

BOWLS SCOTLAND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Bowls Scotland held virtually via Zoom Webinar on Wednesday 22nd November 2023 at 1800 hrs.

Register of Interest

- Kim Walker, Chair
- Arlene Ewing, General Director- Empowering Women in Bowls
- Andrew Upton, General Director
- David Scouller, Director of Governance- Lenzie Bowling Club
- Henry Robertson, Director of Finance
- Rudi Urbach, Director of Development
- Gavin Smith, General Director- Colinton Bowling Club
- Michael Cavanagh, General Director- High Performance

Chair's Opening Remarks

Bowls Scotland Chair, Kim Walker, welcomed everyone to the 2023 Annual General Meeting and introduced the Board and panellists including, Alan McMillan CEO, Lindsay McKenzie - Partnership Manager **sportscotland**, Marella O'Neill and Ron McArthur, Bowls Scotland Presidents and Andrew McNamara, Partner, Business Services & Outsourcing from BDO.

The Chair asked attendees to participate in a minute's silence for all of those from within the bowling community who unfortunately lost their lives in the last year.

The Chair indicated that there were 10 voting items and clarified the process for asking questions, voting, and who was entitled to vote and ask questions. A practice poll was conducted.

The Chair confirmed the required quorum is 76 voting members (10% of voting members, 31 associations and 731 clubs as at 31st October). The chair confirmed the AGM quorum had been met with a total of 22 proxies and 96 eligible voters present at the meeting. In addition, there were 17 guests including Honorary Members and District Co-Ordinators.

I. To receive the Annual Report of Bowls Scotland for 2023

The Chair introduced this item and the Annual report video for the year of 2023 was played.

The CEO provided an overview from the year:

- A lot has been achieved over the last 12 months, specifically in club development with us progressing to a more targeted approach to support clubs to increase membership and reduce the barriers faced. We were delighted to announce investment of £65,000 in our flagship membership growth programme Try Bowls over a 3-year period.
- We were pleased to see membership grow slightly this year by 0.6% and a 46% increase in the number of clubs signing up to Try Bowls.
- Our club accreditation scheme BowlsMark, is gaining momentum with clubs progressing through the stages, ensuring quality, safe and fun environments for participants, volunteers, and their local communities. Congratulations to all the clubs who have achieved accreditation this year.
- We continue to deliver accessible world leading learning and development opportunities for coaches and volunteers, increasing the number of qualified coaches from 134 to 201.
- We were pleased to announce the appointment of Roz Asli as Bowls Scotland's new Equality, Inclusion & Welfare Manager. This new post is a result of additional investment from **sportscotland** and will help to accelerate work in this area, ensuring we progress towards fulfilling our vision of a sport that is accessible to all.

- We completed the KPMG independent audit of Bowls Scotland’s operational effectiveness. We were pleased with the overall result and small number of recommendations will help to further strengthen the overall governance within the organisation.
- We have taken some difficult decisions over the last 4 years, which at times have been unpopular. However, we are in a market with many other activities, sports on television, social media influences as well as an ever-changing work/life balance. Whether we agree or not, we do need to change and change rapidly to modernise and adapt, ensuring we keep up with societal changes and continue to attract people into this great game.
- As we come to the end of our current strategy and prepare to launch our new one, we continue to balance growth through change, strengthening the organisation and adapt to the wider sports policy and political landscape. We look forward to working together with you in 2024, where we will continue deliver our values of ambition, teamwork, inclusivity, integrity, and clarity, making sure that clubs are at the heart of everything we do.

Questions regarding the Annual Report were requested from those eligible to vote.

Gary Smith, Linlithgow BC, asked for the percentage of attendance (including proxies). Mr Smith also queried why the minutes of the previous meeting were not on the agenda for approval. Mr Smith stated he was interested in knowing the scope of the KPMG audit.

The Chair thanked Mr Smith for his question and ahead of answering indicated that there were a couple of people struggling to get into the AGM. Therefore, the total number of eligible voters had increased to 105. The Chair requested Board Director Andrew Upton to answer the question from Mr Smith relating to the minutes. Mr Upton outlined the previous years AGM minutes are available on the Bowls Scotland website. There is no requirement or legal obligation for the previous minutes to be ratified at the AGM, therefore it is not a standing agenda item. The CEO outlined the areas included in the KPMG audit including risk, governance, finance, HR, policies, and procedures. The Chair outlined that attendance at the AGM (in the room and proxies) accounted for 16% of Bowls Scotland member clubs and associations.

