

GENERAL SECRETARIES REPORT TO THE AGM

13th November 2021

Fellow Bowlers,

We have all had to adapt to a lot of change this year, much of it introduced by Bowls England in response to feedback received from their 'Focus Groups' and membership surveys. They are working hard to make our fantastic sport attractive to a wider playing audience and more 'user friendly'.

Whilst the major changes so far are to competitions and the National Finals at Leamington, I think the most disruptive change this year was the collection of affiliation fees.

What should be a simple process turned into a real paperchase and recent communications from Bowls England would suggest they realise they got it wrong.

It appears high on the Agenda for Bowls England's Counties Conference later this month.

In May this year our membership numbers had dropped by 650 (16%) on the 2019 total, broadly in line with the average national decline of 15%.

The Bowls Big Weekend had varied levels of success across the County with 45 of our 75 Clubs registering for at least one session over the 4 days.

Yatton were highlighted on the Bowls England website with 114 new bowlers attending and 18 eventually signed up as full members. Severalls Jubilee had 22 sign up, Chew Stoke 16, Isle of Wedmore 16, Bloomfield 13 and the list goes on. But, regrettably, some Clubs reported a nil take up. In total there were 209 new names registered by Clubs as a direct result of the BBW.

The inaugural Ladies League played a limited fixture list across three Regional Divisions.

Winners were:

North League – Purnell BC

Mid League – Victoria BC

South League – Ilminster BC

Winner's certificates will be presented at our Luncheon.

Details have been circulated to all Club Secretaries regarding the 2022 League and please contact Barbara Colby (Yeovil) for more information.

I am delighted to report that Carolle Skeates has applied for the Chairperson's position following John Durston's retirement. You will also have noted that we have, at long last, had nominations for the vacant Region 1 (Bath) Council Member's seat: Bill Alexander (Bath) and Danny Kite (Alexandra). Just like buses, nothing for ages and then two turn up at once !!! And, 'Hot from the Press', Ed Hopegood (Bristol) has stepped forward to undertake the County Archivists role.

The failure of our website has been a real headache and, whilst I am sure this will be covered in more detail elsewhere, I wish to reassure you we are working to repopulate an historic 2018 template to get this important communication channel working again.

The usual SBA Gen 1 (registration of club's officers) will be circulated later this month. I imagine the Affiliation Return and SBA Gen 4 (membership registration) will be issued in the Spring but will await guidance from Bowls England regarding this.

Ross Turnbull
General Secretary