



**BowlsCymru**  
**BowlsWales**

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2019/20



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# BOWLSWALES BOARD 2019/20

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Chair Appointed Ken Burton

Vice-Chair Independent (Development) Chris Emsley

Independent Director (Finance & Risk) Ashely Kindred

Elected Director (Equality) Zoe Thacker

Elected Director (IT) Simon Colwill

Appointed Director (Performance) David Harding

Appointed Director (Commercial & Marketing) Michael Kent

Appointed Director (HR) Richard Palmer

Independent Director (Performance Support) Anneli MacDonald

## STAFF

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General Manager Sophie Hancocks

Development Manager Claire Joll

**CHAIR FOREWORD**  


For Bowls clubs the year 2020 will go down as the season that never was, the problems caused by the spread of the Covid 19 virus in March, and ongoing, saw the sport of Bowls, like so many other sports, forced by and large into hibernation, however the staff at BowlsWales are to be applauded for continually updating us with the latest news, and working with Sport Wales, the Welsh Government and our Member NGBs, producing guidelines for the clubs who were able to open albeit with strict constraints.

The Board of BowlsWales have also seen many changes. During the year we have said goodbye to the Chairman, Alun Jones and directors Lawrence Hourahane, Cerys Humphreys and Richard Bowen. I must take this opportunity to pay tribute to the work that each has done, during their tenure, for the benefit of bowls in Wales.

I must also pay tribute to the other Board members, our staff Sophie and Claire, our Member NGBs and Sport Wales for working together to overcome the problems that existed. We are not out of the woods yet but if we continue with the progress that has been made, we will achieve the objectives we all share. We all want Welsh Bowls to prosper and gain success at all levels from grass roots to international, we want to see vibrant clubs, increased diverse participation at all age groups and a positive future for our sport.

Finally, we are almost up to full strength, of Director's, with the appointment of four new members, a very warm welcome to Anneli, Richard, Michael and David who are bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience which they will use to help Bowls meet the challenges ahead.

Thank you one and all for your great efforts during 2020, let us look forward to a much better 2021.

## 03

# COMMUNICATION

## SOCIAL MEDIA

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Social media continues to be an area of growth for BowlsWales. Giving us the ability to display good practice, good news stories, funding opportunities and engage with bowl clubs and Members on a regular basis.

Platform	December 2019	December 2020	Growth
BowlsWales Twitter	698 followers	841 followers	20.5%
BowlsWales Facebook	1340 followers	1449 followers	8.1%
*Newsletter subscriptions	0	246	N/A

\* Newly created that year

## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

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- National Lottery supports grass roots sport to remain a key part of local communities. [Feature on Hay on Wye Bowling Club.](#)
- Sport Wales met with Whitchurch Hospital Bowls Club to look at ['Addressing the Impact of Covid-19'](#).
- Local schoolchildren come to the aid of [Clwb Bowlio Coedpoeth Bowling Club.](#)



## 04

# DEVELOPMENT



## STROKE ASSOCIATION

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The partnership with the Stroke Association recently passed its 1-year anniversary and although we had hoped to have more Stroke Survivor sessions up and running, we are delighted with those that started pre-Covid. The impact the sessions had upon the participants was significant and was a pleasure to hear about and witness. The progress they made showed the 'power of sport', but more specifically the 'power of bowls', as well as highlighting what can be achieved through effective collaboration. One of the projects had the support of Rhondda Cynon Taf council's Sport Development team; SportRCT, with their input being vital to support the sessions. The project has been successful and has grown to now include involvement from GP Referrals, where individuals are now being referred to play bowls as part of their recovery from having a Stroke; I think you will appreciate that this is a fantastic achievement and opportunity for the sport to continue having a positive impact.

Like many things COVID-19 has halted this project and as we are unsure of a safe return date, we have been working to develop online 'Stroke Survivor Sessions', to ensure we limit the impact of this interruption. We finished 2020 with a very positive meeting with the group of individuals who will be joining us for the online sessions starting in January 2021 and we can't wait to get back to bowls with them!

## SCHOOL SESSIONS

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At the beginning of year, we were able to provide events for primary & secondary school children, in partnership with a student from the University of South Wales and working with local bowls clubs and organisations. Over this period, we delivered bowls to pupils from Cardiff, Caerphilly, and Rhondda Cynon Taf, with just under 500 participants experiencing bowls for the first time.

## DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

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BowlsWales have two nominated Groups that have responsibility for planning and managing their specific areas, these being Performance, Development and Communications. Whilst each group has different objectives, they are all aligned by their purpose which is to see the game flourish in Wales.