100 voted out of 105 eligible to vote	
For	Against
97%	3%

This motion is carried.

2. To receive the Financial Statement of Bowls Scotland for 2023

The Chair invited Andrew McNamara from BDO to provide a general overview of the accounts. Mr McNamara presented an analysis of the Bowls Scotland Financial Statements for 2023.

“Last year saw a return to normality after the pandemic years, and this year has consolidated that position. Total revenue increased by over £60k, to £1.059m, the first time that the £1m barrier has been exceeded. Membership revenue remained fairly constant at approximately £245k, with the increase coming from **sportscotland** funding which is up by £47k to £559k, and revenue relating to championships and events being up by about £14k. The funding from **sportscotland** is received twice per annum and is earmarked for specific expenditure. Each year we have to review the related expenditure to ensure we are accounting for the revenue in the correct period. This has resulted in £101k of the funds received this year being deferred to match expenditure incurred after the year end. Last year’s equivalent deferral was £113k.

On the expenditure side, staff costs continue to be the main expense of the organisation, accounting for about 45% of the total expenditure, which is very normal for a Scottish Governing Body of sport. The headcount of the organisation remained at an average of 16 throughout the period. The high-

performance program, which is solely funded by **sportscotland**, accounted for a further 18% (£193k) of the total expenditure. The costs associated with staging the national championships and other national and international events amounted to approximately £240k, which is covered by the income generated from these events. The normal running costs of the organisation have fallen by around 10% from the previous year. IT related costs still make up about one third of the total overheads, and due to the different mixture of income and related expenditure this year the organisation has been able to recover more of the VAT on expenditure, resulting in a lower irrecoverable VAT figure.

The final boost to this year has been the increased interest rates, which has seen a 20-fold increase in the interest earned on cash deposits from £323 last year to over £6,000 this year. This income is deemed to be non-member income and therefore is subject to corporation tax, hence the provision of £1,200 in the accounts.

Overall, a combination of higher revenue, controlled overheads, and interest earned has resulted in the organisation generating a surplus after tax of around £12,200.

Onto the other main primary statement, the balance sheet. This is effectively a snapshot of the financial position of Bowls Scotland as at close of play on 31 August. What we can see is that the net assets of the organisation have increased from £253,005 to £265,209 the movement of £12,204 being the surplus for the year we have already spoken about. Tangible assets relate to office equipment and computer equipment. In line with accounting standards these costs are taken to the balance sheet and written off over their expected useful life of 4 years, the only movement this year being the annual depreciation charge. Debtors represent amounts owed to the organisation at the balance sheet date. This year includes approximately £15k of monies due in relation to the British championships, sponsorship and from various clubs, as well as VAT recoverable of almost £12k, as well as some prepaid expenses amounting to just under £3k. The bank balance of £547k shows an increase of almost £30k on last year. Included here is the Sportscotland income received in advance of £101k referred to earlier. The £30k increase reflects the surplus for the year of £12k, non-cash movements such as depreciation of £2k, the reduction in debtors at the year-end of £26k, less the reduction in creditors of £10k. Creditors relates to costs incurred but not paid prior to the year end, as well as amounts received in advance. As noted previously there is £101k of Sportscotland advance income included here. There are also unpaid invoices of £28k which have been paid post year end, accrued costs, which are those incurred pre year end but invoiced post year end, as well as the development fund and the World Bowls annual levy. There is also the PAYE and National Insurance relating to the August salaries.

Overall, with net assets in excess of £265k, Bowls Scotland remains in a healthy financial position, and is in a good financial position to move forward with your objectives to promote Bowls throughout the country. That is a quick run through the numbers which hopefully adds some commentary to the numbers in front of you. I would like to thank Alan, Ellison and all of the team at Bowls Scotland for the assistance they gave to my team in preparing these financial statements. I am now open to any questions you may have”.

The Chair invited Director of Finance, Henry Robertson to add to Mr McNamara’s statement. Mr Robertson thank Mr McNamara for the thorough overview and added that the accounts are in a good position and welcomed any questions from members.

Questions regarding the financial statement were requested from those eligible to vote.

Ron McAthur, Zetland BC, asked how many of the 16 members of staff were paid by Bowls Scotland and how many are paid by **sportscotland**.

