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ANNUAL REPORT 2020

sportscotland
the national agency for sport



CHAIR'S REPORT

When I reflect on my statement from last year, I along with everyone else could not have foreseen the unprecedented and challenging time we would face as a nation in 2020 and will likely face for some time to come. First and foremost, I want to express my condolences to those who have been directly affected by COVID-19. Our bowling family has lost some exceptional human beings and our hearts go out to everyone who has lost a loved one or valued friend.

The Board and I would like to express our deepest thanks to all the Bowls Scotland staff and our District Secretaries for their unfailing support during this most difficult of times. With help and advice from the Development team, a huge number of clubs have been able to access financial support through various government grants and loans, to the tune of more than £6 million. I hope that this goes some way to ensure our clubs can survive throughout the off season and return ready to welcome members in 2021. I would also like to thank our clubs for adhering to the rules and doing everything possible to keep their members safe.

I'm sure you will agree that our communication has been clear and consistent, providing an invaluable source of help and advice and I would like to thank our staff and District Secretaries for all their hard work in keeping everyone up to date.

I would also like to express our thanks to **sportscotland** and the Scottish Sports Association for their help and support. Working in partnership is extremely important to us and even more so throughout this difficult time where we have all needed to work collectively to ensure our return to the green and our clubs were well supported.

As there have been no competitions this year, we have taken the opportunity to take a step back and review what and how we deliver competitions. Both George McCartney, Director of Competition and Events, and Kim McAully, Director of Finance, have been appointed to the Board and I do hope that the membership approve them both in the Directors ballot along with the other Directors due for approval. I would also like to thank Sheila Cowan for her support as the former Director of Finance.

As part of looking at how we can deliver our services to all our member clubs in the most efficient and effective manner, a couple of years ago we invested in an online club and membership system that allows clubs to purchase capitation, competitions entries, club development workshops and coach education courses online. In preparation for 2021 capitation, we have tested the system with a number of clubs and members, and it is now working well. We will continue to keep clubs up to date on the new club and membership system, including delivering a series of workshops for clubs in the winter months.

As with many organisations, we have had to adapt to the 'new normal' and we are all getting used to using virtual platforms such as Zoom for meetings and communications. We will host our first ever virtual Annual General Meeting and whilst we will miss not seeing everyone face to face, it will allow people to attend the meeting that normally would not be able to due to distance and/or travel difficulties.

We are not through this pandemic yet, but we will be, and by continuing to work together, we will be able to get back to the game we love. In the meantime, look after each other, keep well and stay safe.

Sue Beatt
Chair of Bowls Scotland



INTRODUCTION

In a season where there has been no National Championships, no International events and very limited club bowls, the focus for Bowls Scotland was on information gathering and sharing, support for clubs and the members of those clubs as well as review of the game to use the time available to look at how we can progress from a year of turmoil.

As soon as lockdown occurred in March, all staff were equipped to work remotely and therefore continue to support the game. This included the return of capitation fees and competition entries.

Our staff worked closely with both Scottish Government, **sportscotland** and members to establish the correct and up to date guidance to ensure when restrictions were lifted, clubs had information allowing them to make decisions to let bowls take place, but also to make sure that the club members stayed safe and protected.

The decision was taken to furlough 3 members of staff and the Board would like to thank them for their understanding during this difficult period.

The staff established a three-phase approach to supporting the game:

- **Stability**- establish and disseminate information quickly and accurately. Gather funding advice for members and stabilise Bowls Scotland expenditure and income streams.
- **Review**- take this time to review what we do, how we deliver and what could be improved.
- **The New Start**- implement what we have agreed from the review.

As part of the three phase approach above we:

- Delivered regular virtual meetings with the Board, staff meetings, clubs and District Secretaries.
- Distributed two surveys and took on board the feedback from members.
- Restructured our National Development Officer areas to give a better coverage to member clubs.
- Worked with other countries to share ideas, improve how bowls is delivered and support each other.
- Established a Club Crisis Fund.
- Incorporated Empowering Women in Bowls ideology through the introduction of an over-55's international, linking with other bowls nations to share good practice and look at decision making to support women within the game.
- Reviewed the High-Performance programme and developed a "What it takes to win" model

Whilst the environment was at times challenging for all, there has been a stabilisation of the sport, with all of us facing another big challenge from a financial perspective in 2021 season.

