

New Management Structure Q&A

Q1. The club appears to be doing well, why change? If it isn't broke don't fix it.

A- At the moment we don't have a Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Development Officer or Welfare Officer. The club cannot function without someone completing the secretarial tasks. The secretary role is considered too demanding for one person so this plan is an attempt to spread the load among other officers. The General Committee is too large, with potentially near 20 members all having their say on each issue, as a result, meetings are too long and it is often difficult to reach decisions.

Q2. Why so complicated?

A- All we have attempted to do is compartmentalise the different functions of the club into four key sectors. This should simplify the administrative process and reduce duplication of effort by spreading the load. All of the roles listed are essential, we're not generating extra work for the sake of it.

Q3. If you can't fill the committee places now how do you suppose you'll fill the extra roles?

A- One person will probably still need to cover more than one role, especially at first. At the moment it's not unusual for one member to cover two, perhaps even three of these roles. We have around 150 outdoor members, the committee feels we should have enough members for each role to have a separate member. Many of these roles, in isolation, are not terribly demanding.

Q4. In my previous club a committee of six or seven ran everything, why do we need nearly 30?

A- Your previous club had less than 60 outdoor members, we have well over twice that number, and over the past 10 years the amount of routine administration required has increased exponentially, with Health and Safety and GDPR, in particular, adding a significant burden.

Q5. Why have you added jobs like webmaster and home teas allocator when they don't officially exist at the moment?

A- I was asked to look at other clubs' structures, and also, we are disestablishing the Ladies Administrator role which used to look after teas. It says in the proposal document whether this post is created will be a decision by the Executive, no doubt informed by the opinion of the Functions Sector Manager. Most clubs have a webmaster looking after their website and social media channels. The Webmaster is effectively the club's brand guardian, with most of the club's advertising and promotion via the website and social media channels.

Q6. Why are most of the sub-committee posts chosen by the Executive rather than AGM?

A- We haven't always had a great deal of luck filling posts at the AGM, it's extremely rare to have to vote for more than one candidate. Many key posts will remain AGM votes. Volunteers will still be required for the other posts but it may be that members would prefer to approach the Sector Manager directly rather than wait for an AGM. This change may have to be reviewed depending on how well it works? We are looking to allow some flexibility in the way posts are filled rather than rigorously sticking to an AGM vote.

Q7. Why have you done away with the Think-tank?

A- We occasionally found the Think-tank was duplicating tasks that the General Committee were undertaking. Also, members giving up their time to attend the Think-tank may perhaps be better served by volunteering for one of the sub-committees. Having said all of that the Think-tank has produced some significant ideas that have improved the club. However, we will now have more focussed sub-committees, members having suggestions on how to improve the club will have a clearer channel to make the suggestion via the appropriate Sector Manager/ sub-committee.

Q8. Do any other clubs have a structure like this?

A- We are a very large outdoor club with only Madeira having a larger outdoor membership in southwest England. Clubs with significant indoor facilities have a different business model. These clubs make far more money out of their indoor sections than their outdoor and have a management structure which reflects that. Some clubs do separate the bowls function from other "General" functions.

Q9. Do you not think the real problem is that the club has got too large and cumbersome for its own good?

A- In 2014 income from the club's membership did not cover our costs, the club was making a loss which, had it continued, would have resulted in the club folding. The club then embarked on an aggressive recruitment campaign which, thanks to the fantastic efforts of a handful of members, resulted in the club returning to profit and becoming viable again. The superb extension completed this winter has only been achieved because the club has the membership income to pay for it. Reducing our membership is a retrograde step and risks the future of the club. The demographics of bowling clubs means there is an inevitable annual churn of membership, we can't afford to become complacent in this area if we want to be members of a prosperous successful bowls club.

Q10. What about a Health & Safety Officer which seems to be missing?

A- This important role has been considered in the past, and may be considered again in the future, perhaps as part of the Asset Manager's sub-committee? However, if you look at the roles, they all have a significant H&S element. It's an old management adage but Health & Safety is everyone's responsibility, with all members having a part to play.

Q11. I think we should keep the Development Officer position on the Executive.

A- Firstly, we haven't had a Development Officer for over a year. The optimum size of a committee is 4-7. We should avoid adding posts to the Executive or it risks turning into another general committee which most members agree is too large. We envisage each Sector having its own development strategy. Recruiting new members is a fundamental part of the club's activities in order to prosper. The club's recruitment strategy must be defined by the Executive, requiring cross-sector co-operation, particularly between the Bowls and Admin sub-committees.

Q12. Who will represent our ladies now the Ladies Administrator position is being disestablished? I would have preferred to retain this position on the Executive and create a Men's Administrator position to represent our men.

