

Minutes of BN Men's Section Council meeting held at 7.00pm on Monday 24th October 2022 at Gedling Indoor Bowls Centre

In the absence of President Dave Guthrie (in hospital for a knee operation), the meeting was opened at 7.00pm by Russ Chamberlain, who welcomed the few members present.

Roll Call

A roll call of members showed those present as Secretary David King-Taylor, Treasurer Frank Wallis, Competition & Match Secretary Russ Chamberlain and delegates Chris Smith and Mick Leafe (Arnold Park), Malcolm Potter (Beeston Unity), Alan Ayre and ANO (Brierley Park), Alan Leonardi (Bulwell Forest), Irvine Powdrill and Alan Scally (East Leake), Mike Carley (Notts Constabulary), Keith Williams (Queensway Park) and Nick Sewter (West Bridgford). Apologies for absence were received from Attenborough BC, Keyworth BC, Retford BC, President David Guthrie, Colin Firbank, Brian Littleton and Mike Owen.

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting on 27 January 2020 had been circulated to all clubs. It was proposed by Malcolm Potter (Beeston Unity), seconded by Mick Leafe (Arnold Park) and accepted unanimously that the minutes were a true record. There were no matters arising.

Secretary's Report - D King-Taylor

Evening Gentlemen. The last meeting we had was in January 2020. Since then, the Executive Committee have met several times, usually bi-monthly, and conducted business on your behalf. If it wasn't for the committee here, we would be in great difficulty because we have worked as a team and without them we would be lost. My message tonight is that if we don't get new officers, we don't get new blood, we could flounder. Thanks to Frank and Russ and to Lee Garrett who has now retired after eight years as the Competition and Match Secretary and it is with great sadness that I have to say that Dave Guthrie is standing down as our President. He cannot be here tonight as he is in hospital today having a knee operation, hence Russ has kindly agreed to come in tonight and take the chair.

Our website supplies all of our information. We have had 81000 hits. Its where all the information is about everything we do. We are very transparent about everything we do. Every meeting is on the website. It's an electronic age. Paperwork we are trying to keep to a minimum.

We have had three new clubs come in: Beckingham and Newark Town and we welcome back Worksop. We now sit with 31 clubs. A far cry from the days but we can't keep looking back. We have to try to keep going. If there was no committee here, then we would be struggling to have a Men's Section. We have a joint role with the Ladies on the BN Executive Board. The Ladies Section now have more officers than we do. There is nothing else I can say other than that we need to give serious consideration to save ourselves from going under. The only way we can do that in my book is to find new blood to help our existing committee members to carry out the work that they do.

From the floor, Mick Leafe (Arnold Park) echoed the comments about the work done by the committee, and Lee Garrett who was not here tonight. It would be remiss not to comment on the wonderful work done by the Competition Secretary, a thankless job and a tough one, particularly when you are an active competitor yourself. He has done a splendid job.

There's just one point of clarification about the clubs. Worksop, who have just rejoined the Association, Beckingham and Newark Town are not competing in any leagues and are not putting anything into the County.

The Secretary said that these clubs affiliate to the County Association in order to get the benefits that can be gained from Bowls England.

Treasurer's Report - F Wallis

The Treasurer said than an Income and Expenditure Statement for the years 2021 & 2022, together with detailed notes to the accounts, had been circulated to all clubs and he hoped that everyone had a copy or had been able to see one. There's not a lot to talk about really. We made a small surplus in 2021 and a similar small deficit in 2022. It's basically the cost of Civil Liability Insurance and the topping-up of a joint account, to which the Men & Ladies contribute equally to pay costs relating to Bowls England, which make up the amount of the deficit. We are roughly breaking even so with £11500 in the bank so our finances are stable and we should be secure in the future.

Competition Secretary's report - L Garrett

Lee Garrett was not in attendance, but he had produced the following report which was circulated to all clubs prior to the meeting and was also available on the website.

"The 2022 entries compared to 2021 showed an 11.4% increase, which was mainly down to the domestic competitions. There has been a healthy increase in competition entries over the past few years.

The Newark Northern squad were this season's star performers, winning both singles, the pairs and both junior disciplines, who all went on to represent Nottinghamshire at the National finals in Leamington Spa. Jack Emmerson produced a fine exhibition of bowling to narrowly lose to England International Sam Tolchard in the 2 bowl singles in the National Final. The domestic competition winners were evenly spread around the county with East Leake winning 2 disciplines.

