



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**(Meeting held by “Go-to-Meeting” conference call on
31 January 2021)**

PRESENT:

John Bell (JB) – President/Chairman
Gerry Baker (GB) - Regional Director
Garry Collins (GC)- Regional Director
Darryl Clout (DC) - Regional Director
Ian Howard (IH) – Regional Director
Claudius Lam (CL) – Regional Director
Hazel Wilson (HW)- Appointed Director

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gary Smith (GS) – Chief Executive
Roger Black (RB) - Minute taker

APOLOGIES:

None.

1. WELCOME:

The President opened the meeting at 12.00 hours (UK time) and welcomed all to the Board meeting.

2 2021 WORLD BOWLS CHAMPIONSHIPS:

Neil Dalrymple, (ND) CEO Bowls Australia, and Andrew Howie (AH) Events and Competition Manager Bowls Australia attended the meeting to discuss the position regarding the 2021 World Championships. ND provided an overview to the work carried out and investment to date by the organising committee and key stakeholders in preparation for the championships originally scheduled for May/June 2020, then rescheduled for May/June 2021 and then rescheduled for September 2021 due to the effects of and restrictions relating to the pandemic. He advised that the organising committee and the event’s key stakeholders recognised, taking into account the current situation regarding Covid-19 and all the global effects and restrictions currently being imposed and outlook for the rest of 2021, as a result of Covid-19, that the hosting of the Championships anytime in 2021 was now untenable. Discussions had been held with their major funding stakeholders, who remained fully supportive and still keen to investigate further options that may be open to BA and WB to still stage the event.

After due consideration of all feedback received from key stakeholders and MNAs due to participate in the event, it was agreed that rescheduling to early 2022 was still untenable. It was confirmed that the vast majority of MNA's due to participate had already indicated a desire to have the Championships played in 2022.

BA proposed that the Championships be re-scheduled to suitable dates later in 2022. Following on a discussion, it was considered that revised dates later in 2022 after the Commonwealth Games (CG) would be more acceptable than dates prior to the CG, taking into account other ongoing scheduled events. Potential dates – possibly October/November 2022 would be discussed at a meeting of the organising committee to be held within the next few days and BA hoped to be able to propose new dates by the end of the following week. Once agreed, MNA's due to participate would be informed accordingly.

Should the Championships not take place on agreed rescheduled dates in 2022, it was resolved, and unanimously accepted, that they would be cancelled not further postponed.

Resolved:

It was agreed unanimously that the Championships would not now take place in 2021.

BA to advise WB of proposed revised dates in late 2022 for the Championships.

It was unanimously agreed by all parties that if the Championships were then rescheduled to be held in late 2022 and ultimately could not proceed on the rescheduled dates, then the event would be totally cancelled not postponed any further.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

GC – now President of Bowls Guernsey and has relinquished previously held post of Secretary. No other changes.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Tabled: Minutes of October 2020 Board meeting.

The minutes of the October 2020 meeting were accepted as a true record of the proceedings and approved unanimously.

5. BUSINESS ARISING

There were no matters arising not covered in the agenda.

6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In advance of the meeting, JB provided his report to the Board, referring initially to his previous one in which he had identified key factors influencing the wellbeing of the sport. He continued to present an overview of progress on these factors.

WB has committed itself to closer and increased communication with MNAs and having undertaken several meetings with the larger nations there is no doubt in his view that these have been welcomed and appreciated, and they have expressed a unanimous desire to maintain a regular dialogue through on - line face to face meetings.

JB also mentioned the Media and Communications Committee that had been recently formed and which had also received an enthusiastic response from its members. With its considerable expertise, and very relevant focus, they had already started making excellent progress.

The President's report confirmed that Regional Directors are committed to more regular and in - depth communication with the MNAs in their regions again reinforcing the resolve to achieve

better engagement with the global membership.

JB thought these proactive initiatives mentioned above clearly demonstrate that WB is reaching out to bodies and individuals who can bring invaluable knowledge and experience to the table and was of the opinion WB are in a 'great place' to move forward positively.

