



SURREY COUNTY WOMEN'S BOWLING ASSOCIATION

SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2020

Following the AGM of Bowls Surrey in November and the various changes made to the Constitution, members of the Bowls Surrey Board met on 13 January at Sutton BC. At that meeting both Associations were asked to contribute £1500 towards the development of the competition part of the database. It was further agreed that as Communications Officer, Charlotte would set up a monthly newsletter.

It was agreed to hold another open forum between the Board, SCBA Finance & General Purposes Committee and SCWBA Executive and it was agreed they would meet at Leatherhead for open and frank discussions about the "Way Forward" and the moratorium.

It was further agreed that we would work together on certain things namely the Areas/Zones, Badge Qualification, the possibility of a joint Year Book for 2021 and the importance of a Competition computerised system and Website.

John Tucker came forward as SCBA Secretary (as well as SCBA Match Secretary) and was elected by the SCBA Council in December. Colin Homes came forward as Administrator for Bowls Surrey and will need to be elected at the November AGM.

For recording in the SCWBA minutes it was confirmed that the Association had received all its money back from the banks following a very clever and nasty scam which robbed us. It was also confirmed that SCWBA had received some small amounts of compensation from all three banks for various reasons, including Barclays for them not dealing with the complaints speedily, from Lloyds similarly and also for their negligence and similarly from HSBC.

Following a joint meeting with the SCBA, SCWBA Executives and the Board of Bowls Surrey in late January, it was agreed that we would be looking at badge qualification, areas, website and competition programmes together with the possibility of a joint Year Book.

Work had already commenced on both Year Books individually and in late February/early March, the printers were contacted with a view to printing the SCWBA "Information" Book. It was felt by the Executive that much of what was in the Year Book could now be found on the website and we needed to consider the number of books sold and the cost of the production which was determined by the number of pages.

Apart from the Officers and President, photographs of prize winners were removed. It was further decided not to have commercial advertisements as it took up too much time chasing them both for copy and then for payment. By 20 March, unfortunately, the Information booklet for SCBA had been printed but SCWBA's Information Booklet had not. On 23 March the Government announced total "lockdown" due to the COVID 19 pandemic and the country closed down completely (as indeed did many other countries). We all then remained focussed on the lack of toilet rolls, eggs and sugar. The



printing of the Information booklet was cancelled for SCWBA I can confirm we will not be charged by the printers for the preparation of the printing they had carried out.

For those of us who do not use Facetime, House Party, Zoom and other virtual outlets, we suddenly found ourselves becoming very familiar with these entities. We soon realised that regular meetings via Zoom was not only a good way of moving forward but also a way of keeping in touch with people. We started to become familiar with a totally new vocabulary such as “lock down” “virtual meetings”, “self-isolating” “Covid”, “bubble” and more besides.

By mid-April it became clear that things were not going to change in the immediate future and Bowls England announced that their Presidential teams would stay in office for 2021.

SM contacted the clubs where Loyal Service Awards were being presented and we received some very sad news that one of the recipients of the award has passed away due to Covid. However, it is intended at some point to present the award at the Club to the recipient posthumously. Dates for all these awards are still to be organised but, in all probability, they will not happen until the 2021 season. Meantime new requests are coming in but I am sure there are more club members deserving of the Loyal Service Award.

SCBA and SCWBA Executives took the unprecedented step of asking both Presidents and their respective Presidential teams if they would be prepared to remain in office for 2021 which both very kindly agreed to do.

Meantime JT (John Tucker) and SM (Sharon Mitchell) had numerous meetings via Zoom and discussions regarding badge qualification. JT took the points system and operated it for the men and SM did the same with SCBA's badge qualification. This was discussed at length following a virtual meeting of SCWBA and it was agreed that all the clubs would be contacted to find out how they felt about the change to qualifying for their badge from the quarter final stages onwards rather than the badge system. We contacted all clubs and received 66 yes votes to the change from points, there were 11 abstentions with 47 clubs not responding.

SCWBA agreed that County business had to continue during this dreadful time and on 13 May 2020 a virtual Executive meeting was held. SM confirmed her results from the clubs regarding badge qualification. Walkovers and byes were all addressed. There are certain things still outstanding regarding the presentation of flashes for those who have played 50, 75, 100 games for the Johns and Walker Cup. The men receive these flashes for the Middleton Cup but not the Balcombe Trophy, the equivalent of the women's Walker Cup. The SCBA rules state that anyone is eligible to play in the Middleton Cup and Balcombe Trophy in accordance with BE Rules. SCWBA only allow badged players in their rules. SM telephoned a few counties to see what they did and without exception they all followed BE rules. This has been raised at two County meetings before but I think the time has come for SCWBA to follow BE rules and trust the Selectors.