A- Several issues here. We are a mixed club; we don't have a ladies or men's section. The name Ladies Administrator is an anachronism that doesn't really have a place in a forward-looking 21st-century sports club. We should avoid gender-specific roles, though there clearly remains, for example, a role for men's and ladies team captain. The work the Ladies Administrator does, fulfils an important and valuable role on the Executive. As does the Secretary and Development Officer. The work of these three roles will be divided between the newly created sector managers, indeed the proposal document recommends the creation of a "Home Games Teas Allocator" as part of the Functions Manager's sub-committee. If created this role will take on an important part of the Ladies Administrator's role.

Most clubs do not have a Ladies (or men's) Administrator position (or similar).

Q13. You have mentioned in the past the possibility of the club purchasing some IT software and hardware to reduce the administrative burden. Is there any news on this?

There are packages out there which I am investigating. These have been designed for indoor clubs but increasingly are being used by outdoor clubs. There is a cost to these and they are not cheap, but the price is falling. As well as an initial outlay for the hardware there is a fixed monthly cost for the software licence, it is these fixed costs that the club is, at present, reluctant to commit to. Once the new Executive is formed, we may be in a position to revisit this. As more clubs take on these services the price will come down, and there are cheaper alternatives coming to the market all the time. One company in particular, Bespoke for Business Software Solutions Ltd want to visit us and demonstrate their system called Bowlr, which, were we to purchase the full package, would automate the Membership, Financial system, Website, Rink Bookings, Indoor Leagues and indoor and outdoor knockout competitions administration. Members who would like more information on this should visit this website <https://www.bowlr.co.uk/>

Q14. What will happen if the EGM votes against this proposal?

A- I'm not sure to be honest. What I do know is that we can't go on as we are with no Secretary. It is the Secretary role which is the main driver behind this project, we need to distribute this work more equally between other members, which is the reason behind the four sectors. Ultimately the club will fold if no one is prepared to take on these essential jobs. Realistically that is unlikely to happen and the club would probably muck along being managed by a handful of members. It is the opinion of both the Executive and General Committees that now is an ideal opportunity to restructure the club the move forward in a healthier and more efficient manner.

Q15. You've been blethering on about restructuring the General Committee for much longer than we've not had a Secretary.

A- As I said in an earlier answer it remains my opinion that the General Committee is too large to be effective. Most of the Executive and General Committee members feel the same way. This proposal aims to create more focussed small sub-committees, concentrating on specific areas of the general running of the club. We want the sub-committees to effectively take over the day to day running of the club. This should leave the Executive to concentrate on strategy and "big picture" issues.

Q16. Why is there no DEVELOPMENT OFFICER post included? Who will take responsibility for the 'vision element' such as plans after Stage 2b for the Clubhouse, regular/appropriate/well-directed grant applications, fund-raising, sponsorship, recruitment, etc.? If a DEVELOPMENT OFFICER is included, as well as the 'vision element' mentioned

above day to day suggestions of a relatively minor nature (currently forwarded from the now to be disbanded 'Think Tank') could be accommodated.

A- I would expect the new Executive Committee to have a much greater strategic focus than the current one which, due to the ineffectiveness of the General Committee has to make day to day decisions on the running of the club. In the new system, day to day matters should be resolved at the appropriate sub-committee level. The Executive will have oversight of all development matters including grant applications, fund-raising, sponsorship which will then be devolved to the appropriate sector manager. For example, future development of the club-house will be agreed by the Exec with the Asset manager and that sub-committee taking the lead on implementation. If like now, the expertise of other members is required then they can be brought in to help.

Recruitment is a fundamental part of club activities. The recruitment strategy will be agreed by the Exec with cross-sector cooperation required for implementation. This will mainly be the Bowls and Admin sub-committees.

If further down the line the Exec or any of the Sector managers decide they need a Development Officer then so be it. But for now, we need to concentrate on getting the new system fully manned and up and running.

Q17. Very pleased to see that Di Dagg is continuing with the Wellington Weekly reports since the AGM. Is there some way we can get more emphasis placed on Publicity (not just Match Reports) by raising public awareness overall? Not suggesting a separate post, but Publicity needs to be linked in somewhere.

A- The focus for publicity will be the Publicity Officer with the Webmaster. The Webmaster will control social media and effectively be the club's brand guardian. Nowadays most of our publicity will come through social media as well as the Welly Weekly News. Both have an important part to play. Given both the Publicity Officer and Webmaster are part of the Admin Manager's sub-committee this fits in rather well, I think? The club will need to review its social media strategy, I would expect the Admin sub-committee to lead this.

