

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 2nd March 2025

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) Montgomery, Gethin Edwards (GE) Carmarthen, Moira Griffiths (MG) and Peter Kempster (PK) Wrexham, Terry Batt (TB) and David Williams (DW) West Glam

1. The Chair (CE) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.
2. **Apologies:** Arwel Nicholas, Richard Palmer (RP) Bowls Wales Adviser, Darren Davies, Debs Matthews (re: ladies rep), Stephen Williams, Ted Gittoes, Chris McWhinnie
3. **Minutes of previous meeting (29/09/24):** MG proposed, GH seconded and the meeting approved the minutes as a true and accurate account of the meeting.
4. **Matters Arising:**
 - Point 10 (Umpires) – PH stated that the direction given to the managers and captains at the start of the County Competition regarding following the wood up the mat was different to that unanimously agreed at the last meeting. At the competition, it was stated that, in the event of following the wood up the mat, the opposing skip would have the option to remove the wood or not, whereas the meeting had resolved that the rule, as stated in the Welsh rule book, would apply – i.e. on first occasion, a warning would be given and on subsequent occasions, the wood would be removed. GH acknowledged that this had occurred;
 - Following a query, it was confirmed that there had been no progress on a separate red card competition for ladies only;
 - PH informed the meeting that he had received an e-mail from William Bowcutt disputing the comment in the previous minutes that there had been a lack of communication within the county regarding payment of the national competitions' fees. PH explained that he had replied that the minutes could only reflect what had been stated at the meeting and the issue of communication within a county is an internal matter for that county to resolve. JM informed the committee that, even though the previous meeting was informed that the fees would be paid immediately, they were not actually paid until 2nd January 2025. TB acknowledged that this is an internal county matter and apologised on behalf of West Glam;
 - The issue of updating bank signatories is ongoing;
 - GE informed the committee that there were no markers from Pembrokeshire at the National Singles finals. GH stated that there was a lack of markers generally which meant that some umpires were used as markers which reduced the number of umpires available.

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5. Correspondence

CE read out a complaint received from West Glam regarding the withdrawal of counties from the national finals and their replacement(s) by the reserves drawn out at the last meeting. West Glam felt the recent changes were not in line with the WSMBA Constitution and they had been disadvantaged by only having two representatives in the singles whereas some counties had four. CE spoke to Kate Morgan personally and explained the process that had been adopted at the last meeting (see below) and said that it was unfortunate that there was no rep from WG to feedback to the County. GE commented that, unfortunately, it was bad luck that West Glam had not been drawn out as first reserve in the singles or they would have had three places. TB informed the meeting that this issue had not been raised with the West Glam County committee before the e-mail had been sent to the WSMBA.

CE had also received correspondence from Swansea regarding the option of replacing players who have pulled out from any of the disciplines after qualifying for the national finals at their county qualifiers. They understood that it was the county's responsibility to fill 'vacancies' due to the unavailability of players to attend the national finals and they also felt that there should not be two teams from the same county in the same group. Swansea felt that the integrity of the competition had been damaged.

The previous meeting had discussed that where a player(s) drops out of one of the teams who have qualified for the national finals, for whatever reason, but there are still players within that team able and willing to play, then the county can fill those slots with substitutes but those substitutes must have played in the county eliminator competition. However, where a whole qualifying team (e.g. all four rinks players) withdraw from the national finals, then that team will be replaced by the drawn out reserve(s) in that section (singles/pairs/triples/rinks).

It was reported that in the instances referred to in the e-mails above,

- there had been a West Glam withdrawal from the singles and this had been treated as a 'whole team' withdrawal so the first reserve that had been drawn out at the meeting was put in instead;
- In one of the qualifying rinks from Swansea, two players withdrew and the remaining two were not happy (for whatever reason) to play with substitutes identified by the county, so the whole qualifying team were considered to have withdrawn. Swansea felt that they should have been able to nominate a replacement rink in their place.

There was quite a lot of discussion of these issues and it was noted how much unfair criticism had been directed at GE which had unfortunately resulted in him resigning from the position. All the representatives felt that GE had done an excellent job as Competition Secretary and were sorry that he felt that he needed to stand down and thanked him for all his work as Competition Secretary. The committee were also grateful to GE for ensuring a very smooth transition to Jac Edwards who had stepped in at short notice to replace him.

