

English Bowls Umpires Association

Minutes of an Executive Meeting held on Sunday 1 December 2019 at Oxford & City BC, Oxford

Present

Mavis Wellington – Chairman
Ken Bickley – Deputy Chairman
Phyl Jones – Secretary
Vic Perry – National Development Officer
Bernie Hill – Area Secretary
Carol Watt Sullivan – Area secretary
Tony Hatch – Area Secretary
Colin Wilson – Area Secretary
Steve Alway – Area Secretary
Alexander Wilson – Area Secretary
Francis Fletcher

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Mavis welcomed everyone to the meeting and hoped everyone's season was going well and began by making a statement.

You all know that the treasurer has resigned following which a formal complaint has been made. This is being investigated by a member of our Development sub-committee, who is external to the executive and to ensure a fair and legal outcome I cannot allow any discussion with regard to this complaint at this meeting, I will, of course, report on the outcome of the investigation once it has been completed

The following statement was read to the meeting by Francis Fletcher

'I understand that there is a requested agenda item which mentions 'Reasons for treasurer's resignation (and subsequent complaint)'.

I am assured that only the letter of complaint was read, but the supporting documentary evidence to the complaint was not. Unless the letter of complaint, and supporting document, has been copied, then I am in possession of the only copy. The reasons for the treasurer's resignation may be a matter of public knowledge, but the substantive facts are probably not.

I have spent a good amount of time and effort already in the matter, much of which has been to reassure both parties that it will be conducted in confidence throughout, until conclusion, and that communication has been, and will remain with those parties only and directly.

Should I need to make enquiries to others who may be mentioned later, then they will also have that assurance, i.e. confidentiality and direct communication.

I have no control over what is discussed at EC meetings. However, the complaint made subsequent to the treasurer's resignation is a matter which is under investigation. It should therefore be noted that anything discussed at the meeting is considered pure speculation, until such time as the investigation is concluded, both

parties advised of the outcome, and the Chairman receiving a completed document of findings and recommendations.

I would appreciate this statement being included in the official record of this meeting. Thank you for your consideration, and co-operation, in this matter.

F.S. Fletcher

Mavis thanked Francis and he then left the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Jessie Clark – Deputy Secretary

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were proposed as correct by Steve and seconded by Ken and duly signed by Mavis.

4. Matters Arising

Tony Hatch brought up the organisation of the office in Leamington. He felt that more people should be involved. Mavis explained that when the championships were combined, it had been tried to run the office on a weekly basis but this had not been a success as continuity was required. Men members had not made themselves available but volunteers would be welcome. Several had been asked but had turned it down.

Whilst umpires who didn't have duties at any particular time could help out there were times when experience was needed to deal with sudden short notice situations. Tony Hatch was unhappy with the discussion, tendered his resignation left the meeting

It was agreed to continue the discussion of Leamington 2020. Work on two of the greens had already taken place, it might well be there would be changes of venues for some events or parts of events. Phyl had asked them to tell her as soon as it was discussed as this would have an effect on the umpiring/marketing duties for the championships (and other events). Members working at Leamington might well find that their duties were not at Victoria Park and there would be additional problems of getting members to the other venues.

The EBUA had now been added to the Bowls England's circulation list.

The discussion then turned to the instructions received from BE concerning the way that marking was to be conducted in the singles competitions. Mainly that markers should also alter the scoreboard and that it should not be left to the players. Unfortunately, there had been instances where scorecard and scoreboard did not agree and perhaps because of the wet weather where scoreboards had been incorrectly turned. Obviously this will be discussed with Bowls England for 2020. Hopefully the fact that many umpires will now have competency level 3 for marking will mean that they are far more aware and careful to keep the scorecard and scoreboard..

The arrangements for marking for the Sutton Winson weekend at Leamington was also discussed as it always caused problems as separate provisions applied for it but it was staged at the same time as Bowls England events. It was agreed that EBUA markers should be used as far as possible. After a discussion it was also agreed that as in the past parents etc had acted as markers we should encourage competency level 2 to undertake this. It was agreed that the Area Secretaries would push this opportunity to the markers in their areas. Phyl would amend the existing letters and send them to the Area Secretaries to use.