This year we have spent time restructuring of the Development and Communication Group seeking representation from all the National Governing bodies. We are thrilled with the progress here, as we now have full representation from of all codes, plus the umpire's association. Since August we have met monthly to discuss, develop and work collaboratively to help us achieve more. During this time, the group has elected a Chair- Simon Walker and Vice Chair-Mike Doody. Each member of the group has demonstrated a great desire to develop bowls in Wales and communicate its benefits. We would like to place on record, our thanks to all group members that have supported this.

Group Members include:

Simon Walker (WCGBA), Mike Doody (WIBA), Anwen Batten (WWBA), Sara Nicholls (WWBA), Cath Harvey (WLIBA), Kath Blaney (WLIBA), Alun Rees (WBUA), Peter Williams (WBA), Wyn Jones (WSMBA), Claire Joll (National Development Manager), Sophie Hancocks (General Manager), Chris Emsley (Director of BowlsWales with the portfolio of Development).

## COVID-19

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The Coronavirus lockdown posed a serious risk to many bowls clubs in Wales due to a loss of income while fixed costs still needed to be paid. To help support clubs through the first lockdown, Sport Wales set up an Emergency Relief Fund (ERF) which a number of bowls clubs throughout Wales benefitted from. BowlsWales was delighted that 81 Lawn, Crown Green and Indoor Bowls clubs benefitted from £130,103 worth of funding from this fund, with bowls clubs actually receiving 21% of the total money awarded by Sport Wales.

The ERF come to an end in June, but in its place Sport Wales set up the Protect, Prepare and Progress grant schemes to further support clubs through the

ongoing pandemic. In collaboration with the bowls National Governing bodies a virtual funding information session was held to help answer any questions clubs had surrounding the new grants. This grant remains open and in association with the National Governing bodies we continue to support clubs through the grant application process.

To help clubs return to bowls safely and in line with Welsh Government guidelines, we produced Covid resources such as guidelines and safety information posters, which are accessible to all codes of the game. We also provided clubs with an example Risk Assessment and a Covid-19 Club Officer Job Description. We not only promoted the Covid-19 Awareness course for the Sport and Leisure sector but felt it was important to further support the clubs by offering the first 50 clubs free training.



   
@BowlsWales

# Bowls is Back

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## Checklist

- APPOINT A CLUB COVID-19 OFFICER** ✓
- CARRY OUT THE CLUB COVID-19 CHECKLIST** ✓
- UNDERTAKE A COMPREHENSIVE COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT** ✓
- COMPLETE THE COVID-19 AWARENESS COURSE FOR THE SPORT AND RECREATION SECTOR** ✓

More Information and resources can be found at: <https://bowlswales.com/covid-19/>

To understand the true impact of the pandemic it was recommended by the Development and Communication Group to develop a Covid-19 Club Survey. In collaboration with the National Governing bodies, we published the survey and had a great response with a third of all bowls clubs in Wales completing.

*An infographic of the key findings can be found on the next page.*





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## Covid Survey

In collaboration with the National Governing Bodies

# KEY FIGURES

1/3 of all Bowls Clubs in Wales completed the Survey



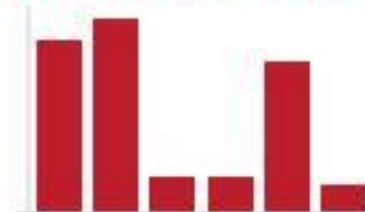
**£70,280.50**

Total of £70,280.50 has been invested into Bowls clubs across Wales.



## CHALLENGES

Financial challenges	114
Reduced membership	131
Marketing	24
Challenges around legislation	24
Challenges operating	103
Other	19



### GREEN MAINTENANCE



Financial restraints	76
Members availability	85
Council restraints	43
Private constraints	27
Other	58

### SUPPORT YOU REQUIRE

Club signage	66
Covid signage	69
Membership poster	134
Poster templates	71
Other	46



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**PERFORMANCE GROUP UPDATE**  


Due to the pandemic, performance bowls was paused in 2020 and in addition, the previous Director with the portfolio for performance stepped down. The Performance Group reconvened in October 2020 including new representatives from the National Governing Bodies and our new Director with the portfolio for performance, David Harding.

When asked about his new role and position on the group he had the following to say 'I'm looking forward to working with the members of the Performance Group to support the National Governing Bodies with the development of a comprehensive strategy that shares best practice and approach to drive the improvement of performance at every level of our game. We should rightfully be proud of the many successes we've seen in recent years at World and Commonwealth Games and inspired to be hungry for more. I'm confident that if we work collaboratively together, are open to new ideas and best practice inside and outside the sport we will be able to make a massive difference for our athletes now and lay the foundations for success in the future in every code of the game.'