The county trial was well attended and resulted in a total squad of 47 bowlers. The Midland Counties league saw experimental teams with players trying to claim a place in the Middleton Cup and Balcomb teams The county team lost out to Yorkshire in the Middleton Cup who themselves failed at the semi-final stage.

The Balcomb team had a new look about it and there were encouraging signs after defeating Cumbria and Northumberland. They lost out to Yorkshire at the quarter final stage, Nottinghamshire's best performance for many a year, Yorkshire lost to Essex in the final.

Bowls Nottinghamshire had been freewheeling for quite a few years but now we find ourselves in a very healthy position with competition entries on the increase, a reinvigorated county squad and an extremely strong Executive committee. There is plenty to look forward to in the forthcoming seasons

Match Secretary's report - R Chamberlain

The 2022 season saw some mixed performances from disappointing to exceptional from representatives of both the County association and at Club level.

Bowls Nottinghamshire contested **The Francis Burton Trophy** in five playing games, unfortunately conceding one fixture against Lincolnshire. The original fixture against Lincolnshire was scheduled to be played at Cleethorpes which was also the day the they were hosting the Armed Forces Day celebrations with an expected influx of spectators exceeding 100,000. We had been advised the public car parks would not be available so technically creating an issue with parking and travel to the green. The fixture was rescheduled for 20th August where we could not raise a team to fulfil this game. From the replayed fixtures we won two (Worcestershire & Derbyshire) and lost three (Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire) finishing second from the bottom of the MCBA table.

The Northamptonshire game marked the end of an era for Bowls Nottinghamshire, Paul Martlew played his last game for the county after a career spanning over 35 years. He appeared for the county 343 times, a record that is unlikely ever to be surpassed. The day was a celebration of the contribution and achievement of a fantastic player and character. Some of Nottinghamshire's finest came along to be part of Pauls day including Brett Morley, Jamie Mills, Duncan Robinson, Dave Baird, Paul Jackson and others.

The Middleton Cup was contested as a straight knock out and after a hugely anticipated game we lost to Yorkshire 94 shots to 133.

After a decision at the AGM in February 2022 the Middleton Cup reverts to the round robin format for 2023 & 2024 seasons and the confirmed fixtures for Bowls Nottinghamshire are:

North A: Cumbria, Durham, Nottinghamshire & Yorkshire.

North B: Derbyshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire & Northumberland

The Balcomb Trophy saw Nottinghamshire progress to the Regional Finals for the first time in a few years. After a brilliant win against Cumbria in the first round 35 - 28, BN continued the momentum into the Regional Semi Final defeating a strong Northumberland side 38 - 36 which booked a place in the Regional Final. An excellent effort by the Bowls Nottinghamshire players only to be defeated by a strong Yorkshire side 26 - 44. Yorkshire went on to lose in the National Final to Essex 45 - 27.

At club level Arnold Park played fantastically in the **Club Two Fours** to beat Blossom Way (Lincolnshire) 39 - 32 in the Area Final, unfortunately losing to Desborough (Northamptonshire) in the last 32. Another great performance and achievement in a tough competition.

Newark Northern achieved a brilliant run in the **National Top Club** beating Stute (Derbyshire) in the Area final. They then progressed to the last 16 just losing out to Aspatria (Cumbria) in the last 16. An excellent achievement in an equally difficult competition to be successful in.

Well done to both clubs.

Jack Emmerson (Newark Northern) having won the County 2 wood competition, followed in the footsteps of Arron Brownley (Church Warsop) in 2016 and progressed all the way through to the National Final, Jack was narrowly beaten by Sam Tolchard 17 - 13. Absolutely fantastic performance and fingers crossed this is a stepping stone to further success.

In summary, Nottinghamshire has achieved some brilliant results in 2022 and I feel we, as a county, have a fantastic chance to go forward positively into the next few seasons with a realistic ambition to achieve success.

Bowls England Delegate's Report - R Chamberlain

The following report is a brief overview of the season's events and developments.

Unfortunately, I no longer receive regular updates from Bowls England as they prefer to target and contact the clubs directly so from an information sharing perspective the clubs possibly receive updates or requests through their Club Secretaries. I am, however, still a point of contact for the county and will liaise with Bowls England on matters arising within the clubs and county respectively.

I just feel that information is just bypassing us and that there is a direct approach to clubs. I don't know why this is because everything used to come through secretaries.

