



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2022/23**



**BOWLS
DEVELOPMENT
ALLIANCE.**



WELCOME TO OUR ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ● MALCOLM DOUGLAS



The BDA is now in its 13th year supporting the development of the sport in close partnership with the National Governing Bodies of Bowls. In my second term as Chair and soon to enter my 7th consecutive year, I have seen first-hand how the organisation has evolved and grown to become an essential central service provider across the bowls landscape.

2022 was a great example of how we are continuing to grow our relationships in the bowl's ecosystem by having increased representation on the BDA Board. The English Short-Mat Bowling Association and British Crown Green Bowling Association were confirmed as full members, joining long standing NGBs, Bowls England and the English Indoor Bowling Association. With Disability Bowls England also feeding into discussions, we are now in a unique position to have open dialogue on how we can improve our working relationships to develop and promote the sport. With that in mind, I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the ongoing collaboration between the BDA and the NGBs, taking collective responsibility for the development of the game and our disability partners.

I would also like to thank Sport England for having the confidence in the BDA as a system partner to deliver against their Uniting the Movement strategy with a successful funding bid taking us to 2027. The BDA staff are extremely committed to ensuring the sport continues to flourish and have spent year one of the funded cycle putting new programmes and initiatives in place to make that happen. I would like to thank our staff for their hard work throughout the year. The highlight, supporting grass root development around a very successful home Commonwealth Games.

The next four years will see the team deliver against the Board approved 'We Are Bowls' strategy which has seen a strong focus on threading community work into bowling clubs across the country. With an opportunity to encourage new people into the sport, the hope is that we can build the base of the participation pyramid and ultimately ensure that the sport continues to thrive through an increase in club membership.

It is my pleasure to support the continued development of our new strategy and to ensure we continue to work in an ethical, open, cohesive, and collaborative manner with our key partners.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ●

It has been an exciting year for the BDA as we entered the first full year of our new 'We Are Bowls' strategy 2022–2027. The strategy represents a new era of collaboration across the bowls network in partnership with Bowls England, the English Indoor Bowling Association, English Short Mat Association and Disability Bowls England. We also had the benefit of a home Commonwealth Games in summer 2022 and a unique opportunity to kick off our new strategy alongside ambitious plans for our sport to grow, evolve and thrive.

Going into our new five-year plan with a greater sense of purpose, our aim was to strengthen our role as a central service provider for our partners and to ensure we continued to support as many clubs and volunteers as possible, regardless of what code they play. We wanted to do this by prioritising our efforts on developing progressive and pro-active clubs whilst engaging with new communities. Increasing participation and continuing to lead on good governance and safeguarding across the sport also remained a key focus for us.

Through the support of Sport England and the announcement of a successful five-year funding bid in 2022, we have been able to put into practice a new model of delivery that we hoped would impact more members, clubs, and players than ever before.

The BDA Club Development Team have worked hard on shaping and improving the Community Club Hub programme which sits at the heart of our grassroots development. With over 14 Club Hubs engaged in the programme to date and a reach of over 300 community clubs this year, these have become the focus of our place-based approach to supporting and educating clubs, volunteers, and local communities. There are some great examples of community engagement across the Team. The Club Development Team have supported community clubs and their volunteers by increasing the amount of virtual and in-person workshops and seminars they are able to deliver, as well as enabling a diverse range of people to experience the sport for the first time.



Summer 2022 saw Bowls take centre stage at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games. Our Club Development Team worked in close partnership with Bowls England in delivering to over 2,400 participants across 150 community sessions. Through a group of dedicated Commonwealth Games Activators, we engaged with a wide variety of people including mental health organisations, refugee groups, those in isolation and people from a diverse background. It was great to have such positive engagement around the event and we will use the learnings to help reshape our club and community programme so we can continue to move forward and build on the success.

Our Just Bowl programme also continued its successful delivery, with over 150 care homes utilising the Just Bowl equipment, to date, as part of the Sport England Funded initiative. The team have engaged with over 1,500 participants and trained 398 staff members. The programme is slowly becoming more sustainable as it moves from being fully funded to a more commercial model. We hope this can bring some future income to the BDA to be reinvested into the sport.



Through the support of Sport England and the announcement of a successful five-year funding bid in 2022, we have been able to put into practice a new model of delivery.

Safeguarding remains one of the core services the BDA provides ensuring there is continuity of care across all NGBs in our sport. The purchase, upload and training of a new case management system was a very important improvement this year. This secure online system has facilitated the growing volume of work of the Bowls Safeguarding Case Management Group and now leads the way for our development of other shared services with the NGBs.

Overall, it has been a year of embedding new programmes, nurturing the important relationships with our partners, and evolving our work based on the learnings taken from the first year of our new strategy.

We are pleased to share our Annual Report and the overview of the fantastic work that has been carried out in the last 12 months at all levels and in partnership with our National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England, and partner organisations.

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

Club Development

- 14 Community Club Hubs participated in our Club Development programme
- 303 Clubs engaged through the Community Club Hub Programme
- 707 New Members
- 72 Community Programmes with 1,200 participants involved. An average of over 16 participants per programme.
- 85 Seminars hosted
- 210 Club Health Checks completed

Education

- 5 Education Courses created
- 9 Quick Guides created

Just Bowl

- Delivered to 49 care homes and 8 community groups
- Trained 101 members of staff
- Over 40 equipment sets purchased by care groups, community groups, charities, and bowls clubs

Commonwealth Games Activators

- 4 Activators in 5 areas of the country
- 151 individual groups worked with/ sessions delivered
- 2,438 individual participants
- 257 new members gained.