Q18. I like the idea but I'm not entirely comfortable with the use of the word manager. To me this implies a hierarchy and someone who delegates. We are a voluntary organisation and it's difficult to tell volunteers what to do. I would prefer co-ordinator?

A- The names really aren't important, and I understand your point. In my opinion the important thing is to pass the concept, then we can discuss the names. Indeed, I've tried not to imply a hierarchy. You might bring this up at the EGM and see what other members think?

Q19. Assuming the new structure is adopted, WHAT IS THE TIMELINE for introducing it? Presumably, as there will probably need to be a major rewrite of the Constitution, the earliest date could only be at the next AGM - next Oct/Nov. WHO, OR WHAT GROUP WILL REWRITE THE CONSTITUTION?

A- After the Vote, if approved, under Actions from the Vote we will ask for anyone willing to take up the new posts to come forward and if more than one person comes forward for a post, there will be a vote. We're quite hopeful about most of the new posts. We will then ask the membership to authorise the Executive Committee to make changes to the Constitution in line with the new Management Structure.

The Executive Committee have not come up with any other alternative to the New Management Structure. Members need to be fully aware that we cannot continue as we are

and that the club will cease to function as it does now if this proposal is rejected and there is no Secretary.

The re-write of the constitution has always been a job for the secretary. It will fall to the Admin Manager in the new scheme.

Q20. Sorry to appear negative but I can see lots of problems with this plan. For example, if we get rid of the think tank who is going to organise the annual tour to Torquay? Who is going to organise things like the annual prize giving ceremony etc?

A- As I said in an earlier reply the Think Tank have produced some great ideas over the years which have enhanced our Bowls Club for all members. However, it needs to be restated that the club is currently experiencing a crisis and CANNOT go on as it is with no secretary. Not only will there not be any bowls tours to Torquay or prize giving ceremonies there may not actually be a club at all!

We have to find a way of sharing the work between members more equitably, which this plan attempts to do.

Assuming the plan is agreed the bowls sub-committee will, in future, be responsible for these types of events, with the Functions sub-committee helping with the prize giving. These committees may well seek help from other members for specific activities, such as organising the annual tour.

We're not going to stop members coming up with ideas, in future these should be forwarded to the appropriate sub-committee, and sub-committees will be in a better position to generate their own sector specific development plans.

Q21. This proposal seems to be like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. All clubs have problems finding secretaries, they muddle along and eventually a volunteer comes along and everything is fine. You do realise this is unlikely to get through the EGM?

A- In the past 6 years the club has had four different secretaries and now doesn't have one. The fact that members won't stay in this job for long is because it is too demanding. We need to find a way of making the administration of the club more attractive and less demanding, we need more members sharing the work. The system presently adopted is broken and we need to do something new to put it right! Members considering voting against this proposal need to understand that there isn't an alternative suggestion on the table.

Q22. With respect, your answer to Q20 doesn't really tell me why we can't have a Thinktank in the new set-up? And your answer to Q21 sounds like you are trying to blackmail members into accepting your proposal?

A- As we've said before the Thinktank has produced some great ideas which have enhanced the club. However, we also often find that it is duplicating some of the activities undertaken by the General Committee. This is obviously wasting members' time. The fact that so many senior important committee positions are vacant shows that the club does not have unlimited resources with regard to time members are prepared to give up on behalf of the club. Where members are prepared to give some of their valuable time we need to ensure that maximum value is gained from this effort. Clearly, if two committees are duplicating effort then that is not an efficient way to do business.

There is also an issue with respect to management lines of communication. Under the old system, the Thinktank reports to the General Committee via a representative who sits on the General Committee,

strictly speaking as a non-voting member (this is yet another post that has been vacant since the last AGM). However, under the new system clearly this line of communication is no longer available.

The urgent priority following the EGM will be to introduce the new system as soon as possible and as fully manned as possible. No one is under any illusions that this will be straight forward. There will be inevitable teething issues with the new system which will be somewhat a change in club culture. The newly formed Executive can follow whatever path they desire, but I would expect the first year will be needed to bed in the new system. Thereafter, assuming all the key posts are fully manned, they may decide they need a Thinktank or a Development Officer for that matter. That will be up to them.

We're not trying to blackmail anyone, but we need members to understand that the club cannot go on as it is now. We are hopeful that by the EGM we will have a volunteer for each key post, these will then, hopefully, be approved by the members, and then we can move forward. The Executive and General Committee have been considering this problem since the AGM last November, this is the best and only suggestion we can come up with.

