

## **BOWLS SCOTLAND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Bowls Scotland held virtually via Zoom Webinar on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 18:30 hrs.

### **Register of Interest**

- Gary Grant – Chair
- Michael Cavanagh – Director of Performance
- Henry Robertson – Director of Finance
- Gavin Smith – General Director
- Nicola Wilson – Director of Development

### **Chair's Opening Remarks**

The Chair, Gary Grant, formally opened the meeting and extended a warm welcome to all attendees, including representatives of member clubs, associations, affiliates, honorary members, district coordinators, youth coordinators, the guests from BDO and **sportscotland**, and members of staff. Gary Grant introduced himself as Chair of Bowls Scotland, having assumed the role in January 2025, and expressed his appreciation for the support of the membership during his first year in office.

The Chair introduced the Board and staff members present. The Chair acknowledged **sportscotland's** continued funding and guidance and thanked the staff team for their support in facilitating the meeting.

A minute's silence was observed to honour members of the bowling community who had passed away during the year.

The Chair confirmed the meeting was scheduled to run until 20:00 hrs, with an additional 30 minutes allocated for overrun if required. Voting process and eligibility were explained by Brogan Sinclair, Business Operations Manager, and a practice vote was conducted successfully.

The Chair confirmed the required quorum was 77 voting members (10% of voting members, 22 associations and 749 clubs as at 31st October). The chair confirmed the AGM quorum had been met with a total of 29 proxies and 102 eligible voters present at the meeting.

### **1. To receive the Annual Report of Bowls Scotland for 1st September 2024 – 31st August 2025.**

Malcolm Dingwall-Smith, CEO, presented the Annual Report for the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025. Membership stood at 48,511 across 808 clubs, representing a decline of 0.9% in adult members. Initiatives to address this trend included the expansion of local development forums and the continued success of the Try Bowls programme, now adopted by 65% of member clubs. Thirty-three clubs achieved BowlsMark accreditation, reinforcing standards of safety and governance, and encouraging community engagement.

In competitive performance, Scotland's men's team secured silver and the women's team finished third at the British Bowls International Series, while Para Bowls achieved gold at the British Internationals in Leamington Spa. Youth development was strengthened by the introduction of the Under-21 Team Challenge. The National Championships were widely regarded as the most successful to date, attracting almost 40% member participation and generating over 620,000 online views through expanded live streaming, which also marked the return of bowls coverage to the BBC.

Safeguarding remained a priority, with over 300 PVG checks processed free of charge and more than 200 volunteers attending safeguarding courses. The CEO encouraged members to review the full report and reaffirmed Bowls Scotland's commitment to supporting clubs and growing participation.

The Chair commended the report and opened the floor for questions; none were raised.

	FOR	AGAINST	RESULT
Live votes	102	0	This motion is carried.
Proxy votes	27	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	

## 2. To receive the Financial Statements of Bowls Scotland for 1st September 2024 – 31st August 2025 (as per the updated draft of the Financial Statements circulated to the members on 20 November 2025).

Andrew McNamara, Partner at BDO Accountants, presented the financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2025. He confirmed that the format of the accounts remained consistent with the previous year and provided a detailed analysis of the organisation's financial position.

### Income:

Total income for the year increased by approximately 13% to £1,179,872. Membership revenue declined slightly by £3,000 to £236,675, reflecting the ongoing reduction in membership numbers. Revenue from championships, events, and development activities rose significantly to £303,000, an increase of £74,000, primarily attributable to the success of the National Championships. Grant funding from **sportscotland** increased by £63,000 to £631,226, partly due to the absence of a £40,000 repayment that had impacted the previous year. Approximately £85,000 of **sportscotland** funding received during the year was deferred to match expenditure occurring after the year-end.

### Expenditure:

Staff costs remained the largest component of expenditure, accounting for 48% of total costs, down from 60% in the previous year. Actual staff expenditure fell by £42,000 due to vacancies, reducing the average headcount from 18 to 16. Costs associated with the High-Performance Programme, funded entirely by **sportscotland**, increased to £150,000, reflecting timing differences compared to prior years. Expenditure on staging national and international events rose by £50,000 to approximately £300,000, fully offset by increased event revenue. Operational costs increased by £12,000, driven by IT-related expenses, including a one-off migration to cloud storage and consultancy fees for an economic impact study of the National Championships. Irrecoverable VAT also rose by £2,000.

