

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 held on 10th December 2023 at Radnorshire Indoor Bowling Stadium, Llandrindod Wells.

- 1. Chairman's Address.** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked those for travelling on such a miserable day.
Present. Craig Evans, John Matthews, Gethin Edwards, Gerald Hands, Gill Reeman, Ted Gittos, Ed Rees, Paul Hudson, Terry Batt, David Williams, Kate Morgan, Arwel Morgan, Jac Edwards, Chris McWhinnie, Richard Palmer.
- 2. Apologies.** Wyn Jones, Darren Davies, Swansea, Wrexham.
- 3. Minutes of the previous meeting.** A correction in the minutes. The money to buy the raffle prizes for the British Isles should read that a budget of £100 per day and not £50/£60 per day.
- 4. Matters Arising.** Paul Hudson informed the committee that the Top Team Challenge was held the previous weekend and was considered a success. Paul also thanked the WSMBA for the use of mats and equipment for the event and thanked those who attended the event to support and to help. Next year's Top Team Challenge will be held in England.
Gethin confirmed that the new website was up and running and despite an issue with the domain name, has been well received overall. The issue with the domain name is being investigated and will be rectified as soon as possible.
- 5. Correspondence.** A letter was received by the Secretary from Gerald Hands regarding an incident at the British Isles Championships in Prestatyn. The incident involved Gerald and the way he had been spoken to and sworn at by Welsh player and selector Arwel Morgan. The letter had been circulated to the committee a week prior and counties were asked to attend the meeting to discuss its content and if any sanctions were to be brought forward. Terry Batt commented that he was disappointed that Wyn Jones as WSMBA Secretary and Wales Team Manager was not at the meeting. Gethin Edwards also commented that Wyn had jumped the gun in his own e-mail to the counties regarding Arwel being removed as selector and that this should have been put forward for the meeting so that counties did not have that bias in mind when discussing before the meeting.
The Chair then asked Arwel and Gerald to leave the meeting so that each county present could put forward their initial views on the matter.
Cardigan – The Chair read an e-mail from Cardigan and Cardigan believe that the behaviour is unacceptable and that Arwel should be suspended or removed from his position as selector and a ban of 1 match for Wales be imposed.
Brecon & Radnor – Brecon & Radnor believe that the behaviour showed disrespect towards the umpires and that Arwel should not have become involved in a conversation that we nothing to do with him. Removal as selector and a 1-year ban was suggested.

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Montgomery – It saddens Montgomery that this incident has happened and that others in the past have received a ban for drinking while on Welsh duty and that swearing at an official should be held in the same view, if not more severe. There is a risk of umpires walking away from the game and a ban was suggested.

Pembrokeshire – Pembrokeshire have not held a meeting but held discussions in the county and spoken with some of the witnesses that were there during the incident. The witnesses believe that they did not see the whole incident and only part of it. It is agreed that umpires should not be spoken to in this way and that Arwel was out of order. Pembrokeshire believed that Arwel should have apologised at Prestatyn, and the incident could have easily been resolved there and then. Pembrokeshire have not come to a consensus on how the matter should be dealt with. Ed Rees then asked if Arwel had apologised to Gerald and the Chair confirmed that an apology was made via Facebook on the Tuesday following Prestatyn and that Arwel had also phoned Gerald on 04/12/2023.

West Glamorgan – West Glamorgan held a meeting on Thursday night about the incident and agreed that Arwel was in the wrong, but no decision was made on how to move forward with any recommendations on how it should be dealt with. It is the belief that this is a disagreement between two people and that this should be resolved by the parties involved.

Carmarthenshire – Carmarthenshire have not held a meeting but had discussions with the officials. Carmarthenshire again believe that it was wrong that the Team Manager had put forward his views so early on for all counties to see before Arwel's view had been put forward to counties. It is agreed that umpires should not be spoken to in this way, however Carmarthenshire state that this is out of character for Arwel and that he had been very supportive to one of our players during the Ladies British Isles when comments had been made about a player using a chute to play. It was also mentioned that Arwel does do a lot of work in his role as selector, much of which is behind the scenes and that additional pressure had been placed on him during the lead up to the event. Carmarthenshire reserve their opinion on how to deal with the matter until hearing from Arwel and his version of events and hearing from Gerald during the meeting. Carmarthenshire also mention that there is nothing in the WSMBA Constitution on procedures, sanctions or appeal procedure that can be definitively used as guidance on this matter and that this would need to be looked at urgently before the AGM so that it is in place for any future issues.