At this point SM confirmed she was very concerned about the lack of opportunity for selection for the Johns Trophy squad and she had contacted other home counties to see if we could organise a Home



Counties league similar to the men's home counties. This would enable selectors to see players in a truly competitive situation other than just general competition. To date nothing has been heard as the Council meetings of various counties are not taking place until November time when it is hoped things will have improved.

SCBA had been working on their Areas and Divisions for some time and SCWBA Executive decided to wait until they had sorted out their area to see if we were able to fit in. SCWBA had made it clear at this time that if it did not suit our competition draws then we would not proceed. We therefore took all our competition entries in 2020 and put the clubs into their new areas. Although not perfect the draw was much fairer. When we did the same exercise with the 2019 competition entries, we were shocked to find that the entries were completely fair right across the board. After discussion with JT, we came across a solution that in order to maintain fairness, although the clubs are in their default areas for inter-county games, it would be at the discretion of the Competition Secretaries to move clubs from one area to another to enable fairness and equality in the draw for all competitions.

SM and the Executive knew this would upset one or two clubs for a variety of reasons but the whole purpose of this was fairness to all members. I cannot stress too strongly that had it not worked out we would have been looking at alternatives to bring the draws for competitions to be more fairly distributed. We do not know what 2021 will bring and indeed competition entries may well be decimated. I personally do not think that 2021 will be a fair reflection on what occurs with the competition draws and that we must give it at least until 2023 to see how it all goes. Clearly, we will need to look at the number of rounds played depending on the number of entries. I cannot stress too strongly we all felt that we had to do this for the fairness to everyone who enters competitions.

Around this time, both Associations received various notices from Bowls England of money being available to clubs through local authorities and initiatives from Sport England. The two Presidents, and the two Secretaries divided the County into four and each one contacted every club in his/her allocated area and it was surprising how many clubs were not aware that these funds were available to them. We also advised clubs that they could contact any member of SCBA or SCWBA if they needed any guidance or help. Both Presidents and Secretaries have received numerous calls from clubs about a variety of things, relating to toilet facilities, bar and catering facilities, sanitisation of equipment to name but a few.

Meantime, work on the Match System for the SCWBA has gone ahead with all badged players' details being put on the system to enable them to apply for matches on-line. This will not affect those ladies who do not have computers as letters will be sent out in the normal way. Clearly the Match Secretary and Secretary have some work to do to ensure that all the information is correct. Similarly, the Johns Trophy will also be dealt with on-line. Once a player is selected they will receive a confirmatory email and can then pay their money by BACS to the Treasurer. All the paperwork for the matches will then be produced automatically.

It was agreed very early on that we would add a further £500 each to the computer costs to enable a start to be made on a new website and also a computerised competition system.



Sadly, the website has come to a halt at the moment as it was felt the competition program needed to be dealt with first. This system will be better for players as they will be able to enter their results on the system immediately without having to ring a competition secretary with the result. They will also be able to see who they are drawn against in the next round. Once again those ladies without access to a computer will still be able to ring their results through in the usual way.

The County Secretaries and Competition Secretaries are all going to be busy testing and making sure the competition system works in readiness for the 2021 season.

The two Secretaries have been working on the Constitution and Rules. You will see there are a number of amendments in red which we will need to agree or not as the case may be for the Constitution.

The rules have changed to take account of the changes to the County Colour Policy/Badge Qualification. We have called it a policy as it does not just reflect on the earning of the County badge but also flashes and badges/flashes for the juniors, Johns Trophy, Walker and Balcombe Trophies and the Amy Rose.

We have also started work on the new Year Book for both SCBA and SCWBA combined. We are waiting to find out what the price will be for printing. As soon as we are able to update you on this we will do so. The draws for the women's competition will still be in the Year Book!

Bowls Surrey is looking to appoint a "Chandler" someone who will look after all the Surrey uniform. This person or persons will not serve on the Bowls Surrey Board but will keep all the stock of the uniform for both men and women. They will need to provide uniform as and when requested, keep a full record of all stock and order stock when it is running down. It is felt this will be a sensible way of dealing with the County uniform going forward.

Finally, I would like to thank the Executive for all their support during a very sad, worrying and challenging period. Our President has been magnificent in fulfilling her role as Communications Officer and I feel that she deserves a special mention. It is not easy to try and keep everyone informed and she certainly has had her work cut out in sending out numerous emails that at one point seemed to come in daily from Bowls England.

Sheron Mitchell

13 September 2020