

Merseyside County CGBA Development Officer - Annual Report

Following the aborted 2020 season, I ensured that contact was maintained through the Winter months with both the clubs that had intended to run 'Bowl For Health' and the people that had expressed interest in attending them.

I maintained contact with the Merseyside Sports Partnership and managed to obtain from them 14 sets of new bowls weighing 2.4 and 2.6 pounds, together with the 20+ sets of 'used' woods I have purchased over the last 2 years, I have now built up a reasonable stock of bowls for people to try before they buy when attending bowls promotions.

Unfortunately, due to the Covid Pandemic, the 2021 season was late starting and the vast majority of clubs opted to concentrate on getting their members back bowling, rather than opting back into any initiatives to encourage newcomers into the sport. However, all was not lost, I managed to persuade four clubs on The Wirral to take part in the 'Big Bowls Weekend', three of these clubs had previously signed up for the 'Bowl For Health' initiative in 2020. The plan was to encourage those people who had expressed interest in the '2020 BFH' initiative to attend the 'weekend open days' together with anyone else who showed an interest. All those who attended the open days were invited to sign up for a 'BFH' course starting shortly thereafter.

The Results of the open days and subsequent 'BFH' courses resulted in some 64 people becoming members of 3 of the 4 clubs that took part, (32 in my own particular club) no results being notified by the fourth club.

I have taken every opportunity to advertise the positive results described above to each club I have played at and each League AGM I have attended. As a result there are now a number of clubs, some of whom previously discounted my efforts to promote the sport, who are desirous in holding open days and 'BFH' courses in the New Year.

Since the BCGBA rejoined the Bowls Development Alliance, I immediately struck up a working relationship with their Northern Development Officer Dave BOULT and now his replacement, the BDA North-Western DO Ian GILL.

The results of this working relationship are that my own club, Oxton Conservative BC has been made a 'Bowls Hub' for this area. Ian GILL and I have invited all clubs to attend meetings with a view to us advertising courses and other initiatives that could help them in recruiting new people into our sport, and their clubs in particular. I am organising meetings with contacts from local charities and organisations that I have made over the last 20 months, these to be held in the New Year, when Ian GILL and I can discuss how we can all work together to benefit the people they represent and our sport.

I have personally :-

Approached those clubs I know to be in difficulties regarding shrinking memberships and persuaded them to attend upon Ian GILL to have websites set up advertising their clubs and facilities, etc.

Maintained contact with the local 'Social Prescribers' in the Doctors Surgeries in order to advertise future 'BFH' courses and any other initiatives that could attract people to the sport via the social-prescribing scheme.

Held a meeting with the Sports Coordinator/Teacher of Well Lane Junior School and am in the process of organising a number of Bowls 'taster sessions' with the children. These sessions will be held toward the end of January and early February. Parents will also be invited to take part. Those children and parents who show interest will be invited to attend two local bowls clubs when they open their greens after Easter.

Paid a £20 fee to join the 'Wirral Sports Forum' which is a body that all sports clubs/associations/schools located on The Wirral are invited. The purpose of the organisation is to help its members network and promote their sports.

As a result of the above, I have struck up a working relationship with the Head of PE at Prenton High School for girls. I discussed the problems that are faced by teachers who have groups of pupils that have no interest in Athletics. A meeting is to be arranged in the New Year in regard to attending the school to give groups of pupils 'Bowls taster sessions', thereafter for those girls to attend organised lessons at a local green after Easter, when the majority of pupils will be doing athletics.

Together with Ian GILL, have struck up a working relationship with the Community Development Officer at Tranmere Rovers Football Club. As a result,

we attended on Saturday 18th December at the clubs Christmas 'fun day' for local children from deprived areas. A number of indoor bowls activities were set up to provide fun bowls orientated games for the children to try, whilst giving us the opportunity to assess the childrens skills. 75 children took part in total, 15 of whom were handed 'prize certificates' inviting them, and their families, to contact me to arrange attending an organised coaching course in the New Year. I have already had one inquiry from a parent regarding this.

The Chief Executive of Tranmere Rovers expressed his joy at seeing the children enjoying themselves and wishes to have a meeting in the New Year to assess the possibility of purchasing some of the indoor equipment used on the day for me to run similar events at their community centre in a deprived area of Birkenhead.

Further to the above, I have been invited to attend 2 courses run by Tranmere Rovers to assist with people who are desirous of losing weight and becoming more physically active.

William Robert DOW

MCCGBA Development Officer