

# Bowls Devon Newsletter No.23

May 2020

We are looking forward to hearing the Prime Minister deliver his “comprehensive plan” later this week on how the lockdown might be eased. Whatever restrictions are lifted, social distancing will remain a priority. As far as returning to play is concerned, we must stick firmly with the Bowls England guidance which will follow the governments advice. Any deviation could put clubs in a serious position as their insurance would be invalidated if something were to go wrong. Unfortunately bowlers, in the main, are in the vulnerable age group and, quite rightly, may need to make individual decisions as to whether they wish to commence bowling this year.

Aimed at safeguarding the health of our members, it was in mid-March, amid growing concerns and uncertainty around the coronavirus pandemic, that Bowls England (BE) advised that all bowls events should be cancelled indefinitely. This included Celebration Matches, Competitions and Tournaments.

It is likely that none of us have experienced the level of fear and uncertainty that the current period places us in; situations that affect every aspect of our lives including the future of many of our nations bowling clubs.

During the past few weeks, BE has addressed many issues some of which were included in my Statement issued to all Clubs on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.

BE has now advised that all Celebration Matches for the 2020 season are cancelled. Arrangements will be made for all clubs and associations that were due to host a match in 2020 to receive their celebration banner. All those due to host a Celebration Match in 2020 will be offered the opportunity to rollover matches to 2021 subject to the total number of matches not exceeding 38.

Bowls Devon (BD) has cancelled all County and Presidential matches up to the 1<sup>st</sup> July and the programme for the remainder of the season will be reviewed on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020.

Following the decision to cancel all National Championships and National Competitions, BD has cancelled all individual competitions for 2020. However, if bowls can resume by the 1<sup>st</sup> July, the Competition Committee has proposed that at least some of the Team Competitions will take place with new play on/play by dates to be advised. It is anticipated that a decision will be made by the 1<sup>st</sup> June. As there will be no trophies to present this year, the County Luncheon and Prizegiving scheduled for the 1<sup>st</sup> November has been cancelled.

BE has returned Affiliation Fees and National Championship Fees to Counties and, accordingly, BD has also refunded through Section Treasurers, Club affiliations and their portion of the National Championship entry fees.

Financial support is available through the Sport England Community Emergency Fund. This fund aims to deliver immediate funding to those most in need and the eligibility criteria states that it will prioritise organisations who work with groups including older people and those with long term health conditions - clearly two areas of the population from which bowls clubs draw a large percentage of their members. To date bowls clubs across England have secured almost £400,000 cash from this fund. To find out more about the Sport England Community Emergency Fund and to submit an application go to:

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/our-funds/community-emergency-fund>

Clubs can also apply for the Retail, Hospitality Grant available through their local Council. I understand that Crediton, Topsham and Bitton Park Bowling Clubs have received grants of £10,000 each from their local Councils. To find out more about the Retail, Hospitality Grant go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-business-support-grant-funding-guidance-for-businesses>

As previously advised, Clubs who have loans from the Amenities Fund can defer repayments this year. Any clubs who wish to take advantage of this should contact the Assistant Treasurer, Ray Stringer.

We would encourage our 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.

The BE series of workouts, designed to keep our members active during the lockdown, have been very well received - including many members of our international teams who have been sharing videos of themselves participating in the various exercises in their own homes. The workouts and the BE official podcast, "The Extra End" are both available on the BE YouTube Channel.

The officers of BD would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation of the vital work put in by our green keepers who are currently maintaining the playing surfaces. BE has worked closely with the Institute of Groundsmanship in producing a detailed guide on essential greens maintenance work so that our greens are playable when it is safe to resume bowling.

In line with BE, it has been decided that the Presidential team will remain in office through 2021 so that they enjoy a full year in office i.e. Christine Marshall and Bob Dowdell will be Presidents in 2021, Aileen Rowden and John Abbott, 2022, and Paul Debnam, 2023. We currently have a vacancy for a Ladies' Junior Vice President.

In addition to the vacancy for a Ladies' Junior Vice President, Ciss Jones has tendered her resignation as Ladies' Administrator. This will be effective from the Annual General Meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> December when we will also be looking to fill the positions of BD Chair and BD Treasurer.

BE has acknowledged that, during the lock down, clubs may be having difficulties in gathering information from their members and, accordingly, have deferred the date for return of information for the National Membership Register. A working group has been formed to review all aspects of the membership register going forward. If more information is required regarding the Membership Register, go to <https://www.bowlsengland.com/membership-register/> or contact the Project Officer of the Membership Register, Jamie Chestney, at [jamie@bowlsengland.com](mailto:jamie@bowlsengland.com)

At County level, Bowls Devon has continued to function. I can advise that:

Approval has been given to new shirt designs for Cullompton BC, Culm Vale BC, Starcross BC, Paignton Torbay BC and City of Plymouth BC. Approval has also been given for a new shirt design and trousers for Culm Vale BC.

We look forward to a time, hopefully in the not too distant future, when we can get back, safely, onto the green and renew friendships.

The message from BE is "Stay home, stay safe, stop the spread".

Harry Riley  
County Administrator  
5<sup>th</sup> May 2020.