BowlsWales Annual General Meeting – Minutes

Date: Monday 10th August 2026

Time: 6:00pm

Venue: Sophia Suite 2, Sport Wales National Centre, Sophia Gardens, Cardiff and via Microsoft Teams

Chair: Richard Jones

Present: Richard Jones (Chair); Joanna Owen (Chief Executive); Andrew Hopkins (Board Director); Chris Spriggs (Board Director); Kath Evans (Treasurer, Welsh Lawn Bowls); Trevor Clarke (CEO, Welsh Crown Green Bowling Association); Kath Blayney (Welsh Indoor Bowls); Sioned Ann and Jac Edwards (Welsh Short Mat Bowls Association); Lyn Perkins (Chair, Welsh Bowls Coaching Association).

Apologies: David Phillips (Welsh Bowls Umpires Association), delayed by traffic on the M4, was unable to join the meeting and sent apologies.

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair, Richard Jones, welcomed those attending in person and via Microsoft Teams, including representatives joining from Welsh Indoor Bowls, Welsh Crown Green Bowls, and Welsh Short Mat Bowls Association.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted from David Phillips who was travelling to the meeting but was delayed and ultimately unable to attend due to traffic on the M4.

3. In Memoriam — Mike Doody

The Chair invited the meeting to pay respects to Mike Doody, a former Board Director of BowlsWales, who passed away recently. The Chair noted that Mike had been an excellent supporter of bowls in Wales and of BowlsWales for many years. The Chair and Chief Executive had attended his funeral earlier that day, which was very well attended, reflecting the strong support felt by his family and the wider bowls community.

4. Minutes of the AGM held on 12 January 2026 and Matters Arising

The minutes of the AGM held on 12 January 2026 had been circulated to Members in advance. The Chair confirmed there were no matters arising.

5. Notices of Motion under Article 26.3

The Chair confirmed that no notices of motion had been received under Article 26.3 of the Articles of Association.

Resolution: That the minutes of the AGM held on 12 January 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record.

Proposed by the Chair, Richard Jones; seconded by Andrew Hopkins. Approved by general assent.

6. Chief Executive's Report — Year in Review

Joanna Owen presented her first report to Members as Chief Executive, having previously shared the written report ahead of the meeting. Key points included:

- Joanna was appointed General Manager in November 2025 as the organisation's sole paid employee, and the Board confirmed her appointment as Chief Executive with effect from July 2026, in recognition of the scope of the role.
- Work on the BowlsWales Strategy is well underway following the facilitated strategy day in May, attended by representatives from all six Member organisations; the framework has been shared with Members for initial input, with a fuller update to follow later in the meeting.
- Governance development has been a deliberate, sequenced piece of work: Phase 1 of the Articles of Association review has been completed with Jon Morgan of RPT Consulting. Phase 2 is intentionally scheduled to follow finalisation of the strategy, with Members at the centre of that conversation this Autumn.
- The new BowlsWales website is now live at bowlswales.com, bringing together Commonwealth Games content, a full policy and governance hub, and a news section. Member organisations were invited to submit news stories for publication.
- At the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Wales won a bronze medal in the Mixed Para Pairs, achieved through dramatic tiebreak performances; the Women's Pairs narrowly missed out on a bronze medal match. Joanna paid tribute to the athletes for their performance across very long competition days, and to Team Manager Anwen Butten MBE for her exceptional contribution alongside her full-time career as a Head and Neck Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist. Joanna also noted her pride in nominating Anwen for the Welsh Sports Hall of Fame, and in attending the Games in person, including taking part in a panel discussion at Team Wales House alongside Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson and Helen Phillips MBE.
- This has been the strongest year of funding support for Member organisations and clubs in recent memory: all six Member organisations received an increase in NGB funding or ringfenced development funding in 2026. At club level, clubs across Wales received over £240,000 via the Be Active Wales Fund and over £140,000 in Energy Saving Grants in the last financial year.
- The safeguarding framework is in a significantly stronger position than twelve months ago, supported by the WSA Safeguarding Plus contract and a refreshed policy suite now published on the website. The continued absence of a single, verified digital membership register across all codes remains the most significant structural gap, with direct implications for safeguarding assurance and for meeting Sport Wales' funding expectations.
- Completing the JustGo digital membership rollout is one of the most important deliverables for the next twelve months; the foundational configuration work is complete and the project is moving into implementation. Joanna will be working with each Member organisation this Autumn to ensure every person playing bowls in Wales becomes a registered member.

- Non-executive director recruitment is live, with applications closing 16 August 2026 and interviews planned for the week commencing 24 August 2026, seeking safeguarding and finance/audit expertise.
- Joanna closed by thanking the Chair, the Board, Members and volunteers, and by recording thanks for the contribution of the late Mike Doody.

Discussion: Lyn Perkins asked whether the change in title from General Manager to Chief Executive represented a change in role. The Chair explained that the Board had originally decided to appoint at General Manager level to allow the role to develop, and that after six months it was clear Joanna was operating above that level and representing BowlsWales in a capacity requiring the Chief Executive title; this had been accompanied by a change in salary. In response to a follow-up question, the Chair confirmed the specific salary would not be disclosed at the meeting but would be visible in next year's accounts, and that there is no legal requirement to disclose it separately.

