



18th March 2020

STATEMENT: CORONAVIRUS

Following an Emergency Meeting of Bowls England Board members and key staff held on Tuesday 17th March 2020, and in light of the latest Government advice regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the Board has taken the following decisions regarding the 2020 season and the operations of Bowls England:

Operations

The Bowls England Head Office will close at 5pm on Friday 20th March 2020 (subject to any prior notification from Warwick District Council regarding access to Riverside House).

All staff will work from home from Monday 23rd March 2020, until further notice, so there will be no change in the support that we are able to provide.

Tony Allcock OBE will officially retire as Chief Executive on 31st March 2020, with Jon Cockcroft taking up his position as Chief Executive on 1st June 2020. During the interim period, Bowls England's operations will be led by Alistair Hollis (Operational Services Manager) and Penny Maguire (Business Services Manager) with close support from Board Chair, David Tucker, and the Board Directors. County Associations should direct all enquiries to Alistair or Penny in the first instance during this interim period.

Please note: Understandably, the Office has been inundated with enquiries from our clubs and county associations, and we will ensure that each and every enquiry is responded to. However, our priority in the next three working days will be ensuring that our staff are able to work from home effectively in accordance with Government guidance from next Monday.

Communications

Any post addressed to Riverside House will be redirected, however we ask that you use electronic communication (preferably e-mail) wherever possible as this can be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff most easily.

Board

The Board will be meeting regularly via Skype/Conference Call to review all issues related to the Coronavirus outbreak to discuss its ongoing impact on Bowls England, County Associations, Clubs and bowlers, and to plan accordingly. All other meetings have been postponed until further notice.

Celebration Matches

All Celebration Matches scheduled up to 1st July 2020 are cancelled. The programme for the remainder of the year will be reviewed on 1st June 2020. All clubs will be officially contacted.

Presidential Team

The Presidential Team be 'deferred' for one year (i.e. Paul Robson to be President in 2021/Terri Keen 2022/Deepak Tanna 2023) in order for them to enjoy a full year in office.

Club Loans

Any clubs facing hardship with repayment of a Bowls England Club Loan should discuss their situation with the Business Services Manager.

National Championships (Appendix A)

The National Championships are cancelled in their entirety for 2020 (including all County Championship qualifying rounds). This decision has been taken because most County Associations hold their qualifying rounds leading to the National Championships from May to July, and we believe it is impractical for these to be completed this season.

Bowls England will refund all entry fees to County Associations and we ask that you then discuss directly with entrants whether they wish to 'roll over' their entry to 2021 or receive a refund.

Our Business Services Manager and Operational Services Manager will discuss the implications of cancelling the National Championships with traders, sponsors and suppliers who support the Final Stages, with the hope of minimising the disruption that this will cause to their businesses.

National Competitions (Appendix B)

The National Competitions are cancelled in their entirety for 2020. Again, the timing of the earlier rounds of the National Competitions means it is impractical for these to be completed this season. Bowls England will contact all those who have entered in 2020 directly to ask whether they wish to rollover their entry to 2021 (refunds will be available on request).

International Events (Appendix C)

All Bowls England Trials and Training linked to International Events are cancelled. At the time of writing, discussions are ongoing with the BIBC and BIWBC with regard to their planned events.

High Performance

All events planned by the High Performance Director will cease until further notice.

Festival of Bowls

We appreciate that cancelling the National Championships and National Competitions will be a big blow to many bowlers, clubs and counties. So, subject to any restrictions that may or may not be in place later in the season, Bowls England will seek to organise a 'Festival of Bowls' in August/September. A possible format being considered is local qualification events and finals held at Victoria Park, Royal Leamington Spa. Our hope is that by this stage, the Government advice will have changed, bowls clubs will have opened and bowlers will be looking for competitions to play in. The Festival of Bowls could also be linked to club recruitment drives and publicity.

Counties Meeting – Saturday 21st November 2020

The above event is subject to review.

Women's Annual Dinner and Presentation of Prizes – Saturday 21st November 2020

Men's Annual Dinner and Presentation of Prizes – Saturday 27th February 2021

The above events are cancelled – see below.