### Other Items:

Bank interest income decreased to £7,812, down from £10,680, due to falling interest rates. This income is subject to corporation tax, resulting in a tax charge of £1,484.

### Overall Position:

The organisation recorded a deficit of £15,529, an improvement on the previous year's deficit of £21,012. Net assets decreased from £244,198 to £228,669, reflecting the deficit. The balance sheet showed a bank balance of £460,948, a reduction of £22,000, explained by the deficit and timing of debtor receipts. Current liabilities included £85,000 of deferred **sportscotland** income and other accrued expenses. Despite the deficit, Bowls Scotland remains in a healthy financial position, with sufficient reserves to meet obligations.

Following Andrew McNamara's comprehensive presentation of the financial statements, Henry Robertson, Director of Finance, addressed the meeting to provide additional context and commentary. Henry Robertson acknowledged that Bowls Scotland had recorded a deficit for the second consecutive

year, noting that this trend had first emerged at the 2024 AGM and had continued into the current financial period. He emphasised that these financial challenges were not isolated but had been progressively materialising over recent years, driven by rising operational costs and static income streams.

Henry Robertson confirmed that the Board had previously undertaken a comprehensive review of the organisation's financial model, examining all available options to ensure sustainability. He reiterated that Bowls Scotland must now advance this work and implement measures to address cost pressures and secure long-term financial stability. This includes exploring alternative income streams, reviewing expenditure priorities, and ensuring that the organisation remains compliant with governance and funding requirements.

In closing, Henry Robertson expressed his appreciation to Andrew McNamara and the BDO team for their professional support in preparing the financial statements. He assured members that the Board would continue to monitor financial performance closely and take proactive steps to safeguard the organisation's future.

Following clarification of a technical amendment to note 14 confirming no Board expenses were claimed during the year, members voted to accept the updated financial statements. Both the amendment and the substantive resolution passed.

**Ordinary resolution: That resolution 2 on the Notice of Annual General Meeting 2025 be amended so that it reads "To receive the Financial Statements of Bowls Scotland for 1st September 2024 – 31st August 2025 (as per the updated draft of the Financial Statements circulated to the members on 20 November 2025)."**

	FOR	AGAINST	RESULT
Live votes	99	0	This motion is carried.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>0</b>	
%	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	

**To receive the Financial Statements of Bowls Scotland for 1st September 2024 – 31st August 2025 (as per the updated draft of the Financial Statements circulated to the members on 20 November 2025).**

	FOR	AGAINST	RESULT
Live votes	99	0	This motion is carried.
Proxy votes	27	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>0</b>	
%	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	

The Chair expressed appreciation to Mr McNamara for his detailed presentation and noted his departure from the meeting.

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

The Chair reminded members that, at the 2024 AGM, Bowls Scotland had indicated an intention to conduct a competitive tender for external accountancy services. He explained that, in light of the proposed change to the organisation's accounting reference date (from 31 August to 31 March, see Agenda Item 4), the Board considered it prudent to maintain continuity through this transitional period. Accordingly, the Board proposed the reappointment of BDO as external accountants for a further year to ensure consistent support while the financial year-end change is implemented.

The Chair invited questions; no questions were raised.

	FOR	AGAINST	RESULT
Live votes	98	2	This motion is carried.
Proxy votes	26	1	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>2%</b>	

#### 4. To amend the accounting reference date of Bowls Scotland from 31 August to 31 March in each year.

The Chair explained that Bowls Scotland currently operates a financial year running from 1 September to 31 August, which coincides with the peak of the outdoor bowling season. This timing requires staff to focus on year-end financial administration during the busiest operational period, creating inefficiencies and diverting resources from service delivery.

To address this, the Board proposed amending the accounting reference date to 31 March, thereby aligning the financial year with the standard fiscal year used by many organisations. The new financial year would run from 1 April to 31 March, simplifying financial management and reducing administrative pressure during the competition season. The Chair clarified that this change would not affect the timing of affiliation payments, which will continue to be collected in October, nor would it have any direct impact on member clubs.

The Chair invited questions; none were raised.