Maintaining a constructive dialogue and creating effective partnerships with MNA's is, however, absolutely essential to WB undertaking successful review processes and implementing any subsequent remedial initiatives considered necessary. The climate for genuine collaboration and cooperation has never been better, or more necessary, with WB fully appreciating this and relishing the opportunity to take full advantage and embrace the potential support that is now available.

JB continued by reminding the Board that Regional Development is and should remain a high priority for World Bowls and that the closer the relationship Regional Directors have with their respective MNA's then the more productive and successful WB will be in stimulating development opportunities for them.

There was a need now to build on the pro-active roles of Regional Directors as well as a need to increase WB's effectiveness and to formulate carefully crafted, and realistic Regional Development Plans for each region. These should include initiatives created through the intelligence gathered from RDs' interaction with their MNAs and refined by the expertise of the RD's along with the use of criteria which should aim to produce impactful development as opposed to cosmetic schemes.

JB's report referred to the WB Development Strategy, indicating that he, HW and GS had received suggestions and comments regarding the criteria to assist in the determination of applications. These suggestions have now been incorporated into an updated Development Strategy. When it is finally approved, by the Board, it was recommended it be relaunched and delivered via Regional Directors to the relevant respective MNA's. This will hopefully stimulate new interest in WB's offer of assistance as well as facilitating improved contact with those MNAs who have proved elusive in the past. It was confirmed there was an annual budget available but it was agreed funding was not available for major capital investments and is primarily aimed at supporting emerging and smaller nations. The Board agreed to have a further look at the plan and any comments be sent to GS by the end of the following week.

Action:

The Board agreed to re-examine the revised Development Strategy document to ensure it was fully up to date based on the recent global studies.

It was agreed to re-launch the revised Development Strategy to MNA's through the relevant RD.

JB then referred to the on-going events review process, also covered in the CEO's report. The meetings with the MNAs have gone extremely well with positive feedback and with a number more to undertake, after which the Events Review Working Group will summarise the views and concepts gathered and put forward recommendations for discussion and approval by the Board hopefully within the next month. This will include discussing various options for formats, timings and all other relevant aspects of the World Bowls events programme. It will also discuss the concept of forming an international working group composed of World Bowls representatives and appropriate MNAs to discuss the approved recommendations, and work towards the implementation of an agreed programme of World events which strengthens the

profile and attractiveness of the sport of bowls, enhances the integrity of World Bowls as a proactive governing body, and is fully fit for purpose for benefitting global membership. JB confirmed to IH that Bowls USA were to be included in a meeting still to be arranged, recognising the potential that existed in that region. Some additional nations would also be considered for inclusion in the project.

7. REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORTS:

Tabled: Written reports from the Regional Directors were circulated in advance prior to the meeting.

Europe:

GC reported that because of the effects of covid-19, there was not very much happening in Europe at the moment.

There was no further update on the BIBC/BWIBC merger, and the European Bowls Union (EBU) were in the process of preparing a new constitution/articles for approval. Brief updates were provided, where appropriate, of activities in each of the MNA's in the region.

The Board had previously agreed to extend Switzerland's development status up to the 2020 World Championships and photographic evidence of short carpet activities were produced to reinforce their enthusiasm and ambitions to progress to become full members once suitable facilities were available. The Board agreed an extension of development membership until the 2024 World Championships.

Asia:

CL provided a detailed report to the Board prior to the meeting - the main points of interest are summarised as follows:- In addition CL was keen to investigate and arrange for the provision of coaching and training of officials, which JB reminded was available through the Development Strategy.

Brunei: there are plans to organise umpire and marker courses in May and coaching courses later in the year. Bowls Asia will assist in the coaching.

China: bowls will be included in the Chinese National Games in September in Xian with Hong Kong, Macau and provinces in China being involved.

There are currently 9 greens in China, with 6 more being constructed or under planning.

