

English Bowls Umpires Association

Minutes of an Executive Meeting held on 16 August 2015 at Leamington Spa.

Present

Mavis Wellington	–	Chairman
Vernon Findell	–	Secretary/Treasurer
Jessie Clark	-	Deputy Secretary
Phyl Jones	–	Deputy Chairman
Allan Thornhill	-	Development Officer
Val Coldwell	–	Area Secretary
Ray Keen	–	Area Secretary
Brain Burton	–	Area Secretary
Bob Penny	–	Area Secretary
Vic Perry	–	Chief examiner

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Mavis welcomed Vic Perry and all the Executive members to the meeting. She explained that the room was only available for an hour and a half so it would be necessary to move speedily through the agenda.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Carol Watt Sullivan – Area Secretary/Safeguarding Officer and John Davies – Area Secretary

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Bob Penny and seconded by Val Coldwell and duly signed by the Chairman.

Jessie asked that copies of the minutes be emailed to all members of the Executive, but it was explained to her that they were placed on the Association Web site.

4. Matters arising

Vernon said that Drakes Pride had not after all donated chalk sprays to the Association.

Bob said that the document he had prepared for those working at Leamington had not been distributed.

5. Correspondence

Correspondence received by the Secretary was summarised and was available to members if they wished to see it.

A letter had been received from Taunton Deane IBC asking for umpires. It was agreed that Ray would reply as the Club was in his area dealing with their request and reminding them that such requests should be sent to him and not Vernon.

6. Secretary's Report.

Vernon reported as follows:-

Since the last meeting we have lost 5 members of the Association, J.W. "Bill" King , Peter DGLISH, Bill Hellier, Clive Ashby and Cliff Springett.

I am sure that you are all aware of the World Bowls Series, and as my previous e-mail it was words well sent!

Membership seems to fluctuate, but we now have the grand total of 95 markers, and 553 umpires.

I might add that I did a Markers Course for 12 people the other night and would like to congratulate Allan for all the hard work he has put into it. My pupils were very impressed, so may I add was I. For those who have not taken the course I highly recommend it, it will certainly gee up some of our fellow umpires, and then maybe one day we will have perfection at Leamington have joined the ranks of umpires which is also very good.

I would like to thank all the co-ordinators and assistants who have, and continue to run the National final at Leamington; it makes my job of sorting out the whole programme worthwhile.

By the time you read this I am sure we will know the results, but hope the applicants and re-tests for the ITO grade have all passed.

We now have 5 new umpires who have joined our ranks, all from Bowls England H/Q, and when he gets a chance we will have a 6th one, namely Tony Allcock MBE. I would love to see the players faces when he comes out to mark!!

By the BE H/Q staff being umpires it reduces the "silly" queries from the bowling fraternity, as they now answer a lot more.

7. Treasurer's Report

Vernon supplied the following accounts and explanations:-

Notes on accounts

SALES

Sales up, hence also the increase of purchases.

Course/Exam fees up, due to a lot of markers courses taking place, for a reasonable amount of expenditure to run them.

Subs down, these are adjusted from the prepaid subs at the end of the year.

Grants, £2300-00 paid by EIBA in October.

Donations down, due to £100-00 levy.

PURCHASES

Purchases up, see Sales.

Course /Exam fees down, less training courses claims.

OVERHEADS

Post and phone down.

Travelling, this figure is actually £7873-00 as it includes the £12375-00 from BE for Leamington duties

Print & Stationery down.

Accountancy & Insurance up, auditor put his account in this year, instead of last.

Maintenance 2 year web domain cost.

Depreciation put on at year end.

