

CYMDEITHAS BOWLIO MAT BYR CYMRU

WELSH SHORT MAT BOWLS ASSOCIATION

The Governing Body for the Sport in Wales

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Minutes of the WSMBA Executive Committee meeting at the Radnorshire Bowls Stadium on Sunday 14th December 2025 at 10.00 am

Present: Peter Kempster (PK) Vice Chair, Richard Palmer (RP) Secretary, John Matthews (JM) Treasurer, Paul Hudson (PH) Pembrokeshire, Jac Edwards (JE) Competition Secretary, Craig Evans (CE) Welsh Team Manager, Chris McWhinnie (CMc) and Kevin Birch (KB) Montgomery, Gethin Edwards (GE) Carmarthen, (MG), Arwel Morgan (AM) West Glam, Darren Davies (DD) Cardigan, Stephen Williams (SW) Swansea, Tony Morgan (TM) Brecon & Radnor

1. Chairman's welcome and apologies

As Gerald Hands (GH) is recovering from a recent operation, Peter Kempster took the Chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He wished Gerald a speedy recovery after his operation and it was resolved that RP would send a card to Gerald giving him our best wishes.

Apologies

Gerald Hands Chair, Wyn Jones President, Deborah Matthews, Moira Griffiths, Mary Jane Rogers

2. Confirm minutes of previous meeting (21/09/25)

GE proposed, JE seconded and the meeting approved the minutes as a true and accurate account of the meeting.

3. Matters arising

Ladies WSMBA 'open' competition(s):

SW informed the committee that, while the organisers are open to adapting the competition in some ways, they would be reluctant to lose Emma Bevan's name from it. The committee understood their position and asked RP to contact Chris Hillier to take forward.

4. Correspondence

Question from Pembrokeshire re: the re-instatement of the Junior Singles/Pairs competition that used to be run. This used to be organised by Barry Sambrook but has not been run in recent years and Nick Evans agreed to re-look at this subject to finding a date in the calendar.

Public Liability Insurance certificates:

AM asked whether certificates are sent out to all clubs because they are not always displayed. JM stated that they are usually sent out to any clubs who ask for them. RP undertook to issue certificates for next year to county secretaries for distribution within their counties.

5. Financial Report

JM circulated a handout to each county detailing the current financial position showing total bank balances at 12th Dec to be £55,451.37: however, this includes Bowls Wales monies for the Ladies BI and the World Championships that has not been distributed to the players involved so gives a slightly distorted picture and most of the Reserve Account is money committed for these events.

JM also confirmed that the Bowls Wales funding for the Top Team event had been paid to the players (& officials), in line with the practice for the other international events, and not to the County.

He reported that the process of getting payment well in advance of competitions had worked well this year with very few issues to report. He circulated the breakdown for the BI Champs in November showing that all monies had been paid and that there was £159.31 credit which was due to Craig Evans re: his parents' room: Craig informed the meeting that he did not wish to receive a refund and was prepared to leave the funds with WSMBA.

6. Policies

RP presented the draft Transgender Inclusion policy (which had been circulated prior to the meeting) and led the committee through the various points. There was a discussion about many of the buildings used for our sport as being very restrictive and many only having men/ladies changing rooms: RP suggested that disabled toilets could be used in exceptional circumstances if they are available at the venues. It was proposed that the wording on the player registration form regarding gender be clarified to "biological sex at birth".

The Committee unanimously resolved to accept the draft policy and thanked RP for his work in producing it.