Some research had been done in respect of shorts for umpires and markers It had been agreed that they should be navy with the EBUA badge on them in the same way as BE ones did. Bernie agreed to investigate the position on the supply of navy shorts with John Bell. It was agreed that shorts for EBUA members needed to have a belt loop, be properly tailored and have good sized pockets (including back pockets). She said she would try and get a pair of shorts made up for everyone to see at the next meeting

Whilst the question of shorts was being discussed the question of socks/footwear was raised. It was agreed that the uniform would be to wear 'ankle socks' when wearing shorts.

The discussion turned to the uniform generally, and our position in respect of the design of the shirts etc. Bernie agreed to investigate the position as to whether the design had been properly registered (as it was feared it had not) and we would then investigate the procedure for getting it registered.

It was also feared that the copywrite of the manual may not also belong to the EBUA. Bernie agreed to discuss the position with Allan Thornhill and whether he would assign the copywrite to us if we did not have it already.

It would also be necessary to investigate the question of the Association badge, and whether that should also be copyrighted to protect it.

There had not been a 'proper' AGM in 2019 as so few members attended that the quorum had not been reached. Those who did attend agreed that the meeting go ahead, the Constitution said an attempt should be made to have another meeting on an alternative date. When this was put to the meeting it was agreed that as sufficient people had not come to the 'proper' meeting it was unlikely that sufficient numbers would turnout on the alternative date! As there were no motions on the agenda it was thought that it was best to leave the decision of that meeting undisturbed.

5. Correspondence

A letter had been received about expenses, but this was to be discussed under item 11 of the agenda

6. Secretary's report

Phyl reported as follows

The last report I submitted was that for the AGM and many of the themes in this one are those continuing, in fact some of them seem to have been there for ever.

Leamington saw some difficulties, but the Association was widely praised for the work you all put in. The long hours where umpires were needed because there had been 'double-ups' between competitions so extra matches went on into the evening

(or what felt like night), the singles days when you churn between rinks, match to match, and the everyday nature of it I know take their toll on all of you – they certainly do on everyone who helps in the office. All I can say is ‘thank you everyone’ and that is not a sufficient recognition of all you do.

One of the problems at Leamington was that although we had been promised a banner for the Portacabin. Unfortunately, when we arrived (on the Friday morning) there was no sign of this. Apparently although Jessie had liaised with BE they had discovered that they needed a copy of our badge, but had forgotten to ask for it to order the banner with the others!

In September we have the Top Club final stages at Leamington and again a thank you to Ken for running this. You will have seen that because of the work being done on the green in preparation for 2022 this has been merged into the last days of the Championships. I don’t know if this will become the regular place for it, and I suspect neither do Bowls England!

While Ken was slaving at Leamington, I was off to the seaside, (not that I actually saw the sea)! The Junior Men’s British Isles took place at Southend and we had 4 umpires working here. Two were ‘established’ internationals (Karen Wood and Bob Penny) and two received their international flashes there as they were appointed to the international grade (Sue Mates and Greg Brown). I had arranged for them to be presented with their flashes (and certificate) by English President Hazel Marke and for photos of this important event to be taken for them to keep. The Executive had felt that this was a suitable way to mark this important event for them in their umpiring careers (the two new internationals appointed at Falcon BC received tier flashes and certificates that way) and the intention is that this will be the way the promotion to the International grade is marked in the future.

Unfortunately, not enough members turned out for the AGM at Leamington to meet the quorum. Those present agreed with two exceptions (one against and one abstaining) that the meeting should proceed as it seemed that if not enough members came when they were at Leamington then to call a meeting on another date elsewhere was unlikely to attract a bigger ‘audience’, and this is what had happened in the past!

I was very disappointed with the response to the request for those wanting to put themselves forward for the teams for Nottingham. There were nowhere near the number I had expected from those who over time had suggested that they were interested. Even fewer ladies put themselves forward, why not ladies? I find it surprising that I keep getting told ‘same old faces’ but the new names are just not coming forward! We can’t put in different people if new ones don’t make themselves available!

There are two international indoor events in 2020 and requests for volunteers for the first of those (men’s 050 double rinks at Warners) where only two are required are now with those holding international grade, but I have not been overwhelmed by those saying they are available! The second the Under 25 internationals at Stanley follows later. I am asking the Executive to agree that we take this as an opportunity to create two more international grade umpires (as we have done before). The EIBA have said that they are content for this to happen.

