

ANNUAL REPORT

2023/24

CONTENTS

<u>BowlsWales Board</u>	<u>01</u>
<u>Chair Foreword</u>	<u>02</u>
<u>Development</u>	<u>03</u>
<u>Communications</u>	<u>04</u>
<u>Funding</u>	<u>05</u>
<u>Safeguarding</u>	<u>06</u>
<u>NGB Reports</u>	<u>07</u>
<u>Acknowledgements & Partners</u>	<u>08</u>

BOWLSWALES BOARD 2023/24

<u>Chair (Interim)</u>	<u>Simon Colwill</u>
------------------------	----------------------

<u>Appointed Director (Finance & Risk)</u>	<u>Tom Hancock</u>
--	--------------------

<u>Elected Director (Equality)</u>	<u>Zoe Thacker</u>
------------------------------------	--------------------

<u>Elected Director (IT)</u>	<u>Simon Colwill</u>
------------------------------	----------------------

<u>Elected Director</u>	<u>Chris Spriggs</u>
-------------------------	----------------------

<u>Appointed Director (Risk & Governance)</u>	<u>Ceri Ann Glen</u>
---	----------------------

<u>Appointed Director (Safeguarding)</u>	<u>Hannah Bevan</u>
--	---------------------

<u>Independent Director (Performance Support)</u>	<u>Anneli MacDonald</u>
---	-------------------------

<u>Appointed Director (Commercial)</u>	<u>Robert Hampton</u>
--	-----------------------

<u>Appointed Director</u>	<u>Adam Park</u>
---------------------------	------------------

<u>Appointed Director (Stakeholder Engagement)</u>	<u>Mike Doody</u>
--	-------------------

STAFF

<u>General Manager</u>	<u>Sophie Hancocks</u>
------------------------	------------------------

<u>Development Manager</u>	<u>Claire Biddle</u>
----------------------------	----------------------

FOREWORD



At the start of the year, I never would have thought I would be writing this foreword as Interim Chair. At this point, I would like to thank Richard Palmer for all the work he has put in through his tenure as Chair.

On reflection, I believe 2023 has been a challenging year for all of us. The cost-of-living crisis has meant we have had to stretch our funding a lot further than previous years, which has had an impact on everyone. My hope for the long-term future is this financial impact will improve, as we look for alternative ways to support our Members and to help have a positive impact on the bowling communities.

Early in the year the results of the Bowls in Wales review were published. As we move towards 2024, we will be continuing to work collaboratively with all NGBs and stakeholders to deliver on the outcomes of the review to benefit the sport across all codes of the game.

We have continued our partnership with the Stroke Association, and introduced a new partnership with the Women's Institute, while the Blazing Bowls initiative is developing further. I would like to thank Claire and Sophie for their work over this year.

It has also been a busy year for international competition, with many players representing the Country. I would like to congratulate all of them on their performances.

To my fellow Board members, all NGB Officers, Coaches, Umpires and the many other Club volunteers within our sport. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication, and I wish you all the best for 2024. See you on the Green.

Simon Colwill

Interim Chair



03

DEVELOPMENT



DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

The development and Communication group continue to meet quarterly to develop projects and initiatives that benefit bowls in Wales.

We would like to thank all group members that have supported the group and continue to give up their time to attend and contribute.

Group Members include:

Chair-Simon Walker (WCGBA), Vice Chair-Mike Doody (WIBA), Anwen Batten (WWBA), Cath Harvey (WLIBA), Kath Blaney (WLIBA), Alun Rees (WBUA), Peter Williams (WBA), Wyn Jones (WSMBA), John Jones (WBCA) Claire Biddle (National Development Manager), Sophie Hancocks (General Manager), Hannah Bevan (Director of BowlsWales with the portfolio of Development).

BLAZING BOWLS

The Blazing Bowls Project continues to run in the Active Gwent area introducing children to the game of bowls through fun activities and increase their knowledge of all codes of the games. Following the success of the project we are now working with the local authorities to run bowls festivals/competitions.