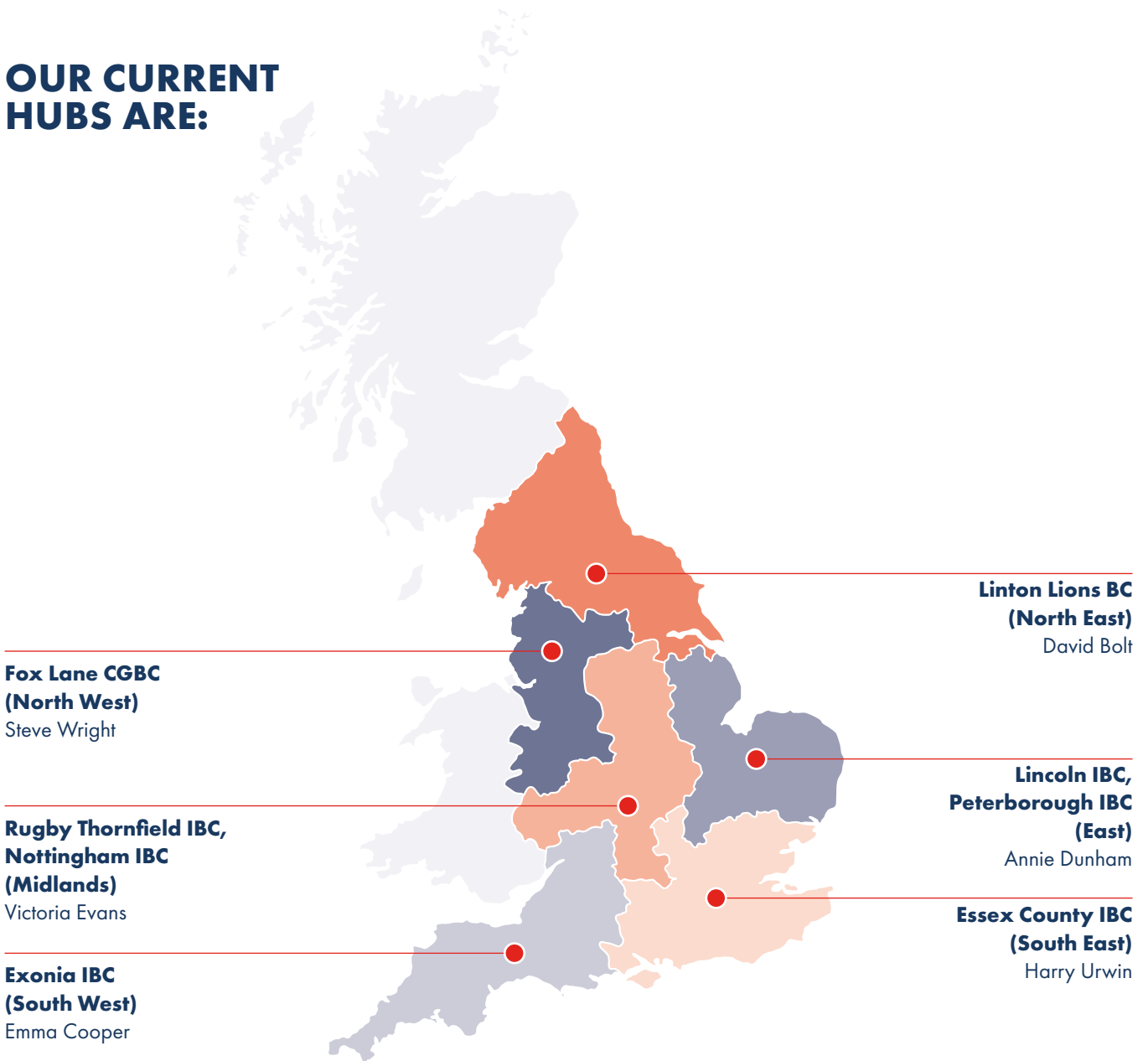
CLUB DEVELOPMENT ●

What is the Community Club Hub Programme?

The Club Development Team have been evolving and embedding the new and improved Community Club Hub Programme over the past 12 months. This programme has provided an opportunity to build relationships with clubs, volunteers, and wider organisations such as Active Partnerships and Community Groups by implementing core activities across several central Community Club Hubs. The Hubs allow our team to create a focal point to provide support to wider clubs and their volunteers across the area, developing networks focussing on sustainability for the future.

In the 2022/23 season over 300 clubs engaged with their local Community Club Hubs and 72 community sessions were delivered across our networks. The BDA Club Development team have been in dialogue with a variety of associations around the country, including Age Concern, MIND, Active Families North East, Parkinson's and a wide range of Health Organisations, Local Authorities, Active Partnerships, Residential Homes, and Schools with the aim to link up and promote the sport of Bowls through designated community sessions.

OUR CURRENT HUBS ARE:





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**In the 2022/23
season over 300
clubs engaged
with their local
community hubs.**

Building new relationships has provided great opportunities for clubs to work in partnership with organisations and has helped introduce new faces to the sport. Our community sessions have offered the chance for clubs to engage with a wide range of participants in which the sport has helped to contribute positively on their physical, social, and mental wellbeing.

Some examples of successful programmes include Bowl for Health, which has played a key role in helping to tackle social isolation by bringing people with shared life experiences together. Erdington Court BC has also delivered sessions for a local ladies' cancer support group, whilst Exonia BC has set up sessions aimed at people with Parkinson's disease and their families. The sessions at Exonia have resulted in a dramatic improvement in the participants balance and mobility. Lincoln IBC has also helped to tackle social isolation in the community through regular 'Mindfulness Doodling' sessions with some of the group's participants taking part in the club's Bowl for Health sessions too.

