



British Crown Green Bowling Association

Report to Management and Counties – Governance Review

Introduction

British Crown Green Bowling Association is in a period of organic change.

All national sporting bodies, of which we are one, that receive funding from central Government are required to adopt the relevant government legislation and governance requirements that relate to sporting bodies. To comply with such, over the last few years the BCGBA has initiated safeguarding requirements with the introduction of safeguarding Officers at Club and County level, has joined Coach Bowls, the cross-code coaching body, and has this year re-joined the Bowls Development Alliance (BDA).

Each of these steps have started the modernisation our Association, which brings us into line with all other sporting bodies. We are not immune from legislation that governs sport and there is much still to do.

Sport England has issued the “Uniting the Movement” document which looks at the relationship and funding opportunities available. Sport Wales and the Isle of Man have similar bodies.

During the last 12 months I have been working with the other Bowls codes* and the BDA to prepare the next funding Sport England bid for the development of Bowls. This is currently with Sport England, and we are waiting on final feedback. When final approval is given, we will be able to update you on the development options available over the coming years. This bid covers a programme of activities that we see necessary to develop the sport of crown green bowls over the next 5- 10 years.

Why Change - Sport England governance review is a major part of the need to modernise, our decision-making process currently does not fit any of the options that would open the potential for further funding. BCGBA’s structure has remained for many years and there have been previous reviews to enable us to adopt a more formalised Board.

For the last few years, the Executive has operated as a subcommittee of the Management Committee, which although being a hybrid for the former Finance and Officers working groups it now needs formalising.

BCGBA Board Structure

The time has now come to Establish a Board structure which will replace the Executive, this will consist of (eventually) an independent Chairman, CEO, Finance, and Safeguarding Lead, along with a number of Independent Board members. These will be elected at the Annual General Meeting formally every 3 years. The board will consist of a maximum of 8-12 members, to include a total of 5 County representatives one from each regional groups.

To accommodate this, the Management Committee will be restructured into regional groupings who will each nominate a potential Board member to sit for the first 3 years, with a rotational membership to ensure that all Counties have a representative able to sit on the Board. (The actual period of office is up for discussion. No member can sit for longer than 9 years in total).

Road Map to an Independent Board. (Provisional)

January 2022, Agreement to proceed to a Board Structure

July 2022 Nominations to Interim board- elected at July Management Committee

July 2022- Jan 2023 Board members elected, Ratified at AGM 2023.

Articles of Association By-Laws revision and consultation process commences January 2022 for ratification at 2023 AGM (January)- Consultation process and the revision of Management to National Council confirmed.

There is much to do to facilitate change and I accept no one likes to change, but if we are to move the sport forwards and work with other bodies and bowls codes to grow the game, we need to be in a place that enables decisions to be taken where required in a timely manner.

The regionalised structure within the National Council (Management Committee) will allow for greater allocation of resources in the future and potential distribution of workforce if we generate additional funds for the Association. This will also create forums to discuss how we further facilitate growing and developing the game across Crown Green, bringing together structures for Coaching and Development. There will be other areas where working together will enable greater discussion forums to take place.

Uniting the Movement Link.

<https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement>

Code of Governance

<https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/code-sports-governance>

Mark Bircumshaw

* Bowls England, English Indoor Bowls Association, English Short Matt and Disability Bowls England

BCGBA GOVERNANCE REVIEW

This note attempts to clarify some of the issues raised at the Secretaries Meeting held on Thursday 9th December

Background.

- Central government is becoming increasingly aware that sport/physical exercise benefits the physical and mental health of the nation.
- Consequently, via Sport England particularly, additional financial resources are being diverted to sport/physical exercise.

Access to Funding.

- Sport England has published criteria which National Governing Bodies e.g., BCGBA must meet to directly bid for this additional funding.
- At present the BCGBA can only access these funds indirectly via the Bowls Development Alliance as its Governance structure does not meet Sport England criteria.

Existing BCGBA Governance.

- At present the BCGBA is governed by an Executive Committee, which meets 5/6 times p.a. and consists of Officers of the Association, Chairman of the Trustees, and an independent county representative, and by a Management Committee, which meets 3 times p.a. and consists of representatives from all counties and Officers, some 30 members.
- The Executive Committee deals primarily with day to day and urgent matters to which counties have limited access. The Management Committee deals primarily with strategic issues to which counties have full and direct access.

Proposed BCGBA Governance.

- Establishment of an Independent Board (IB) of around 12 members, as per sport England criteria, of which 4/5 will be Independent Members (elected via advert/interview) with areas of expertise not readily available to existing officers e.g., diversity, marketing, human resources and legal. To meet 5/6 times p.a.
- Counties will be divided into 5 groups with 3/4 counties per group. These groups will consider bowling matters they themselves raise as well as strategic and everyday issues passed down from the IB. They will elect a representative from within their own group (for a period of 2/3 years) to be one of the 5 county representatives on the IB.
- There will remain BCGBA AGM and Rules Revision Meetings on an annual basis. In addition, a National Council consisting of county representatives, similar to the present Management Committee, will meet 2/3 times p.a. to discuss issues raised by counties and to disseminate information and Yearbooks etc. to counties.
- Grassroots access to the proposed IB, directly or via counties, will not change from present arrangements.

Cost of Proposals.

- There will be no direct or indirect costs to counties or grassroots bowling. All costs will be met from existing BCGBA Funds.
- The Trustees Fund will remain outside the scope of these proposals.

Benefits.

- Acceptance of the proposed Governance Review will enable the BCGBA to apply directly, as well as via the Bowls Development Alliance, for Sport England, and other outside bodies such as the National Lottery, funding with a much greater chance of success.
- Major strategic developments such as Heaton Park as the potential BCGBA HQ and grassroots funding to encourage an increase in bowling numbers and improvements to facilities will have a much-improved chance of success in attracting external funding.
- Counties, via their representatives on the IB, will have more opportunities to present their views both on strategic and everyday issues.

Process/Road Map.

- A road map has been produced highlighting the major stages in the transition process. Ideally 2022 will be used for transitioning with a view to being ready to go in January 2023.
- Throughout this process the BCGBA commits to being as transparent as possible with major decisions being put to counties at relevant times.

Comment.

- Acceptance of the proposed Governance Review provides the opportunity to directly access considerable outside funding for the development of crown green bowls at both strategic and grassroots levels and to give counties more involvement in this process. To not seize this opportunity will severely restrict the development of the game of crown green bowls both for present and future participants.