

BOWLS SCOTLAND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Bowls Scotland held virtually via Zoom Webinar on Saturday 30th November 2024 at 1030 hrs.

Register of Interest

- Michael Cavanagh – AGM Chair, Director of Performance
- David Scouller – Director of Governance and Interim Chair
- Henry Robertson – Director of Finance
- Gavin Smith – General Director
- Nicola Wilson – Director of Development
- Chris Holloway – General Director (Apologies due to illness)
- Gary Grant – General Director

Chair's Opening Remarks

Michael Cavanagh welcomed attendees to the 2024 Annual General Meeting and introduced the Board and other attendees including, Kareena Cuthbert – Head of High Performance, Brogan Sinclair – Business Operations Manager, Lindsay McKenzie – Partnership Manager **sportscotland**, Frances Sandilands – Bowls Scotland President and Andrew McNamara – Partner at BDO, accounting services provider.

A minute's silence was held to honour members of the bowling community who had passed away in the past year.

The Chair indicated that there were 9 voting items and clarified the process for asking questions, voting, and who was entitled to vote and ask questions. A practice vote was conducted successfully.

The Chair confirmed the required quorum is 78 voting members (10% of voting members, 30 associations and 747 clubs as at 31st October). The chair confirmed the AGM quorum had been met with a total of 30 proxies and 53 eligible voters present at the meeting. In addition, there were 19 guests including Honorary Members and District Co-Ordinators.

I. To receive the Annual Report of Bowls Scotland for 1st September 2023 – 31st August 2024.

The Chair introduced this item and the Annual report video for the year of 2024 was played.

Questions Raised:

- Gary Smith (West Lothian BA) requested greater recognition of Cities and Counties Associations in future reports.
- Anna Marshall asked about DCs voting on behalf of clubs – clarified by Kareena Cuthbert.

	FOR	AGAINST
Live votes	47	0
Proxy votes	29	0
TOTAL	100%	0%

This motion is carried.

2A. Ordinary Resolution – That resolution 2 on the Notice of Annual General Meeting 2024 be amended so that it reads “To receive the Financial Statements of Bowls Scotland for 1st September 2023 – 31st August 2024 (as per the updated draft of the Financial Statements circulated to the members on 25 November 2024).”

Due to a correction in the financial statements circulated on 25th November 2024, a resolution was passed to amend the wording of resolution 2.

	FOR	AGAINST
Live votes	49	0
TOTAL	100%	0%

This motion is carried.

2B. To receive the Financial Statements of Bowls Scotland for 1st September 2023 – 31st August 2024.

Andrew McNamara (BDO) presented a detailed overview of the accounts for 2024.

“After a couple of difficult years with the pandemic, revenue has now returned to normal, being £1.046m, a reduction of £13k from last year. Part of this reduction is due to having to repay over £40k of funding to sportscotland for amounts received in previous year that were not spent. Membership revenue fell slightly to just under £240k, revenue from championships, events and development also dropped slightly to just under £230k, and despite the repayment to sportscotland their overall funding recognised in the accounts increased by £10k to £568k. Had the repayment been known about at the time of completing last year’s accounts, the sportscotland income recognised last year would have been £515k, and this year would have been £611k, an increase of almost £100k. 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 £110k of the funds received this year being deferred to match expenditure incurred after the year end. Last year’s equivalent deferral was £101k.

On the expenditure side, staff costs continue to be the main expense of the organisation, accounting for about 54% of the total expenditure. This is comparable with similar organisations, and the movement is proportionate to the movement in funding received. The costs associated with the high performance program, which is solely funded by sportscotland, fell this year to £75k, from £192k in prior year. This is purely due to timing. The costs associated with staging the national championships and other national and international events amounted to approximately £250k, which is predominantly covered by the income generated from these events. The normal running costs of the organisation have increased by around 10% from the previous year (back to a similar level as 2022). IT related costs still make up around one third of the total overheads, and due to the different mixture of income and related expenditure this year the organisation has been unable to recover as much of the VAT on expenditure as before, resulting in a higher irrecoverable VAT figure.

The final boost to this year has been the increased interest rates, which has seen a 70% increase in the interest earned on cash deposits from £6,314 last year to £10,680 this year. This income is deemed to be non-member income and therefore is subject to corporation tax, hence the provision of £2,029 in the accounts.