Wrexham – Wrexham had sent in an e-mail on their views that this behaviour cannot go on and that they believe that Arwel's position as selector is untenable.

Swansea – Not present at the meeting and no written views on the matter received.

Gwynedd – Not present at the meeting and no written views on the matter received.

Following the counties giving their views, Gerald and Arwel were invited back into the meeting to give any final views and for any questions to be put to them by the counties.

Gerald confirmed that he had nothing further to add to his original e-mail on the matter, but this is needed to use as a message to both umpires and players about acceptable behaviour.

Arwel then apologised to Gerald in front of the committee and admitted that he was in the wrong and his behaviour was not correct and that he had also apologised to Gerald by Facebook and a 25-minute phone call as well. Gerald confirmed that he had accepted Arwel's apology.

Ed Rees then put forward a question to both Arwel and Gerald on what had started the whole incident. Arwel replied that he believes that it was down to the pressures of the weekend being a British Isles competition as well as having extra responsibilities put on him at the last minute that should have been dealt with by the Team Manager. Arwel was asked by the Team Manager on Thursday about organising a photographer, which is not part of his role as a selector.

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Gerald confirmed that he was in discussion with a player about the rules of removing a bowl if a player had followed the bowl up the mat and Arwel joined the discussion from nowhere.

Arwel confirmed that he had been given wrong information by another player previously that contradicted the rules and was advised that Gerald as Umpire Coordinator had passed this on to the wrong rule to the umpires. It transpires that the player had approached Arwel had misunderstood the ruling, and this led to the outburst when he heard another player asking about the rule.

John Matthews then spoke and believes that this whole incident should have been dealt with on the weekend by the Team Manager as Gerald had approached the Team Manager several times about the incident and asked for an apology from Arwel. John believes that the Team Manager should have taken Arwel and Gerald into the meeting room used by the team and spoken with both and resolved the matter before it had escalated so high.

Gerald confirmed then that he had accepted Arwel's apology and bears no hard feelings on the matter no matter what the decision of the committee would be.

Richard Palmer then re-iterated the need for the policy and procedures need to be in place from a Bowls Wales standpoint with clear sanctions that can be imposed for varying types of complaints and behavioural issues.

The Chair then asked both Gerald and Arwel again to leave the meeting while final deliberations took place.

Carmarthenshire – Satisfied that Arwel had apologised to Gerald and to the committee and that it has been accepted. In favour to keep Arwel as a selector, however, not allow him to play in the World Championships in March and to not allow him to play in the Premier team in the next British Isles. He would be eligible for the A-Series team for the next British Isles.

Pembrokeshire – Accept the apology made by Arwel, however some sanction is needed to send a message to other players that this behaviour is not accepted. In favour of Arwel remaining as selector, however, agree to a ban, but unsure on severity or length.

Cardigan – In favour to remove Arwel from his position as selector and that a ban on representing Wales be imposed for 1 event.

Brecon & Radnor - In favour to remove Arwel from his position as selector and that a ban on representing Wales be imposed for 1 year.

Montgomery - In favour to remove Arwel from his position as selector and that a ban on representing Wales be imposed for 2 years.

West Glamorgan – In favour of as least a punishment as possible.

Wrexham - In favour to remove Arwel from his position as selector.

Swansea – Not present at the meeting and no written views on the matter received.

Gwynedd – Not present at the meeting and no written views on the matter received.

It was agreed by majority that Arwel be removed as a selector and that a ban on representing Wales at the World Championships in March the next British Isles. Arwel would still be eligible to play for club, county and compete in the National Finals, however if he did win a National Final, he would not be permitted to represent Wales while the ban was in place.

