

## **Bowls Scotland Board Meeting**

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2026, 11:30**

### **Stirling Court Hotel**

Present: Gary Grant – Chair (GG), Henry Robertson (HR), Nicola Wilson (NW).

In Attendance: Malcolm Dingwall-Smith - CEO (MDS), Brogan Sinclair - Business Operations Manager (BS).

Apologies: Gavin Smith (GS), Michael Cavanagh (MC), Fiona Lilley – **sportscotland** partnership manager (FL), Kareena Cuthbert - High Performance Manager (KC).

#### 1. Welcome

1.1. Chairs Opening Remarks: The Chair welcomed members to the formal Board meeting following the Board Away Day sessions.

1.2. Declarations of Interest: No conflicts declared in relation to the agenda. The Board asked BS to take an action to oversee an update of the annual conflict of interest register.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes: Minutes from the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026 were approved.

2.1. Matters Arising: None.

2.2. Action Log: The Board noted progress against the Action Log. Most actions are complete or in progress. Actions delayed to the May meeting were noted.

2.3. Board Decision Log: No decisions have been taken outwith Board meetings since the last Board meeting.

2.4. Board Forward Planner: The Board noted the planner dates need updated to reflect the rearranged date for the October meeting – 03.10.26.

#### 3. Executive Management Report:

The Board received the Executive Management Report and noted the update on key operational activity since the February meeting. The CEO provided an overview of staffing changes, including recent appointments and forthcoming recruitment activity, and highlighted progress across delivery areas despite ongoing resourcing challenges.

Updates were provided on major events and programmes. The Board noted positive indicators from National Championships entries, continued preparations for National Try Bowls Weekend, and recent performance activity, including international events and the completion of Commonwealth Games selection. Improvements in communications and digital engagement were also highlighted, including increased use of visual content and external collaborations to broaden audience reach.

The Board further noted progress and ongoing challenges in relation to the National Centre lease arrangements, with a short-term lease extension on current terms.

The Board discussed communications and event delivery, including streaming arrangements for the upcoming 4 Nations Event.

In response to a query from the Chair, MDS confirmed that Team Scotland is responsible for the public announcement of the Commonwealth Games squad. GG also noted that the work of the Board Recruitment Working Group should be prioritised over the coming months.

- 3.1. Safeguarding (standing item): An update regarding the CWPS assessment will be brought to the May Board meeting. The Board noted this.
- 3.2. EDI (standing item): The Board noted the transition of the EDI Working Group to an EDI Advisory Group and the intention to recruit additional volunteers.
- 3.3. Anti-doping (standing item): The Board noted completion of the annual assurance submission and planned education activity for 2026.

#### 4. Budget 2026/27:

The Board considered the end-of-year financial forecast for 2025/26 alongside the updated budget for 2026/27. It was noted that the forecast 2025/26 deficit represents a significant improvement on the previously approved budgeted deficit. Members noted that this reflects a combination of improved income performance, controlled expenditure, and the reprofiling of some expenditure into the next financial year.

The Board noted that the revised 2026/27 budget projects a surplus, driven primarily by confirmation of additional core-cost funding from sportscotland, alongside other budget movements. MDS advised that an updated 2027/28 budget will be circulated outwith the meeting and that early indications suggest a more positive outlook than previously anticipated. This reflects the full year impact of the recent affiliation fee increase, lower forecast expenditure due to Bowls Scotland not hosting the British Isles Championships, and the completion of the kit renewal process.

HR commented on the significant improvements in the budget process over the past two years, which were noted by the Board. GG requested that the Board receive an update on the Reserves Policy ahead of the 2026 AGM, reflecting anticipated changes in operating costs associated with the National Centre.

The Board discussed progress on commercial income, noting that while there remains potential to increase income generated through events, progress on securing sponsorship remains challenging. MDS advised that meetings are planned with external sponsorship agencies in the coming weeks to explore alternative approaches. The Board also discussed infrastructure costs associated with the National Championships.

HR noted that the accounting services contract is now due for review. BS confirmed this position and agreed to take forward the required action.

Decision: The Board approved the updated 2026/27 budget.

#### 5. Finance Manual:

The Board considered the updated Finance Manual, which had been revised as part of the organisational improvement work and in preparation for the sportscotland Development Audit. The Board noted the key changes, including the establishment of a Board Finance Committee and

a Staff Finance Group, updated budget-holder responsibilities, revised authorisation thresholds, clarified credit-card usage, and updated procurement processes, including provisions for exemptions where appropriate.

The Board noted that authority to approve updates to the Finance Manual had been delegated to the Director of Finance in February, subject to ratification, and confirmed that the revised document reflects those agreed changes.

Decision: The Board approved the updated Finance Manual and agreed to appoint GG as the second Director, in addition to the Director of Finance, to sit on the Finance Committee. The Board noted flexibility in the appointment of this position and agreed to review the appointment after Board recruitment has taken place.

6. sportscotland Development Audit:

6.1. Draft Audit Report: The Board received an update on the outcome of the sportscotland Development Audit conducted in March 2026. It was noted that Bowls Scotland received an overall assessment of “Good”, the second highest of five possible ratings. The Board noted the areas of recognised good practice highlighted in the draft report, alongside three findings identified through the audit, two of medium significance and one of low significance.

The Board discussed the key findings, which relate to stakeholder engagement and strategic communications, documentation and retention of financial oversight records, and risk management practices. The Board noted that these findings are largely aligned with areas already identified for improvement through existing organisational improvement work.

6.2. Management Response: The Board considered the draft management response to the audit recommendations, including proposed actions, named owners and target completion dates. MDS outlined the approach taken in developing the response, noting where actions are already underway and where the organisation intends to take a proportionate and pragmatic approach appropriate to Bowls Scotland’s size and operating context.

The Board discussed in particular the recommendations relating to risk management and agreed that, while enhancements are required, it is appropriate to tailor the organisation’s approach rather than fully adopt more complex public-sector risk models. The Board was satisfied that the proposed management response adequately addresses the audit findings.

Decision: The Board approved the draft management response to the sportscotland Development Audit.

7. Companies House Registration:

The Board noted the introduction of new Companies House requirements for director identity verification, which apply to all directors ahead of the organisation’s next confirmation statement. It was noted that the deadline for completion is 24 September 2026. The Chair confirmed that he has already completed the verification process and that it is straightforward. BS confirmed that a link and further guidance will be circulated to remaining Board members.

8. AOCB

- The Board noted the additional one-off public holiday on 15<sup>th</sup> June announced by Scottish Government and approved the CEO’s proposal to award the extra day to staff with flexible arrangements.

- The Board was advised that approval for a National Championship contract above the delegated threshold may be required by email between meetings.
- The Chair highlighted the need to review and clarify delegated authority and alignment across remuneration and HR-related policies, which was noted for future consideration
- The Chair acknowledged the commitment of staff and Board at the recent Club Development Forums.

The meeting closed at 12:35