website Club Directory for her county were incorrect. More than two weeks later, most of these still were, though a small number had been updated. Counties should no longer need to involve themselves in this.
 - LC had asked Bowls England, repeatedly – from the time of Alan Lane and now into Daniel Elliott’s stewardship of the Newsletters – to supply her with a list of the clubs in her county who had registered with Bowls England for direct contact and also those who were receiving BE Newsletters. This is important, since an Administrator (all Administrators) – in circulating information – sometimes needs to concentrate on those clubs who remain unconnected with Bowls England.
 - The specific comment in the previous bullet point reflects a significant common reluctance by Bowls England to provide updates to County Administrators of exactly which clubs are participating in various initiatives, processes and schemes. Bowls England may not perceive provision of this information to be important, but the county perspective is quite different (see 4.1 below).
 - MS asked that Bowls England always put the subject matter of an email within the title of that email, otherwise searching one’s emails for particular subject matter was substantially more difficult. Emails covering multiple matters at the same time were an obvious difficulty during searching, these being quite common from some Bowls England staff.
- e) Bowls England celebration matches
- Some surprise at the inclusion of club officers in consideration for celebration games. Only 720 team places available in the whole season (including places for BE Presidential Team in every game, with 35 counties, so an average of just about 20 places per county across the whole year. One club quoted had put virtually all their main officers up for consideration, they alone covering 60% of that county’s requests !
 - Decision to now allow anyone to play celebration games inside their own county seems strange. Celebrating clubs don’t usually wish to play against a ‘Bowls England’ team containing local players who they regularly see !
 - RT asked that an extra column be put in the Bowls England matrix entitled ‘qualification’.

4. Discussion topics requested

4.1 Recruitment initiatives

4.1.1 Big Bowls Weekend 2023

- Engagement figures quite good in our region in 2022, from 29% to 68%.
- Counties need to know from Bowls England which clubs have signed up for 2023, so that they can support those clubs participating, including attending events and encouraging networking [which seems to happen naturally between neighbouring clubs]. This is a vital piece of information.
- Counties need to encourage participating clubs to give data feedback to Bowls England later in the year (as referred to in Clause 3.1 (c)). Again requires county to know who has actually participated !

4.1.2 Bowls Bash

- Poor uptake so far, in all our West counties. One attendee noted, however, that ‘it’s just bowls, but a different format’.
- Can be used associated with the BBW intake in their early stages
- Receipt of resources pack requires registration , and this is now a priority if clubs are to obtain one of the available packs. Please urgently remind your clubs.
- Criticism of the fact that Bowls England will not give resources packs to counties, which might help them encourage clubs to participate. Noted that an alternative way might be for counties to encourage key participating clubs to become ‘hubs’ at which other clubs in the county can see the simplified format game being played.
- Must improve both overall participation and later feedback to justify the huge sponsorship available. Suggested by one attendee that clubs could play the new format without registering, but this would have no positive engagement ‘footprint’.

4.1.3 Play Bowls / Pay and Play

- Can be stand-alone, though often linked with Bowls Bash.
- Clubs tend to see the work involved for the same old volunteers who do everything else, but not see the possibility of acquiring new members.
- Play Bowls and Bowls Bash have a role in relation to ‘corporate days’.
- Again, poor uptake in West region and we should try to encourage our clubs.

4.2 Software Management Systems for counties

- A lively discussion on a matter that currently seems to be of live interest to counties keen to improve the efficiency of their processes in a modern way and possibly reduce the need for volunteers at the county level.
- Four counties (Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Somerset) were already investing in this development or close to so doing, and all GW attendees displayed an interest.
- Two systems are under consideration - B4B Marketing 'Bowlr' and Bowls Surrey MATCH. The Secretary had tabulated some of the main comparative considerations, to focus the discussions: Capabilities; market; future developments; cost and payment plan; software and software support; nature of demonstration available; enhancements. The discussion enabled an updated version of this tabulation to be produced after the meeting [please contact the Secretary if interested].

4.3 Registration of Coloured Clothing

General open discussion about how the counties present interpreted their role in relation to administering clothing registration on behalf of Bowls England. Slightly different approaches evident. Suggested also by some that – in this day and age – the process itself might really no longer be needed. Sponsorship marks and back-letting considered.

4.4 Whatever happened to the Bowls England Buddy system ?

Clearly differing views on the effectiveness of the Buddy system. Some Administrators felt entirely happy, others felt that it had barely worked, perhaps depending on the individuals involved. Though little contact beyond the initial meeting and conversations, in most cases.

5. **Any Other Business**

5.1 Safeguarding (again)

Concern expressed on the problem of dealing with a small number of applicants for club membership, where there may be suspicions but no official data re offenders. How do they proceed – guidance needed ? A balance must also be struck in relation to Human Rights and GDPR implications.

5.2 Registration of Trustees 2022

Quite a long conversation on this, with some attendees having recent experience of the process. Need to refer to Bowls England Web site to see to whom it applies and what is involved :

<https://www.bowlsengland.com/trust-registration-service/>

Seemingly, all trustees must be listed, but only one (Lead) Trustee needed as a contact.

5.3 Succession planning

Asked that this go on our November meeting agenda.

5.4 Handling of propositions at the Bowls England AGM

Raised by Chair, but concerns from some delegates present at the Bowls England AGM re the handling of the proposals in relation to numbers of qualifiers per county. As noted in 3.1. (a), outcome of the Bowls England proposal for 2023 fully accepted, including by Dorset. Bowls England Competitions Review aiming to cover 2024; reporting in due course. But felt that the Worcester proposal was also for 2024 and should have been voted on. Constitutionally doubtful.

5.5 Next Chairman - Michael Jackson (Warks)

Meeting closed at 13.30 pm Date of next meeting - Tuesday 7th November 2023.