The Association is experiencing difficulties with making payments as the Treasurer resigned, but normal service will be resumed when the Bank finally sort both Ken and Mavis' interest access. We have a plan if it looks as though new banking arrangements will be delayed. Even better would be the appointment of a new Treasurer in the near future, we are looking for volunteers so do make contact if you are interested in finding out what it involves.

I'd like to thank those who enquired about my health following my unexpected few days in hospital and operation. It couldn't have happened at a worse time, as I am now a month or so behind my usual timings, and I can only ask you to bear with me while I catch up! Healthwise I am getting there but am under instructions to take it slowly. I haven't decided whether to comply yet!

Phyl added that she was arranging a meeting with the EIBA in respect of their recently announced 'summer competition' and their thoughts/requirements concerning how the finals would take place and umpiring/marking for those. This was likely to be at Stanley IBC whilst the BIIBC U25 event was taking place.

It also meant that she could arrange the presentation of their international flashes and suitable commemoration of the event for the two new internationals whilst she was there. It had been agreed with the EIBA that the umpiring team would consist of two existing members of the international grade and two newbies. We needed to appoint further umpires to that grade, and few seemed to reply when she asked concerning their availability and as a grade the average age seemed to be rising. Meaning that jobs seemed to tend to be going to the same few people which was contrary to the policy that the EC had discussed over the last few years.

The question of whether the photographs of those joining the international grade should be added to 'brighten up' the Web site. Phyl did not know if this would be possible but would discuss this with the photographer when she next saw him.

Phyl would be putting the application forms to mark at Nottingham on the site shortly.

7 National Development Officer's Report

Vic reported as follows

Since my last report, we have been busy carrying out Mac Courses and Umpire Examinations up and down the country as required.

Nothing significant has changed and the new regional Umpires are still achieving scores of 96-99%. Most of the 4yearly re takes are only achieving 91-95%.

I must thank our county mentors for carrying out an amazing job, with the new markers achieving their goal and getting to Level3.

It was mentioned three years ago that we need a working assessment set up. With the help of the development team and Allan Thornhill, we have now achieved this.

It was in operation this year at the national finals at Leamington Spa. 23 candidates achieved the required pass mark and 15 who did not.

I was asked at the AGM if there would be feed back. All the candidates had an opportunity to have a one to one with the assessors. This was taken up by all who felt very encouraged by this process.

One Umpire –Marker that were assessed scored well below the pass mark.They were told of their faults, Later in the month this person was reassessed by another

member of the team who did know they had already been assessed, and they scored a pass, I think this proves we are on the right track. Just to remind everyone, the development team have asked for all umpires of all grades to offer themselves up for a marking assessment with their County Mentor. The working assessments carried out at Leamington were with all Umpires and Marker Grades.

8 Area Secretaries Reports

Area 1 – Bernie Hill

Bernie reported as follows

I am pleased to report that all outdoor and indoor fixtures have been covered to date, though sometimes this means a bit of last minute scrambling, in fact today I took a call from an Indoor Club who needed an umpire for a fixtures in 4 days time as they had had a last minute all off. Thanks to the great commitment of some of the umpires in the north, I was able to find an umpire to cover this.

The County Coordinators continue to work hard and I am eternally grateful to them for all their help and hard work. All areas are actively trying to promote the EBUA and trying to attract new members to build their numbers.

I have run two MAC courses at Bolton and Harrogate IBC, these being supported by Greg Brown and Maxine Groce. The Executive at Harrogate IBC is very proactive in hosting the MAC courses and I would like to thank them for the positive and supportive outlook. Two members from the Club have now gone on to apply to be Regional Umpires and I wish them well as they progress through this.

I have managed to appoint two County Marking Mentors, Maxine Groce for Yorkshire and Martyn Page for Cumbria. I am hoping to appoint in the other northern counties, but as yet no further volunteers have come forward. Additionally, there has been little interest in hosting a MAC in these Counties. Particular mention must go to Maxine Groce who has been outstanding in this role and is highly committed to supporting Markers and potential umpires.

The PBA qualifying weekends at Cumbria IBC were covered, there is an excellent team working here, including two ITOs from the Scottish Association.

I have organised the umpiring schedule for the Indoor National Finals of the Mixed Pairs and Mixed Fours at Hartlepool IBC for February 2020.