From: Month 1, January 2015
To: Month 12, December 2015
Chart of Accounts:

Actual

<u>Sales</u>	
Affiliation Fees	0.00
Blazers, General, Manuals & Training DVD's	5965.55
Course/Exam Fees	4089.35
Subscriptions Received	4840.00
Grants - E.B.A./E.I.B.A.	9000.00
Donations Received	966.50
	24861.40

<u>Purchases</u>	
Purchases	3325.49
Production of Manuals	2726.66
Course/Exam Expenses	2144.06
Development Expenses	0.00
	8196.21

<u>Overheads</u>	
Postage & Telephones	1259.69
Travelling	[4502.10]
Printing & Stationery	887.12
Computer Costs	79.98
Accountancy & Insurance	330.50
Maintenance & Equipment Hire	153.60
Flowers & Donations Paid	25.00
Bank Charges & Interest	-7.58
Depreciation	0.00
Friendly Matches	0.00
	[1773.79]

Net Profit/(Loss): 18438.98

8. Development Officer's Report

Allan reported as follows:-

Laws of the Sport Crystal Mark 3rd Edition

All of the training materials were updated over the winter and were used for the first time in February. There are a few anomalies in some of the exam papers but we are slowly weeding those out.

We are still getting a lot of questions relating to the laws and these are being answered as they come. They do seem to come in themes, which is a bit odd. Bizarrely we still receive the ludicrous questions such as "is marking a bowl with a cross illegal" – who thinks this stuff up?

Home Study Manual

The revised training manual is selling well still. The photos and some of the text were updated but the main change was to the Laws section. New candidates are receiving a copy of the manual and DVD with their applications and their knowledge is superb when they come to a course. In many cases better than experienced umpires.

Workshops

Six workshops have been held since the beginning of the year with most areas being covered. Good numbers of attendees on most of the workshops. There are more planned for later in the year and already dates for 2016 being arranged.

I must ask that Area Secretaries arrange workshop dates and let me know as soon as possible to avoid any clashes.

I am currently working on some improvements to the workshop format which will make them more interactive. However, it is pleasing to know that we are getting good feedback from both new candidates and experienced umpires.

Examinations

Each workshop is followed by an examination session on the second day. On exceptional occasions it has been necessary to examine some candidates on the same day but this is really not an ideal option and will not be the norm.

As I mentioned at the AGM, It is always sad to see any candidate fail but it is experienced members that are totally unprepared expecting a walk in the park. As I mentioned earlier new candidates are far better prepared. We have a standard to maintain, the practical exercises are standard measures and yet we consistently find individuals making silly mistakes.

Assessments

We have established a small team of experts to devise a method for on the job assessment. We have looked at what other umpiring bodies do and an excellent assessment sheet has been devised. The first assessments are being carried out at Leamington and the hope is that some of those that are successfully assessed can

receive a re-qualification certificate avoiding the need to attend a workshop. BUT, and it is a big BUT, we still need a mechanism for determining their laws knowledge. I am often astounded by some of the answers we get on examinations and in workshops, often quoting laws from previous editions.

This is very much in its infancy so let us see what comes back from Leamington as work from there.

Markers Courses

The uptake of the EBUA Markers Course has been incredible. At the AGM I reported that 29 courses had been run in the previous 12 months. Since April a further 7 have been held and I have dates for numerous more up until mid-way through 2016.

More and more people are volunteering to host and run courses which was the concept of cascading the training out. I am aware of some individuals passing on the course material without my knowledge and thus may not be suitable to run the courses or indeed have the full details on how to run them. Stick with the procedures and things will work, go your own way and it will fail.

The average attendance of the courses is around 25 people. This is a manageable number if you have sufficient tutors, a maximum group size for practical sessions being about 7 or 8. We are trying to keep expenses reasonable but the income is pretty much covering the majority of expenses.

I am aware that further work is required. Most pressing is the mentoring of those that decide to join the association as EBUA Markers. Notification of those members needs to go to the County Coordinator in my view so that these keen individuals can be helped and watched. We have an assessment process in place but it does seem a bit ad-hoc at the moment.

Certificates of Competence. More needs to be done to refine this process. A few new members have passed through the system the way it was envisaged with assessments being completed and signed off by a mentor followed by a request for certificate.

Now before anyone suggests that the certificates are produced locally by the tutors rather than centrally, I will strongly object to that. The reason is simple. If numerous people produce certificates it will not take very long for numerous different styles and paper quality appear on the scene, also a central production means that there is a central register of those that have attended which can be passed to the membership secretary.