The CEO highlighted that 5 members of staff are paid for by Bowls Scotland and the rest through sportscotland investment.

Ian McPhait, Falkirk BC, highlighted approximately 50% of income comes from external grants. Mr McPhait asked what impact the loss of the Commonwealth Games would have on the investment from **sportscotland**.

The CEO thanked Mr McPhait for raising a really good point and expressed his concerns over the Commonwealth Games. The CEO clarified **sportscotland** funding is split over 3 areas of the organisation – Development, Effective Organisation and High-Performance. Any investment made by **sportscotland** is ring fenced for specific areas of the organisation therefore the impact from the Commonwealth Games would only have an impact if at all on High-Performance and not Development or Effective Organisation. Board Director, Mr Upton added that the organisation has a register of risks with **sportscotland** investment being discussed at Board level regularly to ensure the organisation is ready for any risks and strategies put in place to mitigate those.

Brian Mitchell, Brunstane BC, asked about clubs having to pay the capitation fees twice in 2023. Mr Mitchell highlighted he understood why it was done, but wanted to note that it came at a really difficult time with clubs facing increasing costs in other areas.

The CEO thanked Mr Mitchell for raising this point and highlighted that Bowls Scotland appreciate this would have been difficult for clubs and therefore flexibility was provided to allow any clubs who were struggling in this transitional year to defer payment. The CEO highlighted that 88% of the clubs and associations who were members at the beginning of 2023, had affiliated by the 31 October, with the remainder to come in over the next few months.

Hugh Robertson, New Cumnock BC, asked if there would be an opportunity to see the account summary on screen prior to voting?

The CEO highlighted the accounts summary are sent out along with the AGM notice for members to view and would not be shared on screen ahead of voting.

Chris Jagger, Canonbie and District BC, asked if the profit for the financial year is 43% of last year's profit - is this a cause for alarm?

The Chair invited Director of Finance, Henry Robertson, to address the question. Mr Robertson highlighted that last year COVID was still having an impact last year. Mr Robertson outlined the processes are in place to ensure continue to monitor spend and cost save where appropriate. Mr Robertson reassured members there is no cause for concern, but that finances continue to be monitored.

Gary Smith, Linlithgow BC, asked about a minute from the 2022 AGM related to the lack of audit of BS accounts. Whilst not legally required, is it not surprising that they are not audited and that appears to be accepted by **sportscotland** bearing in mind their level of annual investment?

The CEO asked Andrew McNamara to answer this question. Mr McNamara highlighted there are three thresholds that need to be met for a statutory audit to be carried out and two need to be exceeded before an organisation is legally required to complete an audit. One of which is income of £10.2 million, with Bowls Scotland at around 10% of this and the other being 50 employees, which Bowls Scotland usually hovers around 16 members of staff. The other being assets over £5.2 million, which Bowls Scotland does not have, roughly gross assets of £600,000. Therefore, Bowls Scotland are well away from the threshold under the Companies Act. With regards to **sportscotland**, only the largest sport e.g. Rugby and Football, and potentially a couple of others will be subject to audit. Almost every other one, will be in the same position as Bowls Scotland and **sportscotland** will be satisfied, providing the accounts are prepared and thoroughly checked by a recognised accountant.

Director of Finance, Henry Robertson, highlighted BDO would flag any issues and are ethically bound to do so. General Director, Andrew Upton, added that there is a proportionality of costs to carrying out an audit. The board feel it is not a sensible use of the organisations fund when there is so many other things that money could be put to. In this circumstance we have the accounts prepared professionally and **sportscotland** are content with this process as an appropriate process.

101 voted out of 105 eligible to vote	
For	Against
97%	3%

This motion is carried.

The Chair thanked Andrew McNamara from BDO and asked her to leave the AGM. Mr McNamara left the AGM.

3. To appoint BDO as accountant of Bowls Scotland for the forthcoming year

The Chair invited any questions.

Graham Gillespie Lanarkshire Gents Association, asked, can you confirm what their fee will be?

General Director, Mr Upton confirmed that the organisation periodically put the appointment of accountants out to competitive tender. When we last did so, BDO's response represented the best price over a 3-year period. The services will be retendered again in due course, but the appointment itself requires annual ratification.

101 voted out of 105 eligible to vote	
For	Against
96%	4%

This motion is carried.