GOVERNANCE

DIRECTORS

Directors joining the Board – George McCartney- Competition & Events:

Kim McAully - Finance

Directors leaving the Board – Finance: Sheila Cowan

STAFFING

New Staff- 2019/20

- National Development Manager – Sarah Pryde-Smith
- Admin Assistant - Jett Abernethy
- Competition & Events Officer - Eve Wallace
- Competition & Events Coordinator - Tom Weir

Staff leaving- 2019/20

- Competition & Events Administrator – Steven Barclay

The Board wish to thank all those staff who have moved on from the organisation and wish them well for the future.

FINANCE

These notes should be read in conjunction with the Financial Statements prepared by BDO, accountants to Bowls Scotland. The financial position of the organisation has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, due to support provided by **sportscotland** and actions taken to reduce costs, the overall loss was limited to £103,651, reducing reserves by 31% to £227,698.

Although the circumstances of this year have had an exceptional impact on the finances, the organisation is financially solvent and has sufficient reserves to continue current operations. A full budget review is underway and will be consolidated with a recovery plan.

There will be no increase to the capitation fees put forward to the membership at the 2020 AGM. However, it is anticipated that an increase will be proposed at the 2021 AGM.

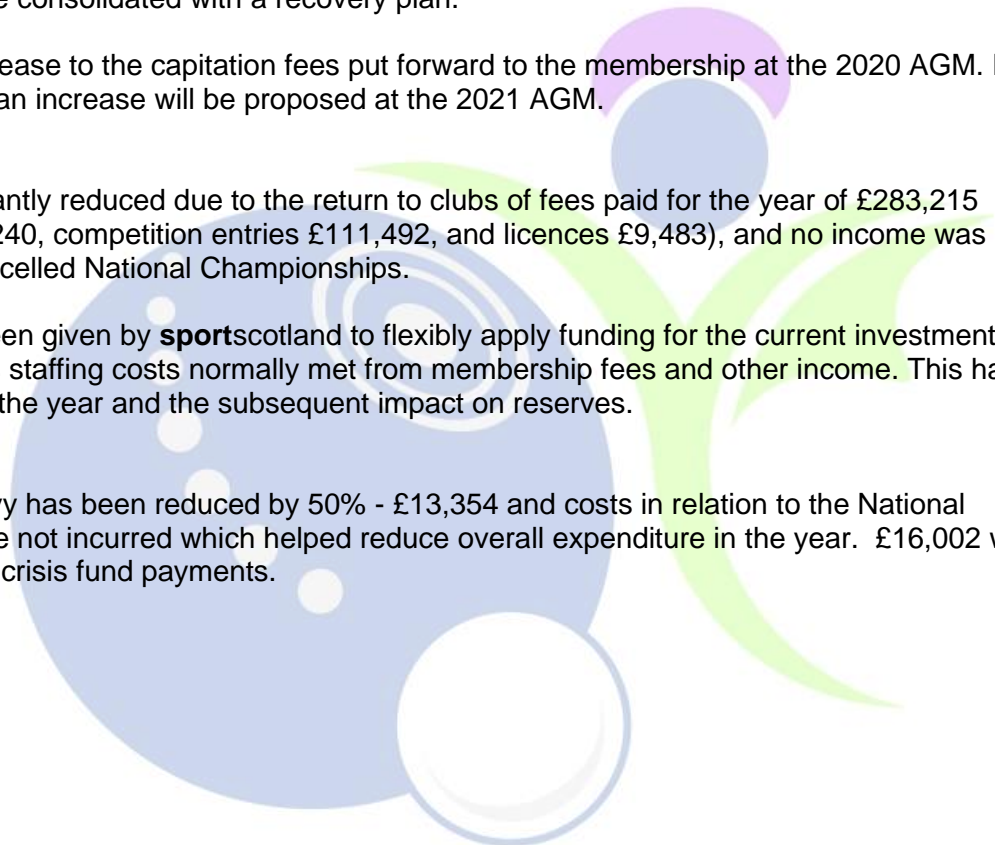
Income

Income was significantly reduced due to the return to clubs of fees paid for the year of £283,215 (membership £162,240, competition entries £111,492, and licences £9,483), and no income was received in relation to the cancelled National Championships.

Dispensation has been given by **sportscotland** to flexibly apply funding for the current investment year to cover costs, such as staffing costs normally met from membership fees and other income. This has helped mitigate the loss for the year and the subsequent impact on reserves.