Overall, mainly due to the repayment of unspent monies to sportscotland, as well as the increased costs of the organisation, there is a deficit this year after tax of just over £21,000, compared to a surplus last year of £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 decreased from around £265,000 to £244,000 the movement of £21,000 being the deficit 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 movement this year reflects some new IT equipment purchased at a cost of £4,402, less the annual depreciation charge of £466. Debtors represent amounts owed to the organisation at the balance sheet date. The largest single debtor is £38,000 from South Ayrshire Council in respect of the national championships, as well as many small balances from clubs and individuals. There is also VAT recoverable of around £13.5k. The bank balance of £483k shows a decrease of almost £64k on last year. Decrease can be summed up in the amount repaid to sportscotland of around £40k plus the loss for the year of £21k. Included here is the sportscotland income received in advance of £110k referred to earlier. 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 £110k of sportscotland advance income included here. There are also unpaid invoices of £26k 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 of approximately £244k, 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 Ellison, Brogan and all of the team at Bowls Scotland for the assistance they gave to my team in preparing these financial statements. I would also like to put on record my thanks to Alan McMillan for the assistance provided during his tenure as Chief Executive. I am now open to any questions you may have.”

Henry Robertson (Director of Finance) added commentary on financial strategy and future planning:

- While the organisation’s financial position remains robust, the cumulative impact of several years of rising costs, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, is now becoming apparent.
- Although the 2023-24 year resulted in a deficit, we are pleased to note that the reserves of the company remain healthy.
- It should be noted that across the Scottish Governing Bodies, we are not alone in facing this situation, with a number of sports impacted by a deficit in recent years and having to reevaluate their income streams and expenditure.
- Looking ahead we need to rebalance the financial model.
- Currently our competitions programme is not financially sustainable, so we will see a direct impact this year on competition entries and ticket prices.
- The board and management will conduct a comprehensive review of financial projections and necessary actions.
- This includes a review of affiliation fees, tournament licenses and wider membership services in 2025. This will involve consultation with the membership, aiming to have a proposition for 2026 at next year’s AGM.
- We will also evaluate opportunities to diversify commercial income, and analyse the return on investment for partners and members.

Questions Raised:

- George Miller asked about depreciation, county championship costs, and governance staff expenses.

- Kareena Cuthbert and Henry Robertson provided detailed responses.

	FOR	AGAINST
Live votes	46	1
Proxy votes	29	0
TOTAL	99%	1%

This motion is carried.

Following the vote, the Chair thanked Andrew McNamara for his presentation and confirmed that he had left the meeting.

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

The chair noted that this will be BDO's fourth consecutive annual appointment. As per good governance practice, it is the board's intention to go to tender again for 2026. This will be brought to the 2025 AGM.

There were no questions from the room.

	FOR	AGAINST
Live votes	46	1
Proxy votes	29	0
TOTAL	99%	1%

This motion is carried.

4. To appoint Keith Fender (East Linton BC) as President of Bowls Scotland.

Before the formal vote, Chair Michael Cavanagh took a moment to acknowledge and thank Frances Sandilands for her outstanding service as the outgoing President of Bowls Scotland. He noted that Frances had been the first unified President under the new structure, which replaced the previous system of separate Ladies and Gents Presidents. Michael highlighted Frances' dedication throughout the year, especially in light of the unexpected passing of Vice President Andy Meekison. He praised her for fulfilling the responsibilities of both roles with grace and commitment, and for being a strong ambassador for the sport and a role model for women in bowls.

Frances was then invited to address the meeting. She began by expressing her gratitude for the opportunity to serve as President and described the past year as a fantastic experience. She reflected on the joy of attending competitions and witnessing the success of players and teams, often sharing emotional moments with them. Frances thanked the coaches and families who supported the athletes and acknowledged the friendships she had formed during her time in office. She also paid tribute to Andy Meekison, describing him as a wonderful person and a great loss to the bowling community. Frances concluded by thanking her husband John for his support and wished Keith Fender all the best in his upcoming term as President.

Following Frances' remarks, Jock Halliday, an Honorary Member from Dalkeith, was invited to speak in support of Keith Fender's nomination. Jock described Keith as someone who had served bowls at every level—club, county, and national—and who consistently stepped up when needed. He emphasised Keith's reliability, humility, and voluntary contributions, noting that the sport relies heavily on volunteers.

like him. Jock also acknowledged the significance of Keith stepping into the role following Andy Meekison's passing and expressed his full support for the nomination.

The Chair then opened the vote to appoint Keith Fender, of East Linton Bowling Club, as President of Bowls Scotland.

	FOR	AGAINST
Live votes	46	0
Proxy votes	30	0
TOTAL	100%	0%

This motion is carried.

Keith Fender was invited to speak following his appointment. He began by thanking everyone who had voted for him and expressed his appreciation for the support he had received. Keith acknowledged the honour of stepping into the role, especially in memory of Andy Meekison, and stated his hope to make Andy proud. He shared that he had been a member of East Linton Bowling Club for over 50 years and had served in various roles, including Match Secretary and County representative. Keith had also represented his district at the National Finals in both the fours and singles competitions. He pledged to give his full commitment to the role and expressed his enthusiasm for working with the Vice and Junior Vice Presidents, Bowls Scotland staff, and officials to promote and grow the sport.