From the floor - Replying to the chairman's comments re information from Bowls England, Chris Smith (Arnold Park BC) replied that he had been secretary of Arnold Park for eight years and he had never received any information from Bowls England. He went on to say that Bowls England is an organisation for 35 Counties and has nothing to do with clubs and that the 35 counties own BE and all it needs is for 18 counties to tell BE that they want to return to the original formats.

Mick Leafe (MCBA President) added that there are six other counties apart from Nottinghamshire that are not happy with the policies BE are adopting such as regional finals, shortening games and formats which are alienating a lot of bowlers and will lead to a reduction in the number of competition entries.

The chairman noted all of the comments raised and assured the members present that all of these issues would be raised at the next Counties meeting in November.

Regional Finals

Despite being mostly unsupported at concept during the last County Conference, the Regional Finals went ahead and I believe this will be widely discussed and feedback voiced at the County Conference in November. From a logistics point of view the whole process seemed largely impractical and didn't benefit most bowlers who qualified out of their County. Venues below:

Senior Singles, Senior Pairs & Champion of Champions:

St Neots BC (Cams), Redcar BC (Yorks), Southey BC (Surrey) & Ilminster BC (Somerset)

Mixed Fours & Mixed Pairs

Essex BC (Essex), Blackhall BC (Durham), Bromley BC (Kent) & Brimfield BC (Herefordshire)

Big Weekend

The Bowls England Big Weekend took place from Friday 27th to Sunday 29th May 2022 with a reported 735 affiliated clubs taking part and an average of 16.5 attendees per each event.

BE believes 20% of all new bowlers are attracted and introduced to the sport through these events. There should be more analysis and feedback available at the upcoming County Conference.

Dates for the next Big Bowls Weekend have been confirmed as Friday 23rd to Sunday 26th May 2023.

From the floor - Three clubs from Nottinghamshire participated - Bulwell Forest, East Leake and East Leake. East Leake said that they recruited several new members. West Bridgford said they received the dates too late and they had already arranged an Open Day. The Chairman reported that the Big Weekend would be held in 2023 between Friday 26 May and Sunday 28 May.

Bowls Bash

The bowls Bash is a large part of Bowls England's vision and ambition to introduce and involve more players to the game of bowls. The format of the game is normally pairs but can be up to four players and only an hour long in duration. Two sets of 5 with a sudden death end if scores are tied. Scoring is points based for woods closest to the jack and bonus points for touching (kissing) the jack.

The website advertises each BE affiliated club and the relevant secretaries' details are published as a point of contact for playing enquiries and options.

I believe this will be a major discussion point at the next County Conference held on Saturday 19th November 2022.

Commonwealth Games

The 2022 season was heavily geared towards the Birmingham Commonwealth Games with the main focus being the Lawn Bowls played at Leamington Spa. Team England achieved 7 medals during the Games:

Men: Triples (Gold), Pairs (Silver) & Fours (Bronze)

Women: Triples (Gold) & Pairs (Silver)

Para: Men's Pairs (Bronze) & Mixed Pairs (Bronze)

The news last week was Lawn Bowls and Para Lawn Bowls have been locked into the Sport Programme for the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Victoria, Australia.

BE "Fit for the Future" Strategy

Bowls England's 'Fit for the Future' strategy commits to -

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

Building on the success of Birmingham 2022, the challenge is how to build a systemically successful performance programme, which not only delivers more gold medals, but makes lawn bowls more visible, inspires people to play and retains competitive bowlers in our sport.

BE are hosting a Performance Summit on Sunday 20th November and have invited a range of people from across our sport to help develop the thinking. Counties will be engaged throughout the process of developing this strategy and will report on the outcome of this session at a forthcoming drop-in session.

Benevolent Fund

Please find the below communication on behalf of Diane Ingle - Chair of the Benevolent Fund.

"It is with regret that we wish to inform you that the Benevolent Fund committee has made the difficult decision to fold the fund. The Committee further agreed not to award any prizes for the 2022 season and we shall destroy all cheques received from counties for the current season (see below). We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

We are aware that many counties have their own Benevolent Triples trophies and may continue to run this event at a local level in future years.

In accordance with the constitution, all remaining funds go to the English Bowling Associations Charity Trust, which continues to offer support to bowlers in need across the country.

We shall circulate a final copy of the accounts to all counties once they are complete.

The committee wishes to thank Bowls England for all of the help and support it has offered to the Fund over the years."

Champions Dinner

Bowls England Champions Dinner will take place at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Coventry on Saturday 19th November to celebrate the 2022 winners.