Q23. Only full members will be eligible to vote at the forthcoming EGM under the existing Constitution. Consequently, this presumably precludes any indoor members from filling any of the proposed positions. Clearly such a restriction (which in itself is unconstitutional) could result in the exclusion of potential volunteers from filling these vital roles.

A- You are correct in that section 3.1.1 part H of the constitution reads (h) INDOOR ONLY MEMBER - shall have no vote and cannot take office. At the AGM in November the matter was discussed by the membership. Allowing Indoor Members to vote at AGM and EGMs was not accepted. Although you may find this disappointing, the Constitution was agreed by the members at the AGM and therefore is not unconstitutional. The only way this can be changed is by a full member putting forward a motion to amend this section at the November AGM.

Q24. Please can you keep in mind that some of our members don't have internet or email? They won't be able to see these questions and answers.

A- About a week before the EGM I will print off a copy of these Q&As and display them on the noticeboard. Inevitably communicating via email or internet is less time-consuming and less expensive than writing and posting letters to members without access to the internet. The club will always strive to communicate with all members, but we've not got a secretary at the moment, so we need to do all we can to make the administrative tasks required for running the club simpler, more attractive and less time-consuming. I would expect most internal club communications to be either web or email-based, with a copy placed on the club noticeboard for members without email to read. I know some members who prefer their communications via post will be disappointed by this, they will need to discuss this with the new Admin manager after the EGM. If any member without email would like to volunteer to help with this, I'm sure our new Admin Manager will be keen to hear from them!

Q25. We are in our second year at the Club and are generally in favour of the new management structure. If the proposals are given the green light at the EGM then the General Committee will be disbanded. Could a member of this committee enlighten us as to the functions, purpose, membership etc, so we can make an informed decision on how to vote?

A- The General Committee meets every three months. It is made up of the Executive, potentially 6 members, plus the General Committee potentially 10 members. Also

invited are Officers Reporting to the General Committee, potentially 9 members, though these can't vote. So you can have as many as 25 members present, though in reality it is always below this number, though I have known high teens. Also 5 of these positions are vacant at the moment and sometimes a member holds more than one position. Paul Kelly, for example, is Greenkeeper and Men's Captain. The full list of members can be found here-

<http://www.wellingtonbowling.club/community/wellington-bowling-club-9633/club-officers/>

To see what we talk about I suggest you look at the minutes. This year's minutes are here-

<http://www.wellingtonbowling.club/community/wellington-bowling-club-9633/2020-committee-minutes/>

With last years archived here-

<http://www.wellingtonbowling.club/community/wellington-bowling-club-9633/2019-committee-minutes/>

You will note virtually everything is covered, and if all members present have their say meetings usually last well in excess of 2 hours. By the end, most members are losing the will to live and the final few items are rarely discussed in detail.

The General Committee are fully behind the new proposal, they can see that streamlining committees into focused smaller sub-committees must be the most effective way to move the club forward.

Q26. I still think this new structure looks bloated with far too many posts. You have 27 which is ridiculous when most clubs have no more than a dozen.

A- Well, if you follow this link you will see North Petherton have 39 officers.

<https://northpethertonbc.sportsclubwebsite.co.uk/officials/default.aspx>

Admittedly they have a larger indoor section than us, but we will by no means be the largest in the area.

Williton have just over a third of the number of members we have and have 17 officers-

<http://www.willitonbowlingclub.org.uk/club-officers>

Watchet are a large outdoor club, but still have under 90 playing members. They have 26 officers.

<http://www.watchetbowlingclub.net/>

So 27 really isn't that bad? The idea is to share the work around more members.

Q27. I see not all posts listed on the website are included in the sub-committees. I'm thinking specifically about the county representative? And where, for example, do the club coaches sit in the hierarchy.

A- Yes, I think that's the only one we haven't included. That post fell under Officers Reporting to the General Committee. It will be up to the new Executive to decide where this post sits in future. No doubt they will talk to the post holder, Mike Groves, who has been doing the job since before a young Francis Drake took up the game many years ago. It could "Report to the Bowls Committee" or perhaps directly to the Exec. It's essentially a standalone task. The constitution allows the Exec some flexibility with posts and this flexibility will be needed over the next 6 months. Any changes the Exec makes should be put to a vote at the next AGM for confirmation. Though the proposal allows the Exec to recruit some of the officers for the sub-committees without recourse to an AGM vote.

Regarding the coaches and the comment about the hierarchy it's important to remember that we are all volunteers so there isn't really a hierarchy as such. Under the old system the coaches didn't report to anyone, they just got on with it as required. I guess, if ever they had a problem, they would go through the bowls sub-committee. It's been suggested that we use the term coordinator rather than manager. If implemented that will be something for the new Executive to decide on.