7. Sponsorship Plan (JE/RP/AM)

JE explained the rationale for the plan and the accompanying costing sheet which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The paper generated a good discussion and the committee accepted that this was a medium to long-term plan rather than trying to achieve every element

immediately. During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- It was felt that the starting point may be to look for a new shirt/kit sponsor(s) as there have been supply issues with the current supplier and it would be great if we could find a new supplier and sponsor at the same time;
- Much of the discussion focused on the suggested figures in the 'Costing Breakdown' and CMc suggested that these could be used as benchmark/starting point figures: RP felt that option 2 figures were realistic but he was unsure about some of the others;
- SW queried how the 'Player Sponsorship' element would work and whether any monies received in this category would be put in a "pot" for distribution to all. JE suggested that the sponsorship of a player would be for one year and could be pooled and used toward payments for attending international competitions. Some committee members noted that some players already attract sponsorship on an individual basis and it was suggested that any sponsorship attracted in this way would still benefit the individual and not be pooled;
- There was agreement that any sponsors' logos could be added to the WSMBA website;
- It was suggested that programme sponsorship for international competitions be added to the plan;
- DD asked whether the sub-committee had any potential sponsors in mind? RP suggested approaching a large organization e.g. Admiral;
- It was suggested that we attract as many banners as possible to display at events at £100.00 per year;
- It was also suggested that we incorporate the Bowls Wales logo in as many promotional methods as we can for recognition.

The Executive Committee was very supportive of the plan and asked the sub-committee to continue to work on and develop the proposals.

8. BI Council update

CE informed the meeting that both our proposals were successful at the BI Council meeting:

- any toucher completely in the ditch from the first two woods of singles or leads would be removed;
- players will be allowed to follow their woods up the mat to the head.

These will be applied in the British Championships from November 2026.

It appears that the Past President's medal is missing and may have been with Arwel Nicholas last so RP to follow up.

GE stated that he was disappointed with the medals that had been awarded at the BI Championships but he was advised that this lies entirely with the host country. There was a short discussion on whether to propose to the BI Council that all trophies should be replaced but this was left in abeyance.

9. BI Championships Report

SW gave his report as follows:

British Isles and A series Championships 2025 - Solihull, England

Performance Report

A Series - The A series championships team had a very successful event. Andrew Jones won the singles while Mark Thorpe and James John-Davies won the pairs. Backing their success up were the triple of Alun James, Andy Riley and Rory Gittoes along with the rink of Ted Gittoes, Dylan Johnson, Shaun Howells and Craig Evans who finished runners-up in their respective competitions.

The A series international 16 finished in 3rd place, winning their two games against Scotland but losing twice to both England and Ireland. On the surface this result may seem disappointing but considering the rebuild needed from last year's team and losing one of our skips to illness after the first game on Sunday morning I think the result is acceptable.

We also welcomed some players back into the squad and gave new players valuable experience. We definitely learned a few things and I believe the pool of players is getting deeper.

British Isles - As always our National singles, pairs, triples and fours champions get the opportunity to compete for the British Isles title in their respective disciplines.

This year the team of Aled Edwards, Dafydd Howell and Cennydd Howell captured the British Isles triples title with wins over England and Scotland along with a comeback draw against Ireland.

Andrew Hudson placed 3rd in the singles winning 1 game and losing 2.

The four of Ben Jackson, Ffion Jones, Tom Harris and Nick Evans also placed 3rd with a record of 1 win, 1 draw and 1 defeat.

Finally, the pairs of Sam and Darren Davies placed 4th but although they lost their 3 games they competed in each of them, never letting their opponent run away with the match.

The British Isles international 16 finished 3rd in a closely contested event where 3pts separated the top 3 teams. The team record was 3 wins and 3 losses and the individual rink record was 12 wins, 3 draws and 9 losses.

My initial feeling was of disappointment that we were unable to capture the team title for the first time since 2004 as I felt we had selected a very strong 16. However, after taking some time to reflect before writing this report I'm proud that we competed against each

team and although things didn't fall our way this time I believe that we are moving in the right direction and our time will come.

Sunday night - Usually that would be the end of my report but unfortunately when I went to breakfast on Monday morning, I was informed of a couple of instances involving Welsh players that had happened at the venue during a party/celebration held by the England team after the event and then later at our hotel.

The first was an unsavoury instance involving an England player but after a conversation with the England manager Chris Willies, I'm happy no Welsh player acted out of order and in fact Chris informed me that several of our players had helped calm things down. So, at the time of writing this report, I'm not expecting anything to come from that situation that would concern us.