4. To appoint Frances Sandilands (West End (Perth) BC) as President of Bowls Scotland

Ahead of this item, the Chair invited outgoing Presidents Marella O'Neill and Ron McArthur to say a few words. Invite Marella and Ron to make a short statement as outgoing Presidents. The Chair then invited Susan Hutchison from West End (Perth) BC to speak to the AGM in support of Frances Sandilands nomination as President.

“Frances joined Perth West End in 2017. She had already been involved in committees with her former club serving in most positions at the club over a long period of time which made her well known throughout the bowling fraternity. She is also on the committee of Perth and Perthshire Ladies Bowling Association.

When she joined the club, it was not long before she was appointed as Ladies match secretary, a position she held for several years. She was instrumental in encouraging the ladies to take a fuller part in external competitions, Bowls Scotland games in particular, a Bronze in the Ladies Rinks and also a Ladies Triples at Ayr was the reward. The ladies have also been successful in our area finals on several occasions during her tenure.

As a qualified coach, she would make herself available as required and also organise events. The ladies have also been successful in our area finals on several occasions whilst she was match secretary.

Having bowled and been involved for many years in the administration of clubs and associations, she is well prepared for her new role at Bowls Scotland, and we are delighted to support her throughout her term in office”.

The Chair invited any questions. There were no questions.

100 voted out of 105 eligible to vote	
For	Against
99%	1%

The Chair congratulated Frances Sandilands as becoming the first unified President of Bowls Scotland under the new presidential structure.

5. To appoint Andy Meekison (Duffus Park BC) as Vice President of Bowls Scotland.

99 voted out of 105 eligible to vote	
For	Against
100%	0%

The Chair congratulated Andy Meekison on his appointment.

6. To appoint Mary Watt (Dunoon – Argyll BC) as Junior Vice President of Bowls Scotland.

99 voted out of 105 eligible to vote	
For	Against
98%	2%

The Chair congratulated Mary Watt in her appointment.

The Chair invited Frances to say a few words:

“I would like to thank everyone for attending and thank you to my club Perth, West End for their support on this journey. It is certainly a great honour and privilege to be taking up the position as President of Bowls Scotland. To be the first unified president and female taking on this position is certainly a memorable day for me. I am looking forward to the challenge and a fantastic opportunity to meeting many new people along the way.

I have been bowling for around 30 years, I began playing at Dudley BC in Edinburgh before moving to Perth and playing for both West End and Perth BC. I have also been Treasurer for the Perthshire LBA and for the Tayside Ladies Triples league.

Would I have known, when asked by our previous District secretary, if I would consider being her replacement and follow in her footsteps, and here I am some years later. She too had moved on to take office as Bowls Scotland lady President I look forward to my year in office and I certainly hope I can do Bowls Scotland proud and work as an ambassador for our great sport and with my full commitment while in office. I am looking forward to working with both Andy my Vice President and Mary as my Junior Vice president and wish them well in their respective positions.

I would also like to thank both Marella and Ron for the sterling work they have contributed over the past year and for the guidance and support they have given me whilst Vice President. Thank you so much”.



Ahead of items 7-10, the Chair highlighted as the AGM is virtual, we are unable to present honorary membership face to face, however, we will celebrate these nominees post AGM and arrange a suitable time for presentations.

The chair provided an overview ahead of item 7.

“Marella started bowling in 1984, and has since carried out several posts including President, Umpire and Coach. An honorary member of Dalry Bowling Club, Marella has also been District Secretary for the West of Scotland Women’s Bowling Association in addition to her role as District Coordinator for Bowls Scotland.

Years of dedication and a fantastic ambassador for the game. Ron started bowling 40 years ago, and during that time has held numerous roles as umpire, coach, district coordinator and director. A member of Zetland Bowling Club, Ron has been heavily involved in para bowls, having coached at national and international level. He has been a huge supporter of bowls, as an inclusive sport. Vice President during COVID and last year as President, Ron has dedicated over 40 years of his life to bowls, and we are thankful to him for this”.

The Chair invited any questions. There were no questions.

7. To appoint 2023 President Marella O’Neill (Dalry BC) as Honorary Member of Bowls Scotland

100 voted out of 105 eligible to vote	
For	Against
100%	0%

8. To appoint 2023 President Ron McArthur (Zetland BC) as Honorary Member of Bowls Scotland.

100 voted out of 105 eligible to vote	
For	Against
99%	1%

The Chair congratulated both Marella and Ron on their Honorary Membership.

