

Bowls Scotland Board Meeting

Monday 2nd February 2026, 17:30

Teams Meeting

Present: Gary Grant – Chair (GG), Gavin Smith (GS), Michael Cavanagh (MC), Henry Robertson (HR), Nicola Wilson (NW).

In Attendance: Malcolm Dingwall-Smith - CEO (MDS), Brogan Sinclair - Business Operations Manager (BS), Kareena Cuthbert - High Performance Manager (KC), Fiona Lilley – **sportscotland** partnership manager (FL).

Apologies: None received.

1. Welcome

1.1. Chairs Opening Remarks: The Chair, GG, opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees to the meeting. He noted the agenda was substantial and thanked everyone for reviewing the papers in advance.

1.2. Declarations of Interest: No conflicts declared in relation to the agenda.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes: Minutes from the meeting held on 15th December 2025 were approved.

2.1. Matters Arising: The Board noted that an update on affiliation numbers will be provided once the final clubs complete the process in April, with interim figures included in the Executive Management Report. GG confirmed that the outstanding skills audit matrix has now been submitted. NW acknowledged the safeguarding policy action assigned to her at the previous meeting and confirmed she is progressing it. The Board also discussed a clash in the October meeting date and agreed to move the away day to Saturday 3rd October.

2.2. Action Log: Most actions are progressing or complete; no new actions raised.

2.3. Board Decision Log: No decisions have been taken out with Board meetings since December.

3. Executive Management Report:

The Board received the Executive Management Report and noted ongoing operational activity since the December meeting. This included staffing updates, with a preferred candidate identified for the Communications Officer role and an appointment made for the National Development Officer (East), along with notification that the Equality, Inclusion and Welfare Manager will leave at the end of February. The Board also noted updates on membership trends, further progress toward the National Try Bowls Weekend including confirmation of promotional support from Go Radio, and continued collaboration with SIBA on the upcoming Para International Series.

3.1. Safeguarding (standing item):

The Board noted continued progress against the Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport Standards. Children 1st confirmed there are no immediate risks, and all required actions remain on track for completion by the end of March. Internal reviews have been undertaken to ensure appropriate safeguarding processes within the performance programme.

3.2. EDI (standing item):

The Board noted positive engagement with the Moving to Inclusion adviser and that quarterly meetings will continue throughout 2026. Staff will repeat SAMH mental-health training due to turnover, and Bowls Scotland was recognised in the Scottish Enterprise Awards for its inclusion and wellbeing work. The EDI Working Group will meet again in early March.

3.3. Anti-doping (standing item):

The Board noted submission of the annual anti-doping survey return and plans to deliver education sessions for Commonwealth Games-shortlisted athletes at upcoming events.

4. Business Plan Quarterly Update (25-26 Q1):

The Board received the Q1 update on progress against the 2025–27 Business Plan and noted that most areas are progressing as planned, with 2 of 22 targets achieved, 7 on track, 4 with challenges, and 2 off track, including membership levels and World Cup medal targets. Of the 35 actions, most are progressing, though delays were noted in Carbon Champions and Targeted Coaching Opportunities, the latter impacted by earlier staffing gaps. The Board discussed challenges around membership trends and welcomed plans for deeper analysis, while also noting underspend in the sportscotland Coaching Subsidy Fund and steps being taken to increase delivery before year-end and adjust future grant requests. Feedback was provided on refining future reporting to focus on priority items and improving the alignment of Bowls Scotland and sportscotland KPIs.

5. Finance:

5.1. Quarterly Update (25-26 Q1)

The Board received the Q1 financial update and noted that overall performance is broadly in line with expectations, with affiliation income slightly exceeding budget. High-performance expenditure is under significant pressure due to increased activity in preparation for the Commonwealth Games, and reprofiling of performance funding from 2026–27 into 2025–26 has been agreed with sportscotland to support delivery.

5.2. Scottish Government funding

The Board noted the Scottish Government's announcement of £18m in additional recurring funding for sport from 2026–27 onwards. Further detail will be provided once sportscotland confirms the allocation process.

5.3. 2026-27 budget update

The Board noted the intention to bring a refreshed 12-month 2026–27 budget to the April Board meeting. The timeline includes draft budget circulation on 20 March, Finance Group review w/c 23 March, and Board papers issued on 3 April.

6. sportscotland Development Audit:

The Board received an update on preparations for the sportscotland Development Audit scheduled for 9–13 March 2026. The audit will focus on governance, policies and processes, stakeholder management and financial controls under the “policies and processes” audit area. An internal review has identified several documents requiring updates ahead of submission, including elements of the finance manual, procurement and expenditure policies, and the risk management policy and register.

The Board noted the scope of the audit, the evidence required, and the timeline for submission. The Board agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Finance to approve updates to the

Finance Manual and associated financial policies ahead of the March deadline, with ratification to follow at the next Board meeting.

7. Risk and Risk Management:

The Board received an update on Bowls Scotland's current risk management approach, noting that the existing Risk Management Policy and Strategic Risk Register now require review ahead of the upcoming sportscotland Development Audit.

The Board held a substantive discussion on organisational risks, recognising that existing risks need refreshed and expanded to reflect the current operating environment. The Board agreed that a full refresh of the strategic risk register is required, noting key themes raised in discussion including financial pressures, staff turnover, safeguarding, data protection, cyber security, operational delivery risks, stakeholder engagement, ageing membership demographics, and risks relating to the National Centre.

The Board approved the recommendation to undertake this redevelopment and delegated authority to GS to lead the work on updating the Risk Management Policy and Strategic Risk Register, working with staff, with formal ratification to follow at the next Board meeting.

8. National Centre update

The Board received an update on ongoing negotiations with South Ayrshire Council regarding the long-term lease for the National Centre at Northfield. Discussions in January progressed positively, including agreement in principle on adding a two-year break clause, preferential advance booking rather than exclusive green access, and guaranteed access to adjacent park areas during the Nationals and major events. The Council have confirmed the rateable value of the pavilion (prior to the 2026 re-evaluation). It falls well below the threshold for eligibility for 100% business rates relief under the Scottish Government Small Business Bonus Scheme. The Council indicated building insurance costs through the Council are expected to be under £1,000 per year.

9. Commercial update

The Board received an update on existing and potential commercial partnerships. The new four-year kit partnership with Greengauge/Henselite will be formally announced in early February, including the launch of a Bowls Scotland online shop offering branded supporter products. Taylor Bowls have confirmed continuation of their partnership, and discussions are underway to refresh the agreement.

The Board noted ongoing efforts to secure a top-tier commercial sponsor. Initial outreach has produced mixed responses, with some early declines and several positive engagements. Additional leads are being pursued, including through Sponsor Seeker and a newly developed sponsorship pitch deck for wider circulation. Lower-tier opportunities are also being explored.

10. Board Forward Planner

The Board received the new Board Forward Planner, introduced to support improved scheduling of future Board agendas and to meet sportscotland's requirement for an annual schedule of business. The planner outlines standing items, finance and audit cycles, annual governance requirements, strategy development milestones, and other Board commitments across the 2026 meeting schedule. It will be incorporated in future alongside the Action Log and Decision Log. Board members were invited to provide any further feedback directly to the Chair and CEO.

11. AOCB

The Board noted plans to schedule two strategic deep-dive sessions ahead of the April Away Day, with dates to be confirmed. Members agreed these would be beneficial.

NW highlighted the high calibre of candidates recently interviewed for NDO role and noted this as a positive reflection of Bowls Scotland's reputation.

An update was also provided confirming that further work on exploring a charitable arm for the organisation will be taken forward later in the year.

The meeting closed at 19:30