

English Bowls Umpires Association

Minutes of an Executive Meeting held on 4 March 2018 at Oxford & City BC, Oxford

Present

Mavis Wellington – Chairman
Phyl Jones – Secretary
Vernon Findell – Treasurer
Vic Perry – National Development Officer
Jessie Clark – Deputy Secretary
Carol Watt Sullivan – Area secretary
Alexander Wilson – Area Secretary
Bob Penny – Area Secretary

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Mavis welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for giving their time to the Association.

2. Apologies for Absence

Ray Keen – Area Secretary, Colin Wilson – Area Secretary and Val Coldwell - Area Secretary

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were proposed as correct by Alexander and seconded by Carol and duly signed by Mavis.

4. Matters Arising

- a) The venue for the AGM in August had been booked. The AGM would be at The Avenue Bowls Club on 19th August at 18.00.
- b) It was noted that the post of Deputy Chairman had been suspended at the meeting in the August. It was unanimously agreed that the post should be re-instated so that nominations would be needed for it at the AGM.
- c) It was also noted that both the Chairman and the Treasurer's 'terms' expired at the AGM and so would need to be re-elected this year.
- d) Phyl said that she would put a notice on the site reminding members that motions and proposals for office needed to be with her by 2 June.
- e) The question of facilities for umpires at Leamington was raised by Vic who suggested that the provision of a Portacabin be priced as this would not only provide an 'office' for the umpires (out of the way of BE) but also secure storage for members kits etc. The price as well as where it could be located was discussed and Phyl agreed to discuss it with Bowls England bearing in mind that a few years ago one had been provided.

5. Correspondence

The committee discussed some of the items of correspondence that Phyl had received.

6. Secretary's report

Phyl reported; -

This report covers the period of the year where there are the least items to report, but maximum activity going on!

Since the last executive meeting I have appointed the umpires to work at the Ladies Junior Internationals at Nottingham, and co-ordinated the markers applications to work at the Melton Mowbray & Nottingham Championship finals.

At the same time the forms for people to volunteer to work at Leamington have been available from the web site and those with no email had forms to volunteer posted to them. Applications have now closed, and I am in the throes of sorting them and allocating duties before starting the marathon printing session to get the details of their duties out to the 'lucky' ones!

I've also been dealing with the usual correspondence which we will cover in that section of the Agenda, as well as the queries that always follow when bowls appears on the television!

I dropped into the Nottingham Internationals and did some PR work with both the England and the Officers from the other counties who were there.

Later this month I have arranged to call into the EIBA office in Melton to get to know the people there, and for them to get to know me, making working together easier in the future.

The cause of much excitement is the visit of the Australians for Test matches later in the year. I have some information but have not yet had details of their requirements from Bowls England. I understand there are still some details they are trying to finalise from their side before letting me have the final list.

As usual I have done some examining for Vic. This gives 'double value'! Vic gets an examiner and I get to meet our members, both those requalifying and the 'newbies'.

7. Treasurer's Report

Vernon reported as follows

TREASURERS NOTES ON 2017 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Enclosed are the audited accounts for the year ended 31st December 2017,
Financial Statement Page 1.

INCOME

Sales are up by £1,128-00.

Course/Exam fees up by £99-00

Donations from Clubs, down by £920-00, but this is due to the fact that the PBA, who used to give us £1,000-00, have with our mutual agreement done away with this, and will pay umpires and markers direct at the venue they officiate at.

Umpires donations, thankfully we had a very generous set of umpires on our books, and these are up by £992-00.

EXPENSES

Purchases are down by £365-00.

Course/Exam Fees, up by a massive £2,830.00, this needs to be looked at and rationalized, as we cannot keep carrying a debt like this.

Postage, up by £298-00, mainly due to me purchasing extra stamps in 2015, due to massive price hike by GPO in 2016.

Telephones, up by £306-00, mainly due to the new secretary and NDO being paid for same, which is acceptable.

Travelling, up by a massive £3,800-00, due to much more claims for single jobs. This will change in the year of 2018, as I have had to re-appraise the whole system, also due to falling numbers, we cannot keep paying the original rate. It is awful to say, but many more are claiming, for what was once a straight-forward job of officiating.