Michael Cavanagh closed the item by congratulating Keith and expressing the Board's eagerness to work with him in the coming year.

Vice President Appointment

The chair explained the process for appointment of the Vice President:

"At this point in our AGM business, we normally move to the appointment of the Vice President. As outlined in the AGM notice, due to unforeseen circumstances, the appointed candidate could not be confirmed and circulated with the AGM papers. As such this is not a voting item today, but we would like to share the modified process for membership approval.

We are pleased to share that the nominated candidate is Sandra McLeish (Spittal BC). Sandra has been a District Coordinator for 5 years and has had a distinguished career in bowls as a high performance player, coach and umpire, including appearances at World Championships and Commonwealth Games.

It is the board's view that the most accessible and appropriate adjustment to the process for membership approval of this appointment is via an electronic vote by email. The voting paper will be issued to all members on Monday 2nd December by email, with an allocated 19 days for return. If there is no disagreement from members here present regarding the proposal, the board will take this motion forward."

No objections raised.

5. To appoint Rae Graham (Lockerbie BC) as Junior Vice President of Bowls Scotland.

The Chair introduced the motion to appoint Rae Graham of Lockerbie Bowling Club as the Junior Vice President of Bowls Scotland. Members were invited to ask any questions regarding the nomination, but none were raised.

	FOR	AGAINST
Live votes	47	0
Proxy votes	29	0
TOTAL	100%	0%

This motion is carried.

Following the result, the Chair congratulated Rae Graham on his appointment and welcomed him to the role.

6. To appoint outgoing President Frances Sandilands (Perth West End BC) as Honorary Member of Bowls Scotland.

The Chair introduced the motion to appoint outgoing President Frances Sandilands of Perth West End Bowling Club as an Honorary Member of Bowls Scotland. He spoke about Frances' long-standing contribution to the sport, noting that she had served as a District Coordinator since 2014 and would continue her work in District 6 in the upcoming season.

He highlighted that Frances was the first unified President under the new structure and had fulfilled the role with distinction. Her leadership during a difficult year, particularly following the illness and passing of Vice President Andy Meekison, was commended. Frances was described as a strong ambassador for bowls and a role model for women in the sport.

	FOR	AGAINST
Live votes	43	0
Proxy votes	29	0
TOTAL	100%	0%

This motion is carried.

The Chair congratulated Frances on her appointment as an Honorary Member and thanked her again for her exceptional service.

7. To appoint outgoing District Coordinator Mary Watt (Dunoon Argyll BC) as Honorary Member of Bowls Scotland in recognition of over 10 years of service to Lawn Bowls in Scotland.

The Chair introduced the motion to appoint outgoing District Coordinator Mary Watt of Dunoon Argyll Bowling Club as an Honorary Member of Bowls Scotland. He noted that Mary had served as District Coordinator for District 26 for ten years and had been a consistent and dedicated volunteer throughout her tenure.

Mary's previous roles included serving as SIBA Ladies President and being an active member of the Scottish Umpires group. The Chair stated that honorary membership was a fitting way to recognise her contributions as she stepped down from many of her responsibilities.

	FOR	AGAINST
Live votes	45	0
Proxy votes	29	0
TOTAL	100%	0%

This motion is carried.

The Chair congratulated Mary Watt on her appointment and thanked her for her service to lawn bowls in Scotland.

8. To appoint outgoing Bowls Scotland Board Director David Scouller (Lenzie BC) as Honorary Member of Bowls Scotland in recognition of his completion of two full terms of service to the Bowls Scotland Board of Directors.

The Chair introduced the motion to appoint outgoing Bowls Scotland Board Director David Scouller of Lenzie Bowling Club as an Honorary Member of Bowls Scotland. He acknowledged David's eight years of voluntary service on the Board, including his roles as Director of Governance and two terms as Interim Chair.

David was praised for his leadership during periods of change and for his work on governance improvements, including the modernisation of District Coordinator roles in 2020. The Chair also shared a personal reflection, noting David's support and guidance during his own time on the Board.

	FOR	AGAINST
Live votes	46	0
Proxy votes	28	1
TOTAL	99%	1%

This motion is carried.

The Chair congratulated David on his appointment and thanked him for his outstanding contribution to the sport.

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

Before moving to Any Other Competent Business, the Chair announced the results of the votes on the appointment of Board Directors. Two Directors, Nicola Wilson and Chris Holloway, were seeking approval to remain on the Board. The Chair confirmed that all Directors received more than the 30% approval threshold required by Bowls Scotland's governance procedures. Full voting results would be published on the Bowls Scotland website in the new year.