We believe that local communities are at the heart of all bowling clubs and through our work we are starting to understand how to introduce new audiences to the sport. We have already seen how the game can be beneficial to those who participate in bowls or those who just want to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee in a warm and social environment. Through the success of this place-based work, we aim to continue to build a host of networks across the country, working in partnership with an even wider variety of stakeholders.

The hubs are also a base for providing education to our volunteers through a variety of workshops, courses, and seminars. Since December 2022 our NEW Online Weeks of Learning has targeted those who can't access face-to-face learning but instead receive valuable education via online seminars free of charge. This offer is available to all clubs affiliated to our partner National Governing Bodies.

Some of the topics include;

- A guide to running Open Days
- Recruitment and Retention
- Marketing and Promotion
- Social Media and Website development
- Good Governance
- First Aid
- Safeguarding Adults and Children
- Coaching (Level 1)
- Inclusion and Diversity



The Commonwealth Games engagement proved to be key for both community and club sessions; successfully creating 257 new or potential members for clubs across the country.

BOWL FOR HEALTH

The continued success of the Bowl for Health programme was evident this year with many of our Hubs and Community Clubs receiving funding and support from their Active Partnerships through the collaborative work of the BDA.

A good example is Erdington Court Bowls Club where Bowl for Health began in 2022 with funding from the Community Club Hub Programme and an average of six participants at each session. The club is now running weekly Bowl for Health sessions that are averaging ten participants each week. These are open to all, with a nominal £2 fee covering a portion of the green fee and refreshment costs. Most importantly the club has created a pathway to help transition people from Bowl for Health into other sessions at the club.

Additionally, Two Community Clubs in Warwickshire (Avenue BC and Avon Valley IBC) are running Bowl for Health sessions this summer after receiving funding from Think Active to cover the cost of the programme.

South Shields IBC has also hosted two 8-week cohorts, each catering for 12 attendees, and is now running a 12-month open session which averages 22 participants each week. This programme has proved extremely popular so far and has been funded by RISE and Age Concern to allow as many people to benefit from the sessions as possible.

To date 52 individuals have taken part in the sessions at South Shields, which has resulted in 16 new members from the initial two cohorts alone: A conversion rate of 67%.

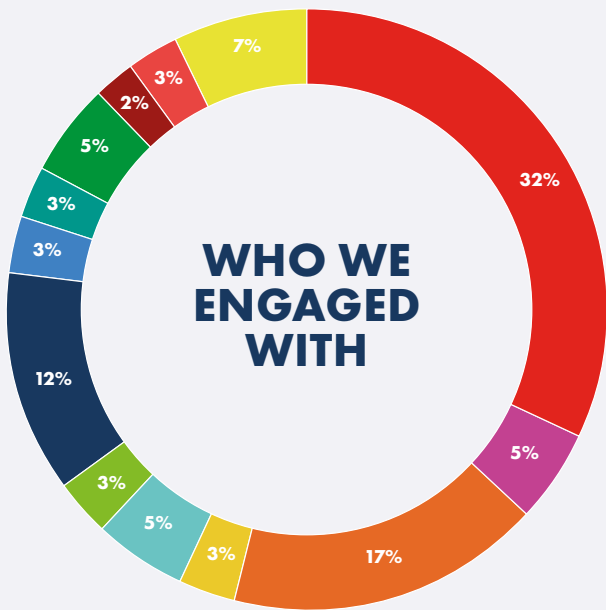
COMMONWEALTH GAMES – BIRMINGHAM 2022

Year in numbers

- 4 Activators in 5 areas of the country
- Number of groups worked with/sessions run – 151
- Individual participants – 2,438
- New members/potential members gained – 257

Throughout the build-up period and the duration of the Commonwealth Games, our four Commonwealth Games Activators worked alongside their local Club and Community Development Officers to create a diary of events that catered for a wide array of community groups and organisations.

These Activators were jointly funded by the BDA and Bowls England to help promote the sport of Bowls and to capitalise on the opportunities provided by a home Commonwealth Games. A large proportion of the activator sessions were centred around the Birmingham area due to the amount of large-scale Commonwealth Games events and multi-sport experiences taking place. However, our activators across the rest of the country were also able to deliver a full programme of activities. Many sessions were recurring throughout the period, with several Holiday, Activity and Food programmes taking part during the school summer holidays allowing the children to develop their skills over the course of several weeks.



- Over 50 – **32%**
- Special Education Needs – **5%**
- Schools/Under 16s – **17%**
- Refugees – **3%**
- Mental Health – **5%**
- Multicultural – **3%**
- Council Summer Events – **12%**
- Stroke – **3%**
- Dementia – **3%**
- Bowl for Health – **5%**
- Occupational Therapy – **2%**
- Leamington CWG – **3%**
- Other – **7%**

Whilst many of these sessions took place out in the community, there were also sessions hosted at bowls clubs which provided attendees with an immediate pathway into the club structure. This pathway proved to be key for both community and club sessions; successfully creating 257 new or potential members for clubs across the country.

During the games, the CWG Activators and our Club and Community Development Officers also volunteered at the Bowls England live site in the Pump Room Gardens, Leamington Spa. This site comprised of two rinks and both new-age and traditional bowls to allow people of all ages to 'have a go' at the sport for free. The location of this site was key and was situated in an area of high footfall around the 'big screen' viewing area and refreshment facilities. This gave the sport great exposure and created source of interest for passers-by.

This period gave us the opportunity to reflect on the 'Activator model' and think about how we could incorporate this into our work moving forward. Overall, the scheme was successful in showing that this model is well received within the community setting and would allow us to reach a much wider, and more diverse audience in the future.

In some areas of the country, the programme was so popular that it meant we were overstretched with bookings and unable to attend every community organisation that requested sessions. However, this can also be taken as a positive as it highlights that there is a strong appetite for this style of delivery out in the community.



