Bowls Scotland Board Meeting

Monday 11th May 2026, 17:30

Teams Meeting

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

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

Apologies: Michael Cavanagh (MC).

1. Welcome
   1.1. Opening Remarks: HR opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. It was noted that the Chair (GG), would join shortly due to a delay.

   1.2. Declarations of Interest: No conflicts declared in relation to the agenda. Directors were reminded of the outstanding action to return their annual update for the conflict of interest register.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes: Minutes from the meeting held on 12th April 2026 were approved.

   2.1. Matters Arising: None.
   2.2. Action Log: The Board noted progress against the Action Log.
   2.3. Board Decision Log: The Board noted the decisions recorded since the previous meeting, including a pay award approved by the remuneration committee, and contract awarded for streaming services.
   2.4. Board Forward Planner: The Board noted the Forward Planner and upcoming schedule of business. No additional matters were raised.

3. Executive Management Report:

The Board received the Executive Management Report and noted a busy period of operational activity since the previous meeting, including delivery of the inaugural National Try Bowls Weekend, the 4 Nations International Tournament and the Commonwealth Games team announcement. The Try Bowls Weekend saw over 70 clubs participate with positive early feedback and indications of new member conversions, while the 4 Nations event provided valuable preparation for the Commonwealth Games, delivering strong digital engagement despite lower in-person attendance. The Board also noted the significant opportunity presented by the **sport**scotland Club Support Programme investment, alongside the associated capacity considerations. Updates were provided on Club Development Forums, where attendance had reduced but engagement quality had improved, ongoing progress with sponsorship including appointment of an external agency, and challenges experienced with payroll services which are being addressed with support from **sport**scotland.

   3.1. Safeguarding (standing item): The Board noted progress against CWPS actions and the extension of the assessment deadline to 30 June. A potential risk relating to historic PVG records (2015–2024) was highlighted, with further work ongoing to understand the extent of the issue and potential solutions. Directors were reminded of the requirement to complete or renew Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport training where required.

3.2. EDI (standing item): The Board noted that recruitment to the EDI post had been paused pending alignment with emerging **sport**scotland investment opportunities. Ongoing engagement with partners, including Scottish Disability Sport, was also highlighted.

3.3. Anti-doping (standing item): No update.

4. Business Plan 2025/26 Q4:

The Board received the Business Plan update and noted overall positive progress, with the majority of targets achieved or on track and most actions progressing as planned.

Areas of challenge were noted in relation to a small number of targets and actions. The World Cup medal target was not met, although a review has been completed to inform future performance, and the Carbon Champions action remains off track due to capacity constraints. The Board discussed the approach to RAG ratings, including the potential to reclassify some items where delivery remains achievable, and agreed the importance of maintaining a dynamic and realistic business plan.

The Board noted the update and agreed that further reporting on specific areas of underperformance, including actions arising from the World Cup review and the future of the Carbon Champions project, would be brought forward.

5. Finance Update 2025/26 Q4:

The Board received the Finance Update, covering the final period of the 2025/26 financial year. It was noted that there were no significant changes to the year-end position compared to that reported in April, with the final result expected to align closely with budget projections.

The Board noted progress towards preparation of the annual accounts, which will be circulated for approval outwith the meeting, and plans to recommence the accounting services tender process to secure a longer-term provider. An update was also provided on a small bad debt write-off, which had been approved by the Finance Committee.

The Board noted that **sport**scotland has approved the retention of underspend, to be reallocated to priority areas including National Try Bowls Weekend, the EDI Club Project and the Club Facilities Project.

The Board approved the addition of the Events Manager to the list of credit card holders within the Finance Manual.

6. Membership Analysis:

The Board received the Membership Analysis report and noted the overall affiliation position of 48,226 members across 799 clubs, representing a small year-on-year decline. It was noted that the longer-term trend of decline appears to be slowing, indicating relative stabilisation in adult participation.

The Board discussed the membership profile, noting that the sport remains predominantly male and ageing, with a significant proportion of members aged 55 and over. This was recognised as a potential long-term risk to sustainability. While overall membership declined slightly, nearly half of clubs reported growth, with particularly strong performance among Try Bowls clubs.

The Board noted the continued decline in junior membership and the challenges around data quality, including under-reporting, but also recognised positive progress in the collection of EDI data, particularly in relation to age and disability. The very low representation from minority ethnic groups was highlighted as a potential area for future focus.
The Board discussed the opportunities arising from the report, including building on successful recruitment initiatives, improving data collection, and using the findings to inform future strategic priorities. The Board agreed that a public version of the Membership Analysis report should be prepared for sharing with the membership.
The Board noted the report.

7. Staff Survey:
The Board received the Staff Survey results and noted a very high response rate, providing a strong snapshot of staff experience. Overall, the results were positive, with high scores across most areas, particularly in relation to inclusion, trust, and recognition.
The Board discussed the key themes arising from the survey, noting areas for improvement. It was recognised that these issues relate to ways of working rather than organisational culture, which remains a strength.
The Board noted that the next step is to agree priority actions, with a staff session planned to identify three key areas of focus, which will form a targeted improvement plan.
The Board welcomed the positive results and noted the importance of continuing to monitor staff wellbeing and capacity.
The Board noted the report.

8. Board Recruitment Update:
The Board received an update on Board recruitment, noting that the role description and advert is in final review and due to be published this month.

9. Strategy Consultation:
The Board received an update on the proposed approach to the Strategy consultation and noted the planned timeline and engagement activity.
The Board discussed the consultation approach, including stakeholder engagement, member workshops and the online survey. It was noted that engagement with a broad range of stakeholders is critical to ensuring the strategy reflects the needs of the sport, and the Board considered whether any additional groups should be included.
The Board approved the consultation approach, with staff to finalise the survey design and progress delivery.

10. AOCB
- MDS provided an update on the upcoming partnerships event – Bowls Scotland Connect, and extended an invitation to Directors. HR expressed interest to attend.
- MDS also outlined a disciplinary matter for the Board's awareness.

The meeting closed at 19:00.