The Chair also acknowledged the retirement of David Scouller, who had completed two full terms on the Board, reaching the maximum of eight years of service. He thanked David once again for his exceptional contribution to the organisation.

It was then announced that Gary Grant would be appointed as Chair of Bowls Scotland, effective from 1st January 2025. Gary was invited to speak and expressed his gratitude for the opportunity. He thanked the Board, particularly David Scouller, Michael Cavanagh, and Frances Sandilands, for their support during his onboarding. He also thanked Brogan Sinclair and Kareena Cuthbert for their assistance and said he looked forward to working with the new CEO, and with President Keith Fender to support the sport and its members.

The Chair then provided an update on District Coordinators (DCs):

District 2 Ladies:	Lynn Ronald (Turrif BC), Re-appointed
District 4 Gents & Ladies:	Steve McGillivray (Laurencekirk BC), Re-appointed
District 6 Ladies:	Frances Sandilands (Perth West End BC), Re-appointed
District 7 Gents:	Alan Pearson (Strathmiglo BC), New appointment
District 11 Ladies:	Alison Shaw (Colgrain BC), Re-appointed
District 16 Gents:	Ramsay Blair (Gilmerton BC), New appointment

District 16 Ladies:	Anne-Marie Shearer (Gorebridge BC), New appointment
District 20 Ladies:	Fiona Kerr (Bellshill & Mossend BC), Re-appointed
District 22 Ladies:	Laura Welsh (Baillieston BC), New appointment
District 26 Ladies:	Norma Ramsay (Gourock Park BC), New appointment
District 31 Gents:	Rae Graham (Lockerbie BC), Re-appointment

The Chair expressed delight at the number of DCs continuing in their roles and welcomed the new faces to the team.

The chair also acknowledged those who had stepped down since the 2023 AGM, thanking them for their service.

District 5 Ladies:	Julie Gilbert (Monifieth BC)
District 5 Youth:	Ali Burnett (Abbey BC)
District 6 Gents:	Gary Cardle (Bridge of Earn BC)
District 7 Gents:	Andy Meekison (Duffus Park BC) (Passed Away)
District 10 Gents:	Ian McPhait (Falkirk BC) (Passed Away)
District 13 Gents:	Frazer Muirhead (Linlithgow BC)
District 15 Youth:	John McDermott (Sighthill BC)
District 16 Youth:	Neil Briggs (Dalkeith BC)
District 16 Ladies:	Lynda Christinson (Polton BC)
District 19 Gents:	Tom Notman (Stonehouse BC)
District 19 Ladies:	Gail Notman (Stonehouse BC)
District 24 Gents:	Alan Bell (Cardonald BC)
District 24 Ladies:	Anne Miller (Cardonald BC)
District 26 Ladies:	Mary Watt (Dunoon Argyll BC)

The Chair noted that Bowls Scotland would continue to recruit for remaining vacancies and aimed to have these filled before the start of the new season.

AOCB

The Chair opened the floor to Any Other Competent Business, explaining that this was an opportunity for voting delegates to ask questions relating to Bowls Scotland business. He noted that the session would be limited to 20 minutes and that any unanswered questions would receive a written response following the AGM.

A slide was presented showing questions that had been submitted in advance. The first question asked what action Bowls Scotland would take if a club allowed a player to participate in an unlicensed tournament. The Chair referred attendees to the written response on the slide.

The second question, submitted by Halford Bowling Club, concerned the impact of occasional licences on clubs. The Chair explained that this was a local issue and not something Bowls Scotland could significantly influence.

Further questions were raised live and via the Q&A function. David Sutherland asked whether Bowls Scotland had concerns about the low number of attendees at the AGM, given the total number of member clubs. The Chair acknowledged the concern and noted that 18 apologies had been received. Brogan Sinclair added that some clubs had matches scheduled that day and suggested that future AGMs might be more accessible if held midweek.

David also asked about the outcome of discussions with the Scottish Government regarding rates relief for clubs. Kareena Cuthbert responded that the issue had been pursued by former CEO Alan McMillan and would be picked up by the incoming CEO in early 2025.

Elizabeth Gordon from Hamilton Caledonian Bowling Club asked whether Bowls Scotland would consider offering financial support to clubs that host Bowls Scotland organised competitions. Brogan Sinclair responded positively, saying that this could be discussed further after the AGM.

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting by expressing appreciation to the Bowls Scotland staff for their hard work in preparing for the AGM. He wished all attendees a safe and happy festive season and a successful year on the green in 2025.

The AGM closed at 1145 hrs.