



Bowls Hampshire Executive Meeting Minutes

21st September 2021

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Paula Haynes, Malcolm James, Liz Bingley, Charles Graham, Eileen Scovell, Helen Springett, Ric Newsom, Gill May, Mary Varndell, Min Wright, Ken Graham, there were 29 members were in attendance.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the zoom meeting held on 7th April 2021 were approved, proposed by Julie Greenwood, seconded by Margaret Leggett, all agreed.

Richard then went through the outstanding points on the Action Log.

Action 1: Peter Little to update the meeting on Action 1 – invitation to the Coaching Director to visit Bowls Hampshire.

Peter informed the meeting of the possible visit of Alan Lane BE Development Officer to look at up to 4 clubs, but stated he was currently on holiday as yet wasn't sure exactly what the visit was intended to cover. Richard stated that a clear indication as to what BE are looking to deliver from this visit. Brian Jones suggested it maybe a preparatory visit to gain an understanding of what's happening at the grass route level.

Debbie Senior had a specific request of getting more bowlers trained as coaches at Ringwood. Hazel explained for BH that Anthea Dore was the County Coaching co-ordinator as should be her point of contact. She also explained that Alan Lanes position of development was different to coaching and that the invitation from BH was for Mal Evans BE Coaching Director to visit, he is a level 3 coach. There then followed a discussion on the floor about Coaching and both Coach Bowls and EBCS (English Bowls Coaching).

Action 3: BH Marketing. Peter gave an update on the various methods to improve BH communication, including 'Facebook', 'Twitter' and the 'Newsletter' Some of the comments included that although the newsletter was informative and very good, it was almost out of date by the time it came out. There followed a very good discussion as to various methods and it was agreed that they were all good. For many bowlers the Newsletter was the only way to hear about articles as they were not on Facebook or Twitter. Peter requested everyone to look to send in information that could be published from the various areas to keep everyone informed. There is a dedicated link on the website newsletter@BH.com.

Richard thanked Peter for his efforts and hard work.

Action 9: Presidents Day, Hazel had received an email from Neil with reference to next year's Presidents Day which Cynthia and Neil hoped to be held on Wednesday 6th July at Gosport. Hazel explained that it was felt that the Presidents Day should be held at Banister Park as a central location and as previously would be paid for by the County. Both Cynthia and Neil agreed and a meeting would be held after the AGM to discuss in detail the day.

Action 10: Friendly mixed matches with Hampshire bowls clubs, following the AGM Richard would arrange a meeting with the Men's and Ladies Match Secretaries to discuss this.

3. Matters Arising

Item 4 Michael informed the meeting that he had produced a photo book of this year's competition winners and thanked everyone who had taken these as he was unable to attend many of the events. He also noted that with reference to the Golden Pairs, the minutes stated both Golden Men and Golden Boy's pairs but the website stated Golden Pairs. It was agreed it should be Golden Pairs.

4. BE Update

Richard asked Hazel to deal with each of the points separately. Firstly, the competition formats which following the BE survey for 2022 have been changed. Pairs, Triples and Fours will be 18 ends, with the pairs reverting back to 4 bowls and the triples reverting back to 3 bowls. Both singles competitions remain 21 shots (4 bowls) 21 ends (2 Bowls). Although not 100% happy, the meeting agreed with the formats and felt BE had listened to the competitors

Changes made at the Championship were not received well and the committee brought up the following points

- Poor communication for competitors on arriving at the greens (particularly for bowlers attending for their first championship)
- No indication about the change of competition payment for semi, runner up and winners. Still no communication as to how much the prize money is.
- With three matches in a day and the short time in between, competitors unable to get food and drink due to the long queues (this was exacerbated by the closure of the clubhouse for 6 days)
- The trade tent had only two suppliers, giving them a monopoly on cost of clothes and equipment. Suggestion that other suppliers be invited and possibly other items such as jewellery, handbags and items (as it's the ladies who predominately do the shopping).
- Lack of a National Open draw, many competitors felt this was unfair
- Lack of Badge Presentation, this Nationals is a very special event which competitors strive to reach and was felt that rather than celebrate the achievement it was passed off as unimportant. The committee felt if at the Counties meeting this was reinstated, that a proposition be put to the AGM.
- National Brochure the go to booklet for where the counties and competitions were playing was missing, so supporters were left trying to find out where matches were being played.