**HERE ARE SOME
MORE GREAT
EXAMPLES OF
JOINED UP
COMMUNITY
WORK ACROSS
OUR HUBS;**



COMMUNITY
CLUB HUB
PROGRAMME

North East

South Shields IBC had an initial 2 Bowl for Health cohorts of around 12 attendees every Thursday for 8 weeks gaining 20 new members from the 2 groups. The sessions were initially facilitated by the BDA and jointly funded by the Active Partnership (RISE) and Age Concern.

Due to their successful delivery, the Active Partnership (RISE) continued to fund 2 rinks every week with refreshments and these sessions were open to all. The programme exceeded expectations with approximately 21 attendees utilising the opportunity with funding being extended to open a further rink due to the popularity of the sessions. This is a great example of how we are working and connecting with our partners to provide sustainable opportunities to clubs.

North West

Fox Lane BC hosted a Bowls Festival in May where 74 children, 8 schools and 3 clubs participated. The day was organised collaboratively between the BDA, Active Partnership, and the County Crown Green Development Officer. This was followed a week later by a "Big Bowls Weekend" open session where a further 66 new people attended.



CLUB HEALTH CHECKER

Over the past year, our free, online self-assessment tool has been well received by clubs affiliated to partner NGBs across the country, which include Bowls England, English Indoor Bowling Association, British Crown Green Bowling Association, and the English Short Mat Bowling Association. Over 200 clubs have completed the 30-minute questionnaire to date, highlighting the desire from clubs to grow.

Midlands

Erdington Court BC engagement resulted in the club successfully applying for funding where they received a total of approximately £11,500 from a local Neighbourhood Networking Scheme, the local Council and Crowdfunding with the CO-OP matching their target raised over the last year. The money has been used for their community-based projects including delivering a Bowl for Health programme which has grown into a great success. It hosts a variety of people from the local community and will continue throughout 2023. The funding has also been used to subsidise a Parkinson's group who attend on a weekly basis and has contributed to the Warm Space project which the club has run over the winter months, providing a happy, relaxing, and friendly environment for people of the local area.

East

Mindfulness Doodling is led by Dr Sandra McCutcheon of Mindfulness Skills4Life and sponsored currently by Lindsay Johnson of the Lincoln City Council. The LIBC Restaurant has played host to the sessions..

The attendees are people who have been identified as requiring help with their mental health and the sessions have been full at over 20 attendees each week, all of whom benefit from social company. This is a fantastic initiative for all parties concerned as well as a huge benefit to the community.

One attendee commented that it gave them 'A fabulous new interest and a new lease of life'. Some of the people have joined Lincoln's Bowl4Health sessions in the past and several have become full club members – nearly all of them enjoy a meal in the cafe after the sessions each Tuesday.

It is encouraging to see that many clubs are now returning to complete the Club Health Checker for a second and even third time to see the development they have been able to make over the past 12 months. These clubs have all seen improvements on their original results and have taken on board the advice they received to help their club become more sustainable for years to come.

The Club and Community Development Officers have used the Club Health Checker as a way of engaging with local community clubs surrounding the Club Hubs. The one-to-one appointments have meant that clubs are able to get even more bespoke support through the evaluation of their Club Health Checker report and the creation of an action plan to help them move forward with their goals.



CASE STUDY: ERDINGTON COURT BOWLS CLUB

Erdington Court was a warm and friendly club with the appetite to grow in terms of membership and community engagement with both indoor and outdoor greens.

The clubs playing membership had decreased due to the impact of Covid-19. However, they were keen to attract a new audience, offer their facilities to the local community and enable more community groups to experience bowls. Lacking in coaches, they wanted more qualified members within the club, and they wanted to increase footfall through their doors with the focus on achieving more playing members.

They signed up to the Pay and Play Platform and introduced a new fast paced format of the game called Bowls Bash which has proved very successful with new members and now is played at the club on a regular basis. They use this format with the Bowls for Health programme and the Parkinson groups along with target and fun bowls activities, using the Just Bowl equipment they received for being a Hub.

Within the last year they have hosted a Level One Coaching Course, an SEN Colleges Festival, created partnership work with a local primary school which they are continuing with into 2023, and provided sessions for a local disability group.

After a successful bid for £11,500 in 2022, a continuous Bowl for Health programme was funded, predominantly targeting those in social isolation; long term health conditions; people with disabilities and those want to become more active.

The club are making these sessions sustainable by supplementing the funding through small session contributions from the participants.

CASE STUDY: RUGBY THORNFIELD IBC

Rugby Thornfield Indoor Bowls Club have been working with the 'Health Exchange' in Rugby and Warwickshire, who provide health and wellbeing services to groups.

They have been working with the organisation since October 2022 – providing their function room for a social prescribing group who meet once a month. This is a PAT (Pets as Therapy) Hub and has been used as a case study that the organisation plans to mirror in more locations. This has proved to be very successful, due to the facilities and transport links available at the club and has been pivotal in providing a hub for the social prescribing team in the Rugby area.

For Rugby Thornfield IBC, this has provided greater links to their local community and other organisations including, Age UK, CAVA, and dementia groups as well as the social prescribing teams. They are now working with the social prescribing team (PCN's) and offering sessions once per week for new participants and they are going to be working with Age UK and a dementia group to set up new sessions for certain groups and individual.

The club has had MIND training, taken part in a Coach Bowls Inclusion course and they are a Dementia friendly club.

They are hoping to build more links and relationships throughout their community to offer specific sessions enabling people to participate in bowls and to take part in the social aspects of being at the club and involved within the sport. They also provide follow up sessions and other pathways into the sport and to becoming a member.