	FOR	AGAINST	RESULT
Live votes	101	1	This motion is carried.
Proxy votes	27	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>1%</b>	

#### 5. To set the capitation fee payable to Bowls Scotland by Club Members for 31 October 2026.

The Chair introduced Agenda Item 5: Capitation Fee, noting that this was one of the most significant items for consideration. The Board presented two proposals to increase the capitation fee payable by clubs for each adult member from the current rate of £5 to either £7 or £8, effective from October 2026. There was no proposal to increase fees for associate or affiliate memberships.

##### Context and Rationale

Malcolm Dingwall-Smith, CEO, delivered a comprehensive presentation outlining the financial context and rationale for the proposed increase. He explained that Bowls Scotland's total annual income is approximately £1.2 million, with the largest proportion (around 55%) derived from **sportscotland** grant funding, which is restricted to specific activities and cannot be used for general expenditure. The National Championships account for approximately 25% of income, while affiliation fees represent around 20%.

Expenditure is broadly aligned with income, with staff costs comprising 48% of total spend. The CEO emphasised that staffing levels are modest compared to other governing bodies, with 18 staff (equivalent to 16.5 full-time roles), 83% of the costs of which are funded by **sportscotland**. He noted that Bowls Scotland is not a high-paying organisation, with only two staff earning above the national average salary for full-time employees.

The CEO highlighted significant cost pressures, including inflation, rising employer national insurance contributions, and increased event costs. He drew attention to the National Centre at Northfield, where the current lease with South Ayrshire Council is ending after nearly 20 years. Under new terms, Bowls Scotland will be required to assume full responsibility for the pavilion and associated facilities, with estimated costs of £70,000 per year, including maintenance of stands and potential green fees. Additional investments, such as £20,000 for live streaming at the National Championships, were cited as essential to modernising the sport and meeting member expectations.

The CEO stressed that Bowls Scotland has recorded deficits for two consecutive years, and projections indicate further losses without corrective action. While efforts are underway to grow commercial income and sponsorship, these will take time to materialise. He noted that a simple inflationary adjustment since the last fee increase in 2021 would have raised the fee to approximately £6.25. The proposed increase to £7 or £8 is intended to secure financial sustainability and protect services, including club support, competitions, safeguarding, and development programmes.

#### Member Discussion

The Chair invited questions and comments. Several members expressed concerns about the impact on smaller clubs and grassroots participation, with suggestions that Bowls Scotland should prioritise generating alternative income streams rather than increasing fees. Others acknowledged the financial challenges and supported the need for an increase, while favouring the lower option of £7. Comparisons were drawn with fees charged by other governing bodies, which are significantly higher than Bowls Scotland's current rate.

The CEO reiterated that the Board recommends clubs pass the increase on to members transparently and highlighted the extensive benefits provided by Bowls Scotland, including safeguarding services, development support, national competitions, and partnerships offering cost-saving opportunities for clubs.

A large number of questions were answered both verbally and using the online meetings text functions.

Two resolutions were considered in sequence:

#### **5A. To set the capitation fee payable to Bowls Scotland by Club Members for 31 October 2026 at £8.00 per Registered Member of that club over the age of 16.**

	FOR	AGAINST	RESULT
Live votes	21	78	This motion is rejected.
Proxy votes	11	16	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>94</b>	
<b>%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>75%</b>	

#### **5B. To set the capitation fee payable to Bowls Scotland by Club Members for 31 October 2026 at £7.00 per Registered Member of that club over the age of 16.**

	FOR	AGAINST	RESULT
Live votes	60	40	This motion is carried.
Proxy votes	16	11	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>51</b>	
<b>%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>	

The Chair confirmed that Resolution 5B was approved and thanked members for their engagement in what was acknowledged as a critical discussion for the future of the sport.

#### **6. To appoint Sandra McLeish (Spittal BC) as President of Bowls Scotland.**

The Chair introduced Agenda Item 6: Appointment of President, beginning by acknowledging the exceptional service of the outgoing President, Keith Fender, during his term of office. The Chair commended Keith Fender for his commitment, energy, and extensive contribution to Bowls Scotland, including his active involvement in the delivery of the National Championships and his role as District Coordinator since 2013.

Keith Fender was invited to address the meeting and provided a reflective summary of his year as President. He described the experience as an honour and highlighted key moments, including attending the Para Bowls Test Series in Ireland, presenting the inaugural Andy Meekison Trophy, and supporting Scotland's teams at the British Isles Championships, where three gold medals and a silver were secured. He also referenced his participation in youth competitions, including the Under-18 and Under-25 internationals, and praised the dedication of players, volunteers, and staff. Keith Fender expressed gratitude to the Bowls Scotland team for their support and to his wife for her assistance throughout his term.