Japan: planning to hold the 7th Japan International Open Lawn Bowls Tournament on August 27 - 29 this year at the newly built Kobe-Shiawasenomure green if Covid-19 pandemic has been resolved before this summer.

The World Masters Games 2021 in Kansai has been postponed to May 2022. Lawn bowls will be one of showcase sports in this big sports event and Bowls Japan welcomes all bowlers in the world who are interested in this event.

Malaysia: building of two covered greens is underway and due for completion this year. The green will be used for the Under 21 competition which was deferred to 2022 due to COVID-19.

CL outlined the problems trying to establish contact with officials from Bangladesh, a development member, and GS confirmed that fees and returns had not been received for 2020 or 2021. The Board agreed that their membership be terminated.

Oceania:

DC advised there was little to report other than BA were currently working to finalise a coaching resource for global use and that Cook Islands had completed their National Championships. The status of PNG was still to be determined and the position was being monitored by WB. DC stated he had spent some time with the BA Training Coordinator, whose team was putting the final touches to various coaching courses, hopefully being completed by June 2021. BA had intimated that they would be happy to make their courses available for global access in the fullness of time when completed.

Africa:

GB advised that there was very little to report from his region, which was mainly down to the imposed lockdown as a result of the effects of Covid-19. In South Africa, all major events were postponed. Namibia is due to host the 2021 African States tournament in June, but were concerned the event may need to be cancelled/postponed.

No contact was possible with Zambia.

Namibia is the host country for the upcoming African States tournament scheduled for June 2021 and will evaluate later whether the event can proceed or will have to be cancelled/postponed due to the effects of Covid-19.

In addition to, and since the report, there had been interest expressed from a small, diligent and keen group in Ghana to establish a bowling association. GS had written to the contact to ascertain the level of interest and support from the national sports authorities.

GB also raised concern about the ability of African players to get time off work etc for both the CG and the World Championships in 2022.

Americas:

IH provided the Board with a detailed, comprehensive report on his region, summarised as follows:-

Argentina and Brazil – nothing to report albeit Argentina thought WB could give more attention to smaller nations. It is considered that Argentina should be reminded of the existence of the Development Strategy which is specifically geared for the smaller nations.

Canada – had participated in the WB events committee review of WB competitions and had indicated doubt about participation in the WB Championships if current Covid-19 conditions don't improve. The MNA had signed up with an organisation to provide a national integrated safe sport tracking and membership management platform including all (bowls) member provincial sporting organisations. The platform will assist bowlers, coaches, umpires and volunteers in participating in a safe and inclusive environment free of abuse, harassment or discrimination.

A national marketing campaign is being developed to promote lawn bowls as a safe outdoor activity for all Canadians and also being developed is a campaign to help clubs reorientate themselves toward a sport business model.

Coaching workshops via virtual delivery are to be launched with effect from March 2021.

It was projected that participation rates in 2021 will be similar to 2020 levels.

USA – Covid-19 has had a marked negative impact on bowls and BUSA cancelled their National Championships planned for August and the US Open planned for October.

Discussions between BUSA and Bowls Canada are taking place regarding whether or not the North American Challenge, which was postponed from last season to 2021, will again be cancelled.

It was known that Bowls USA has approximately as many bowling non-members as it does have bowling members, and BUSA could substantially increase its revenue if all the non-members signed on to supporting BUSA.

Falkland Is - in the Falkland Islands, the Government has provided funding that will enable the building of at least three rinks at a popular golf course

Jamaica - progress is being made to build a full sized bowls green, online coaching program has started and lobbying efforts continue for financial aid from Jamaica Sports for travel assistance to enable players to participate in WB events

Resolved:

Development Membership of Switzerland to be extended to 2024 World Championships.

Development Membership of Bangladesh to be terminated.

