

English Bowls Umpires Association

Minutes of an Executive Meeting held on 20 August 2017 at Royal Naval Club, Leamington Spa

Present

Mavis Wellington	–	Chairman
Phyl Jones	–	Secretary
Vernon Findell	–	Treasurer
Jessie Clark	–	Deputy Secretary
Vic Perry	–	National Development Officer
Ray Keen	–	Area Secretary
Carol Watt Sullivan	–	Area secretary
Alexander Wilson	-	Area Secretary
Bob Penny	–	Area Secretary
Val Coldwell	-	Area Secretary
Alison Welsted	–	Area Secretary

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Mavis welcomed everyone to the meeting – especially the three new members Alexander, Alison and Vic.

Mavis said that she had been sad to hear of the death of John Davies, so recently made a life member. She was pleased that several members of the Association and particularly members of the Executive had managed to attend his funeral.

She went on to say that she hoped that this would be a constructive meeting with us moving forward on important things like marker training.

2. Apologies for Absence

Nil – all members present

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed as correct by Ray and seconded by Jessie and duly signed by Mavis.

4. Matters Arising

Newsletter- No action had taken place concerning the issue of a newsletter, and Phyl had received an offer from Ken Bickley to take this over as none had been issued for two years.

There was a discussion of whether the regular newsletter was the way forward or whether we would be better to use the website for news, information etc. It was decided that especially as Ken was doing a major upgrade of the site it would be better to use the web site.

It was noted that there were some items that remained on the web site that were obviously 'old' and should be removed (and archived). After a discussion it was agreed that 'news' items should not remain after they were more than 3 months old.

5. Correspondence

- a) There had been a couple of queries referred on by the EIBA – one of which Vernon had helped to answer.
- b) An enquiry concerning payments when umpires helped at VIBE events which had been identified as a misunderstanding of the agreement concerning payments for duties done and settled.
- c) A new type of measure was referred by Bowls England, and it was agreed that this should be referred to World Bowls for their consideration.
- d) There had been several enquiries concerning whether members could wear shorts. The members were referred decision of the AGM in April 2017.

6. Secretary's report

Phyl reported as follows: -

As this is my first report it seems appropriate to not only report what I have done since April, but also what (& how) I intend to act in the future.

Before going any further can I welcome our 'new' members to the Executive? Welcome Alexander and Alison, I know you will find us a happy crew and one where people are willing to help you out with advice etc when you need it.

Since being presented with my 'gong' at the AGM I have only worn it twice, both on sad occasions. Firstly, I attended Norman Deeprose's funeral, a gentleman I only met a couple of times, but who we all must thank for laying the foundations of the original EBUA. More recently I attended John Davies' funeral, whom we all knew well from his years of service as Area Secretary, work during the men's championships at Worthing and PBA and World Bowls activities.

Bowls England have been supplied with the umpires they needed for various events at Leamington as well and the later stages of the Johns Trophy, Middleton Cup etc. Those events at Leamington are appointments that I hope that everyone will help me with next year. I have tried to give members (male & female) who have not worked at such events opportunities to experience them this year and I hope to receive suggestions about others who would benefit from the experience.

We had an Officer Meeting in May which enabled us (amongst other things) to help Vic by letting him see what we wanted from him as Development Officer and helped him start to prepare the Marking Awareness Procedures the Executive have for approval. There is another Officers meeting scheduled for just before this meeting.

I have also arranged the members to work at the Top Club in September. As usual, these are very largely new or relatively inexperienced members with the aim of making them feel confident enough to volunteer in future for the main Championships at Leamington. It has been pleasing to see some of those who have been 'with me at the Top Club now working at the Championships 'proper'

This has been a learning period for me in watching and learning from Mavis & Val the 'real' and often hidden workings of 'the office' at Leamington. All the work Vernon has been putting in over the years to get and allocate volunteers will fall to me next year and will be a major challenge to get right! Before that there is the 'indoor'

championships to organise with Umpires and Markers (and accommodation)! I know I will receive lots of help with this.

I am pleased to be part of Vic's examination team, this is helping me get out and meet the members, and hear their views. So far (since April) I have been at Eastbourne, Madeira (Exmouth) and Dolphin (Poole). I hope he continues to find me useful for this, as it is a good opportunity for me to meet people and give Vernon 'value for money'! On this topic, I hope Area Secretaries will invite me to their annual meetings in the Autumn to see and hear more from the members.