The funding has also supported weekly sessions in partnership with a Parkinson's groups and their local Headway branch. Part of the funding allowed them to open as a Warm Space three times per week to the local community over the winter into spring 2023 which provided a safe and enjoyable experience to those that attended. Their facilities are now starting to be used more by community groups and private parties.

They have improved relationships with Sport Birmingham, the local authority, local neighbourhood networking scheme, local community groups, doctors and social prescribing coordinators. All of which have contributed to implementing their plans and successful funding bids.

Other improvements within the club include the introduction of an online booking system, a move to card only payments, free Wi-Fi, and the installation of card operated vending machines. Monthly payments of membership subscriptions became an additional option which has proved successful with both new and current members. They are now using social media, particularly Facebook more regularly which in turn is bringing more people through the doors and creating more links with the local community.

Over the winter season of 2022/2023 the club saw an increase in crown green players playing at the club and provided further links to crown green clubs in the local area. The BDA introduction meeting held there, provided the club to link with other clubs to share good practice and support.

This engagement work has been of huge benefit to the club, helping to raise their profile within the community and establish links with a range of partner organisations. Their membership has steadily grown; however, this focus needs to be a constant not only for Erdington but across all clubs to build members and casual players to ensure longevity and sustainability. With all the groundwork over the last year and with partner support they are now in a strong position and can build upon this years work in the future.

CASE STUDY: EXONIA BC

Exonia Bowls Club have been running weekly sessions for people with Parkinson's and their relatives since January 2023 every Thursday. These sessions have received the support of the Parkinson's nurses at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital who have been recommending the sessions to their patients. From the initial 8-week cohort, one participant has already joined the club and begun playing in leagues and friendly fixtures, whilst the remaining participants all intend to join the club along with their partners at the start of the outdoor season.

A portion of the Exonia Community Club Hub budget was utilised to provide the club with accessibility equipment, including walking sticks and a walking frame, which has been very beneficial to those participating in the sessions. From those attending these sessions, 50% of participants have reported an increase in their balance and mobility levels since they have been attending which has seen further partnership discussions with Parkinson's UK.

“It has been good to play a sport with other Parkinson's sufferers. It has been really good; everyone is so friendly and helpful”

“This group has also been important for the wives of the bowlers.”



EDUCATION.

The BDA has continued to develop and evolve its Education offer over the last 12 months. An online Education platform was created to support clubs and volunteers to learn and improve their knowledge on key subjects which underpin strong and forward thinking clubs. The courses developed are aimed at an entry point level and cover the following topics:

- Bowls Trans & Gender Diverse Policy
- Running a Successful Open Day
- Celebrating Diversity in Bowls
- Introduction to Safeguarding in Bowls
- Digital Marketing

These free online courses (which take no longer than 30 minutes) showcase the type of learning that affiliated NGB clubs get access to in much more detail. They are supported by our highly knowledgeable and approachable Club and Community Development Officers. It remains a core part of the BDA offer in partnership with the National Governing Bodies of the sport.

The BDA has also developed a number of quick guides on the education pages of our website. These are short information guides around key topics for clubs and volunteers which can be used at club or used on notice boards to educate wider club members.

The main offer and educational support for clubs and volunteers exists through our online Weeks of Learning. These learning weeks have been created to give more in depth support on a variety of subjects including but not limited to:

- Club Helpers Workshop
- Club Health Checker awareness and understanding
- Play Bowls and Bowls Bash awareness and understanding
- Recruitment and Retention
- Utilising your Website and Social Media
- Basic Introduction to Safeguarding

All Weeks of Learning are free to access courses, promoted and advertised on the Education page of the BDA website. They are one of the core benefits to affiliating to one of the following National Governing Bodies – Bowls England, English Indoor Bowling Association, English Short Mat Bowling Association and British Crown Green Bowling Association. For more information on the wide range of support and benefit package on offer please visit the NGB websites for more details.

We will continue to develop our offer and courses over the coming year and base our courses, quick guides, and Weeks of Learning topics on the needs of the sport its clubs and volunteers. We are constantly collecting information and feedback from the grassroots of the sport. This information will help shape key topics that are needed and essential to sustaining and developing strong, well governed, and safeguarded clubs for the benefit of its participants, members, volunteers and spectators.





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JUST BOWL ●

Overall, 2022/23 has been a busy year for the Just Bowl team. We have explored multiple avenues of delivery and engaged with a range of different sectors including care, charity, education, disability, and sport development. In 2023/24 we will utilise this knowledge to develop new commercial opportunities, including the launch of our new Activator Programme.



Engagement with Care Homes

Over the past 12 months Just Bowl has been progressing toward a return to normal service in the care home sector. Wearing a mask is still required in some homes, as is proof of a negative lateral flow test, but despite this the Just Bowl team have persevered and have now delivered to 150 care homes from 2020–2023, including 49 care homes this year (2022/23). During this 3-year period we have engaged over 1500 participants and trained 398 staff members. Therefore, we are pleased to state that we have achieved our Sport England targets in these two areas.

Partners and Sport England Research

Just Bowl have continued to work with Headway, the head and spinal injury charity, and have made significant positive progress. We have now visited 15 Headway sites to carry out research into the impact of Just Bowl on members' mental wellbeing, cognitive skills, and communicative skills. A report from our research partner, Sheffield Hallam University, is due to be completed by April 2023. This will include data taken from physical tests and questionnaires, also supplemented with images and quotes provided by participants who took part in the project. Just Bowl is thoroughly looking forward to sharing the report once published and encourage all readers to follow our social media platforms to be kept up to date.

Our work with the Stroke Association continues to develop and the team have worked with a small number of stroke support groups across England, providing training and equipment to staff and volunteers. We are thankful to the association for working in partnership with us throughout the previous 12 months and look forward to further positive engagement moving into 2023/24.