8 MEDIA & PR & SOCIAL MEDIA REPORTS

The World Bowls Media and Communications Group has been tasked with looking at all forms of World Bowls Communications and initial meetings have concentrated primarily on a review of the WB website. Part of the review has focused on linking social media posts to the website and the prevention of having to duplicate each post manually on all current outlets, together with the cosmetic look on the display of information. The Bowls Australia website was considered a best practice example and Aidan Davis (Bowls Australia Communications and Marketing Manager) was asked to provide information on how the above could be achieved. Aidan reported on a product that Bowls Australia currently use a “widget” called Curator. Curator is a social media aggregator that allows you to pull together all your media channels in a brandable stream that can be embedded anywhere.

The Group discussed the options and based on current upwards trends in “hits” of World Bowls social media posts felt that the free version would not be suitable because of the limitations on numbers and also the limitation on platforms.

HW presented the Board with with a funding proposal to purchase a "Curator" widget which enables integration of social media, thereby preventing duplication on the WB website. The Board agreed that a full license be purchased, subject to and following a trial of the free version initially to gauge interest and positive feedback. The cost of a full license was in the region of US\$550 per annum.

HW had circulated to Board members the proposed Terms of Reference of the newly formed Media & Communications Group and the Board agreed unanimously the content.

GC had circulated to the Board all the statistics since the last meeting on activity on social media platforms, twitter, facebook and Instagram, and was pleased to report that in excess of 6000 followers had now been achieved.

Statistics on website activity was still to be obtained from the Hunter Johnstone, the company

responsible for the WB website,

Resolved:

The Board agreed the terms of reference of the Media & Communications Committee.
The Board agreed that a full license be obtained from Curator, subject to initially a trial of the free version to gauge interest and positive feedback.

9 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT:

Tabled: Chief Executive's written, detailed and comprehensive report was circulated to all Directors prior to the meeting.

Affiliation & Membership:

The latest, up to date details of registered membership details were issued to Directors in advance of the meeting.

No acknowledgement or response received to the notice of termination of membership of Malawi as agreed at the last meeting,

WB remains in regular contact with the PNG NOC regarding the ongoing progress to resolve the constitutional issues relating to the MNA. Their 2021 annual return and 2020 & 2021 fees have not yet been received.

Fees were received from India and Samoa but full details of annual return figures still awaited. Both Tonga and Jamaica had made their annual returns but fees remained outstanding Zambia's annual return and fees remained outstanding and there were no responses to any correspondences sent. Their long outstanding late withdrawal invoices remain outstanding and it was agreed that the relevant amount should now be included in the 2021 forecast as a potential bad debt. GB indicated that there had been no response to communications sent to the MNA in Zambia but he had hoped to make enquiries via one of their bowlers and would report back in due course any information gained.

Kenya's long outstanding late withdrawal invoice remains outstanding but they have indicated part payment by February and clearance later in the year and this had been agreed as acceptable. I.B.D. had been accepted as an Associate Member of WB and their annual return received. No fee had been previously agreed and GS recommended the minimum fee would be appropriate – the Board agreed. GS pointed out that the vast majority of their members were members of bowling clubs in existing MNA's. Some 17 countries were in membership of IBD and CL stated that Para Lawn Bowls disciplines would be featuring in the Asia Para Olympics in 2022. Out of a forecast total of £93323 for 2021 affiliation fees £93215 has already been received.

Resolved:

Level of fees for IBD agreed at the minimum level.

Events

2021 World Singles Champion of Champions

The 2021 World Singles Champion of Champions, is currently confirmed to be staged at Naenae B.C., Wellington, NZ in late November 2021. It was agreed with the CEO Bowls NZ, following on the recent WB Events Review Working Group involving Bowls New Zealand, that the 2021 event be cancelled in the light of the ongoing pandemic situation. The 2022 Champion of Champions was also scheduled to take place at the Naenae club.

2021 World Under 25s event

The 2021 World Under 25s event is currently provisionally scheduled to be held at County Antrim IBC, N. Ireland in December 2021. The IIBC had indicated it was currently their intention for the event to still go ahead in December 2021 with the hope that the roll-out of the vaccine programme would enable them to do so. Invitations to submit entries are yet to be issued by WB & IIBC. The Board had reservations on holding this event, based on the current position of the pandemic and GS would liaise further with IIBC.

