

CYMDEITHAS BOWLIO MAT BYR CYMRU

WELSH SHORT MAT BOWLS ASSOCIATION

The Governing Body for the Sport in Wales

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Minutes of meeting held at The Radnorshire Bowls Stadium on Sunday 15th December 2024

Present: Craig Evans (CE) Chair, Gerald Hands (GH) Vice-Chair, John Matthews (JM) Treasurer, Wyn Jones (WJ) Secretary, Paul Hudson (PH) Pembrokeshire, Jac Edwards (JE) and Chris McWhinnie (CW) Montgomery, Ted Gittoes (TG) B&R, Gethin Edwards (GE) Carmarthen, Stephen Williams (SW) Swansea, Darren Davies (DD) Cardigan, Moira Griffiths (MG) and Peter Kempster (PK) Wrexham

1. The Chair (CE) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.
2. **Apologies:** Arwel Nicholas, Richard Palmer (RP) Bowls Wales Adviser, Terry Batt (West Glam)
3. **Minutes of previous meeting (29/09/24):** GE proposed and TG seconded and the meeting approved the minutes as a true and accurate account of the meeting.
4. **Matters Arising:**
 - Point 7 – GH noted that the proposed clarification of the rule regarding ditching the jack on the first or second bowl was not successful at the BI Council meeting, mainly due to the wording, and suggested that this leaves the issue somewhat in limbo. The consensus of the meeting was that a proposal needs re-submitting to the BI Council's next meeting. It was pointed out that, while England were against changing the rule whatever the wording, there would be agreement amongst the other three countries for adopting the Irish rule that stated that the first two woods could not be touchers wholly within the ditch area. There was a discussion as to whether an extra-ordinary general meeting was needed but, as the next BI Council meeting will be in November, the Committee resolved to consider a proposal at the WSMBA meeting in March and ratify at the AGM in July to be submitted to the BI Council's November meeting. In the meantime, it was agreed that the umpires were to implement the rule as it is in the current rule book – i.e. the jack can be ditched with any wood and first and/or second wood touchers will remain live in the ditch.
 - Point 8 – WJ informed the meeting that there had been some progress on badges but the issue is not complete and still ongoing.
 - Point 9 – PH confirmed that the policies/procedures had been circulated. SW had not received them and asked they be sent again. The meeting resolved that the policies should now be uploaded to the website to be reviewed and amended by this Committee as appropriate.
 - Point 10 – CE informed the meeting that the issue re: advertising boards is ongoing.
5. **Correspondence**

There was no correspondence to report.

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6. Financial Report:

JM presented his final report as he had given his intention to stand down as Treasurer in advance of the meeting. He circulated a pack to each delegate which included:

- Overall income/expenditure summary to date and bank account balances as at 14/12/24;
- Up to date county breakdown (the relevant breakdown for each rep);
- Overall payments for national competitions by county;
- WSMBA membership breakdown by gender, disability and age;
- Confirmation of BowlsWales funding allocation and usage;
- Detailed breakdown of costs and payments by player/guest/supporter for BI and Ladies BI Championships;
- List and cost of stock in hand.

JM confirmed that 79 clubs had paid affiliation fees but not all had registered players. He explained that those clubs not registering players were not interested in competing in national competitions but wanted to take advantage of the insurance package. He also explained that he puts the BowlsWales monies in the Reserve Account, where we get interest, and transfers to the Current account as required but this year he has not needed to draw down so much, nor as often, as there has been sufficient funds in the Current Account when payments have been due. He stressed the importance of trying to accurately forecast costs for the application for funding to BowlsWales and to spend all the monies allocated for their intended purpose.

Although there appears to be a healthy surplus for the current year (>£11K), he advised the meeting not to read too much into this as there are various expenses still to be paid, some of which he has estimated in the middle of the page and he is hoping that the Association will at least break even this year.

Bank balance as at 14th December 2024:

	Dec 2024	Dec 2023
Current account	19,736.53	25,741.32
Reserve account	<u>17,730.50</u>	<u>10,492.16</u>
Totals	<u>37,467.03</u>	<u>36,233.48</u>

JM pointed out (sheet 3) that West Glamorgan had not yet paid their entry fees for the national finals, county competition or League Winners (£300.00) and queried that, as the draws were being done at this meeting, whether they should be included in the draw. As there was no representative from West Glam present, CE contacted the treasurer of West Glam to confirm the position: there had not been any communication within the county about this payment and the treasurer undertook to make the payment immediately and the committee resolved to allow West Glam entry into the draws.

There was a wider discussion regarding deadlines for payment of subscriptions, fees, etc which appeared to be due by 1st November each year and this should be discussed in the March meeting and may need to be changed at this year's AGM.