However, this may not be the case with the second instance. It involved what could be considered the unacceptable behaviour of one or two Welsh players towards members of the Welsh squad. I'm aware that letters have been submitted to the secretary and that things are progressing regarding dealing with the issue. My worry is that this issue may have caused damage to the team spirit that may take some time to repair.

The Chair thanked Steve for his report. RP informed the committee that a disciplinary panel had been convened in respect of a complaint received arising from the "second instance" that SW referred to and the committee agreed to extend the deadline for the investigation by two weeks to allow for the Christmas and New Year period.

10. World Short Mat Bowls Council update

CE advised the committee that January 12th was the deadline for submitting the team for the World Championships. RP suggested that it may not be possible to finalise the team by then because of the ongoing disciplinary investigation. However, it was agreed that the selectors should go ahead and pick the team as they would have done if there was no disciplinary process happening and, if the outcome of the disciplinary affects the team chosen, then deal with that at the time.

It was also agreed that while the hotel has been booked by the WSMBA, players and officials will be responsible for making their own travelling arrangements.

11. Draw for National Finals

The draws were done for the National Finals and would be posted on the website and Facebook pages later in the day.

JE advised the Committee that Gwynedd would not be entering any players this year so each county will have four representatives in each section. There was a discussion regarding the

uncertainty of Gwynedd's stance each year and most counties play some of their county heats before the draw not knowing whether the county will have three or four places in the finals. Some members commented that, if the draw was done earlier, then some players/teams in each county may not play to win their county heat but may settle for a lower place (2nd, 3rd, 4th) to qualify for a perceived "easier" group in the finals. The Committee agreed that the issue was not when the draw takes place but knowing how many places counties would be allocated in the finals. It was resolved that this would be established before the start of each season.

The draw was also conducted for the County Championship and it was confirmed that Wrexham would be entering this year so each county would be involved in each round and there would be no need for a bye. Counties were drawn out in the following order:

1. Brecon & Radnor 2. Cardigan 3. West Glam 4. Carmarthen
5. Montgomery 6. Swansea 7. Wrexham 8. Pembrokeshire

12. Meeting arrangements

There were some clashes with the draft dates proposed in the agenda which RP would look to resolve, but the Committee agreed with the proposal of part online/part face to face meetings and noted Monday 26th January (evening) as the next meeting. RP to issue joining instructions in due course.

13. AOB

Carmarthen

GE queried whether there should be a defined person to lead the ladies' team rather than the shared responsibilities at present. CE queried whether the current arrangement was tied in to a time-period or whether it was flexible? The consensus was that this should be reviewed after the BI Championships in January.

Montgomery

CMc informed the committee that Shropshire had disbanded as a county within ESMBA and their individual players do not play in the English national events other than an Open Championship and queried if players, who play in the Montgomery league on a friendly basis only, could have a red card and represent Montgomery in WSMBA events. CE also informed the committee that he had confirmed with the BI Council that a player can be a member of more than one national body. CE also stated that there is a BI Council ruling that if a player has represented a county in any national competition, they will not be eligible to represent another county for two years and he could confirm that the players in question have not played in English events for at least two years thereby making them eligible to represent Montgomery this year. They will not be applying for membership of the ESMBA next year so will solely be members of WSMBA.

It was agreed that the players involved could represent Montgomery in WSMBA national events in the current season.

Team Manager

The committee gave CE permission to provisionally book the Crowne Plaza hotel in Belfast for next year's BI Championships

Chairman of Selectors

SW asked what official would be attending the World Championships in Norway. It was confirmed that the Chairman (GH) and Secretary (RP) are hoping to attend.

Pembrokeshire

PH informed the committee that the Top Team event had been well organised but, unfortunately, Pembrokeshire had finished third but it was a very well fought competition and the difference in points between the first and third was the closest he could remember The final result was:

Norfolk 53 points

Western Zone 43 points

Pembrokeshire 36 points

The meeting closed at 12.05 pm