The points discussed included:

- The impact of the original imbalance of Gwynedd choosing how many places they would take in each discipline and subsequent withdrawal of some teams;
- The lack of clear rules to deal with these issues. Need to establish a robust set of rules for each competition;

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- The timing of the draw – made earlier? Would not stop withdrawals at the last moment;
- Biggest problem seems to be ‘pre-drawn reserves’ – needs to be addressed;
- Issue of two teams in same group – always possible if using ‘pre-drawn reserves’ and teams pull out after the draw is done. Not feasible to do re-draw at the last minute;

CE also referred to the an e-mail which had been received by all committee members from Francis Brady (Wrexham) regarding the condition of the equipment used at the national finals and stated that the Executive do try to keep the equipment in a good state of repair but there was general agreement around the table that Francis had raised valid points, in particular, foam coming off the underside of the mats, pitted jacks and slippery foot mats. CE undertook to do an inspection of all the equipment during the A series trial and draw up a schedule of work/repairs needed.

CE also reported that he had also received correspondence regarding the organization and management of the ladies’ team but it was agreed that this would be covered under agenda item 9 below.

6. Financial Report:

JM went through the financial report handout he presented to the meeting noting:

81 clubs had paid affiliation fees but not all had registered their players with WSMBA;

Pleasing to see 116 new members being registered;

We had received more Bowls Wales monies in the current year (under Total Income to date);

The mat storage (£300.00) and the venue hire costs (£2242.50) both relate to Llandrindod.

He then went on to inform the committee that he had purchased 20 extra shirts for the U21s at a cost of £25.00 each (i.e. £500.00) and all Welsh teams will now have the same shirt design. He also explained that the WSMBA had received sponsorship monies from the Emma Bevan Trust with the stipulation that these be used exclusively to support the U21s and he felt the best way to do this would be to subsidise the shirts for the players and suggested that each player pay £10.00 with the remaining £15.00 per shirt being funded by the sponsorship. The committee resolved to support this recommendation and JM undertook to discuss this further with Nick Evans.

JM then highlighted the importance of the raffle monies collected in the various competitions so far and thanked Sylvia for her commitment to selling the tickets, even during the competitions she played in.

In response to a question regarding the application to Bowls Wales for funding next season, JM confirmed that he would prepare and submit the costing as he was now familiar with the process. The committee was told that there had been a lot of changes at Bowls Wales in both the Board and senior/middle management so there was uncertainty at what the priorities for the new leadership might be: PH asked whether the new regime might be prepared to consider the Top Team competition as an international event which it clearly is. JM suggested that he include it in the submission and see what the response will be – PH to prepare a costing for JM. PH suggested it would be useful to have a statement from the BI Council to confirm that, as the competition falls under their responsibility, they certainly consider it an international competition.

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Bank balances as at 1st March 2025:

	01/03/25	29/02/24
Current account	17,308.58	23,240.25
Reserve account	<u>17,788.53</u>	<u>4,995.28</u>
Totals	<u>35,097.11</u>	<u>28,235.53</u>

7. Treasurer Appointment/Competition Secretary

JM confirmed that, provided each county assumes responsibility for tracking membership and the WSMBA appoint a Membership Secretary, he would be prepared to continue as WSMBA Treasurer. He suggested that GE would be an excellent Membership Secretary and he felt that they could work together very well. GE agreed to think about becoming Membership Secretary.

8. League Winners Competition

The draw was made for the playing order of the League Winners Competition to be held in Carmarthen on Sunday 13th April. It was explained that as there 7 counties represented one county would sit out in each round as follows:

Round 1 - Swansea to sit out

Round 2 - West Glam

Round 3 - Carmarthen

Round 4 - Montgomery

Round 5 - Cardigan

Round 6 – Brecon & Radnor

Round 7 – Pembrokeshire

There was a discussion as to what level the rules should stipulate how the winning club should be determined in the event of a tie, e.g. points, overall aggregate, head-to-head result, head to head ends won, etc and this will be confirmed by the Competition Secretary prior to the competition. It was also agreed that this would apply for each individual discipline (singles/pairs/triples/rinks) and for the overall position.