JM informed the meeting that the current signatories on the bank current account were himself, WJ and Ron Jenkins (RJ) and, obviously, will now need to be updated. After a long discussion of

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various options, the Committee resolved to delete JM and RJ and add GH as he will assume the Chair after the AGM. **In the meantime, the Committee resolved that both WJ and GH should apply for online banking with the Nat West and this minute should be presented to Nat West as confirmation and approval.** It was noted that there was still a need to appoint a treasurer (agenda item 7).

7. Treasurer Appointment:

There had been no nominations in advance of the meeting. DD and GH informed the meeting that they had sounded out a person within their county but he felt that the demands of the role which combined the treasurer and membership officers were too demanding. He did not have time to chase clubs/counties for outstanding subscriptions and registration forms. JM supported this point of view and noted that the WSMBA used to have a Membership Secretary before the role was integrated into the Treasurer's duties: it is very, very time-consuming. After a discussion of various options, the Committee resolved that the 'membership' duties be separated from the treasurer's role and instead become the responsibility of an officer within each county who would administer the paperwork and collect the subscriptions on behalf of the WSMBA and remit one total payment at the start of each season and any subsequent payments for new members etc as they fall due throughout the season. PH also suggested that a member of the WSMBA Executive Committee should be identified to oversee this process and ensure that payments from counties are made within the set deadlines. This proposal was communicated to the person in Cardigan who promised that he would have a re-think about taking on the treasurer's role.

8. National Finals Draw

GE administered the draws for the National Finals and County Competitions and confirmed that they would be posted on the facebook page later that evening and he would also confirm to counties by e-mail. He explained that Gwynedd would be playing in the national finals but would not be taking up all their allocated places which meant that some counties would only have three places in some of the disciplines and that reserves would need to be drawn accordingly. Wrexham would not be playing in the County Competition.

9. British Isles Report, Ladies and Main Team

SW presented a written report at the meeting (copy attached) and RP had submitted a report regarding the Ladies BI Championships in advance of the meeting (also attached): both reports were accepted by the Committee.

It was really pleasing to note that it was the first time that the A series international team (4x4 rinks) had finished second in the competition – a really good achievement.

CE added that from an organizational point of view, things seemed to have gone smoothly but any feedback would be appreciated and noted. Some comments were made regarding some damage on one of the buses on the Saturday evening but, on investigation, this was due to a fault on the window blind itself (retractor missing) and CE had confirmed with the bus company that they had no issues whatsoever.

SW informed the Committee that several of the ladies' team raised the possibility of national championships for ladies. This generated a lengthy discussion with the consensus appearing to be that there are not enough ladies in each county to replicate the current singles, pairs, triples and rinks format but it was suggested that there might be a pairs competition where ladies can play with others across county lines as a way of moving forward.

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JM confirmed that from a financial point of view, the Ladies BI event had run smoothly with all monies paid in full and 'up front' and BowlsWales funding had supported the costs. The total cost of the venue (Bro Myrrdin), including all 4 practice sessions and the competition itself was £900.00 and the amount of sponsorship adverts in the programme had significantly helped with the venue costs.

Regarding the BI Championships in Scotland, JM explained to the meeting again how cancellations can affect the subsidies paid to players. He informed the meeting that the WSMBA had suffered a £1000.00 loss on rooms not cancelled early enough and he was only able to compensate for a large part of that shortfall by limiting the subsidies for players: each player would have received at least an additional £28.00 subsidy. He urged the Committee to introduce and adhere to deadlines for future competitions as we have discussed previously to avoid these situations happening again. It was confirmed that the next BI Championships will be in Solihull in November 2025.

Due to the unavailability of the venue in Belfast, there will not be a Ladies BI Championships in October 2025 but this will be held in Belfast on 17/18 January 2026 and is likely to be held each January thereafter.

10. Umpires:

GH informed the Committee that the WSMBA were asked at the last minute if they could provide umpires for the BI Championships which we did.

GH sought clarification on how rule 7.14(b) (p28 of rule book) regarding following the bowl up the mat should be implemented. WSMBA rule says on first occasion player is warned and second and subsequent occasions, the wood is removed from the mat. GH understands that this is different to the English rules where, apparently, the opposing skip has the choice and the Irish who have no rule covering this. Welsh umpires have received abuse in various competitions when implementing this rule.

DD proposed and the Committee resolved unanimously that, as the rule is in the WSMBA rule book it should be implemented until it is amended or removed from the book. An announcement to this effect will be made at the start of the national finals, county championships and the League Winners competition.