AGM/Annual Dinner – Saturday 27th February 2021

The above will be held on Saturday 27th February 2021 at Hilton Hotel, Coventry – this will provide an opportunity for all attendees to look forward to the 2021 season.

Affiliation Fee

In support of Clubs at this difficult time, Bowls England will refund the Affiliation Fees paid for 2020 by each playing member. Bowls England will arrange refunds to the County Associations, who are mandated to ensure that all monies are then paid to their Member Clubs.

Club Support

Bowls England recognises that many clubs will be facing a difficult season ahead and there will be a number of areas in which they may require support in 2020 – for example:

- Greens Maintenance (Bowls England intends to provide advice to clubs on the minimum maintenance that is required to maintain greens so they are playable when we resume bowling)
- Funding
- Club Loans
- Recruitment
- Encouraging members to support their clubs financially by continuing to pay their annual subscriptions – in order that the clubs will be there for them when we are able to resume bowling.
- Looking after members (We will encourage members to keep an eye out for each other i.e. shopping/contact etc especially those members who may live on their own)
- Staying fit (Bowls England intends to produce a “Bowlers’ Workout” in order to keep members active and fit, during isolation or working from home, so we’re all ready to play when we resume bowling)

These areas will form a key part of work for the Bowls England Staff over the coming weeks/months.

Bowls England Head Office

Given the current financial uncertainty facing Bowls England and its member clubs, no further progress on the building work relating to our new headquarters building will be taken until further notice.

Coronavirus Guidance

A dedicated page will be created on the Bowls England website containing relevant links to Coronavirus guidance and providing updates on the impact on Bowls England.

Charity Auction

The Charity Auction planned in aid of Disability Bowls England and canine charities nominated by our retiring Chief Executive, Tony Allcock OBE, has been put on hold until further notice.

Membership Register

Work on the Membership Register will continue, as its further development will enable Bowls England to communicate directly with its members and provide tailored support in situations such as this. We encourage Clubs and County Associations to spend this time putting together their membership information – the more we know about our Clubs and bowlers, the more we can tailor our advice and support during this difficult time.

Coach Bowls

Coach Bowls has postponed all courses from Monday 16th March until further notice. Bowls England will consult with the English Indoor Bowling Association regarding when Coach Bowls activity should resume.

APPENDIX A: NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

This covers all events as listed in Bowls England Regulation 50.1.4:

- Singles
- Two-Wood Singles
- Pairs
- Triples
- Fours
- Junior Singles
- Junior Pairs
- Senior Fours

APPENDIX B: NATIONAL COMPETITIONS

This covers all events as listed in Bowls England Regulation 52.1.4:

- Johns Trophy – Inter-County Competition (Women)
- Walker Cup – Inter-County Top Two Fours Competition (Women)
- Amy Rose Bowl – Inter-County Junior Competition (Women)
- National Senior Singles and Pairs Competition (Women)
- National Top Club Competition (Women)
- National Family Pairs Competition
- National Champion of Champions Singles Competition (Women)
- Middleton Cup – Inter-County Competition (Men)
- National Club Two Fours Competition (Men)
- National Top Club Competition (Men)
- National Senior Singles and Pairs Competition (Men)
- National Champion of Champions Singles Competition (Men)
- Balcomb Trophy – Inter-County Top Two Fours Competition (Men)
- White Rose – Inter-County Junior Competition (Men)
- National Mixed Pairs Competition
- National Mixed Fours Competition
- Tony Allcock Trophy – National Club Mixed Over 60s Double Rink Competition

APPENDIX C: BOWLS ENGLAND INTERNATIONAL SELECTION AND TRAINING EVENTS

| Date | Event | Venue |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 23 rd & 24 th May | Youth Academy | Victoria Park, RLS |
| 25 th May | Junior Trials | Victoria Park, RLS |
| 31 st May | Senior Squad Day (Men) | Victoria Park, RLS |
| 5 th July | Junior Squad Day | Victoria Park, RLS |
| 19 th September | Senior Trials (Men) | Kingscroft BC, Leicestershire |
| 19 th September | Senior Trials (Women) | Nuneaton BC, Warwickshire |
| 20 th September | Academy Trials | Welford-n-Avon BC, Warwickshire |