National presentation dinners scrapped, this was consulted on or communicated and Counties, Competitors and Supporters found out by reading in the Championship booklet. The committee felt this event was the culmination of the years competitive programme, very well supported and a chance to congratulate and celebrate their players achievements. The committee agreed that if after discussion at the Counties meeting this wasn't changed a proposition be put to the AGM.

The committee discussed the format for the Johns Trophy and Middleton Cup and wanted to understand the reasons for these competitions not reverting back to league but remaining as knockout competitions. There was acceptance for 2022 but wanted a proposition to go forward at this year's AGM that these competitions would revert back in 2023.

5. Financial Update

Carl gave an update on the financial situation, which shows a large surplus this year of about £14000 which will cover the last year's loss. Money paid out included prize winners, Banister Park and Atherley annual payment, green fees, umpires' costs, and general expenses. As yet Bowls England haven't made a payment for the competitors attending RLS although they have on numerous occasions said this will be forthcoming. Once payment is received this is given to the competitors so nothing goes to the County.

Carl stated that he was not expecting any changes to the affiliation or competition fees. Following an email today from BE it has been confirmed that there will be no change to last year's affiliation and competition fees.

Following a meeting between the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer a survey was prepared and all bowlers in Hampshire were invited to take part. Richard asked Carl to give the results to the meeting, which were as expected particularly with reference to this year's format. The full results are attached.

Richard thanked Carl for all his hard work.

6. Bowls Hampshire Vacancies / Nominations

Hazel informed the meeting that two nominations had been received, one for the Vice President, Alan Leppard proposed by Fareham BC seconded by Lee on Solent. As Rosemary Corney is retiring from the position of Ladies Match Secretary, a nomination has been received for Wendy Brown from Milton Park BC.

Hazel informed everyone that following the meeting she would be sending an email to all clubs inviting nominations for all positions to be received by the end of October. It was agreed that for current Officers and Exec committee members who wish to continue, no nomination would be required just an email to the secretary.

Date of AGM Thursday 25th November.

7. Friendly Fixture Programme

Both Match Secretaries stated that their programme would be complete by the AGM.

8. BH Yearbook

Michael asked Carl to add the photo book to the website. Hazel requested that the Club information be added to the website, Michael explained that the problem with GPPR meant this wasn't possible but said he could do a 'drop box' which is password controlled.

Richard thanked Michael for everything he does during the year in particular with the newsletter.

9. Marketing Sub-committee update

Already covered under the Action Log.

10. AOB

Hazel read out the letter received from Purbrook Heath thanking the committee for their hard work, particularly with reference to the Thornbury competition. In addition, she read a card received from Rosemary who thanked everyone for the gift she received from the County for all her hard work.

Richard thanked Rosemary and Brian Jones who are both retiring at the AGM for their dedication over many years to the County, they will both be greatly missed.

Peter informed the committee that 12 clubs had held Open days all gaining 20 or more new members. He is also busy taking his level 2 coaching and side one of the instructors is Mark Burkenshaw (a crown green bowler and a Director of BD)

Davie Wildman informed the meeting that the Eastney bowls club is folding. He also informed us that unfortunately Graham King's cancer has returned and has to go into hospital for another operation. Richard informed the committee that Paul and he had discussed the Under 25 men's side joining the Home Counties League next year and requested their agreement to enter them. Everyone unanimously agreed.

In addition, the role of Under 25 Manager should be advertised to all clubs, this position would be for the next two years. He added that Mark Barnes who has been running the under 25 team and done a super job knew and could apply for the position. He requested approval from the Exec, all agreed.

Lesley Taylor asked whether it was possible for BH finalists to receive the year bar. Hazel explained that the cost for these bars had become so expensive that the County couldn't justify purchasing them.

Julie Greenwood asked that a vote of thanked be recorded for Banister Park who had worked extremely hard to ensure everything possible was available for the County, including finding additional dates for both the rearranged competition and the Dolly Gore day.

Hazel was requested to send an email thanking them.

The next Exec meeting will follow the AGM on Thursday 25th November.