Ahead of item 9, the Chair provided an overview of the nominees:

“Ishbel, Bette Tom and Jim have been in their District Coordinator roles for over a decade, dedicating their time, experience, and knowledge to the game. Each of them stepped down for their roles recently and we are sad to see them go. However, we know they will still be involved in the game at club level, and we are delighted to propose them for honorary membership. Tom was recently appointed Vice President of Bowls Scotland but has decided to end his presidential journey and we wish him all the very best”.

The Chair invited any questions. There were no questions.

9. To appoint outgoing District Coordinators who have served 10 years or more, Ishbel Ferguson (Bannockburn BC), Bette MacDonald (Craigmillar Park BC), Tom Weir (Dalsersf BC), Jim Boyce (Dalgety Bay BC) as Honorary Member of Bowls Scotland.

100 voted out of 105 eligible to vote	
For	Against
97%	3%

**Bowls Scotland
(Company No. SC386410)**

Ahead of item 10, the Chair provided an overview of the nominees.

“Over the years many people have been involved in the shaping of Bowls Scotland and indeed been heavily involved in the transition from SWBA and SBA to one of Scotland’s biggest and most successful Governing Bodies of sport. Ann Paton has sat on both the SWBA Board and the early years of Bowls Scotland. An avid supporter of bowls in the Edinburgh area and throughout Scotland, Ann worked closely with the CEO to set the marketing principles for Bowls Scotland back in 2010. We thank Ann for her continued support for Bowls Scotland.

Betty Aitken has been there and done it! Team manager, coach, District Secretary, committee member and Director. Supported by her family, Betty has been an integral part of Bowls Scotland and its initial direction since 2010. Now enjoying some time away from the game at National level, Betty, like Ann, has been instrumental in moving the sport forward”.

The Chair invited any questions. There were no questions.

10. To appoint former Bowls Scotland Board Directors and SWBA officials, as Honorary Members of Bowls Scotland in recognition of their services to Lawn Bowls in Scotland.

100 voted out of 105 eligible to vote	
For	Against
97%	3%

The Chair indicated that this now concludes the main part of the AGM.

The Chair announced the results of the votes on the appointment of Board Directors. In total, five Directors were seeking approval from members. Two Directors who have been co-opted onto the Board to undertake specific roles, and three Directors that have been recently appointed to the Board to fulfil vacant ‘designated’ roles.

All five Board Directors had to be approved by the members to remain on the Board. The Chair confirmed all 5 Directors received more than the 30% required, with the full results available on our website in the coming days.

The Chair announced that Arlene Ewing our General Director with responsibility for Empowering Women in Sport has decided to step down after 4 years.

The Chair announced the following changings to District Coordinators:

- District 1 Gents: Alexander MacDonald (Fraser Park BC), Re-Appointed
- District 2 Gents: Bill Menzies (Strichen BC), Re-Appointed
- District 5 Ladies: Julie Gilbert (Monifeith BC), Re-Appointed
- District 10 Gents: Ian McPhait (Falkirk BC), New Appointment
- District 14 Ladies: Moira Rogers (Craigentiny BC), New Appointment
- District 16 Gents: Ramsay Blair (Gilmerton BC), New Appointment
- District 22 Gents: James Brian Hayes (Mount Vernon BC), New Appointment
- District 23 Gents: Douglas Smith (Kelvindale BC), Re-Appointed
- District 27 Gents: Christopher Carswell (West Kilbride BC), New Appointment
- District 27 Ladies: Wendy Grant (West Kilbride BC), Re-Appointment (Previously Gents)
- District 31 Ladies: Zoe Kirk (Marchmount BC), New Appointment

The following people have stepped down from their position since the 2022 AGM.

District 10 Gents – Ron McArthur (Zetland BC)
District 10 Youth – Brian Logan (Laurieston BC)
District 13 Youth – Colin Brett (East Calder BC)
District 14 Ladies – Diane Bell (London Road Foundry BC)
District 17 Youth – Stuart Thomson (Haddington BC)
District 27 Ladies – Marella O’Neill (Dalry BC)
District 28 Ladies - Val O’Neill (Troon BC)
District 31 Ladies – Margaret Gillies (Glencairn BC)

AOCB

The Chair invited any questions under AOCB. For clarity, the Chair outlined this is an open forum, where voting delegates get a chance to ask questions relating to Bowls Scotland business. The Chair confirmed that it may not be possible to cover every question due to time constraints and that members were welcome to submit questions following the AGM to info@bowlsscotland.com and a member of the team would respond.