In 2022/23 Just Bowl became a member of NAPA (National Activities Providers Association) as a registered, recognised, and trusted activity provider for care homes. We are pleased to announce the renewal of our membership for 2023/24 and our continued position within this excellent network of activity providers. Joining NAPA has increased the visibility of Just Bowl across the care sector, and we are grateful to the association for their support over the previous 12 months. Looking ahead, we are in conversations with NAPA to advertise a Just Bowl group session with some of their members. We aim to collaborate with the BDA Club Development Team and utilise a Community Hub Club as a hosting venue.

Commercial Partnerships and Opportunities

Our commercial partnership with Maria Mallaband Care Group has been highly successful and has grown significantly over the last 12 months. Since our last report, excellent feedback was received from the 6 pilot homes and following this, 16 homes received Just Bowl training and equipment. As a result, Maria Mallaband have requested that Just Bowl be rolled out to all 80+ care homes the company manage. 37 Maria Mallaband managed care homes have now received Just Bowl equipment and training, continuing into 2023. Just Bowl would like to thank Maria Mallaband for their custom and the support of their Lifestyle team.

Successful commercial partnerships and opportunities allow Just Bowl to plan and work towards becoming a financially independent part of the Bowls Development Alliance, paving the way for a future concept that is sustainable and commercially viable. In recognition of this, Just Bowl is launching a new Activator Programme. This will allow for diversification of our delivery method so that we are able to offer hourly paid sessions to care homes and community groups that are unable to purchase equipment and/or do not have the staff to run sessions for their residents and clients. The team have begun to develop contacts within the East of England and the delivery of sessions are to begin in April 2023.



Other Areas of Work

In March 2023, the Just Bowl team attended the UK Care Week at the NEC and exhibited over two days. The exhibition was very well attended, and the team were inundated with interest from care homes, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, community groups, special educational needs schools/colleges and mainstream schools. Our new hourly sessions were advertised and after follow-up with these contacts Just Bowl hope to gain further custom.

Since our last report, our proposal to access funding to hold a Special Educational Needs (SEN) project in two Birmingham SEN colleges was successful. This project created an opportunity for cross organisational work between the BDA Club Development Team and Just Bowl. Our Midlands Officer hosted sessions in two SEN colleges across the catchment area which culminated in a Special Educational Needs colleges' festival at the 2022 Midlands Community Club Hub – Erdington Court Bowls Club. This project received excellent feedback and introduced the sport of bowls to a new group of potential bowlers, encouraging participants to access their local bowls club after the conclusion of the project. Just Bowl are looking forward to continued cross organisational work in 2023/24.

PRIORITIES FOR 2023/24

Care Homes

In the next 12 months the Just Bowl team will prioritise providing training and equipment to the 50 remaining care homes needed to meet our Sport England target of 200. We are currently on track to do this successfully.

Publication of our latest research

Over the next two months our priority is to engage with our research partner at Sheffield Hallam University to ensure our latest evaluation is produced, published, and shared across our platforms. We are looking forward to sharing this with our participants and thank them for their engagement with the project.

Activator Programme

Over the next 12 months our priority is to launch, develop and extend the Just Bowl Activator Programme. With the initial launch taking place in the East, we will then extend the service further across England, introducing Activators to manage and hold fun and engaging paid sessions in a range of settings within their relevant areas. We believe this model will be key to the sustainability of the Just Bowl programme as we move into 2024/25.

NEWTON HOUSE CASE STUDY

We place a high importance on gathering case studies and testimonials. These allow us to understand how care home residents and support group members respond to playing bowling games with the Just Bowl equipment. One of the care homes we visited in 2022 provided this excellent quote:

“Just Bowl has been a huge asset within Newton House. It allows all residents of mixed mobility to join in the fun, and engage in fun teamwork, exercise and increasing a feeling of confidence. We can take the set all around the home (Newton House is made up of 4 separate communities). The set is lightweight and very easy to carry. It is also wonderful for being used outside, which we have done on several occasions including the Queen’s Jubilee Garden party and games afternoons with our local cub scouts. We were delighted that Just Bowl was introduced into our homes, it is beneficial in so many ways and we continue to have as much fun with the set now as we did in the beginning.”

Karen – Activities Coordinator at Newton House Care Home in Grantham, within Barchester Healthcare. December 2022.

QUOTES FROM THE MEMBERS

Headway South-East London and North-West Kent (SELNWK) provide services and support to individuals who have been affected by acquired brain injury. We introduced Just Bowl to this group in April 2022, and bowling games were included into their regular sessions throughout the year. These insightful quotes have been taken directly from members who used Just Bowl in their sessions.

“I love the competitive side of playing bowls.”

“Bowls helped me with my balance and co-ordination.”

“It may be simple for other members to do exercises like rolling the ball, but for me it’s a challenge, so Bowls has helped me with small movement and exercises.”

“I really enjoyed doing Bowls. I would also like to try and play it as a team.”

“It helped me with improving my movement and gave me confidence to challenge myself.”

SAFEGUARDING ●

The 2022 Whyte Review into British Gymnastics continued to highlight the need for safeguarding to be a high priority for all sports organisations. UK Sport and Sport England both endorsed the recommendations of the final Report in full. Our Lead Safeguarding Officer (LSO) has attended workshops to explain the responses to the Whyte Review and to ensure that the BDA and the sport of Bowls is working in line with best practice and these recommendations.

The NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit celebrated a victory, in June 2022, as the law related to abuses of positions of trust changed to include coaches and others in positions of trust within sport. We promoted this important change through to our clubs with the help of the bowls NGBs and Coach Bowls. This featured in our June 2022 Safeguarding Bulletin. We have continued to publish a bulletin every two months and are grateful to our partner NGBs for promoting this through their own mailings and social media channels.