In the pipeline are a MAC at North Cave IBC on 8.2.20 and a workshop/Assessment day on 14.3.20 in Yorkshire at a venue to be confirmed

Area 2 – Colin Wilson

Colin reported as follows

It does not seem a long time ago that we were @ Leamington, but now we are well into The Indoors. My 1st Area Final (C of C) has been arranged for 5th December and we in the Midlands (Spalding I B C) are busy arranging Markers and Umpires for the Men's and Ladies under 25 National Singles Finals in January 2020.

Northamptonshire has been appointed to hold. The National Under 18 Singles Finals, along with Yetton/ Denny and Egham Finals so there is no letting up for the Midlands Area.

Area 3 – Tony Hatch

Tony reported as follows

All Area finals were covered during the outdoor season although in most cases, outside of Essex, by Umpires travelling outside their county boundaries due to a severe lack of personnel in Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. We do have 3 new regionals taking their exams in February at Chesterton IBC, but we missed an opportunity at the BE national finals for some recruitment advertising around the portakabin as had been promised. I have organised a further Umpire training weekend at Hatfield IBC in March. There have been a few MAC courses run locally. Mike Birch and Ed Hall were tutors at a well-attended course at Chesterton IBC in September and Roger Jarvis tutored one at Acle IBC in November for 12 attendees. I attended an autumn meeting of Essex Umpires in November and several members, who were either playing or attending as spectators at Leamington this year, were concerned that the markers had been told to update the scoreboards at both ends of the rink. This is very time consuming and slows the flow of the game which is totally against the MAC training within the time management section of the course.

Area 4 – Carol Watt Sullivan

Carol reported as follows

Assessment centres are well in hand at Wealden IBC (A22/A26 junction with A272) on 21 & 22 December (delayed from September due to an MAC Course in Cambridge) and also at Horsham IBC for 22nd and 23rd February 2020. My thanks are expressed to the clubs for supporting the EBUA in this regard. Wealden is a new venue for EBUA and my thanks are expressed to Denise Staton for liaising with the club, who are very interested in our proceedings – perhaps some might be encouraged to do MACs or become umpires.

It is also pleasing to see existing marker members taking their career further by going for upgrades to regional grade. We need this constant influx to counteract the gradual decline of our older members retiring due to health, age or family commitments.

Markers Awareness courses continue to attract interest with some attendees moving onto umpire training. We are also finding new locations in the area now expressing an interest in such courses and hopefully this will not only improve marking skills at club level but also provide a good recruitment ground. Successful events were held

at Grattons IBC in July 2019 and a request to go to Whiteoaks (Swanley) in Kent in January 2020, with priority for club members. Arrangements for the latter are in hand.

Members are also busy on EIBA Club and EIBA inter-county events. It is always a struggle to meet all needs/ requests, but we try our best. However, it is still not helped by clubs etc only coming to myself or county co-ordinators at (sometimes) 48 hours notice, when they have known for some time, or then requesting services and then within 24 hours filling them and not notifying us. Hopefully, by constant educating them to come as soon as dates are known, we can assist rather than politely suggest competent people, due to EBUA members already being committed elsewhere.

My thanks as always to all my umpires and markers supporting their county co-ordinators to make things happen and fulfil duties requested.

Area 5 – Steve Alway

Steve reported as follows

I like to thank all the county co-ordinator for all the hard work they done and all the umpire during the outdoor season. There are one workshop and examinations course and there are 9 mac set up in different area with the indoor season started all duties are covered so far.

Area 6 – Alexander Wilson

Alexander reported as follows

An Umpire Training Workshop and Examination Weekend was run in Cornwall in September. Prior to the weekend, a number decided they would be retiring and, together with those who were unsuccessful in their 4 yearly assessment, means that the number of umpires in Cornwall for next year will be approximately halved. A Marking Awareness Course has been run in both Devon and Hampshire and I will be arranging further Courses in Hampshire (where I have a number on a waiting list), Dorset and Devon in the New Year. I am also intending to arrange a team to be able to offer the Course in Cornwall. My thanks go to my hard working County Coordinators for ensuring the necessary appointments are made and to the Area's Umpires who give their time for duties.