The Chair highlighted to the members, there will be Board and Management Team Q&A Sessions delivered across Scotland in the New Year.

The Chair handed over to the CEO to make a statement: -

The CEO is concerned about the sport in terms of the number of members of clubs and that this is a global challenge which he was linking with other Nations to seek solutions. Whilst there has been a small increase in membership in clubs in Scotland in 2023 for the first time in over 15 years, the sport needs to quickly adapt and change. There are many sports that were not in existence 10 or 20 years ago. These sports are thriving in the main due to their ability to change and adapt to their market, be relevant to society, with some of those sports directly targeting the 55 and over age group. Bowls clubs and their members have to look at what they offer within their community and make changes and be more adaptable. Doing the same things every year will not create local people seeking membership. Adaptation includes all that we do and this includes the competitions we currently play, including the Andrew Hamilton Trophy. We have made changes to a number of competitions over the years to update, improve and make them more relevant. We will continue to do this and help keep bowls relevant within Scottish society.

General Director Mr Upton added his reflections on his time on the board and the commitment from the CEO to do what is best for the organisation. Mr Upton highlighted the unjustified criticism levelled at the CEO in relation to changes made to modernise and improve the game. Mr Upton highlighted the changes being made to the Andrew Hamilton Trophy are an attempt to address the number of issues raised over a number of years by Counties, including lack of engagement, lack of participation, lack of quality bowlers competing, and a perceived lack of importance or decreasing importance of the Andrew Hamilton Trophy from an international perspective. It is hoped that the changes will address all of these issues in a way that bowlers have suggested it could be addressed, and that is one of the driving forces behind this change. Mr Upton highlighted the need for this new format to be tried and allow it to be evolved to ensure it is as good as it can be.

The Chair invited any questions.

James Dalziel, Dumbartonshire Gents Association asked, who made AHT Change decision I was down as one of County secretaries and in 3 Commissions in 15 years always received Status Quo vote. Never discussed this with current Coordinators.

The CEO confirmed our competition and events manager spoke to James on the phone earlier in the week. The CEO clarified that the 4 AHT coordinators spoke to a range of people but did apologise if James was not included in this. There will be a review post 2024 to gather views from players and officials.

Gary Smith, Linlithgow BC, indicated he was asked to report the frustration and anger from the West Lothian Bowling Association with regards to the comments on consultation and discussions in relation to the Andrew Hamilton Trophy. Mr Smith raised the feeling that Counties had been disenfranchised in consultations. If individuals have been appointed as Area Coordinators, what right did they have to talk on behalf of Counties in their area. Mr Smith wanted it recorded that there had been no consultation with West Lothian Bowling Association. Mr Smith asked if the 2024 competition calendar is a fait accompli? Mr Smith highlighted some issues with the calendar and some competing dates whereby players /clubs would need to make a choice on what competitions and events they attend. In addition, Mr Smith asked if there had been any review of the format of the home internationals? Mr Smith also offered his congratulations to those receiving Honorary Membership and raised that there has been no mention of the greens at Ayr. Mr Smith asked if there was a plan in place to upgrade the greens and monitor this?

The CEO confirmed the calendar of events was in place for 2024 and that there are discussions ongoing with the Nations for 2024 competition. The CEO confirmed that there have been discussions with South Ayrshire Council and a plan is in place to improve the greens.

James Dalziel, Dumbartonshire BA, commented on the disappointment at the changes to the Andrew Hamilton Trophy after the number of years it has been in existence and the talent that had been brought through. Mr Dalziel also expressed the sense of apathy amongst the bowling community and highlighted this was a club and Bowls Scotland issue.

The CEO commented on the pressures on clubs and volunteers in clubs to be able to keep things going can be really difficult. We sympathise with the challenges and that is why we invest in programmes to support clubs including Try Bowls Activators and BowlsMark to help support clubs on and off the green. Our National Development Officers are available to support clubs and we are proactively supporting clubs.

The Chair indicated there had been a question received ahead of the AGM from Denise Connell, Pollokshaws Bowling Club. Ms Connell commented on the operational costs for High Performance seeming excessive and what other National competitions/Championships were delivered. Ms Connell asked if Bowls Scotland should be increasing the sponsorship income and how can this be improved, including securing a sponsor for Junior Bowls Clubs to improve the sport's profile e.g. McDonalds are sponsoring football for children on the tv. Ms Connell also suggested that Bowls Scotland do not appear to be responsible for the publicising of bowls nationwide.