International Technical Officials

At the time of writing I do not know the results of the recent ITO examinations. The reason I have added this to my report is to remind the Executive that we have had a policy or understanding that the ITO qualification is NOT recognised by the EBUA. This of course means that anyone that becomes an ITO does not automatically become an International Grade EBUA Umpire – and I personally endorse this. An ITO qualification does not mean that an individual is competent at officiating at International events – trust me I have worked with some of them (thankfully not English ones though).

Personnel

As you will know, and as I reported at the AGM, Alex Duckworth is stepping down as Training Administrator and will be replaced by Mich. Alex has done an incredible job for many many years and will be missed in this role. Mich was confirmed at the AGM I now have a small team working on “on the job” assessments and I am using others as sounding boards for ideas and improvements.

Log books, Vernon has and is sending out. With regard to the website this has not been done yet but will be. Ken is looking at migrating to a new ISP and I can talk about that on Sunday.

Procedure for letting Area Secretaries and County Coordinators know about candidates; I would have thought was already in place. It is down to the Area Secretaries to inform county Coordinators. The Training Administrator informs the Area Secretary.

Brian said that the marks being gained by those seeking to qualify for the first time were higher than those attending for re-qualification and wondered why this might be. This was discussed and a likely cause was thought to be that those going for re-qualification did not seem to be aware of what would be expected of them, and were not putting in the necessary pre-examination work. It was agreed that Allan would send a link to the Training Procedures document to EC members for Area Secretaries to include in their invitation letter to their retests to make people more aware of what would be required.

The questions of loss of members who had originally been Markers and who had left the Association as they did not wish to become Umpires was discussed. Allan said that he had drafted a letter to these people (largely ladies) and there was a list of them available. It was agreed that he would send this letter to them drawing their attention to the new EBUA Marker grade and encouraging them to re-join.

It was also noted that Markers must have a ‘flash’ on their shirt saying ‘marker’ to emphasise that they were a marker and not an Umpire. These flashes were available from Karen Wood.

There had been a problem recently with non-members being able to buy EBUA uniforms from the Merchandising Officer. It was agreed that the order form on the web site be amended to include a box for the membership number and that Karen would be told she was not to supply to anyone without that information.

Vernon said that he had been asked by a supplier if they could supply our jackets. It was agreed that he write to them and say ‘no’ as we wished to limit the numbers of suppliers of our uniform.

There was a discussion on the frequency of examinations. Although people were able to retake examinations six months after they had failed it was not usually possible to hold them in the same area that frequently. Members would probably need to travel outside their ‘home’ area to retake on that timescale. There were some places where it had not been possible to hold examinations for a number of years, for example, Cornwall although Allan said these had now been arranged for

October. Some examinations were already arranged for 2016 and appearing on the site for members to book.

Allan would also let the committee have an update on the position re assessments after the Leamington Championships.

9. Championships

Ray pointed out to the Committee how much work had been done by Vernon in the lead up to the Championships and all this work had been of high quality. The Committee expressed their thanks to Vernon for all that work.

Jessie raised the question of the amount of equipment our members were taking onto the green. Markers seemed to be carrying a lot more than they needed and some umpires were carrying 'doctor's bags' onto the green. It was agreed that the co-ordinators at the Championships would make the point to members that the EC did not consider it necessary to take large bags of equipment onto the green, although it was acknowledged that due to the design of ladies clothes they may not have sufficiently large pockets to hold all they needed.

It was also agreed that markers would ask players to turn the scoreboard at their end when they were agreeable (if no one else had been provided).

10. Uniform

a) It was agreed that the following was the EBUA dress code.

Navy Blue EBUA 'approved' shirt

White shoes

White/navy socks

Wet weather clothing – navy by preference

For Men

Navy trousers

For Women

Navy trousers

Navy cropped trousers

Navy skirt

It was also agreed that shorts would not be added to this list

b) Constitution

It was agreed that Phyl would write a suitable clause (to be agreed at the next meeting) to be put to the AGM as an addition to the Constitution

c) Information on shirts

Vernon raised the question of the amount of information that was appearing on shirts (in addition to name and grade). After a discussion it was agreed that this should be included on the next agenda when people had had a chance to consider what they thought was appropriate. Phyl agreed to collect this information before that meeting. It was agreed that members with the marker grade must have this shown on their shirts so that there was no confusion between markers and umpires.