Expenditure

The World Bowls levy has been reduced by 50% - £13,354 and costs in relation to the National Championships were not incurred which helped reduce overall expenditure in the year. £16,002 was paid to clubs through the crisis fund payments.



BOWLS SCOTLAND COVID-19 SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Our core values of collaboration, inclusivity, integrity, and clarity have been central to our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure our clubs were supported throughout this time, we developed and delivered a comprehensive support programme. We worked hard to ensure our sport was one of the first to return and collectively ensured our wonderful game remained open and accessible to all.

From Lockdown to a Return to the Green: Working in partnership with clubs, **sportscotland**, the Scottish Government, and the wider sporting network. Providing a collective voice for bowling clubs across Scotland and ensuring our members have regular, up to date and concise information.

- Club Helpline Launched
- Club Support Guides & FAQs published
- Monday Motivation videos
- Monthly Chair Statements to clubs, members, and partners
- Regular Video Q&A sessions
- Provided regular, clear and consistent communication
- Return to the Green:
 - COVID-19 Getting Back on the Green Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions
 - COVID-19 Additional Guidance; Competitions; Children's Activities and Coaching
 - Resources developed and support provided to clubs
 - Shared club good practice
 - Responded quickly and effectively to ensure our members had the most up to date guidance on Scottish Government additional restrictions

Sustainability: Working with, and for, our clubs to try to lessen the impact of COVID-19

- Returned £129,000 annual capitation fees to all member clubs
- Launched a £50,000 Club Crisis Fund
- Informed and supported (directly or indirectly) 549 clubs applying for external grants, totalling £6.2million
- Provided up to date funding resources and avenues for clubs
- Provided early intervention support via our NDOs to the clubs most at risk of closure

Collaboration & Innovation: Working together, keeping connected and demonstrating creativity

- Launched two COVID-19 Club Surveys to help assess the impact of COVID on our clubs and identify support required:
 - 615 clubs responded
 - 452 clubs responded
- Shared and profiled clubs supporting their local community
- Launched Thank You Frontline Workers membership campaign:
 - 36 clubs signed up
- Delivered 5 Zoom online training sessions to 94 club members
- Delivered 9 online meetings with District Secretaries
- Delivered 3 social media training sessions to 36 clubs

PLAYING THE GAME – DEVELOPMENT

Whilst this last year has been very different, work has still been ongoing to ensure clubs continue to be supported.

Key Highlights:

- National Development Officer support to clubs. We introduced three district split areas in April this year to provide clarity and consistency for our clubs.
- Regional Networking Events and Drop-in sessions: Over 200 members, representing 100 clubs/associations signed up to the networking events with 3 of the 6 events delivered prior to COVID restrictions.
- 42 clubs signed up to Try Bowls Membership Growth Programme for 2020 (prior to COVID)
- 29 clubs are currently going through the BowlsMark process
- 15 clubs have achieved Bronze
- 1 club has achieved Silver
- 100% compliant with the Standards for Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport which was introduced by **sportscotland** in conjunction with Children 1st to ensure all Sports Governing Bodies are working to the highest standard of Wellbeing and Protection.
- In September 2020, a new online PVG application form process was introduced, providing more efficiency with a faster turnaround on PVG certificates, allowing clubs to become safeguarding compliant in a shorter time
- 4 online Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport course delivered to 52 candidates
- Working in partnership with **sportscotland**. Bowls Scotland successfully secured funding for clubs to provide sanitary products for their female members and visitors. 43 clubs allocated funding including 15 clubs in SIMD areas
- Coaching Awards:
 - 5 Introduction to Bowls courses delivered with 58 candidates attending, representing 33 clubs
 - 3 Level 1 coaching courses delivered with 31 candidates attending, representing 18 clubs
 - No Level 2 courses were delivered in 2019/2020
- Continuous Professional Development for Level 2 and identified coaches
 - 10 coaches attend the Understanding the role of coaching in developing performance behaviours
 - 10 coaches attended the Psychology for Bowls Performance:
- Coaching Programme Development:
 - Piloted a 4-hour Introduction to Coaching Award to ensure we continue to meet the needs of our clubs and coaching workforce
 - Working in partnership with Scottish Disability Sport to create an Inclusive Bowls Course for coaches and volunteers

PLAYING THE GAME – COMPETITIONS & EVENTS

COVID-19 had a significant impact on our competition and event calendar; however, this has enabled us to take some time to review and reflect work in this area.