The CEO addressed the High-Performance costs and the reason this is high is due to the full team attendance at the World Championships in Australia. Securing sponsorship is a tireless task and something the team has been working hard on the last couple of years. We have a good group of partners on board who can help clubs to cost save on utilities and other financial outlays. The CEO disagreed with comments in relation to publicising bowls nationwide. There has been coverage from TV this year across all aspects of the game including club stories. We are not at the stage where we could approach a sponsor for junior bowls specifically.

Questions raised via the Q&A Chat Function (not spoken live):

Dawn Hunter Gallatown BC, asked if the empowering woman in bowls are going to have more meetings as I am on this committee, and we don't seem to get anywhere. As the 30% of members are woman and when you see the board members are nearly all men. if we want to empower woman in bowls,



should the board members be equal men and women? Sarah Pryde-Smith, Bowls Scotland Business Operations Manager thanked Dawn for her question and outlined with Roz Asli, our new Equality, Inclusion and Welfare Manger coming on board, we are reviewing the EWIB programme and plan to run alongside our new strategy. This is still a priority for us and your input in this group is welcomed. We will be out with more of an update at the start of the new year.

Liam Thom, Kemnay BC, have you a contingency plan in place if counties decide to no longer enter the AHT?

The CEO confirmed Bowls Scotland will run the Andrew Hamilton with the Counties who enter.

Liam Thom, Kemnay BC, you also talked about 'how is bowls seen in the area' - taking away 2/3 home games for a county result in bowls being seen even less. A county day is a big day for host clubs and generates a bit of cash. If you're in a season when you only have one home game and subsequently just one club getting the game, the whole county suffers financially.

The CEO accepted this could be the case but highlighted the other opportunities for clubs to host events as part of the new calendar of events.

Kathleen Gordon Oldmeldrum B C, Has there been interviews for NYCs

Sarah Pryde-Smith, Bowls Scotland Business Operations Manager thanked Kathleen for her question, and confirmed the process is ongoing and hopefully will be concluded shortly. Bowls Scotland are looking forward to seeing all our new DCs and NYCs in the new year.

Stephen McGillivray Laurencekirk B C, asked what do Bowls Scotland plan to do about funding and support for Umpires? Sarah Pryde-Smith, Bowls Scotland Business Operations Manager thanked Stephen for his question and outlined a commitment to working with Umpires to better improve the relationship and where we can add value including funding. Bowls Scotland will reach out to the Umpires committee in the new year.

Ian McPhait, BC, there have been a lot of complaints about communication, why was the announcement of the Podium Pathway out with the bowling season?

The CEO highlighted the amount of work required to finalise the Podium Pathway and the timelines in place to ensure the pathway and events are delivered.

There were five questions/statements from clubs that were either already covered via previous questions asked or time did not allow for answers, however a number of these were answered out with the AGM meeting. The questions/statements were:

Tom Reeder, Kirkliston BC, commented that the reason for the lack of international bowlers playing in Hamilton Trophy lies with BS as they changed the set up and agreed with Gary Smith's comment that this is going to give our club a serious problem, if podium events clash with Inter Counties Top Ten.

Graham Haddow, Balgay BC, I think that BS give the impression that elite bowling is a priority. Of course it's important, but grass roots bowling needs greater attention

Douglas Lambert, Bridge of Earn BC, asked how many counties have withdrawn from Andrew Hamilton trophy?

Michael Airnes, Denny BC, just a follow up to Gary's question regarding the proposed Gents Top Ten competition on the calendar considering there is already an Inter County Top Ten Championship. Can we have clarification on this.



Charlie Peacock, Stamperland BC, asked if any clubs require assistance with their utility costs, please as I have saved our club Stamperland BC over 70% over the last 2 years.

The Chair encouraged attendees to submit any other questions to info@bowlsscotland.com and thanked everyone for attending and thanked staff for their hard work making sure everything was prepared for today's meeting. The Chair wished everyone a safe and happy Festive Season and wished everyone a successful season on the green in 2024.

A Short 'A Year in Pictures' slideshow will be shown, with attendees asked to leave the Zoom webinar.

The AGM closed at 1930 hrs.