Competition Format Survey

Bowls Hampshire invited members to give their views on the changes in the Bowls England Championship formats introduced this season so that feedback could be given to the NGB

A short questionnaire was published on the website and emailed to every club contact for onward communication to all their members but disappointingly only 66 responses were received of which 40 were from men and 26 from women

A summary of the responses is as follows:

- **Question 1** - Did you enter the National/County Championships in 2021?

Response	Men	Women	Total
Yes	39	24	63
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>97.5%</i>	<i>92.3%</i>	<i>95.5%</i>
No	1	2	3
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>2.5%</i>	<i>7.7%</i>	<i>4.5%</i>

- **Question 2 (a)** – Were you happy with the new format of reduced ends?

Response	Men	Women	Total
Yes	7	3	10
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>17.5%</i>	<i>11.5%</i>	<i>15.2%</i>
No	33	23	56
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>82.5%</i>	<i>88.5%</i>	<i>84.8%</i>

- **Question 2 (b)** – Were you happy with the new format of fewer bowls?

Response	Men	Women	Total
Yes	4	2	6
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>10.0%</i>	<i>7.7%</i>	<i>9.1%</i>
No	36	24	60
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>90.0%</i>	<i>92.3%</i>	<i>90.9%</i>

- **Question 3** - Would you like to see the formats return to those used before 2021?

Response	Men	Women	Total
Yes	36	22	58
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>90.0%</i>	<i>84.6%</i>	<i>87.8%</i>
No	2	2	4
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>5.0%</i>	<i>7.7%</i>	<i>6.1%</i>
Unsure	2	2	4
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>5.0%</i>	<i>7.7%</i>	<i>6.1%</i>

- **Question 4** - If you do not wish to play future Championships with the New formats, would you like to see National and County Championships separated, with the County continuing to use the format as per pre 2021?

Response	Men	Women	Total
Yes	29	13	42
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>72.5%</i>	<i>50.0%</i>	<i>63.7%</i>
No	8	7	15
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>20.0%</i>	<i>26.9%</i>	<i>22.7%</i>
Unsure	3	6	9
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>7.5%</i>	<i>23.1%</i>	<i>13.6%</i>

- **Question 5** - If there is no change will you be entering Competitions in 2022?

Response	Men	Women	Total
Yes	9	9	18
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>22.5%</i>	<i>34.6%</i>	<i>27.3%</i>
No	4	1	5
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>10.0%</i>	<i>3.8%</i>	<i>7.6%</i>
Unsure	27	16	43
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>67.5%</i>	<i>61.5%</i>	<i>65.1%</i>

Additional Survey Comments on New Competition Formats

Bowls England's decision to change formats for 2021 has been claimed to be a response to a need in 2021 for a shorter National Championships but I am aware from attending BE Counties Meetings that there has been a desire for some time to introduce shorter formats, which supporters claim will encourage more people to take up the game. This may or may not be true but the unilateral imposition of these badly thought through changes has caused confusion and given the impression that the new brooms in the Office think they know best and that the views of the Counties and bowlers is of little importance. Successful change involves carrying people with you and this Bowls England has manifestly failed to do

If for 2021 the size of the Championships had to be reduced the changes in format might have been more acceptable if they had applied only to matches at Leamington and the traditional formats been retained at county level. England's National Champions when representing England at the British Isles are required to play a different number of ends to those by which they qualified so it would have been feasible to ask county champions to change when they reached Leamington

My personal views on the formats are

- 15 ends for Fours massively increases the advantage for the home team and changes the whole nature of the game. Matches can effectively be over by 12 ends and players are complaining their travel time is often greater than playing time
- Triples must return to be 3 bowls. This is arguably the most popular format for the club bowler and if the length of the game needs to be reduced this should be achieved by reducing the number of ends
- Pairs should remain at 4 bowls and if change is necessary 18 ends might be acceptable
- If the 2021 formats are retained, I would probably confine my entries to 4 and 2 bowl singles

Hopefully Bowls England will listen to the views of bowlers, but it is worrying that they seem to think that views expressed in their surveys conducted through social media and Zoom meetings are representative of the bowls community. Bowls Hampshire and other Counties need to make clear that the NGB is owned by the Counties and if changes to formats are to be introduced then it should be as a result of agreement with Counties and not unilaterally imposed