Rules & Regulations:

A new addition to our Rules & Regulations was introduced this year regarding smoking on the green. This new ruling came into effect this year and was due to be implemented at the National Championships Stage 2, Andrew Hamilton Trophy Final & Ladies Top 10 Finals played at the National Centre for Bowling.

We would encourage all members to adopt this ruling at club level and review how we can all collectively promote a positive image of our game whilst supporting the health and wellbeing of our members.

PLAYING THE GAME – HIGH PERFORMANCE

This season has been challenging in performance as it has been for all areas of the sport, including:

- World Bowls Championships postponed until September 2021.
- International Bowls for the Disabled World Championship in November 2020 has been cancelled.

As part of the High-Performance Review, Craig Bolan was appointed as Performance Operations Manager in March. The role involves managing the performance programme and implementing a structure that helps to build upon the recent success of our international players while also looking to support future success. The cancellation or postponement of competitions provided an opportunity to review in-depth the current structure and identify a new approach for performance bowls.

The new approach will place a focus on working with players on a more individual basis. 30 players have been selected as part of the first stage of the performance programme. To deliver the programme a team of 8 coaches have been selected who will work with allocated players providing 1-2-1 coaching and support. This programme will be expanded in the near future to players who are aspiring to represent Scotland in future Commonwealth cycles.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Throughout this year we had increases across all our Social Media platforms. Our Facebook likes increased by 977 to 11,376 and continues to be our main platform, along with the website, to publish information to our members.

In February, Bowls Scotland's first ever podcast, 'Rock n Bowl', was launched and received a total of 682 downloads across the first two episodes. We look forward to re-launching this in 2021.

The 2020 National Championships unfortunately could not take place due to COVID-19, however, we were able to run a 'Virtual National Championships' across our social media pages for the first time. All the content was widely received with it reaching out to over 110,000 users throughout the week.

We launched our monthly Q&A sessions with our CEO and other members of staff. We are looking to continue this throughout the off season to keep our members and clubs up to date with the latest information.

Key stats:

- 18,772 social media page likes across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube
- 150,00 user reaches through Facebook posts during the season
- 3,328 E-newsletter subscribers
- 107 Press releases across our Website and Social Media platforms
- 198,100 video views across Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and Twitter

PARTNERSHIPS

Many of our partners also faced great challenges during 2020, however despite this, they have all provided support, resource and expertise in whatever way they could. We are grateful for their continued support.

We were delighted to partner with Sports Turf Services to support and advise the member clubs on the best ways to look after your greens.

We signed a partnership with Fantastic Fanatics, an online fundraising company who aim to raise funds for clubs through shopping with external organisations.

Unfortunately, due to restructuring caused by financial constraints, we have now finished our partnership with Prostate Cancer UK. We would like to thank all our existing partners and look forward to continuing our close relationship with them in 2020:

- Jack High Insurance
- Taylor Bowls
- Kukri Sports
- Castle Water
- Sports Turf Services
- Fantastic Fanatics

sportscotland support

We have worked very closely with **sportscotland** over the year through the guidance distributed to clubs and direct links into government. The flexibility they have demonstrated with the investment available to bowls has allowed us to underwrite areas of work that were directly affected by the loss of “bowlers” income from membership and entry fees. We would like to take this opportunity to mention and thank the **sportscotland** staff who we work with directly for their continued support:


- Fiona Lilley – Partnership Manager
- Aileen McGillivray – High Performance Partnership Manager
- Ruari Davidson / David Forbes – Partnership Manager (Coach and Volunteering)

We would also like to thank all staff at **sportscotland** who have supported Bowls Scotland over the last year.

FINALLY,

This season has been the most unusual and demanding that not just bowls has faced, but also Scottish sport and society. Everyone has worked hard to make things happen at the bowls clubs of Scotland and our thanks and recognition of this goes to all the club officials and volunteers. These hard-working members of your community have gone above and beyond to make sure that although not as we know it, bowls has been available in many of the clubs in Scotland in a safe and protective manor during 2020.

We are all hoping that 2021 will be a better year where we can get back out on the greens in a fashion that we are more used too.



Chair

October 2020



CEO

October 2020

With grateful thanks to our partners



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