11. Election of selectors:

There had been 5 nominations:

Stephen Williams (Swansea)	seeking re-election
Chris McWhinnie (Montgomery)	seeking re-election
Aled Edwards (Carmarthen)	seeking re-election
Darren Davies (Cardigan)	seeking re-election
Mark Taylor (MT) (Pembrokeshire)	new nomination

The meeting was informed that MT did not have the international experience required by the criteria for selectors but PH stated that this document had not been circulated to counties so therefore could not have been considered by them in their nominations. In addition, PH informed the meeting that MT is a very experienced county player, had been a county selector for several years and had represented Pembrokeshire many times in the Top Team event which is an international competition.

There was some discussion as to whether there was critical need for 5 selectors. CM suggested that

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the Team Manager could have a role to play in selection and become the 5th selector but the meeting felt that there would then be two selectors from one county.

MG suggested that the four nominated selectors are very capable and proposed (seconded by GH) that we should proceed with four selectors for the next 2-year cycle with the Chair of Selectors having a deciding vote if needed. This was passed by the Committee and the 4 selectors seeking re-election – Stephen Williams, Chris McWhinnie, Aled Edwards and Darren Davies – were confirmed as selectors until after the British Isles Championships 2026.

12. AOB

County Reps:

Pembrokeshire: PH informed that the Top Team had been quite successful with the final result as follows – North West zone 61.5 pts, Pembrokeshire 40.5 pts, West Midlands 30 pts and it was really pleasing to have pushed West Midlands into third place at their venue.

Carmarthen/Competition Secretary:

GE noted that this was JM's last meeting as Treasurer and thanked him for all his hard work and diligence in the way he has carried out the role. This was echoed by all committee members.

Swansea:

SW sought confirmation that if members who had won through to the national finals in the county heats were unable to play in the finals, they could only be replaced by another member who had played in the county heat: this was confirmed.

It was also discussed what would happen if a whole team were to withdraw from one of the disciplines and it was agreed that, in this situation, the reserves would be put into the group(s) from which a team(s) withdrew in the order they were drawn – 1st reserve, 2nd, etc.

Nick Evans (NE) joined the meeting to clarify the position regarding shirts for the juniors and JM confirmed that the intention is that all teams representing Wales will wear the 'dragon' shirts and the "Emma Bevan" bursary monies could be used towards the cost of shirts and this is ongoing.

Dates of next meeting:

Sunday 2nd March 2025

The meeting closed at 12.57 pm.

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Report on the 2024 Ladies British Isles Championships

The 2024 Ladies British Isles Championships was held on 12th and 13th October in Carmarthen, Wales. The event was only the second full Ladies British Isles competition, following the inaugural event held in 2023 in Melton Mowbray, England.

Selection

Selection for the event was in the hands of Steve Williams, Darren Davies, Chris McWhinney, Liz Evans and Deb Matthews. As Team Manager, I provided administrative support to the selection process.

51 ladies from across Wales attended the trial in Llandrindod Wells on Sunday 12 May. Following the trial, 29 were invited to form the squad for the 2024 International. 20 of the ladies selected had played in 2023, with 9 new caps selected for their debuts in 2024.

All of those not selected were provided with personal feedback prepared by the selection panel during the selection meeting.

Several of the ladies noted how they had valued this feedback as it provided something they could work on for future years.

Event preparation

Mats for the championship were identified and numbered, allowing us to set up the venue in exactly the same configuration for each of the preparatory events. This would provide a level of 'home advantage' for our players who would, by the event, have played on the mats three times.

Preparation for the championships began on 1st September with a squad development day in Carmarthen. The aim of the day was to allow members of the squad to get to know each other, to have some fun whilst exploring with Steve a range of shots which would need to be played during the event, and to begin the process of shaping the team for the championships.

Ahead of the championships, two friendly matches were arranged against Carmarthenshire on 8th September and Cardiganshire on 5th October. For the first of these, the selectors prepared their first team formation for the 16 and the individual disciplines. Following the day, the selectors were able to review the play and make any necessary changes to the formation.

The team was finalised ahead of the second match against Cardiganshire, with 26 players named in the starting line up plus three reserves.

At each of these sessions, the selectors were able to share some of their extensive experience with the squad – again, something which many of the ladies valued.

Administration and finances

The selectors and management agreed at the outset that the squad would stay together over the championship weekend. Unfortunately, no suitable accommodation was available in Carmarthen (England and Ireland had already secured the available hotel space), so accommodation was booked in the Premier Inn, Llanelli.

Accommodation costs had to be paid in full by mid August, so players were asked for their payments by a date 2 weeks in advance of this deadline. Everyone paid ahead of the deadline, which meant that all accommodation costs were covered before payment was made. Players and officials subsequently received an accommodation and a travel

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subsidy once the event costs had been finalised.