The website has remained largely unchanged since it was originally devised. Ken Bickley (the Webmaster) tells me he is now working on a major revamp, which you will see in the next few weeks.

7. Treasurer's Report

Vernon reported as follows

Sales	£ 4,731	
Course Fees Received	£ 4,585	
Subs.	£ 6,690	
Grants	£ 9,000	
Donations	£ 388	<u>£ 25,394</u>
Purchases	£ 3,403	
Course Expenses	£ 5,543	
Post & Phone	£ 1,696	
Travel	£10,961	
O & S	£ 1,296	
Computer Costs	£ 195	
Insurance	£ 111	
Maintenance	£ 100	
Donations	£ 261	
Depreciation	£ 150	<u>£ 23,716</u>

At the moment we have £1678 to pay all of the travel claims, [excluding Leamington, where I have already got the money] and all other expenses until the end of December, before we start eating into our reserves.

While we are on my report I wish to have a discussion about travel claims again, as I have found out some rather disturbing things about them.

I have in the last 3 weeks processed over 300 claims for duties, one in particular I find very galling, a person claimed £20-00 for 2 jobs, with a TOTAL mileage of 24 miles, do they not have a conscience?

I have had a person claim £75. On an authorised claim form, I phoned him up to thank him for doing it at such short notice, when he said, "do not worry I was going there anyway as a committee member". Also cases of a Middleton Cup manager umpiring his own county, another case of 2 umpires who live 13 miles apart in the same city charging nearly £100-00 to travel separately to a Middleton Cup.

I am sorry to say, it seems to be the newer secretaries and co-ordinators who allocate these duties, and it appears that the members want all they can get out of the Association these

days. Just as an aside, as mentioned above, I have in the last 3 weeks had over 300 claims, totalling the grand sum of £3200.

Yet it is out of the 35 Counties only 4 which have gone well over the top of the £100 we get, and out of the 35 Counties we have 18 do not even claim, so obviously being paid by the County for duties performed by our members.

Top of the list is Sussex with, at the moment claims in excess of £367, which included a joint claim of over £130. For 6 markers, of which 2 were 2 wood singles and 2 umpires, for 1 session, all from one county co-ordinator, followed closely by Gloucester of over £343. None of these figures include any of the 6 lots of games listed below.

I have a list of the last full payment to umpires, and some examples paid to them.

An Umpire in Sussex claimed £74-50, of which £47-40 was to mark 3 games

An umpire from Leicester claimed £51-60 for 1 Middleton Cup

A Gloucester umpire claimed £39-60 for marking 2 games.

A Somerset umpire claimed £57-00 for 3 Johns Trophy

A Norfolk umpire claimed £72-00 for 5 games.

A Sussex umpire claimed £57-70 for 3 jobs, which on one claim there were 6 markers and 2 umpires.

A Gloucester umpire claimed £20-70 for a marking job.

A Somerset umpire claimed £54-4- for 3 Johns Trophy.

A Leicester umpire claimed £80-00 for 2 Middleton Cups.

A Hampshire umpire claimed £136.80 for 5 x 93 miles jobs!

Except for Middleton Cup and Johns, which I also want to discuss there is no way they need 2 umpires. Next comes Hampshire with £180, of which £137 was paid to one person for 5 games, followed by Oxfordshire for £140 and lastly by Norfolk and Yorkshire of over the £100.

I would like to propose that we do not pay for the following "County" games, but get them to pay the umpires direct, we can I am sure work out a price list for these, and as the Counties do not like the levy, we can propose this to them as they cannot have it all their own way.

Middleton Cup, Johns Trophy, White Rose Trophy, Amy Rose Bowl, Balcomb Trophy and The Walker Cup. The reason behind this is that I extracted the cost to the Association and it comes to over £3160-00

Another very disturbing thing was I received a claim from a member, and did not recognise the competition, so phoned him up and asked him what it was, he said it was a local County finals, but more importantly he had filled in both the top and bottom of the form, so really it was a self-issued claim, he informed me he was sent a blank claim form to fill in, I then went back over claims and noticed again claims from another member, again totally filled in by the member.