We have continued to support the sport of bowls by taking the lead on the oversight of Safeguarding policies, guidance, and referrals. Our LSO works very closely with the LSOs of each of the Bowls National Governing Bodies (NGBs) to coordinate this essential shared service. We are delighted that the LSO of the English Carpet Bowls Association joined the five other NGB leads in 2022, on our Case Management Group and Safeguarding Steering Group.

We underwent the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) annual Safeguarding Review in November 2022. It was clear that the review has been tightened to respond to the Whyte Review and the CPSU review team were joined by a representative of Sport England to provide 'check and challenge' input to the process. We were pleased to be able to maintain the judgement that we met their criteria with no conditions applied.

This year we have been able to have two 'in-person' development days bringing the LSOs together to explore key themes and work on continuing to share our expertise. The second of these meetings was focused on exploring the evidence requirements for completion of the Ann Craft Trust Safeguarding Adults framework which has become a funding requirement of the latest five-year funding cycle. We plan to submit our information for assessment of this framework in May 2023.

The guidance documents and templates designed to support bowls clubs, have been fully revised over the year and uploaded to our website. It has been good to have queries from clubs which has informed changes and positive feedback which supports ongoing development. We asked to take part in a CPSU volunteer review of our safeguarding website information in 2022. This 'mystery shop' outlined that we could improve the information aimed specifically at children and parents. As a result, new guidance documents have been produced and uploaded to fill this gap. We also participated in a piece of research into response rates related to safeguarding help in March 2023 and have been made aware that our response rate was good.





We have continued to support the Sport of Bowls by taking the lead on the oversight of safeguarding policies, guidance and referrals.

We have completed our first full year of using 'MyConcern' – the bespoke safeguarding software we purchased in January 2022. This has proven to be very user friendly and the NGB LSOs have reported how helpful it has been to be able to record and revisit information through the system. As of March, we have received, recorded, and responded to 49 safeguarding concerns since January 2022. The system has also allowed us to respond to two anonymised research projects exploring safeguarding in sport, one of which is a requirement of our participation in the Sport England funded Case Management Support Project, led by Lime Culture and Sports Resolutions.

Our Education Officer produced an introductory online safeguarding package which we are encouraging clubs to use with their Safeguarding Officers or other committee members. It can also serve as an introduction for those undertaking coaching qualifications although they will need to complete the more detailed safeguarding training offered by Coach Bowls.

Safeguarding does not stand still, and it has been important for our own LSO and NGB LSOs to undertake ongoing training. This training has included 3 LSOs and our Director of Welfare and Safety undertaking the Ann Craft Trust Level 3 training. In addition, our own LSO has completed the Lime Culture Lead Safeguarding Officer Development Programme.

Safeguarding Priorities for 2023/24

- Completion of the Ann Craft Trust Safeguarding Adults Framework plus development of any actions that emerge from the exercise
- Consult with children in the sport, their parents/carers and under-represented groups to identify any safeguarding related concerns they may have or things they wish to celebrate
- Maintain our 'met without conditions' rating in the revised CPSU review for 2023
- Develop forums or other methods of support for club safeguarding officers across the different codes of bowls

GOVERNANCE ●

A new Senior Independent Non-executive Director was appointed in the summer of 2022. Paul Humphreys brings a wealth of experience in the sport and an understanding of Club Development having worked in the sector prior to moving to his current role in the Inland Revenue. He chairs the Audit Committee, bringing new practical ideas to its operation in reviewing the budget, accounts, and the risk register.

Important work has been concluded by the Chair, Malcolm Douglas, in negotiation of changes to the Articles of Association. The revisions formally acknowledge the reintroduction of the representatives of the British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA) and the English Short Mat Bowling Association (ESMBA) to the Board of the BDA. Additionally, individualised, revised Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) were created and agreed between the

BDA and the four partner National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and also between the BDA and Disability Bowls England. These MoUs will be revised annually to reflect any changes in the working relationship between the BDA and its partners, particularly reflecting the differing opportunities to support each organisation through the work of the Development Team.



Bowls has the potential to be a truly inclusive sport and we intend for our strategy and action plan to reflect this.



The Board approved the establishment of a new Data Forum in October 2022, led by Non-executive Director Amelia Lewis. It was charged with exploring the approach taken to securing and utilising membership data by the partner NGBs, with the aim of proposing a shared approach that would meet their needs and those of the BDA, recognising the limitations placed upon collection and use of data by the UK GDPR. Ultimately, we need to better understand our membership data across the sport, acknowledging that many participants play under more than one code of the sport.

A major feature of the governance work this year has been the steps taken to recognise and respond to the revised Sport England/UK Sport Code for Sports Governance. A 'gap analysis' was conducted and presented to the Board in April 2022. A number of documents have been created or updated and approved by the Board, to support the evidencing of compliance with the new elements of the Code. The whole team has been involved in the creation of our new People Plan and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. The evidencing exercise needs to be completed by the end of April 2023, and Sport England will then assess the evidence and provide an Action Plan if required.

While the essential elements of our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy had been developed in 2022, we decided to postpone further development as Sport England had promoted that they would be providing support for all NGBs to develop their newly required Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). The work on this has begun, with completion of the fact-finding questionnaire and arrangement of our 'triage' meeting with our consultant. We look forward to integrating the established elements of the EDI Strategy, findings from our Data Forum, planning work undertaken at our Team Meeting in September 2022 and the suggested DIAP format which will emerge from consultancy meetings. Bowls has the potential to be a truly inclusive sport and we intend for our strategy and action plan to reflect this.