Trophies for the winners and runners up in each section of the event were procured and received by the middle of September along with commemorative medals for the umpires and markers.

Gethin Edwards helpfully worked on the playing order for the championship. A ruling by the British Isles Council that no player was to play on the same mat twice, coupled with the number of players 'doubling up' (in the England, Ireland and Scotland squads) made it necessary to use 14 mats.

Gethin also prepared the artwork for the Championship Programme (which was then professionally printed), and secured the majority of the sponsors who, between them, contributed £500. Programmes were sold at the event for £2 each, with England, Ireland and Scotland taking 30 each. Despite having a number of programmes left at the end of the championship, the costs were more than covered.

I know the Treasurer will provide a financial breakdown for the event, but I understand that costs incurred were covered.

Arrangements at the venue went smoothly. We implemented a pre-order system for meals on each day. This went largely without issue, and meant that the demand on the kitchen could be managed.

Carmarthenshire Council's cabinet member for Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Hazel Evans) attended on both days to officially open the championships and to hand out the trophies.

Results

Ireland completed a clean sweep of the 16 and each of the individual disciplines.

Ahead of the event, the selectors and management discussed what success would look like. We recognised that this was only our second year, and that the other nations were well ahead of Wales in their participation in Ladies International competition. We were looking for good performances with evidence that the squad was learning and developing, as a foundation for future competition.

Our expectations were not only met but exceeded, with some fantastic performances across the weekend.

Wales ended up:

- 3rd in the 16
- 3rd in the Singles
- 3rd in the Pairs
- 2nd in the Triples
- 2nd in the Rinks

Reflections on the weekend...

Overall this was a good weekend and a successful championships. The squad came together well, with their Captain and Vice-Captain (Natalie Evans and Kate Morgan) doing a great job.

Arrangements over the weekend went well, despite a power cut at the hotel on the Friday night! Feedback from the other nations on the venue and the arrangements were very positive.

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We managed to deliver a championship without blowing the budget or upsetting anyone (as far as I know!)

The ladies team is developing nicely – we have another year’s experience and managed to pick up some trophies along the way. The team spirit on show during the weekend was special.

I’d like to record some thanks to people who contributed to the success of the event:

- to the selectors for their work and their support for the ladies;
- to Gethin for his work in advance of and over the weekend;
- to John for all of his work on the finances;
- to the volunteers at Bro Myrddin for being so accommodating in the run up to the event and over the weekend itself; and
- to all of the ladies who did everything we asked of them without question, and trusted that we would do our bit to make them as successful as they could be.

Richard Palmer
Ladies Team Manager
December 2024

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British Isles & A series Championships 2024 (Auchinleck - Scotland)

Performance Report

British Isles - Although we didn't come back from Auchinleck with any titles there was a definite improvement both in performance and team spirit compared with recent years. The premier 16 won 58% of their games compared with just 46% over the previous three years since covid. The 14 rink wins is the most by the premier 16 since the British Isles changed its format in 2014. More importantly though, they won 4 of the 6 matches to finish runners up for the first time since before covid, only losing to Ireland by 5 shots on the Saturday and then losing by 1 shot to the last bowl of the match on the Sunday. Finishing 2nd does give us a more favourable order of games in next year's championships.

In the individual championships we placed 2nd in the singles through Mike John who won 2 of his 3 games but was cruelly robbed of the title by the last bowl of the competition. The pairs, triples and fours all finished in 4th position. The pair of Jac Edwards & Chris Mcwhinnie won 1 & lost 2, the four of Liz Evans, Ffion Jones, Tom Harris & Nick Evans drew 1 & lost 2 games and Paul Hudson, Jonathan Gladstone & Andrew Hudson lost 3 games in the triples.

A Series - The A series team also performed well with the international 16 matching their premier team counterparts by finishing 2nd with the same record of 4 wins & 2 losses from their 6 matches. It may well be the first time our a series 16 have placed 2nd in the event. I do believe it's the first time the 16's (British & A series) have won 4 out of 4 matches against England.

In the a series individual championships the pair of Mark Thorpe & Robert Evans finished as runners up winning 2 games & only losing to eventual winners England by 3 shots. The four of Will Sproul, Gethin Edwards, Dorian Hudson & Richard Arran matched the pairs' record winning 2 out of 3 and also placed 2nd. Andrew Evans in the singles and Kate Morgan, Karl Symmonds & Martyn Davies in the triple lost their 3 games but never stopped trying.

Overall I feel the squad as a whole has improved in the short time I've been back amongst them. The one thing I tried to impress on all of them during our practice sessions was to compete in every game, which didn't happen in Prestatyn. It's not possible to win every game or every competition but if you compete in every game you'll win your fair share.