Awards Night

Nominations are now being accepted for the 14 awards to be presented at the Awards Night on Saturday 25th February 2023 at Athena, Leicester.

Nominations are open and will close on Friday 25th November at 9am. Tickets for the event will be available from Monday 21st November via our website.

Assurance Framework

Bowls England are delighted to announce their completion of the Assurance Framework, which National Governing Bodies (NGBs) must fulfil to certify to UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) that they are meeting their anti-doping responsibilities.

The introduction of the Assurance Framework is the most significant change in the Policy. It outlines a series of mandatory requirements which all NGBs must fulfil. These requirements include the creation of an education strategy and plan, the implementation of anti-doping rules and increased involvement of an NGB's Board with clean sport.

Safeguarding

Bowls England are committed to safeguarding all those who participate in our sport, ensuring they can do so in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment. We aim to enable all our clubs and county associations to provide safe environments for all participants.

Earlier this year we asked for the contact details for club safeguarding officers. This was to enable us to circulate information, best practice and guidance. We are looking to kick this off during the winter season and therefore if you have not yet provided the contact information for your clubs safeguarding officer could you please do so by visiting the Bowls England website and completing the form by w/c Monday 14th November.

Midland Counties Report

David Guthrie was unable to attend the meeting. There was no report available. Mick Leafe, the current President of the MCBA stated that the Midland Counties has had a difficult 18 months with administration issues. The Midland Counties usually play a number of friendly fixtures. In 2021 only 4 of 11 were played. In 2022 only 1 of 9 was completed. Nottinghamshire, despite receiving a lot of criticism, probably committed more players and rinks than the other counties.

The Francis Burton Trophy will recommence in 2023. However, instead of one group of 7, there will be one group of 4 and one group of 3. Lincolnshire and Worcestershire, the two most distant counties will be in different groups. A draw will be made to allocate the remaining 5 teams.

The MCBA championships will also resume in 2023. This is usually held for the winners of each County's competitions. If BE continue to only allow the County winners to qualify for Leamington, then there is a suggestion that the runners-up be allowed to enter the MCBA championships. However, there is the possibility of sponsorship so each County is requested to inform the MCBA of their decision before a December meeting.

Bowls League Report

Frank Wallis stated that the Nottingham Saturday league had fallen through as four clubs (Greasley MW, Hucknall Titchfield Park, Porchester and Rolls Royce) had dropped out, leaving only Arnold Park and Queensway Park. It was expected that these two clubs would apply to join the Mansfield Saturday League. There was a possibility in the Midweek 3x4 Open League that Trent Vale might drop out. This league currently has two divisions of six and the loss of Trent Vale would leave only five teams in one of the divisions. Currently, the other leagues remain the same as in 2022. The Bowls League AGM will take place on 21 November, where hopefully all issues will be resolved.

Election of Officers 2023

The following Officers were elected for 2023

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

President Peter Marshall East Leake BC

A letter had been received from Peter Marshall (East Leake BC), which was read out by the Chairman "Please accept this letter as my formal intent to stand and be nominated for the role of Bowls Nottinghamshire President for the upcoming 2023 season.

Please accept my apologies for not being in attendance at the meeting to be held on 24 October 2022. Representatives from East Leake BC will be there to formally submit my application. Apologies for the late notice, as I believe there was some confusion over the formal application process as ELBC makes changes to our Club Officers.

I look forward to a successful 2023 season".

The Chairman thanked outgoing President David Guthrie for his efforts and commitments since being elected in 2018

Secretary David King-Taylor West Bridgford BC
Treasurer Frank Wallis Cavaliers BC

Competition Secretary Frank Wallis Cavaliers BC

The Chairman thanked outgoing Secretary Lee Garrett for his efforts and commitment to the position over the past eight years and for his achievements in getting the competitions to the level they had now achieved.

Match Secretary Russ Chamberlain Cavaliers BC
Bowls England Delegate Russ Chamberlain Cavaliers BC

GENERAL COUNCIL

MCBA Delegate Mick Leafe Arnold Park BC
Yearbook / Website Frank Wallis Cavaliers BC
Under 25's Manager Steve Bailey Langwith Junction BC
Chairman of Selectors Mike Owen Cavaliers BC

OTHER

Two Delegates to serve on the Bowls League committee
Mick Leafe Arnold Park BC
Brian Littleton Notts Constabulary BC

Acting Chairman Russ Chamberlain closed the meeting at 8.17pm.