By agreement with the PBA they no longer pay us the £1000-00 as they have done in the past, as no claims now come to me, and they said they will cover all reasonable expenses, and pay on the day of the duties.

I had a request from Ken Bickley, that due to Allan Thornhill changing his web provider, we have had to change ours, so Ken is going ahead with what needs doing, and obviously I will reimburse him for all his expenses.

Membership Numbers.

In 2013 we had 1104 umpire members.

In 2014 we had 730 umpire members.

In 2015 we had 535 umpire members.

In 2016 we had 487 umpire members.

As of today's, date we have 470 umpire members, but much more disturbing, if after this meeting, with the agreement of the area secretaries, we will have the grand total of 406.

I do not really know why there should be such a drop in 4 years of over 598, but I feel the uniform is not the only problem. Possibly the exam is too hard and extended, because remember these people are hopefully doing it for the love of the sport, and knowing more than the average bowler, not being trained up to television standard!!

When I get home, there will be 300 new "Markers" handbook, taken from our training manual. The idea of this is to give our "old style" markers a chance to study properly what they were taught at the previous markers awareness course, so hopefully they will think about up-grading to umpires. I realised after doing a couple of courses on the Island, that the course was very good, but "rushed" and there was no end product showing them what had been taught. I had a word with our new training officer and we agreed upon this.

These will be provided free to the existing "markers" and hopefully they can see how to mark, rather than try to remember what they were shown. Vic will be producing a letter to me, so this can be included.

Any "new" markers will be provided with one of these, and a log book on payment of £6-00, the actual cost, inc. p & p.

Vic has also been supplied with 2 more projectors, and 6 screens, so if you have been given these, or already possess one of our projectors, please send me a signed statement that they are in your possession, so at least come stock take I know where they are. Also auditor's requirement.

8. Development Officer's Report

Like two of my colleges this is my first report and I must start by thanking Allan Thornhill and Andy Ewins my two predecessors for all they have done for the Association. It should be easy to take over but's it's not, with the change of Area Secretary's extra work comes. Area 6 lot more than usual Training Seminars & Exams with Allan leaving the Development team has put a lot more on me, I must thank all the people involved, especially Val Coldwell and Frances Fletcher for their involvement with the Markers Awareness Course. [MAC]

I went to Carnmoggas IBC in Cornwall to teach a new Training Tutor Fred Purse he was also on the Examination List and Mick Davies a new Examination Officer he also was on the Examination List so not totally new to the job I thank them both for accepting the posts.

We have also held Training Seminars and exams at Eastbourne, Madeira, and the Dolphin IBC in Poole Dorset where I had planned for John & Sharan to assist me with the exams very upsetting to get the news he won't be helping me, I had worked with John over 20 years at Worthing and National Indoor Finals.

The last Training and exams session will be on the Isle of Wight in Sept.

While all this was going on I was asked to try and sort out the best way to look after our new Markers that will be coming up to their 4 yearly and what next it did cause some discussion and feed back to me (some as long as War and Peace) I have done what I think is the best for all concerned, you will not be able to buy an Umpires shirt 2 days after an Awareness Course, fill in the form for Leamington Top Club turn up and then be taken off the green.

The new process does involve more Umpires getting involved I think that's a good thing.

You will notice around Leamington Posters for a Marking Awareness Course the EBUA were asked to run one in Warwickshire by Tony Allcock and BE this has been ongoing since Feb.

This is not an easy job but with your help it can be less stressful, finally I must thank our treasurer for the help, support and assistance he has given me.

I am not yet convinced that it would not be better to run the new MAC over two ½ days. All my courses have been two ½ days and I have put 700 through with one group of 62 people with 7 Umpires assisting took the whole of the second day, with very good feedback so I was told.

I intend to drop in on many of the courses to see if there's room for improvement.

9. Markers

The new draft policy for the training of markers had been sent to the committee by Vic prior to the meeting and this was discussed.

Some alterations were agreed and the policy was accepted by the committee to be implemented from 1 October 2017.

10. Area Secretaries Reports

Area 1 – Val Coldwell

Not available

Area 2 – Alison Welsted

Being new to the job I am pleased with the way the summer has turned out, everyone and each county appear content. I have tried to keep the cost down and think I have achieved this.