Keith Fender then endorsed the nomination of Sandra McLeish as President, citing her extensive experience in the sport, her service within ladies' bowling associations, and her reputation as a respected World Bowls umpire. He stated that Sandra McLeish's knowledge and commitment would be invaluable in the role.

The Chair proceeded to the vote on the appointment of Sandra McLeish as President.

	<b>FOR</b>	<b>AGAINST</b>	<b>RESULT</b>
Live votes	93	0	This motion is carried.
Proxy votes	27	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	

Sandra McLeish was invited to speak and expressed her appreciation for the confidence placed in her. She thanked Keith Fender for his guidance and support during her tenure as Vice President and acknowledged her home club, Spittal, for their encouragement. Sandra McLeish affirmed her commitment to promoting the sport and supporting members throughout her term and looked forward to engaging with clubs and players across Scotland.

The Chair congratulated Sandra McLeish on her appointment and wished her every success in her new role.

## 7. To appoint Rae Graham (Lockerbie BC) as Vice President of Bowls Scotland.

The Chair introduced Agenda Item 7: Appointment of Vice President, confirming that the Board had nominated Rae Graham of Lockerbie Bowling Club for the position. The Chair noted Rae Graham's longstanding involvement in the sport and his commitment to supporting Bowls Scotland's objectives. No questions were raised by members regarding the nomination.

	<b>FOR</b>	<b>AGAINST</b>	<b>RESULT</b>
Live votes	90	0	This motion is carried.
Proxy votes	26	1	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>1%</b>	

The Chair congratulated Rae Graham on his appointment and expressed confidence in his ability to contribute positively to the organisation's governance and strategic direction.



## Junior Vice President Appointment

The Chair addressed Agenda Item 7 (continued): Junior Vice President, explaining that the expected candidate for this position was due for re-election as a District Coordinator at the time the AGM papers were prepared. As this process had not been concluded prior to the publication of the AGM notice, the nomination could not be included in the formal agenda.

The Chair confirmed that the Board now proposes Maureen Wallace, a member of Tulliallan Bowling Club and District Coordinator for District 9, for appointment as Junior Vice President. To ensure transparency and accessibility for all members, the Board recommended that this appointment be confirmed via an electronic vote by email, similar to the process adopted at the previous AGM.

Voting papers will be issued to all member clubs in the coming weeks, and the outcome will be communicated promptly thereafter. The Chair invited comments or objections to this approach; none were raised. The meeting therefore agreed to proceed on this basis.

## 8. To appoint outgoing President Keith Fender (East Linton) as Honorary Member of Bowls Scotland.

The Chair introduced Agenda Item 8: Appointment of Honorary Membership, noting that it is customary for Bowls Scotland to confer honorary membership upon the outgoing President in recognition of their service. The Chair paid tribute to Keith Fender, describing him as an outstanding ambassador for the sport and a highly committed leader during his term as President.

Keith Fender's contributions were highlighted, including his long-standing role as District Coordinator for District 17 since 2013, his active involvement in the National Championships Delivery Group, and his tireless efforts to promote bowls across Scotland. The Chair expressed personal gratitude for Keith Fender's support during his first year as Chair and commended his energy and dedication to the organisation.

	FOR	AGAINST	RESULT
Live votes	93	0	This motion is carried.
Proxy votes	27	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	

The Chair congratulated Keith Fender on his appointment and thanked him for his exceptional service to Bowls Scotland and the wider bowling community.

## 9. To determine that the Board of Bowls Scotland shall include Directors holding the positions of non-executive Chairperson, non-executive Director of Finance, and up to eight non-executive General Directors.

The Chair introduced Agenda Item 9, explaining that the current Articles of Association specify a number of named director positions, including Director of Development, Director of Marketing and Communications, Director of Governance, and Director of Competitions and Events, alongside the Chair and Finance Director. The Board proposed an amendment to remove these named titles, retaining only the positions of Chair and Director of Finance, with all other directors designated as General Directors.