Printing & Stationary, up by £458-00 which I feel is acceptable.

Computer Costs, up by £250-00, which is the cost of the programs for the new secretary's lap top computer.

Audit and Accountancy fee, no change here, and would like to note my thanks to Mr Alan Bugby for continuing to do the job.

Insurance, down by £27-00, totally out of our hands, we are advised by Bowls England each year what it is to pay.

Donations paid, these are down by £654-00, the actual "donations" are £325-00 the balance being the cost of the new markers manual, sent to all the previous marker members free of charge, as it was felt it would help their development having a copy of what they were taught.

Bank Interest down by £160-00, for some unknown reason the auditor puts this in expenses as a minus expense, do not ask me why.

Depreciation is up by £85-00 this is on the new secretary's lap top.

Equipment Hire, was actually for the treasurer's computer being de-bugged, due to loss of all the information and programs.

Financial Statement Page 2.

Income for this year, £32,467.00

Expenditure £31,760-00

Making an excess of income over expenditure of £707-00, which may appear ok, but when compared to last year's figure of £5,721-00 is not so clever.

There are some disturbing figures in the above, but hopefully I have made changes to the problems, but we will still have to have a look at the training costs, as I do not really want to put up the cost of these any further, maybe the NDO and I can sit down and try and hammer out the problems sensibly, with no extra cost to the members.

8. National Development Officer's Report

Vic reported that he had been very busy, but things were going very well

The weather had caused some havoc with examinations (as well as causing the postponement of the EC meeting!) There had originally been 18 candidates scheduled to attend the Examinations at Westlecot, but only 7 had managed to get there. He reminded Area Secretaries that the most candidates that could be comfortably examined in a day was 14.

He had had a conversation with Drakes Pride about their Umpire Kits after a candidate had been told that it was largely a waste of money and they had written to the Company to complain. He had explained to the Company the problems with the items in the kits and had suggested that they remove the word 'Umpire' from the case (using the word 'Measuring' instead). He had heard nothing further from them.

He had a new Tutor – Fred Purse from Cornwall, who was now leading the seminar's in that Area and another Tutor was being trained. He also had another examiner – Mike Davies who was dealing with examinations in the South/South West.

Vic said he was not happy with the one-day version of the MAC and he felt that a course held over two separate half days was preferable for the attendees.

The MAC was proving financially beneficial for the Association as the fees paid by attendees was usually more than the cost of putting on the course. Where a club did not charge for the use of their facilities he gave a donation to the Club, and still usually made a profit. The course held in Warwickshire had got a huge attendance and had been very well received. It had proved that probably 25 was the maximum number of attendees that could be dealt with.

The Marking Manual was being well received by those who received it after attending the MAC, and they were saying that they found it useful as a reminder after the session.

The MAC was also proving a good 'feeder' for new umpires and this was beginning to show in the numbers coming through for examination as regional umpires.

Markers were also starting to progress to Competency Level 3 which would enable them to mark at the Championships at Leamington.

9. Area Secretaries Reports

Area 1 – Val Coldwell

Val reported as follows

Last December we had a four-yearly assessment at Hartlepool indoor bowling club and I should like to thank the management and Carl very much for the use of their facilities. I welcome Carl Higgins who is director of competitions for the EIBA. He successfully completed the assessment and is now a regional umpire.

Also, can I thank the people who did their four year re qualification they are very much needed

In January we also had another successful Markers Awareness Course. This was held at Harrogate Indoor bowling club and may I thank the club management and Angela Hollingworth for arranging and helping to run this course. I find these courses are being met with great enthusiasm and everyone seems to go home commenting on how interesting they found it. I have another course in two weeks' time at Carlisle, so I am in the middle of arranging this. This is the third one Carlisle has hosted and I am grateful to Margaret Docherty and the club for hosting this one as well.

Things have been a little difficult just lately with regards to Area finals. I am finding that I am getting very little notice of requirements for people to umpire these. Because Yorkshire is always the neutral venue I am relying on the same few people every time and struggling to get some games covered. I am doing the best I can, but some Area finals are only covered with a competent person which is not good for our association.