Arwel confirmed that he would be lodging an appeal against the decision as per his right in the Constitution. The Chair will endeavour to have the appeals panel in place as soon as possible due to the need to select a World Championships team and a possible need to have a new selector in place for the remaining 1-year term to begin with the National Finals in January 2024. Should the appeal be unsuccessful, and emergency online meeting will be held to confirm a new selector.

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6. **Treasurer's Report.** The Treasurer provided a current financial report and confirmed that the WSMBA are still awaiting on a payment from Castell Howell on shirts for the Ladies British Isles team. If the payment is not received, it would need to be covered by the WSMBA. The same is true for the new umpire shirts and that the sponsorship payment is still outstanding.

£750 is also outstanding from the British Isles Council to cover the cost of the trophies for the British Isles Championships.

Paul Hudson asked about the cost of the adverts in the programme for the British Isles and if counties should be providing the payment for the advert, even if no advert was placed in the programme. It was confirmed all counties should be providing the payment if they have not provided an advert.

The Treasurer then confirmed that he was still awaiting payment from Penybont club due to the club having issues with their bank account. Ted will follow up on this with Penybont.

British Isles 2023 – The Chair made a clear apology to both Kate and Ffion for the lack of acknowledgement during the closing ceremony of the British Isles. The Chair thanked them both for stepping in at the last minute with their duties as photographers. John explained that gifts were planned for both, however there had been a mix up with Wyn and the florists. The Chair also acknowledged the issue with the wrong information being printed in the programmes and that the printers said that this was down to the information being provided to them being constantly changed. The Chair confirmed that he had also sent a letter to the Irish Indoor Bowling Association regarding the way he had been spoken to by the Irish Chair.

A message was read out by the Chair from Wyn who said that the event as a whole went well and congratulated those that had received trophies and thanked those that had helped over the course of the weekend.

Gerald then thanked all the umpires that had been a part of the event as well.

7. **Future Competitions.** Gethin confirmed that the U21 match against England had changed date to Sunday 10th March 2024 and will be held at Bro Myrddin Indoor Bowls Centre, Carmarthen. Gerald will be arranging umpires for the event.

Gethin also confirmed that the Ladies British Isles Championships had been provisionally booked in for the 12th and 13th of October 2024. It was mentioned that a sub-committee may be put together to help with the arrangements to evenly spread the work. Gethin also confirmed that as it was being held in Carmarthen, then they as a county would be happy to assist.

The Chair also confirmed that next year's British Isles will be held in Auchinleck, Scotland. He has provisionally searched for hotels, and there are no Premier Inns or Travelodge's within a 15-mile radius.

An over 55 British Isles Championships had been proposed by England, however this is unlikely to take place in the near future to the already congested National and International calendar of events.

It was also confirmed that Scotland may also be looking at joining the Top Team Challenge in the coming years.

8. **Bowls Wales Presentation.** Richard Palmer made a presentation as former Bowls Wales Chair, having ended his tenure a week before the WSMBA meeting. Richard gave an overview of possible funding increases in the coming years and that he had been lobbying within Bowls Wales for the medals won at British Isles and World Championships to be considered as determining factors in the same way Commonwealth medals are considered for other codes. Bowls Wales are also looking at having a standard kit for all the national teams for the separate governing bodies and that discussions had been taking place with a supplier. It may also be possible for supporters and players to purchase kit directly online from the suppliers. Richard also asked if anyone from short mat would be willing to take a position as an advisor within Bowls Wales. It was decided that Richard take the position himself. The Chair then thanked Richard for all his work as Bowls Wales Chair and that short mat in Wales has benefited greatly due to his involvement.

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9. **National Finals Draw.** The draw and rules had been made and confirmed by the committee and will be placed on the website as well as Facebook. Gethin will also circulate the rules and draw to the mailing list. The rules for the County Competition had also been confirmed and a draw made for the position of the counties to determine the playing order. Gethin will also place this on Facebook and the website and circulate to the mailing list.

10. **Any Other Business.** None.

Meeting Closed 13:50.