Confirmed festivals will run in Caerphilly, Newport and Monmouth.

You can watch the project in action on the BowlsWales YouTube channel here - [Blazing Bowls](#)

GARETH BALE FESTIVAL

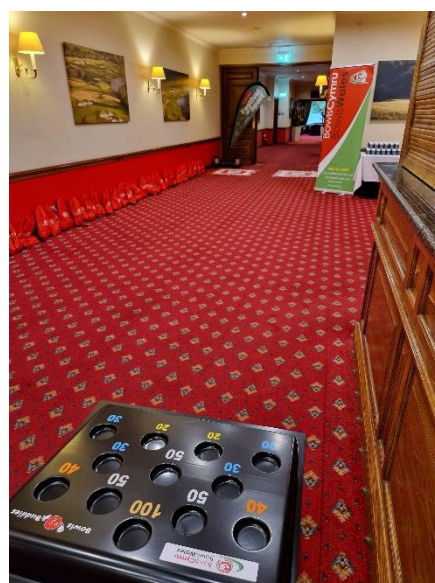
Bowls was invited to attend the Gareth Bale Festival of Sport at the Celtic Manor. The festival provided a great opportunity to showcase the sport, network with new partners and give children a chance to play bowls. Bowls was a huge hit on the day and feedback we received was brilliant. Massive thank you to Welsh bowls players Sara and Ross.

You can watch the highlight video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PcU2-cMVZg>

Gareth Bale playing bowls here:

<https://twitter.com/BowlsWales/status/1707433871745130791/video/1>



Partnerships

STROKE ASSOCIATION

The partnership with the Stroke Association has been ongoing since 2019, whereby we look to offer a range of opportunities for Stroke Survivors to try bowls either through club taster sessions or offer existing Stroke groups equipment.

We currently have the following Stroke Survivors session running at:

- Milford Haven
- Islwyn Indoor
- Newport
-

This year we held the first Stroke Survivors Bowls competition at Bro Myrddin Bowls Club. Big thank you to Bro Myrddin club volunteers, coaches and VI Team Manager -John Wilson for staying to help and present the trophies. All involved had a wonderful afternoon and are now looking to run further competition in South East and North Wales.



WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Earlier this year the Bowls in Wales Development and Communications group identified a set of key priorities, one of which was to increase the membership of Women and girls in bowls. As a result, BowlsWales announced a new partnership with NFWI-Wales.



The project involves working closely with the federations and their nearest bowls club to create weekly beginner bowls sessions, women only open days as well as providing an opportunity to socialise and play.

Read more about the partnership [here](#).

04

COMMUNICATION

SOCIAL MEDIA

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

Platform	December 2020	December 2021	December 2022	December 2023	Growth
BowlsWales Twitter	841 followers	961 followers	1,236 followers	1,401 followers	13.35% increase
BowlsWales Facebook	1,449 followers	1,703 followers	1,921 followers	2,853 followers	48.52% increase
BowlsWales Instagram	Account not created	Account not created	239 followers	321 followers	34.31% increase
	BowlsWales Twitter analytics				
Total tweets (2023)		28			
Tweet Impressions (2023)		221,747			
Profile visits (2023)		1,312			
	BowlsWales Facebook analytics				
Total posts		399	403		
Facebook page reaches		548.2k	339% increase compared to 2022		
Page visits		58.1k	433% increase compared to 2022		
New likes		163	14.2% decrease compared to 2022		
Facebook estimated audience		46m-54m			

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

- 🎥 U25 international series
- 🎥 Promotional video
- 🎥 WSMBA Live streaming
- 🎥 WIB National finals Live streaming
- 🎥 Indoor Para Home Nations Live streaming
- 🎥 WBA/WWBA National Finals Live streaming (1 day)
- 🎥 World bowls team announcement
- 🎥 Get to know WBA & WWBA players and management profiles.
- 🎥 Get to know WSMBA players profiles for British Isle's held in North Wales
- 🎥 Promotional videos for Welsh Indoor bowls and Welsh Crown Green Bowling Association
- 🎥 WCGBA photos and write ups
- 🎥 British Isles Ladies Singles champion
- 🎥 Anwen Batten induction to 'Gorsedd'
- 🎥 Champion of Champions – Dan Salmon winner
- 🎥 Gareth Bale festival 'Gareth Bale played bowls.