We are delighted that our Independent Chair, Katie Thirlaway agreed to continue her role on the group. The group is made up of up to two representatives from each of the National Governing Bodies, the independent Chair, Director with the portfolio for performance and co-opt members including the General Manager. In addition, representatives of Sports Wales act as a Performance advisor, and other Board members support the group from time to time.

## **NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES**

### **REPORTS**



#### **Welsh Crown Green Bowling Association**

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Perhaps not surprisingly in the light of the Global Pandemic, 2020 was not an easy year for the sport of Crown Green Bowls in Wales and was accordingly difficult both for the Welsh Crown Green Bowling Association (WCGBA) and its Member Clubs.

The first lockdown in March left competitive Bowls not able to commence as usual and subsequent events meant that none of our normal League, Cup, National or British competitions were able to take place.

Some of our Clubs, following guidance from the Welsh Assembly Government and the WCGBA, were able to enjoy some Bowling within the confines of their Club but not all took the opportunity given the anxieties inherent in the situation.

The financial position of our Clubs has been severely impacted with even those Clubs with cash reserves struggling to cope with the considerable loss of income and the need to maintain facilities particularly the Greens. The Grant support through Bowls and Sport Wales has been extremely welcome and of considerable assistance in mitigating these issues.

The end of the year leaves us at the WCGBA needing to be optimistic that an easing of the situation will lead to some sort of Bowling being able to take place in the 2021 but still facing a considerable challenge to retain and attract participants to our Sport. We will continue to provide our Member Clubs with all the support we can to face these and other challenges.

## Welsh Bowls Umpires Association report for 2020

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2020 promised to be a good year for bowls with several prestigious tournaments on the calendar providing ample opportunities for the umpires to hone their skills. The year started off well with three candidates qualifying as Level 1 umpires bringing the total number of active umpires up to sixty-nine. In January Bro Myrddin Bowls Club in Carmarthen hosted the Champion of Champions which gave the crowd and umpires present an excellent display of fine bowling.

From the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> March Selwyn Samuel Bowls Centre in Llanelli hosted the British Isles Indoor Bowls Championships and the Home International Series. The tournaments did not disappoint with the cream of British bowlers taking part. Competition was fierce resulting in some close matches meaning that the numerous umpires on duty were kept very busy.

Little did we know then that on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March the country would go into lockdown with all bowls tournaments being cancelled? The Selwyn Samuel Bowls Centre was even converted into a field hospital and became Ysbyty Enfys Selwyn Samuel to cater for the COVID-19 pandemic.

The programme of training courses for new umpires and existing umpires wishing to undertake Level 2 was knocked on the head with bowling clubs being closed and social distancing needing to be adhered to. The only option open to the Umpires Association was to invite any potential umpires to undertake the theory paper. Nine candidates expressed an interest in this and most of these have been successful in attaining the pass mark of 90%. It is hoped that the practical assessments may take place in April at Merthyr Tydfil Indoor Bowling Club. Some Level 2 candidates were also invited to sit a theory paper with the practical assessments provisionally booked for September 2021. It is also hoped that the Marker's courses resume whenever possible with those successful joining the current fifty Markers on the books.

The AGM finally took place via Zoom in October and during this the Honorary Secretary Mrs Tricia Best stood down after eleven years in the post. She has worked extremely hard and really organised the Umpire's Panel and used every opportunity to raise the profile of the WBUA. Tricia will be a very hard act to follow and her successor, Jon Morris, will endeavour to maintain her very high standards. Jon admits that it will be a steep learning curve, but Tricia has kindly offered assistance to make this task somewhat easier.

The position regarding COVID-19 is changing on an almost daily basis so it is impossible to plan too far ahead. It is encouraging that the vaccine program has started, but the task is monumental. It is hoped that the most vulnerable members of the public will receive the vaccine by Easter.

However, the WBUA hope that the course dates pencilled in our diaries will take place and that we can then hopefully welcome new Umpires and Markers to help spread the load.

It is hoped that with financial assistance from Bowls Wales the Umpires Association will be able to update their training and assessment programmes to transfer them from paper exercises to computer base exercises during 2021; this will allow us the opportunity to provide analysis and feedback to all candidates.

## **Welsh Short Mat Bowls Association**

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Short Mat managed to hold our National Championships by 7th March i.e. Singles, Pairs, Triples and Fours before lock down at Radnor Indoor. Our Junior Pairs was held in January, in Bro Myrddin, all were very successful. Unfortunately, our champions were unable to represent Wales in the World Championships in Belgium in March nor in the British Isles Championships in England in November. World Short Mat Bowls is now scheduled for 2022 in Herentals in Belgium. Hopefully we will be able to start our season in September.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BowlsWales would like to thank our partners for their support over the last year...

- Sport Wales
- Welsh Government
- Welsh Sports Association
- National Governing Bodies
- Stroke Association



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