Area 2 – Colin Wilson

Colin reported as follows; -

I have arranged 2 umpire training and exam courses. on 28th and 29th April at Leicester IBC where I have 12 attending including myself and on 18th and 19th May at Bromsgrove IBC where there will be 8 attending. We are having to pay £2 per person at Leicester and £40 per day at Bromsgrove. both clubs are run as a business.

I have had several marker additions to my list of members some, of whom wish to attend the above courses, and 5 in Staffordshire who are asking how they can progress as markers and eventually become umpires. We have no umpires in that county nor do we have a mentor that can help out.

We now no longer have umpires in Nottinghamshire due to retirements, only 1 in Derbyshire, 3 active members in the whole of Lincolnshire and no Co-ordinator in Warwickshire or Worcestershire.

There have been numerous area finals to cover leading up to the national finals and at the moment I have commitments until 18th March covering clubs in, Newark, Lincoln, Louth, Grantham and Stamford.

Area 3 – Bob Penny

Bob reported as follows

Personally, it has been a busy indoor season administratively with the absence of County Co-ordinators for Cambs and Hunts. Unfortunately, Steve Black has stood down as Essex County Co-ordinator and I am very grateful to Paul Costin who has agreed to take back the role on a temporary basis whilst we advertise and seek a replacement.

I am eternally grateful for the hard work and selfless commitment that has been shown by the County Co-ordinators in responding to the requests for umpires, often at short notice, and for sharing the allocation of duties as evenly as possible amongst those who make themselves available to support the sport of bowls.

I have also given notification to the counties in the area that I shall be standing down as Area 3 Secretary as from the end of the 2018 outdoor season. My personal circumstances have changed over the last 6 months and my wife and I now wish to explore opportunities to bowl and umpire in the winter sunshine, whilst we are physically able to do so. I hope that volunteers will come forward for what is an interesting and engaging role.

I intend to continue and extend my availability for umpiring and will continue to support the Association in my current training administration role.

The membership numbers are a concern and there appear to be an increasing number of members who do not make themselves available to assist at games. I recognise that all members have differing financial situations and although volunteering their time, they do not, or are not, able to support games if it means they are out of pocket. Hopefully indoor and outdoor county Associations can be encouraged to adopt a consistent approach which is in line with the EBUA reimbursement policy so that we all know what reimbursement and recognition we can expect.

Bob added to his original report by saying that he thought that he might have found someone to take on the Area Secretary, but this was not yet settled.

He had also arranged for an examination weekend at Riverain in April and a MAC at Clacton. (Subsequently cancelled due to lack of support.)

Area 4 – Carol Watt Sullivan

Carol reported as follows

As ever, winter proves a busy time for our umpires working indoors. My thanks go to the local and County Co-ordinators for their sterling work in finding and trying to find people to staff demand.

Markers Awareness Courses (having been rebranded), are underway again and all counties in the area now have Marker Mentors in place. My thanks to the teams within the counties busy with providing these courses, as well as to the Marker Mentors who are in the processing of grading our marker members in line with their abilities.

Assessment Centres have taken place within the area at Century IBC, Middlesex on 25 & 26 November and Donyngs IBC, Redhill on 3 & 4 February. My thanks expressed to both clubs for their assistance in providing the facilities and to the wonderful helpers who gave up their time to act as string holders etc. to allow the candidates to take their assessments (and that we had some successful upgrades). It was great to see some potential new regional candidates coming to help which gave them in early insight into what they can expect in their own regional assessments.

Thanks also to the team of tutors and assessors for travelling to examine the candidates (under Vic's direction). Another assessment centre will be held at Bromley (for Kent) on 28 & 29 April 2018, while Sussex are looking to hold one later in the year (at a suitable time which our chief examiner can manage.)

Regrettably not all those who came to be assessed, passed, and as ever I thank those retiring for their service to the EBUA and welcome our new members (both regional grades and new marker members) wishing them success in their endeavours.

As previously mentioned, we really need to encourage a few of the younger players to take up the challenge of adjudicating our game and start the career path of umpiring (as well as playing), as they do not seem to realise that to continue their own play, they also need our services.