05

FUNDING



SPORT WALES- BE ACTIVE FUND

The Be Active Wales Fund offers grants from £300 to £50,000 for projects in Wales that intend to do at least one of the following:

- reduce inequality
- create long-term sustainability
- introduce new or different ways of operating

BowlsWales is delighted that 35 Bowls clubs have benefitted from the funding and have received a total of **£150,164** from March 2023 to present date).

This grant remains open and in association with the National Governing bodies we continue to support clubs through the grant application process.

SPORT WALES- CROWDFUNDER - A PLACE FOR SPORT

Crowdfunder is a way of raising money for good causes and ideas, while also helping a club or project to connect with the community, people pledge money to support the cause or idea. In return, the person donating money can also get a reward, which can be a product, benefit, or service.

The following bowls clubs have been successful in using Crowdfunder:

- 🎱 [Penttyrch Bowling Club](#): Sport Wales Contribution - £2,100 Overall total - £8,140. They had 83 supporters.
- 🎱 [Beechwood Bowls Club](#): Sport Wales Contribution £600- Overall total - £2,000.They had 42 supporters.

For more information and how to apply: <https://www.sport.wales/grants-and-funding/crowdfunder/>

SPORT WALES- ENERGY SAVING GRANT

Sport Wales funding was available to support sports clubs to save money by becoming more energy efficient. The Energy Saving Grant offered a unique opportunity for sport clubs in Wales to make energy-saving improvements.

Clubs could apply for an Energy saving grant of up to £25,000 which can be used towards the cost of energy-saving measures such as the installation of solar panels or better insulation. Clubs who are successful with their applications will not only benefit from reduced utility bills so that they can become more financially sustainable, but they'll also be doing their bit for the environment.

BowlsWales are excited to share that 7 clubs were successfully awarded funding, from the Energy saving grant totalling £30,637 for a range of items such as solar panels, windows and LED lighting.

SAFEGUARDING



Safeguarding has been another key priority of work this year for the sport and BowlsWales. Over the last 12 months we have achieved the level 2 safeguarding standard with the Child Protection in Sport Unit.

BowlsWales has funded 5 safeguarding training for over 60 club welfare officers this year. This training includes the Safeguarding & Protecting Children course and the Essential Safeguarding Adults course.

We have also launched the new club safeguarding officer's forum with the first one held in December 2023. These forums will run every quarter with the purpose of sharing relevant safeguarding updates, resources and support as well as specialised sessions on specific areas relating safeguarding in sport.

BowlsWales National Safeguarding Officer, Keeley Spriggs handed in her resignation to focus on her university degree as she heads into her final year. BowlsWales would like to thank Keeley Spriggs for her contribution during her time as the safeguarding lead for BowlsWales.

BowlsWales would like to give a big thank you to all NGB's for their collaborative and supportive approach to safeguarding within the last 12 months and BowlsWales will continue to support and safeguard their members.

If there are any safeguarding related questions or concerns, you can raise this with the Interim National Safeguarding officer, Sophie Hancocks.

safeguarding@bowls-wales.com

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES

REPORTS

WELSH CROWN GREEN BOWLING ASSOCIATION

Overall, the 2023 season was a good one for Crown Green Bowls in Wales with all our Leagues operating successfully and participation at or in some cases above pre pandemic levels.