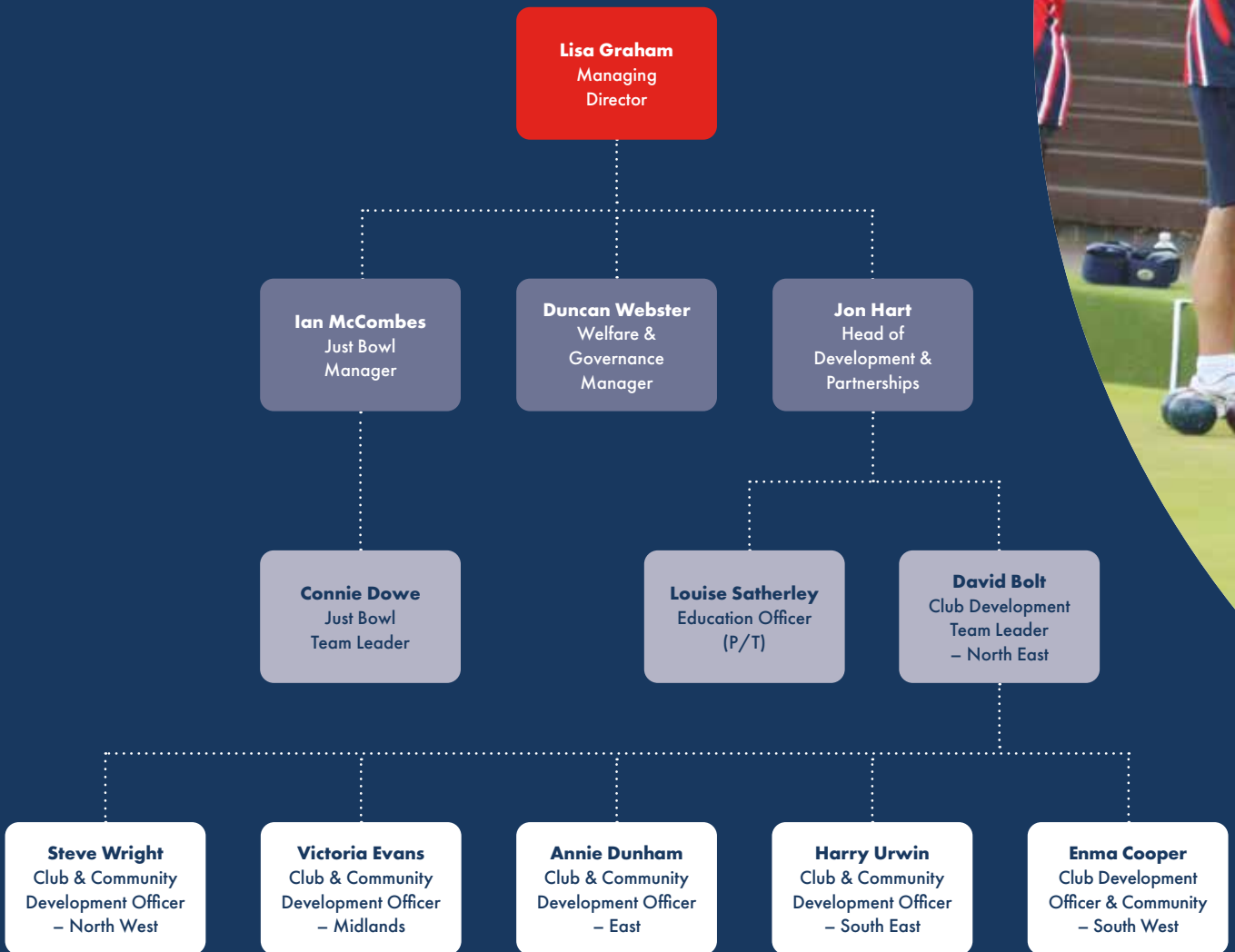
The Governance priorities for 2023/24 are as follows:

- To complete the evidencing of compliance with the Tier 3 requirements of the Code for Sports Governance
- Response to any action plan resulting from the compliance exercise
- Completion of the BDA's Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan
- Continuing to cascade good governance through the Bowls NGBs and our partner organisations.

Attendance Records of BDA Board Meetings: April 2022 – March 2023

Members	Role	Possible Attendance	Actual Attendance
Malcolm Douglas	Chair / INED	4	4
Paul Humphreys	Senior INED	3	3
Amelia Lewis	INED	4	4
Mark Bircumshaw	British Crown Green Bowling Association	4	4
Jon Cockroft	Bowls England (represented by Alistair Hollis on 1 occasion)	4	4
Barry Hedges	English Short Mat Bowling Association	4	4
Peter Thompson	English Indoor Bowling Association	4	4
Steve Watson	Disability Bowls England	4	4
Lisa Graham	Managing Director of the BDA; ex-officio Director	1	1
Jon Hart	Standing in for Lisa Graham (maternity leave)	3	3
Duncan Webster	BDA (Board Secretary) – from January 2022	4	4

THE TEAM.





ABOUT US & OUR PARTNERS. ●

The Bowls Development Alliance is a partnership organisation with a core purpose to; 'sustain, grow and develop the sport in collaboration with the Bowls family'.

Created by the Sport's National Governing Bodies to channel Sport England investment into the sport, the Bowls Development Alliance's primary goal is to increase participation in bowls whilst ensuring the sport is inclusive, safe, and accessible for all. It champions collaborative working across the sport and it works to develop NGB-affiliated clubs and their volunteers, safeguard participants and share best practice. It is a critical time for the sport of bowls to articulate its contribution to boosting activity levels across the country and helping people realise the physical and mental benefits of playing sport.

We look forward to working closely with the National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners and developing a new, shared vision for growing participation in the sport.





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