7. Financial Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2026

Joanna Owen presented the Financial Report on behalf of Andrew Thomas (Finance), who was on annual leave. The report and accompanying slides had been circulated to Members in advance, and no questions had been received ahead of the meeting. The Chair noted that the AGM had been brought forward significantly closer to the financial year end (31 March 2026) than in previous years, to make the financial reporting more timely and relevant to Members.

- Income: Grant income for 2025–26 increased by £45,000 (27%) versus the prior year, reflecting BowlsWales' funding application and improved governance across the sport. A further increase of £74,000 (35%) is anticipated for 2026–27. Thanks were recorded to Sport Wales, Welsh Government and the National Lottery. The organisation remains heavily reliant on grant funding, with other income limited to bank interest.
- Expenditure: Approximately £100,000 (nearly half of expenditure) was directed to NGB and Association funding, including Commonwealth Games preparation. £37,000 was spent on the Board Review (a non-recurring cost that will not repeat in the coming year). £15,000 was spent on infrastructure, including safeguarding, insurance and external communications. Running costs (staffing and overheads) were £57,000, down from £59,000 the previous year.
- Resources: Reserves stood at £53,000. BowlsWales' reserves policy is to hold approximately £50,000, sufficient to allow the organisation to wind down operations over approximately nine months should grant funding be withdrawn. Developing commercial income streams was noted as a priority to reduce reliance on grant funding.
- Financial statements: Financial management is underpinned by independent professional support, including bookkeeping, accounting, payroll and the preparation of tax computations and accounts by Chartered Accountants Arthur Gait & Company Ltd, for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Lyn Perkins asked about Tom Hancock's role on the Board; it was confirmed he is a Board member but no longer holds responsibility for finance.

Lyn Perkins asked about the minimum reserves requirement; it was confirmed the policy figure is approximately £50,000, providing roughly nine months of operating cover.

Members confirmed receipt of the financial statements circulated ahead of the meeting.

Resolution: That the Financial Report and draft accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026 be received.

Outcome: Received by general assent.

8. BowlsWales Strategy

Joanna Owen presented a recap of the strategic framework developed at the facilitated strategy day in May 2026 for those not previously involved. BowlsWales sits as the strategic enabler, with the shared strategic outcome of "Bowling in Wales" driven jointly by NGBs and BowlsWales through participation. BowlsWales' role centres on three enablers: financial sustainability (securing funding as a trusted partner), good governance (clear roles, responsibilities and standards), and data and insight (evidence to inform decisions and demonstrate impact). Member organisations' role centres on three outcomes: Growing (more people playing bowls), Inclusive (welcoming everyone to start, stay and succeed), and Engaged (connected clubs, volunteers and communities).

The strategy is now moving into Stage 2: a wider strategy document has been drafted and circulated, feedback has been received, and a Board and NGB/Member strategy day has been scheduled for 17 August 2026 to progress this work.

9. Phase 2 Articles of Association Review and the November EGM

Joanna Owen provided an update on the Articles of Association review. Phase 1, completed with Jon Morgan of RPT Consulting, set out a range of options informed by evidence from across the sport but did not reach agreement, as the Board had not yet agreed the roles and direction to be set by the strategy. Phase 2 is intentionally scheduled to follow finalisation of the strategy so that the resulting governance structure supports the agreed strategic direction. Jon Morgan will re-engage with Member organisations in September 2026; once a general consensus is reached, revised Articles will be drafted with solicitor support and put to Members for a vote at an EGM planned for November 2026, with the date to be confirmed.

Discussion: Trevor Clarke queried the connection between the BowlsWales strategy and the Articles of Association review, and raised concerns about writing overly specific or representative-based board composition requirements into the Articles, noting the risk this creates for the organisation's ability to operate and cautioning that Articles should be kept as lean as possible, with detail addressed through rules and bylaws instead. The Chair acknowledged the point, noting that a key area of debate has been board size and composition — including whether the Board should be constituted on a skills-based model (aligned with the strategy) or a representative model with each NGB nominating a member — and that current Board numbers are close to the minimum required for quoracy following Mike

Doody's passing. The Chair agreed there was no fundamental disagreement, characterised the issue as one of timing and sequencing, and agreed to follow up with Trevor and Jon Morgan outside the meeting.

10. Any Other Business

The Chair confirmed no formal items of any other business had been raised for the AGM. Informally, the Chair thanked those who had stepped in at short notice to represent Welsh Short Mat Bowls Association at the meeting. In an informal exchange following the close of business, Jac Edwards confirmed that Wales is expected to host the World (Short Mat) Championships in 2030, and that a organising committee has been established, with venues in South Wales under consideration.

11. Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked all attendees for their participation and formally closed the AGM, remaining available afterwards for informal discussion with those present and on the call.

Meeting closed at approximately 6:40pm.

Signed:



Richard Jones
Chair, BowlsWales
Date: 14/08/2026