Our County Co-ordinators, as ever have been busy dealing with both county and club requests as well as the odd EIBA request where some area competition secretaries to deal with some gender competitions and Vernon's guidance notes have been helpful in clarifying what the EBUA will and will not pay.

Carol added that she had now arranged for an examination weekend at Bromley shortly as well as one at Horsham in September.

Area 5 –Ray Keen

Ray reported as follows

Pleased to welcome Ed Poole, Oxfordshire and Steve Always, Wiltshire as my new Co-ordinators for those two Counties.

Both Courses booked for this spring in Wiltshire, Westlecot & Five Rivers, are fully booked. Mike Manns is running the Five Rivers course for me. I am trying to organise Markers Courses in Ilminster, Taunton, Oxfordshire and Bucks for this autumn.

I have Mentors registered in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Gloucestershire and hope to appoint one in Wiltshire soon. Will also try to register Mentors in Somerset after the two courses down there later this year.

I am in the middle of appointing Umpires for the various Outdoor National Competitions and have managed to cover most of the Indoor Area and Zone Finals so far.

I have 17 people attending my Workshop in Westlecot so far, which includes two potentials. I also have a couple of Potentials just completing their Module 1.

Ross on Wye Bowls Club have offered to play the EBUA in a match to help celebrate their Centenary year which we have accepted. I am in the middle of sorting out a date with Glyn Williams and will then circulate to the various Areas.

Area 6 – Alexander Wilson

Alexander reported as follows

As the year came to an end, a number of umpires across Area 6 confirmed their intention to hang up their callipers. I would like to record my thanks for the work they have put in over the years umpiring, marking and supporting the game of bowls. Thankfully with new umpires having qualified and qualifying, we are retaining relatively steady active numbers across the counties.

An Umpire Workshop and Examination was held in Hampshire in February. This was fully subscribed and included 2 qualifying as new Regionals and 1 upgrading. Another is programmed for May and is almost full. While arranging these, a few umpires have questioned the need to attend the Saturday Workshop as well as the Sunday Examination when doing their 4-yearly assessment. Having attended both days, I believe that they have understood the benefit of the Workshop.

By local request, a Marking Awareness Course was also run in Hampshire in February. This was well received by those attending. Area 6 now has umpires trained by the Development Officer's team to deliver these courses. I intend to start rolling them out across the area.

Thanks to the work of and assistance from the Area's County Co-ordinators, indoor umpiring duties have been successfully covered. Of course, covering these duties depends entirely on umpires giving of their time to attend matches and competitions, for which I am grateful.

Alexander added that he had now arranged an umpire course in Southampton in May and was talking to Devon about a MAC there,

10. Any Other Business

- i) It was agreed that there would be a stock of uniform etc items in the office at Leamington for sale to members. It was agreed that these would be held by the Chairman/Secretary.
- ii) Alison Welsted, one of our members, will become the Senior Vice President of the EIBA Ltd later in the year.
- iii) Vernon then left the meeting after stating that he expected to see men in the umpires' office at Leamington this year.
- iv) Alexander raised the question of the use of a Laser measure. After a discussion it was agreed that it could not be permitted as it had several flaws and was not a 'First Choice item' for measuring. It was agreed that the member who had purchased it would be written to and told that it was not to be used on 'official' duty and only otherwise when the Controlling Body and players gave their permission for its use.
- v) Alexander also raised the question of our compliance with the new Data Protection provisions. Phyl said that she had raised this with the 'experts' at her work and they had confirmed that our use of the members information did not fall within the provision.
- vi) Alexander also raised the question of the problems he was having following the new agreement concerning the payment of expenses to umpires under the agreement with Bowls England. It was suggested that this was something for him to raise with Vernon.

11 Next meeting

The next Executive meeting would be on 3 June 2018 at Oxford City & County BC
The AGM would be on Sunday 19 August 2018 at Leamington at 6pm

12 Chairman's closing remarks

Mavis thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and wished them a safe journey home.

There being no further business Mavis closed the meeting at 1.20

M Wellington (Chairman)