

Chair's report for 2021 AGM.

As result of Covid 19, 2020 was a year we would all like to but never will forget. Thankfully things improved considerably for 2021 and we were able to slowly get back towards an even keel. We can only hope there will be no further setbacks and that the 2022 season will be fully back to where we were before the outbreak.

I have to say that, having regard to the circumstances, the 2021 season went quite well. It was unfortunate that we could not get the League up and running and some events had to be cancelled at the commencement of the season. The success of those events that did take place was principally due to the sterling work put in by the various Secretaries/Managers and I thank them, for overcoming the difficulties that were placed before them.

I would like to congratulate all those who made it to the National Finals in Leamington this year, I am sure full details will be provided by the Championship/Competition Secretary and Performance Manager so I will not repeat them here other than to say what a delight it was that Stef Branfield brought back to Somerset the winner's trophy of both the National Woman's Singles and Woman's 2 Wood and narrowly missed out on the Champion of Champions, losing in the final. Also that our young ladies managed to secure the Amy Rose trophy, it is always pleasing when the youngsters do so well.

It was also pleasing to note that Coach Bowls has selected Ilminster BC as one of the Bowls England 8 Centres of Excellence. These venues will be used to deliver Coach Bowls courses. Also that Bristol Indoor has been appointed the BDA Hub for the South West Counties with the view of assisting Clubs with workshops and personalised advice.

As far as Bowls England is concerned there has been an increase in staffing levels at Leamington which should filter down to providing an increase in support for Counties and Clubs. With the advent of the new Chief Executive changes are to be expected and to date these have been principally administrative. There have also been changes to the scheduling and format of the National Championships and Competitions but these were brought about in 2021 due to Covid 19 and will be retained in 2022 as a result of the time restraints occasioned by the Commonwealth Games.

This AGM today is my grand finale as I have decided to step down after an involvement of 50 years or so in various administrative responsibilities in the sport at Club, County and Bowls England levels. My playing days commenced at City of Wells Club in 1959 then Bridgwater BC for one year before joining my present Club, Clevedon, in 1965/66. So I have been a member at Clevedon for around 55 years. I have to say I enjoyed every minute of my involvement in the sport and in particular that I have been in a position to put back in at least some of what I have taken out. Having virtually given my life to the sport I am certainly going to miss it.

I wish my successor well and I am sure, under her leadership together with our very efficient County Secretary, that the County Association will continue to thrive and progress.

John Durston