Bowls Scotland Board Meeting

Monday 31st August 2026, 17:30

Teams Meeting

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

In Attendance: Chris Mackay (CM), Gary Hinks (HG), John Egan (JE), Pauline Cowan (PC), 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: The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Michael Cavanagh. The Chair also welcomed prospective Board members Pauline Cowan, Gary Hinks, Chris Mackay and John Egan who were attending the meeting as observers pending completion of the final appointment process. The Chair thanked existing Board members for their support throughout the recruitment process and noted the high calibre of candidates attracted.

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

2. Approval of Previous Minutes: Minutes from the meeting held on 11th May 2026 were approved.

   2.1. Matters Arising: None.
   2.2. Action Log: The Board noted progress against the Action Log and received updates on a number of ongoing actions.
   2.3. Board Decision Log: The Board noted the decisions recorded since the previous meeting, including approval of a policy for admitting new or re-establishing clubs as affiliate members and approval of Gatehouse of Fleet BC's affiliate membership application.
   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 the significant volume of activity delivered since the previous meeting, including the British Bowls Championships and Internationals, the Commonwealth Games and the National Championships. The CEO highlighted the pressure placed on staff capacity during this exceptionally busy period and noted that staff wellbeing and workload management remained a key focus as the season concluded. The Board recorded its appreciation for the commitment and efforts of staff and volunteers throughout the period.

The Board noted ongoing progress across a range of operational areas, including recruitment to the Inclusion Development Officer post and EDI Advisory Group, delivery of anti-doping requirements, and staffing changes associated with maternity cover and recent departures.

The Board discussed plans for the review of the 2026 National Championships and noted that a full report, including financial outcomes and stakeholder feedback, would be presented at a future meeting.

The Board also noted an update regarding the National Centre, with further discussions with South Ayrshire Council to follow.

3.1. Safeguarding (standing item): The Board noted the safeguarding update, including arrangements to maintain continuity following recent and forthcoming staffing changes.
3.2. EDI (standing item): The Board welcomed the appointment of a new Inclusion Development Officer and five new members of the EDI Advisory Group.
3.3. Anti-doping (standing item): No further update.

4. Finance:
4.1. 2025/26 Draft Accounts: The Board noted progress on the preparation of the 2025/26 Annual Accounts. It was noted that the draft accounts were currently under review and would be brought to the October Board meeting for approval prior to inclusion within the AGM papers.
4.2. Finance Update 2026/27 Q1: The Board received the Q1 Finance Update and noted that current variances against budget were primarily attributable to timing differences in expenditure. It was noted that year-end forecasts would be updated following a meeting of the Finance Committee, with a further update to be circulated to the Board.
4.3. 2027/28 Early Draft Budget: The Board discussed the early draft budget for 2027/28, including assumptions relating to staffing structures, salary increases and future funding levels. It was noted that the draft budget represented an initial position and would be refined as part of the budget-setting process and ongoing strategic review discussions.
4.4. 2027 Capitation Fee: The Board discussed a proposal to increase the capitation fee, reflecting an inflationary increase. Directors recognised the benefits of applying regular inflationary increases rather than periodic larger increases, whilst also noting the financial pressures facing member clubs. It was agreed that AGM papers should be prepared on the basis of a proposed increase, with a final decision to be taken by the Board at its October meeting following further consideration of the budget position.

5. Business Planning & Reporting:
5.1. 2025/26 Annual Report: The Board received the draft Annual Report covering the transitional seven-month period from September 2025 to March 2026. The Board noted the approach taken to reporting on a shortened financial year and that the Chair's Report, CEO Report and Finance Report would be added following completion of the annual accounts process. Directors highlighted the importance of ensuring the report clearly communicated the significant volume of work undertaken during the off-season period and agreed that this would be reflected within the final version. The Board noted the report.
5.2. Business Plan 2026/27 Q1: The Board received the Business Plan update and noted positive progress across the majority of targets and actions. It was also noted that a programme of induction sessions would be provided for incoming Board members to support their understanding of the Business Plan and performance reporting framework. The Board noted the update.

6. Commonwealth Games Review:

The Board considered the proposed approach to reviewing performance at the 2026 Commonwealth Games. The Board discussed the challenging context in which preparations had taken place, including changes to the format, disciplines and competition structure, and agreed that a review should be undertaken to identify learnings and opportunities for the next cycle.

The Board noted a number of positive outcomes from the Games beyond medal success, including the professionalism and culture demonstrated by the Scotland team, the profile achieved by bowls within Team Scotland and the wider sporting community, and the positive impact on the sport's reputation.

Directors discussed the importance of considering athlete, coach and management feedback as part of the review process, including feedback from athletes involved in the selection process who were ultimately not selected for the Games. The Board also discussed the implications of the indoor and shortened format used at the Games and the potential impact on future Commonwealth Games planning and performance programmes.

The Board approved the proposed review methodology and timeline, noting that the findings and recommended actions would be reported to the Board following consideration by the High Performance Group.

7. Strategy Refresh: Staffing Structure:
   The Board considered the proposed staffing structure to support delivery of the future strategy and inform the upcoming sportscotland Strategic Review. Discussion focused on organisational capacity, club support, disability development and performance pathways. The Board approved the proposed staffing structure for inclusion within Bowls Scotland's submission to the sportscotland Strategic Review process.

8. **sport**scotland Funding Opportunities:
   The Board noted the successful award through the sportscotland Pathway Investment Fund to support the development of Regional Performance Centres. The Board also received an update on progress with the Club Support Programme, with 27 clubs currently being supported to develop applications across a range of youth, women's and disability inclusion projects.

   The Board discussed proposals to submit applications to the sportscotland Growth and Innovation Fund for two projects: a Club Sustainability Transformation Project and a Social Bowls Project. Directors welcomed both proposals, recognising their potential to support club sustainability, increase participation and test new approaches to engaging people with the sport. The Board approved submission of both applications to the Growth and Innovation Fund.

9. Honorary Membership:
   The Board considered a proposal to extend its policy on Honorary Membership to include living Scottish inductees of the World Bowls Hall of Fame who are not already Bowls Scotland Honorary Members. Directors recognised the importance of ensuring that individuals recognised internationally for their contribution and achievements within the sport are also appropriately recognised by Bowls Scotland. The Board approved the proposed policy extension and agreed that a wider review of historic honorary membership recognition should be considered in the future.

10. AOCB

- The Chair formally recorded the Board's appreciation for the significant efforts of staff during an exceptionally busy period of delivery and acknowledged the high quality of papers presented to the Board.
- The Board also recorded its thanks and best wishes to Brogan Sinclair ahead of her maternity leave.
- The Chair thanked the prospective Board members for attending as observers and noted that induction activity would take place in advance of their formal appointment and participation in future Board meetings.

The meeting closed at 19:40.