It is with regret I gave to report the death of Mrs Frances Wootton from Lincoln, after a very short illness.

Looking forward I am in the process of arranging a workshop for the new year, 21 candidates are due to retake, but I have a feeling a number of them will either retire or won't retake.

Area 3 – Bob Penny

The Eastern Area encompasses the following counties; Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk

A busy outdoor season in the Eastern Area is nearing completion. Most games have been supported where requested and I am very grateful for the time and effort made by the County Co-ordinators in considering and allocating umpires for local and county games in spite of the reduction in numbers who are prepared to come forward.

Requests for umpires have been met by a core of committed members and there appears to be an increasing number of members who do not make themselves available to support the game but continue to be members of the Association. It is accepted that qualified umpires and markers will have competing commitments but there are some who are seldom seen on the green and do not respond to requests.

Notification has been received that the County Coordinators for Cambridgeshire/Hunts and Essex are seeking to stand down at the end of the outdoor season which leaves important vacancies to be filled if the Association is to continue to support the various associations and BE. Area 3 continues to be without a Bedfordshire County Coordinator. These vacancies undermine the profile of the EBUA and unless volunteers are prepared to come forward, the future is bleak. Arrangements for a representative of Herts County Association, although not an EBUA member has worked reasonably well.

Tony Hatch of Essex and Gordon Adams of Suffolk continue to be very active in arranging Markers seminars and these have been well supported by other umpires and well attended by players leading to the membership of several new marker members.

Markers seminars have been held during the summer in Mersea Island, Sudbury and Latchingdon and have been very well supported and well received. These are proving to be a very useful source of future markers and umpires. Seminars are being arranged across Area 3 for 2017.

I have been waiting for the appointment of the new Training and Development Officer to see if there are to be any changes to the training programme. Enquiries are being made for a training and development workshop in the autumn in Hertfordshire which is reasonably central and accessible to the counties in Area 3.

This gives me the opportunity to wish Vic Perry, the incoming Training and Development Officer every success in the role. I am hopeful that new ideas will be coming forward for consideration by the Executive Committee for umpiring and markers development.

I am very grateful to those who come forward and make themselves available to assist at games. We are all volunteers who have a love for the sport of bowls. We are there to support the players and make it enjoyable for all.

Area 4 – Carol Watt Sullivan

My thanks must go to all my County Co-ordinators for all their hard work organising and staffing all the bowls events in the area for all national, county and local competitions and local 'open' events as well as to the umpires and EBUA markers

who staffed them. They are really the bedrock of how we work and reflect the visibility of our association to the grass roots players. With the new competitions for BE and new regulations allowing several of counties in my area sending a 3rd team/ player to Leamington, this has increased an already heavy load.

With illness, recovery from operations, retirements and impact of illness of family members it is now more vital to encourage increased membership, not only from those who are or used to be markers, but also new recruits to take up the route through regional grade and those moving on to national (along with the mentoring of the same). From comments being made (but have not had formal confirmation) I am also looking at (regrettably) a number of 'retirements', particularly in my own county of Kent.

My thanks to Bob Penny who has been very good at letting both myself and also the county co-ordinators know who has passed upgrade paper. This enables both myself and my county teams to identify where we need to site future assessment centres. However, with regards to new potential regional umpires, the situation has been more fraught communication-wise. As a result of at least 2 rather embarrassing telephone conversations with potential recruits who could have been accommodated at the last Eastbourne Assessment Seminar, I have now made alternative arrangements with Michelle van Put regarding promoting better communication of results of those who have passed their regional workbook.

Currently I am exploring potential sites for the next round of assessment centres, but do need to make sure of who I can rely on for the tutoring day (prior to calling upon our reliable assessor/examination team). Looking at those due for renewal and upgrades and new recruits I think I need at least 2 in the area.

Markers Courses: With the current review, the demand for Markers Courses (or whatever name will be given to the revised / retitled course) is growing. Reports have come in with a lot of thanks on the knowledge passes on and improvements in the level of even club marking, with a small increase in the number of applications coming in to both join the EBUA and also candidates seriously thinking of going on to take the regional qualification.