Nationally, all of our Welsh Teams entered the UK wide competitions and whilst the Senior Men failed to progress some encouraging signs were seen with qualification for the Semi Finals being missed by 8 points only in the final game. The Senior Ladies were in a very strong group and competed well but failed to qualify. The Juniors again did well on the national stage although a lack of competition was apparent with some Associations struggling to raise Junior teams. As a result of the success of our Academy system, which is unique in the UK, our growth in talented Junior players continues and we face no such problems at present.

Our traditional merit competitions were held as normal in 2023 for Seniors, Ladies, Juniors and Veterans together with the Mixed Pairs, Ladies Pairs and the new 18-25 competition. National competitions were duly entered and the Wales qualifiers attended in the usual way.

It is pleasing to report that Jess Lacey from Esclusham BC, Wrexham won the BCGBA Junior Ladies Merit, the second year in succession that Wales has lifted this Trophy.

In general, therefore, a satisfying year on the Green for Welsh Crown Green Bowls and we aim to continue this success in 2024.

Away from competition, in common with many of our peers, we continue to have problems in attracting volunteers to administer the Sport. This will have a serious impact going forward if the situation does not change.



WELSH BOWLS UMPIRES ASSOCIATION

This year has been another very busy year for the Welsh Bowls Umpires Association. There has been a lot of interest in candidates wishing to become Level 1 umpires, but once they are made aware what this entails many fail to get past the application form stage. The course comprises of three stages namely a theory paper of 75 questions for which the pass mark is 90%, candidates are permitted the use of Crystal Mark 4th Edition law book to assist in answering the questions, followed by two umpire practical days in Merthyr Tydfil.

On the first day the members of the Umpire Panel demonstrate the various measuring techniques and candidates have the opportunity to practice these and to ask any questions. The second day starts off with the candidates sitting a 15 question exam paper without the use of the law book, followed by assessing their measuring techniques, deciding the right shot(s) and accuracy. The pass mark for the measuring element is 90%, so just by being invited to attend in no way guarantees success.

Despite this we had eight candidates invited to the umpire practical in March and we were delighted that seven were successful. We ran another course in October/November and five candidates made it through to Merthyr Tydfil, three were successful.

This year we had ten new umpires; this is sadly offset by some existing umpires finding they can no longer do the task and reluctantly having to step aside. Currently we have 67 active umpires on our list, but I am afraid that almost half of these only commit to a handful of engagements if we are lucky, some doing nothing despite putting themselves through the course.

On a more positive note, Ebbw Vale hosted a very successful British Isles Youth Under 18's outdoor International match in August, Llandrindod held a British Isles Under 25 outdoor International match in September. In the former the Welsh team put up a good battle which did not reflect in their overall position. In the latter the weather could have been kinder to us, and the matches were reduced to 13 ends, but the bowling was still of a high standard considering the condition of the greens.

The men retained their title and the women falling just short, the umpires at these events were kept busy and had a great time. The British Isles Indoor Bowls Council Junior Under 18 mixed International will take place at Sully over the weekend of the 12th/14th January 2024.

From the 1st to the 12th December, Huw Jones was one of the International Technical Officials on duty for the Atlantic Senior Fours International held in Cyprus.

The WBUA were looking for funding to support umpire's kits, the purchase of the new 4th Edition Law books and money to run umpire and markers training courses. We wrote to the WIB, WBA & the WWBA asking for a donation to allow us to continue running training courses and we were delighted that each of the above very kindly came up trumps. Thank you all. Without your support we would seriously struggle to run any courses.

WELSH SHORT MAT BOWLS ASSOCIATION

Our Top Team Pembrokeshire travelled to Newry Ireland to play in the 2022 British Isles Top Team Competition. They were successful in coming 3rd this a tough competition on Irish home ground.

The British Isles Championships were held in Belfast. There were some very close games in all categories. In the Premier section our Pairs of Mark Thorpe and Andrew Evans came in Second place. In the "A" Team Fours our team of Will Sproule, Henry John, John Mathews and Skip Richard Arran were proud Winners, first time for Wales.

