



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

I am indebted to Bowls England for the information provided below and to information provided by David Tucker, our County Treasurer/Bowls England Chair and to the Ladies' Administrator (Ciss Jones) and Men's Administrator (Kevin Phillips).

Following an Emergency Meeting of the Board on Tuesday 17th March, Bowls England announced the cancellation of all its domestic events for the 2020 season. This was in response to the latest Government advice and growing concerns from bowlers about how the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak will impact lawn bowls.

The decision covers all National Championships, National Competitions and other domestic events. Bowls England will be providing support and advice to Clubs and County Associations over the coming weeks to ensure the future of the sport.

The British Isles Bowls Council and British Isles Women's Bowls Council have also cancelled, with immediate effect, the BIBC and BIWBC Senior International Series and Championships and the BIWBC Junior International Series and Championships. Alternative arrangements are being sought for the respective Junior and Senior Championships to be played at a later date (either in 2020 or 2021) and a decision regarding the BIBC Junior International Series due to be played in September 2020 will be made at a later date and communicated to players and officials at the earliest opportunity.

The World Bowls Championships due to be held in Australia in May have been postponed until further notice.

All Bowls England Celebration Matches scheduled up to the 1st July have been cancelled. The programme for the remainder of the year will be reviewed on the 1st June and all clubs will be officially contacted.

Coach Bowls has postponed all courses until further notice and Bowls England will consult with the English Indoor Bowling Association regarding when Coach Bowls activity should resume. For all of the latest updates, please visit: www.coachbowl.org

The BDA has postponed all funding for events planned until the end of April 2020. To ensure that clubs are not disadvantaged, clubs are able to email in to packages@playbowls.org with re-arranged dates once the advice from relevant bodies is changed. The BDA has removed the package window closing date and will be leaving it open through the year. For all of the latest news from the BDA visit: www.playbowls.org

Clearly we shall only have a part season, if that, this year although it is understood that some clubs are hoping to open on the 1st July 2020.

Coronavirus Guidance has been available on television and local radio so we are all aware of the care that we need to take. Insofar as bowls is concerned information that I have received from Bowls England has been passed on to clubs. You will appreciate why, in view of the situation changing almost on an hourly basis, it has been impossible to update the Bowls Devon website.

In support of clubs at this difficult time, Bowls England has agreed to refund Affiliation Fees paid for each playing member to the County Associations. In turn, Bowls Devon will refund monies paid to our clubs in due course but it should be noted that this process will take a number of weeks due to restrictions on the amount that can be paid by Bowls England each working day.

Clubs who have loans from the Amenities Fund can defer repayments this year. Any clubs who wish to take advantage of this should contact the Assistant Treasurer, Ray Stringer.

Bowls England's insurers Sutton Winson has confirmed that it will honour the Civil Liability Insurance for all clubs that originally affiliated for the 2020 season and have purchased their insurance through Sutton Winson. Clubs who arrange their Civil Liability through another provider must ensure that their policy covers them. As a duty of care to our members, Bowls England urges all clubs to ensure that their insurance needs are fully in place for the 2020 season. To arrange insurance via Sutton Winson please contact: Claire.Weston@swib.co.uk

With the agreement of the Presidential team, the team is to be rolled over for one year (i.e. Christine and Bob will be Presidents in 2021). This is in order for them to enjoy a full year in office.

We would encourage our members to support their clubs financially by continuing to pay their annual subscriptions. This will ensure that their clubs are there for them when we are able to resume bowling.

Bowls England is seeking clarification in accordance with Government guidance as to when clubs can reopen. This will include casual play and members will be updated when the information is available.

A number of our Clubs have already paid for, and received, their Tournament Licence for 2020. In the event of Clubs having to cancel their scheduled tournament, the Licence will be carried forward to next year without the need of an additional payment although it will be necessary for a new application form to be completed with the new dates shown.

Bowls England intends to provide advice to clubs on the minimum maintenance that is required to maintain greens so that they are playable when it is safe to resume bowling. For any enquiries regarding Greens Maintenance, e-mail: greens@bowlsengland.com with details of the situation and any photographs if possible. This will then be forwarded to the Bowls England professional advisor. You can also use the online submission form at: www.bowlsengland.com/greens-advisory-service.

Bowls England is currently looking at potential funding that may be available to affiliated clubs and relevant information will be circulated when it is received. In the meantime, Bowls England encourages all clubs to support Sport England in their request for further information on the potential impact of COVID-19. More information may be found at: www.sportengland.org/news/coronavirus-information-sector. Bowls England are also working with key partners to produce advice and guidance for clubs for this summer and beyond.

So far I have dealt with general issues.

Insofar as Bowls Devon specifically is concerned there will be no County or Presidential matches played up to the 1st July. The programme for the remainder of the season will be reviewed on the 1st June.

The Competition Committee is planning for a part season with the hope that team competitions might be played. In particular, the Committee has advised:

- 1 All individual competitions for 2020 are cancelled.
- 2 All individual competition entries and entry fees will be rolled over to 2021.
- 3 All individual competitions at Section and Rounds of last 16/8 will be redrawn for 2021.

- 4 New entries will be accepted for 2021 through the normal channels.
- 5 Team Competitions – Grace Matthews, InterClub, Top Club, Foxlands and County Trophy - are to be left in abeyance for the time being. If Bowls can resume by the 1st July, it is proposed that at least some of the Team Competitions will take place with new play on/play by dates to be advised. Competition Secretaries are asked to check that all clubs that have entered in their Section wish to play.

Should you have any specific questions regarding the Competitions, please contact either Ciss or Kevin.

I do hope that this Report goes at least some way towards helping clubs in these difficult times. If you have further concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

Harry Riley
County Administrator
23rd March 2020