9 Any Other Business

i) Leamington Banner

Phyl had been very disappointed that the banner promised had not materialised, despite Jessie having liaised with Penny at Bowls England. When Phyl and Mavis arrived to set up on the Friday everyone else had theirs but nothing for the EBUA. It transpired that BE did not have the correct version of our badge that they needed to reproduce on the banner but overlooked asking us for one, and so did not produce the promised banner.

The situation for 2020 was discussed and it was agreed that we would Vic said that his club had been attempt to get a banner made to fit the width of the Portacabin and possibly also another 'feather-shaped' one to stand

- beside it. Phyl would get the measurements of the portacabin so that it would be made to fit.
- ii) The Association had been invited to play a celebration match against Ross BC on 17 May 2020. Mavis would be taking a six-rink mixed team, one from each area. There was a discussion concerning whether we had any stickers and if so where they were. Steve Alway agreed to find a rink.
 - iii) Alexander noted that there were 4 new ITOs and asked that this be put on the web site.
 - iv) Vic said that his club had not had an umpire for a match in Surrey as all the umpires were at an 'AGM for Surrey umpires'. There was some speculation whether this had in fact been a six-monthly meeting held by the county co-ordinator, but no firm conclusion was reached.

10 Treasurer vacancy/financial matters

Phyl reported to the meeting the actions taken following the Treasurers resignation with regard to signatories on the account, the Associations bank cards and electronic banking. Any outstanding bills or receipts would be dealt with by the remaining signatories.

There were four people (Mrs Cooper, Mavis, Phyl and Ken) who were authorised to sign cheques at the time of the resignation.

At the request of Mrs Cooper various items containing files and papers etc were removed from her residence and placed into storage just outside Leamington, one of the items was a chair.

There was some interest in becoming treasurer, and a decision as to their willingness was awaited. It was agreed unanimously that all payments required authorisation by 2 of a panel of at least three.

In the interim Phyl had been ensuring that monies were being paid into the account when received and getting standing orders 'into the system'. She had not done anything else about any new members except to stockpile the applications

The meeting then moved onto discuss the expenses that should be paid to the EC. After a discussion it was agreed that, as last year it would be paid in the new year (after the annual subscriptions had been received)

Chairman	£250
Treasurer	£500
Secretary	£500
Development Officer	£500
Deputy Chairman	£250
Deputy Secretary	£250
Area Secretaries	£100
Merchandise Officer	£100

The arrangements would be put in place with the new treasurer and paid by 1 March at the latest.

It was agreed that despite the interest that had been expressed an 'advert' for someone to fill the post would be put on the web site.

A very long letter concerning expenses had been received from Mike Manns and the revision to the 2017 policy that had been introduced earlier in the year, and the minimum payment limit which had been introduced some years ago.

In view of the length of the meeting before reaching this item it was agreed that discussion of the points raised would be deferred to the next meeting (1 March) as most referred to the outdoor season.

The meeting moved on to discuss the amounts paid to those working on the various finals of indoor competitions. It was noted that the current regime paid umpires £15 and markers £10. This seemed unfair, especially in view of the distances that it was often necessary to travel to mark at indoor events (in fact it was becoming difficult to get members to mark because of this). Colin was having problems recruiting people to mark for the U25 finals. It also appeared that in the past year there had been various 'variations' of the basic formula allowed. It was agreed (with one exception who felt that a precedent was being set) that for this event a rate of £15 would be paid for both marking and umpiring.

Phyl raised the question of the allowance that those umpiring at the 'Nationals' received. The EBUA received £50 per day per umpire for the umpiring team from the EIBA. This was unlikely to increase, but hotel room rates were climbing year on year, meaning that it was costing members quite a lot to work at these events. She had had several letters from members who hadn't felt able to volunteer because they didn't feel that they could afford to. She suggested that those working at Nottingham received one half of the shared hotel room rate from the EBUA to partially alleviate this. She hoped that this would enable more members to make themselves available for this in future years. This was agreed.

11 Next meeting

1 March 2020,

Probably 1 June 2020

AGM should be 16 August 2020

12 Chairman's closing remarks

Mavis thanked everyone for coming and apologised for the length of the meeting.

We had got through a lot of business and cleared a lot of issues.

She wished everyone a safe journey home. Mavis closed the meeting at 16.40

M Wellington
(Chairman)