The County Team Competition was held in January with strong contention between a couple of Counties but once again was won by Pembrokeshire. They will host the British Isles Top Team challenge this year at Heatherton in Dec 2023.

Our National Finals were held at the Radnorshire Indoor in January and February with fierce competitions as usual. The winners in Singles, Pairs, Triples and Fours going forward to The British Isles Championships which were held at The North Wales Bowls Centre in November.

The Championships went in Prestatyn with Liam Farrington and Peter Rees coming R/up in the Premier Pairs. With Will Sproule, Henry John, John Mathews and Skip Richard Arran winning the "A" Team Fours once again. The first time for Wales to win this Trophy two years consecutively.

The British Isles Ladies Competition at Melton Mowbray was entered by Wales for the First time. This was a learning curve for them, but all enjoyed the experience and have gained a lot from this and has improved their game. We hope that this will in turn provide more Ladies to come through in our National Championships.

The Youth Team travelled to Solihull for the Youth Challenge against England, they all played well some being very young. The Challenge will be in Carmarthen in March.

Membership was slow coming in, we have lost a couple of Clubs, but we have gained some clubs with a couple of clubs starting up at present. Thanks to Bowls Wales (Be Active Wales Fund) for funding for various Clubs.

It is with a sad note that Barry Sambrook our Youth Organizer passed away this year. Also, one of our Ladies Team Emma Bevan (Llansamlet Club) passed away in the last couple of weeks. Our Sincerest Condolences to their Families.

WELSH BOWLS COACHING ASSOCIATION

Another year has flown past as we gradually return to normality. After holding our January meeting via Zoom, the rest have been held face to face back at our base in Merthyr.

Club Coaching Awards have continued throughout the year, with courses being held in Ceredigion, Mid and South Wales. Many thanks to all our co-ordinators for their hard work. The demand has been high.

We are still missing Coordinators in key areas, namely Pembs, Carmar, West Glam. and The Vale of Glam. Can I appeal to you Advanced Coaches in these areas to come forward and offer your names as Coordinators. This will lighten the workload on our existing hard-working coordinators. Thankfully, Jim Harrison filled the South Glam vacancy during our workshop meeting, but we badly need 4 more.

An Advanced Coaching Award has been arranged for November and early December and more Club, and hopefully some Intermediate Courses will be arranged early in the new year.

We held a very successful Workshop for Intermediate and Advanced Coaches in September when 25 were in attendance.

During the year we welcomed 4 new management committee members on board, namely Karen Davies, Terry Leighton, Dr.Chris Daniels and Jim Harrison. All 4 I'm sure will provide great knowledge and support to our Association.

Our Handbooks have proved to be extremely popular and in great demand, with requests coming weekly and copies disappearing at a fast rate. The result being that we have to print further copies of our popular 4th edition. It's turning out to be a best seller!!!!

On behalf of the Association, I have attended regular Bowls Wales Development and Communication meetings, and reported back on each one.

We send our best wishes to our Treasurer Jean who has not enjoyed the best of health in 2023. Hopefully 2024 will see her turning the corner and enjoying better health again.

Sadly, again this year, I have been sending condolences letters on a regular basis. Please inform me if you hear of any members who have left us. I will do the rest.

To conclude I would like to thank all my fellow officers and Management Committee members for their continued support and valuable advice.

If I can be of any assistance to anyone, please do not hesitate to contact me. Not a single day goes by without some form of WBCA communication reaching me, and I try to respond to everyone within 24 hours.

Wishing you all a successful and healthy 2024, on and off the Bowling Green.

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
- The Women's Institute



BOWLSWALES

Sport Wales National Centre

Sophia Gardens

CARDIFF

CF11 9SW

Tel: Office: 029 2033 4998

Website: www.bowlswales.com

Twitter: @BowlsWales

Facebook: BowlsWales



BowlsCymru
BowlsWales