9. Ladies Team Manager

It was reported that Richard Palmer had stood down from the Team Manager role and CE had received a proposal from Liz Evans on behalf of the team that, until a more permanent solution is put in place, herself, Natalie Evans, Debs Matthews and Kate Morgan were prepared to take on the administration and selector duties. Following a discussion with valuable input from MG who had been part of the team at the BI Championships in Carmarthen, the committee resolved to accept the proposal on a temporary basis with a permanent structure being confirmed at the AGM.

10. Umpires:

GH confirmed that, overall, the umpiring situation at the National Finals and County Competitions had gone well but he would likely look to increase the number of umpires at the next County Competition. He currently had 6 umpires confirmed for the League Winners competition but will be looking for at least 8. There was a comment that markers would also be needed but, as there will be a team 'sitting out' each round, it was felt that this would be sufficient.

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GH raised the issue of poor dress code by some counties at the national finals resulting in the disqualification of one team at the National Pairs finals with question marks against some others as well. JM commented that this should be a matter for the counties to address and should not be the responsibility of the umpires.

GH also stated very emphatically that, while there is no specific rule about vaping on the mats, this would not be allowed and most venues had very strict rules against it.

11. Discuss proposal for AGM re: ditching jack by leads etc.

GH handed out two options – Irish rule and SMPT rule – see Appendix 1. After a lot of discussion, the committee resolved to support the Irish rule as it was likely to achieve majority support (Wales, Ireland and Scotland) at the BI Council in November, and it was likely to be put as a proposal at the WSMBA AGM in July so county reps were asked to take back to counties for them to decide how to vote at the AGM.

12. AOB

Following a proposal from PH the committee resolved that, after they have been confirmed at an Executive Committee meeting, the minutes can be placed on the WSMBA website.

The committee resolved that the statement ‘not yet adopted by the WSMBA Executive’ be deleted from the policies posted on the website. GE to action please.

JM informed the committee that he had been challenged at one of the county competitions that a spectator, who was not a current or previous Welsh player, was wearing a Welsh hoodie and sought clarification of what the approach/response should be. After much discussion, the committee felt that this was a difficult issue to monitor and several committee members thought that this was not an issue at all: it should be seen as a good thing that supporters bought hoodies at their own expense to support the Welsh team.

Further to the discussion at the last meeting, GH informed the committee that there is likely to be a resolution at the AGM to delete the rule about following the wood up the mat from the rule book and he wanted to give counties a ‘heads-up’.

County Reps:

Pembrokeshire: PH informed the committee that its safeguarding officers had delivered a well-received training session re: safeguarding to one of its member clubs.

Carmarthen:

The application forms for the Carmarthen Charity Triples would be published in the following week.

Wrexham:

Wrexham would like to introduce a County over-60s competition comprising teams of 10 and details would be published via the WSMBA Facebook page asap.

Dates of next meeting: Likely to be the AGM and date to be confirmed.

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The meeting closed at 12.29 pm.

Appendix 1

IRISH INDOOR BOWLING ASSOCIATION

37. Bowl touching the jack and coming to rest in the ditch

In singles, pairs, triples and fours, if any of the first two bowls on any end delivered by the lead shall touch the jack and come to rest completely in the ditch, they shall be declared dead and removed from the mat. If either bowl so delivered comes to rest intersecting the ditch line it shall be marked as a toucher. If the first bowl is a toucher and remains in the live area, the second bowl can push the toucher into the ditch and that toucher will not be removed.

Rule 37 refers to the first 2 bowls delivered on any end. This is simply to clarify any doubts that may exist.

SMPT

The first bowl delivered by both players on every end, which touch the jack must be removed from play, if in the course of their natural delivery path, enter the ditch fully. Should the toucher come to rest on the ditch line and a portion of it is still live, then this bowl will remain in play and can be further moved into the ditch by any subsequent bowl or the jack. Should the jack be moved by the bowl, it will remain in its new position, even if this is in the ditch.