The Chair outlined the reasoning behind this proposal. The existing structure, which assigns fixed titles to directors, was described as outdated and restrictive. The Board believes that flexibility is essential to strengthen governance and ensure that directors are appointed based on their skills and experience rather than being tied to specific functional titles. This change will allow the Board to recruit individuals with expertise in areas such as commercial development, safeguarding, governance, and strategic planning, thereby enhancing its capacity to deliver Bowls Scotland's long-term objectives.

The Chair emphasised that this amendment is an internal governance improvement and will have a direct benefit to members by enabling the organisation to respond more effectively to emerging priorities and challenges. It was confirmed that the proposal does not alter the overall composition of the Board or its accountability to members.

The Chair invited questions; none were raised.

	<b>FOR</b>	<b>AGAINST</b>	<b>RESULT</b>
Live votes	88	1	This motion is carried.
Proxy votes	26	1	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>2%</b>	

## 10. Outcome of Board Director Vote

The Chair introduced Agenda Item 10, concerning the election of directors. It was noted that only one director was seeking approval from the membership this year: Gary Grant, for the position of Chair of Bowls Scotland.

The Chair explained that the election process had been conducted in advance of the AGM, with voting papers issued to all member clubs. The results of the vote were then announced by Brogan Sinclair, Business Operations Manager:

	<b>FOR</b>	<b>AGAINST</b>	<b>RESULT</b>
Votes	40	1	This motion is carried.
<b>%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>2%</b>	

Gary Grant was therefore confirmed as Chair of Bowls Scotland. He expressed his gratitude to the membership for their confidence and support, stating that it was a privilege to serve in the role. He reaffirmed his commitment to working collaboratively with the Board, staff, and members to address the challenges facing the sport and to deliver on Bowls Scotland's strategic objectives.

## 11. Questions submitted to the Board

The Chair confirmed that, in accordance with the AGM notice, members were invited to submit questions to the Board in advance of the meeting. No questions were received prior to the AGM. The Chair reiterated that, due to the extensive agenda and time constraints, priority had been given to questions relating to specific resolutions during the meeting. He assured members that any questions not addressed during the AGM would be followed up directly by Bowls Scotland after the meeting. No additional questions were raised under this item.

## 12. AOCB



The Chair provided the customary update on District Coordinator appointments and changes since the previous AGM. The Chair expressed appreciation for the continued commitment of reappointed coordinators and extended thanks to those retiring from their roles for their valuable service to the sport.

Incoming and reappointed:

District 3 Gents:	David Cobban-Shaw (Westhill BC), re-appointed
District 5 Ladies and Gents:	Iain Dorricott (Broughty BC), re-appointed
District 6 Gents:	James Scott (Blackford BC), new appointment
District 6 Youth:	Susan Miles (Stanley BC), re-appointed
District 7 Ladies:	Morag Robertson (Ladybank BC), re-appointed
District 9 Ladies:	Maureen Wallace (Tulliallan BC), re-appointed
District 10 Gents:	Brian Logan (Laurieston BC), new appointment
District 10 Ladies:	Sheila Muir (Grahamston BC), re-appointed
District 13 Gents:	Gary Smith (Linlithgow BC), new appointment
District 14 Gents:	Graeme Swan (Tanfield BC), re-appointed
District 17 Gents:	Keith Fender (East Linton BC), re-appointed
District 19 Gents & Ladies:	Alan Hutchison (Eddlewood BC), new appointment
District 22:	Brian Airlie (Chryston & District BC), new appointment
District 25 Gents:	Colin Reddy (Barrhead BC), re-appointed
District 29 Gents:	Alan Happel (Northfield BC), new appointment
District 31 Youth:	Duncan Smith, re-appointed

Outgoing:

District 12 Gents:	Benjamin Major (Lenzie BC)
District 16 Ladies:	Ann-Marie Shearer (Gorebridge BC)
District 17 Ladies:	Margaret Thomson (Prestonpans-Castlepark BC)
District 21 Gents:	Kevin Lewsey (Wellcroft BC)
District 22 Gents:	James Hayes (Mount Vernon BC)
District 27 Gents:	Scott Spiers (Blacklands BC)

The Chair thanked all outgoing coordinators for their dedication and confirmed that recruitment for remaining vacancies will continue, with the aim of filling all positions before the start of the new season.

No additional items were raised under AOCB.

The Chair then formally closed the meeting, thanking members for their participation and engagement throughout the AGM. He extended seasonal greetings and best wishes for the 2026 season.

**The AGM closed at 20:25 hrs.**