World Bowls Events Review Working Group

The first round of individual conference meetings has been conducted so far with Bowls Australia, Bowls Canada, Hong Kong LBA, Bowls South Africa , Bowls England, Bowls NZ and Bowls Scotland. All MNAs involved so far have welcomed the collaboration process and the meetings have proved to be generally constructive and positive. Further meetings will be held in February with other MNAs/International Bowls bodies in the next stage of the process.

Resolved:

The Board agreed the cancellation of the 2021 World Champion of Championships.
GS to liaise with the IIBC regarding the World Under 25s event.

Strategic Planning:

IH asked for an update on Strategic Planning meetings and following on a discussion on the way forward, JB was of the view that there was no point in holding further meetings on strategic planning until such times as the Events Review Working Group's report had been completed and been finalised. Additionally, the Media and Communication Group had also to complete their mandate, all of which would have an impact on the eventual Strategic Plan. In the interim and at the suggestion of DC, GS would prepare an outline Strategic Plan document on the basis of what was currently known.

Resolved:

GS to prepare a document for committee members to consider, comment upon and suggest amendments for consideration at the next Strategic Planning Committee meeting.

Manufacturing, Testing & Artificial Surfaces:

GS advised that the revised ownership/company structure of the Henselite company has now been finalised.

The final instalment of The Bowls Doctor (Barry Cox) Tester's annual licence fee has now been

paid and it was understood that Barry's representations to Bowls Australia regarding their Domestic Regulations for testing and stamping were continuing.

A required update has been identified by the WB technical consultants in the area of abrasion/wear testing. Following consultation, Keith McAuliffe has followed a process of consultation with the accredited laboratories and suppliers of World Bowls approved synthetic surfaces and has just finalised the required revision. This has now been sent to all concerned for any final comments or final approval.

Action:

The Board endorsed the process and the finalised amendment to the Performance Standards.

WADA:

All MNAs were reminded that the 2021 WADA Code and 2021 List of Banned Substances and Methods came into effect on 1 January 2021.

WADA have increased the annual subscription for being a Code Signatory and for Code Compliance Monitoring from US\$2000 to US\$10000.

The WB consultant, Dr Colin Reid, has generously agreed to waive his annual retainer fee this year bearing in mind the lack of TUE applications activity.

Laws Committee, CGF & IBD:

Kerry Clark, CNZM, OBE, advised that there was nothing to report on Law Committee matters since the last Board meeting.

Technical Delegate Kerry Clark continues to liaise closely with CGF and the CG2022 Birmingham Organising Committee on all aspects relating to Lawn Bowls for the 2022 Games and is also liaising with IBD where necessary regarding the Para disciplines.

Correspondence from IPC advised that IPC revision of the IPC Recognised International Federation Category will now only be put forward for consideration at the 2021 IPC General Assembly or future meeting and, therefore, new applications for IPC recognition will therefore not be considered until their process is finalised.

10. FINANCE REPORT.

GS had circulated prior the meeting the accounts for the 2020 financial year and updated financial forecasts.

The vast majority of the documentation relating to the 2020 financial year at this stage has been prepared in readiness for delivery to the WB accountants to undertake the annual audit and preparation of audited accounts.

Over recent weeks, in liaison with our financial consultant, the updated financial forecast issued to the Board has been prepared to be as accurate as considered possible pending any further amendments necessary resulting from the ongoing consideration in areas such as events. Once any amendments are agreed to the 2021 figures the initial 2021 forecast will form the 2021 budget figures. This was endorsed by the Board.

11. GENERAL BUSINESS:

GS advised the Board that Aero Bowls had intimated to WB that they were to manufacture a new sized bowl – 3.75.

Future Meetings:

It was proposed to hold the next conference meeting on 11th April 2021 – 12.00am UK start time. It was agreed that there would now be no face-to-face meeting in 2021.

Roger Black

4th February 2021