

GENERAL SECRETARIES REPORT TO THE DELAYED 2020 AGM
Saturday 10th April 2021

Fellow Bowlers,

My report covers the 17 months since the 2019 AGM.

I am sure others will have more to say about the COVID19 Pandemic which pretty much decimated their areas of responsibility causing untold problems. But for a humble secretary, the paperwork went on although timescales and deadlines became a bit fluid on occasions.

As 2019 ended and 2020 started we were looking at Bowls England's plans for a National Membership Register. Whilst many of you attempted to complete the return (and I thank you for your efforts and perseverance) it quickly became apparent that the 'Go Membership' model wasn't wholly suitable, and a major revamp was needed. This has been delayed because of COVID but is still on the Bowls England long term agenda.

Then the pandemic hit us.

My priority through all this has been communication. In the first weeks of lockdown, I aimed to ensure you all had the relevant information regarding grants and funding. I know many Clubs received lifesaving help from local Councils and Sport England.

Then the restrictions eased and a gradual return to play was rolled out. Again, regular communication was necessary to keep you abreast of the ever-changing guidelines. Each Club had to decide on a timescale and format to suit its own particular circumstances, but I believe most of us were playing some form of bowls by the end of the season.

Then another lockdown and more funding opportunities to help us survive the winter.

We have 'reinvented' ourselves as a Board. 12 months ago, most of us had never heard of 'Zoom', now it's a normal part of our working lives. This AGM is a testament to how we have all had to adapt.

The system for the collection of affiliation fees has changed. Rather than calling for names and numbers in June with payment made in December for the following year, we will now complete the whole process at the end of April. This was a Bowls England initiative to ensure Clubs had received their membership fees before having to pay out the affiliation fees. We the SBA have mirrored those timescales, hence the change to the Constitution for your ratification.

Finally, Bowls England wants to develop a closer working relationship with its Clubs and their Officers. They plan to collect the names and contact details of key personnel (secretary, treasurer, safeguarding officer, greenkeeper, etc, etc) and communicate directly with them on matters of relevance, rather than messages being filtered through the County Associations.

Despite an interesting year I am pleased to report that the 'Good Ship Somerset' remains on a true and steady course.

Ross Turnbull,
General Secretary.