In Kent I have at least 3 locations in the east of the county and at least one in the west of the county, with requests in on hold, waiting for clearance to organise both dates and suitable venues. Those clubs have been advised of the current circumstances. Surrey too has a demand for courses, and Ken Bickley has these on hold. Sussex with Vic P's request to cancel the course organised and advertised prior to the hold being put in place, now has a large backlog. With the end of the summer we are now really looking to do future ones at indoor venues in the autumn/ early winter trying to fit in with what is an increasing congested start of the indoor season.

Area 5 –Ray Keen

I intend to run a Workshop within the Area, hopefully Wiltshire, in February as usual and a Markers Course in Buckinghamshire during the Winter

Markers Courses have been organised, but are on hold until after our meeting in Leamington, in Berkshire and Gloucestershire. Wiltshire Development Officer is going to organise one in Wiltshire and the same is happening in Herefordshire. I will attend both Courses.

Julie Skelly has taken over the Buckinghamshire Coordinators roll but I have lost Peter Stewart (Wilts) and Duncan Muir (Oxon).

I am really pleased to say that we seem to have a steady flow of new Umpires coming into the Area and I know of a number that just about to apply including two in Herefordshire.

Congratulations to Angie Thompson on her selection as an Umpire at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Australia. I hope that she has a wonderful time and safe journey especially as I will be with her.

Area 6 – Alexander Wilson

This is my first report as Area 6 Secretary, having taken over from John Davies at this year's AGM.

It is my first and sad duty to record that John died this July. He will be greatly missed by the Association, Area 6 and his successor. Personally, I have had the great benefit of working with him both as an umpire and in preparing appointments for this year's outdoor season. I shall always be grateful to have had that involvement with him.

I'm pleased to report that across Area 6, the Association was able to fulfil the requirements to provide umpires, although I am conscious that some umpires might have had to travel a little further than our Treasurer would have liked. This has been due to a combination of both umpire availability and the location of umpires in relation to match venues. It has also been influenced to a small degree by my intention to put some lesser used umpires with those more experienced and known, thereby giving me some feedback on abilities within the Area.

With the great assistance of Vic Perry and his team, we have been able to arrange and hold three Umpire Training Workshops & Examinations in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset respectively. A further one is to be held on the Isle of Wight in September. Overall, this will have enabled some 37 candidates to have their 4-year assessment, seek National upgrade or qualify as a new Regionals. I'm pleased to report that to date 13 new Regionals have qualified with a further 3 hoping to do so in September.

Finally, I would like to record my thanks to my five County Coordinators without whose help and patience the outdoor season might not have run smoothly.

11. Any other business

- i) It was proposed that Jean Thompson should be confirmed as a Life member of the Association at the next AGM. This was unanimously agreed.
- ii) The version of the Safeguarding provisions on the site had got out of step with the version that we were using. The version on the revised website was amended to the correct version.
- iii) There was a discussion about the colour of the sunhat that members should be wearing. It was agreed that by preference they should be navy blue, but it was preferable that members wore a hat in the sun rather than none.
- iv) It was agreed that the position of Deputy Chairman would be suspended until the AGM next summer.
- v) Jessie had agreed to deal with getting a team for the match against the EIBA on 15th November, and already had promises of two rinks.
- vi) Vic said that he wished to bring in 'pre-event' training for some event and was considering how best to do this.

12 Next meeting

The Executive Meetings for the year would be held as follows; -

3 December 2017 at Oxford City & County BC
4 March 2018
20 May 2018

The AGM would be on Sunday 19 August 2018 at Leamington at 6pm

13 Chairman's closing remarks

In closing the meeting Mavis said that somethings seemed to be happening within the Association that she was very unhappy with. There seemed to be little groups forming around specific issues which they did not want to bring to the EC.

She wanted to make it clear that she (and she assumed the Association as a whole) did not think that gender was the determinate of who should be doing any particular job. The principle was that of the best person, doing the best job, with no reference to gender. There are only members not male or female members, and she wanted to be sure that everyone knew and acknowledged that.

On a positive note she was cheered to be approached the previous day, by a spectator who she did not know, praising the work being done by the umpires and markers. That made it worthwhile for her.

There being no further business Mavis closed the meeting at 13.25 ,

M Wellington
Chairman