

# **Bowls Devon Newsletter No. 26**

**January 2022**

Finally, we saw some light at the end of the tunnel in 2021 with bowlers starting to be able to come back to playing from mid-way through the season, but these were initially in very limited numbers and, of course, many were still uncomfortable about returning to our sport as the spectre of Covid-19 still loomed large over us all.

Covid-19 has caused massive changes for everyone and really has put a major dent in the finances of sport and bowls has been no exception. Let us hope that 2022 will be a better year for all of us.

## **Annual General Meeting**

The 2021 AGM was held on Saturday 4 December when Honorary Membership was conferred on outgoing Presidents Christine Marshall and Bob Dowdell.

Aileen Rowden (Bitton Park BC) and Paul Debnam (Bideford BC) were installed as Presidents for 2022. The Presidential Team is completed by the appointments of Sandra Andrews (South Molton BC) and John Short (Barnstaple BC) as Senior Vice Presidents and Bill Smith (Bitton Park BC) as Junior Vice President.

There is a vacancy for a Ladies Junior Vice President.

Succession planning is very important and, as the Administrator has given notice that he will be retiring at the 2022 Annual General Meeting, there is a vacancy for an Assistant County Administrator to work alongside him during the current year.

Chair David congratulated our competitors who qualified for Leamington and paid tribute to the Johns Trophy team who won their competition for the first time since 2013. David also referred to the achievement of Gordon Short's Challenge following his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Gordon was presented with his Bowls Devon Life Membership Certificate in September.

## **County Diary**

Clubs are reminded that changes to officers during the year can be updated on the website at any time of the year by contacting the Website Manager, Bob Smith, or the Website Information Co-ordinator, David Mercer.

Concern has been expressed as to the future of the County Diary and the position of Diary Secretary has not been filled at the present time. The subject will be addressed at the April meetings.

## **Amenities Fund**

Money is available from Bowls Devon to clubs in respect of improvements to facilities and clubs can borrow up to £10,000 repayable over 5 years with an admin fee of £25 for each £1,000 borrowed. All applications for a loan should be sent to the Treasurer, Ray Stringer, by email: [raystringer59@gmail.com](mailto:raystringer59@gmail.com)

The Amenities Fund will also be used to support Development Funding including the Devon Youth Under 25s Sessions organised by the Bowls Devon Development Officer and the Coaching Co-ordinator.

Already, in respect of the successful Devon Youth Development initiative, it has been agreed that a selection of different size bowls should be purchased to maintain safe practice. These bowls, sizes 0000s, 000s, double 00s and Junior Aces will be allocated and remain the responsibility of the County Coach Co-ordinator or the Coach who is leading the training/coaching session.

Assistance will also be given to clubs wishing to purchase a defibrillator. This will be based on the club's financial situation and will be subject to approval by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

### **Centenary Trophy - Bowler of the Year**

The Centenary Trophy, presented by Ken Boobyer, was first presented in 2008. 2021 saw our eleventh winner and President Bob Dowdell presented the trophy at the AGM to the winner, Kevin Phillips of the Topsham Bowling Club. Kevin is a worthy winner having been a distinguished player for Devon for many years. He played his first Middleton Cup game in 1986 and, in 2021, played his 173<sup>rd</sup> game!

### **Order of Merit 2021**

The Order of Merit is awarded to members who have given exceptional services to fellow bowlers at club level and the Award was presented to Barry Boucher of the Rock Park Bowling Club.

### **Bowls' Big Weekend**

Although a full review has yet to be finalised, the Bowls' Big Weekend was well received with 693 clubs originally signed up to host an event. Returns from 200 Clubs have been received (a response rate of 22%), highlighting that a total of 5290 attended an event which equates to 26.5 per club.

The 2022 event will take place between Friday 27 to Monday 30 May. This national initiative offers affiliated clubs the opportunity to promote our sport and attract new members. It is claimed that 20% of new bowlers join our sport on the back of open weekends!

### **Bowls England - Annual Report**

The Annual Report will be available, like last year, in digital form.

### **Commonwealth Games**

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games presents a golden opportunity for our sport. Each Club will be invited by Bowls England to nominate a Commonwealth Games Activator who will be the main point of contact to work with Bowls England to increase participation in the sport in 2022.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you good and happy bowling in 2022.

Harry Riley  
County Administrator  
7 January 2022