It was also noted that some members were still officiating in the old uniform. It was agreed there was little we could do about this except remind them that it was no longer the Association uniform if they were seen wearing it.

11 Area Secretaries Reports

Area 1 – Val Coldwell

Val reported as follows;-

Since the last meeting we have had a yearly assessment and also three different venues for the new markers course which was very successful. As of previous years the venue at Stanley hosted the home internationals indoors. The PBA have an event coming up in the middle of September at Carlisle indoor bowling club for which our association umpires will be used and Blackpool Newtonhall have staged several televised event was also run by the PBA

Area 2 – Brian Burton

Brian reported as follows;-

The year for me has been saddened by the sudden death of Peter Daghish (Warwickshire County Co-ordinator). He was one of the nicest guys to meet and nothing was too much trouble. He will be sorely missed and we send all our best wishes to young Jean, who is also a National umpire. We will now need a replacement County Co-ordinator, but I am letting the dust settle first as it was such a shock.

Our annual match against a Midland Counties select team, resulted this year in a turnabout and for the first time we lost (but not by much). Is it a co-incidence that Ken Bick was unable to play this year?

Thanks go to Gareth Willcock and all of those who so gallantly gave their time to officiate at the Visually Impaired National Championships at Leamington in June. We have their undying thanks and it really is a pleasure to be able to assist such a cheerful bunch of people to whom life has not dealt the best of cards.

Gareth will be unable to handle this event in 2016 & Alison Welsted has kindly volunteered to run the June 2016 event.

We have a similar function Indoors at Nottingham in September as well as the World CP Games in August but for both of these I have declined to supply EBUA Markers as we cannot support this element.

Marker training is being undertaken for local volunteers.

We are finding more & more demands for Umpires / Markers from disadvantaged groups which tend to be resource hungry. Usually, we are expected to provide officials for free and although they generally look after us well, there is a limit on how

many times we can go to the well with our reduced numbers. I will be taking this up with some of them in the near future as we want to do as much for such groups as is practical and training some of them may be an option.

We ran a successful Workshop in April at Leicester, where we welcomed Allan Thornhill as Tutor. He made it run very smoothly & we only had one re-test failure. All the new members were successful and they are already being mentored in local matches. We have also run two Marking courses, both over-subscribed, so we shall need to run others. From both of them we picked up members, one of whom has already become a Regional Umpire and already working.

The reduction in umpire numbers is starting to bite and we will not be able to support the early rounds of the Denny, Yetton & probably Egham matches in the coming season at all clubs for the first time which is sad!

I did a spot of Assessment work one day & apart from a Marker turning out a bowl (for which he was suitably admonished by an observant Umpire), I saw nothing disastrous. If there was, I did not see it. The major items for improvement were Marker positioning relative to the head and poor time management. This latter was compounded by the Marker having to update the scoreboard – and sometimes two scoreboards – which obviously is a time waster.

Why on earth, with all rinks surrounded by onlookers, they could not arrange scoreboard turners smacks of poor management. These things delay play in what is for most players is the most important competition of the year.

The improved Marker courses that all Markers & Umpires will need to attend should hopefully fix many of these problems. I will be back again before the meeting and see if my views have changed.

If we consider Assessments as part of our review, what action should we take if we see a beyond expectations performance? Equally the same applies to a significantly below expectations performance.

Please Note: We have our Annual Meeting on Sunday 27th September at Leicester (Slater St) – 10.30 am start

Area 3 – Bob Penny

Bob reported as follows:-

Membership numbers are holding up in some counties but some counties are creating challenges with the limited number of national grade umpires which makes the efforts by those stalwarts who make themselves available to assist in games and support the players and the sport all the more appreciated.

I am very grateful for the time and effort made by the County Co-ordinators in considering and allocating umpires for local and county games and I am particularly grateful to Roger Jarvis who has moved counties and has agreed to take on the role of County Co-ordinator in Norfolk, a county which has been “uncoordinated” for several years! The vacancy created in Hertfordshire as a result of Roger’s move is being covered by Dan Sheehan. A sincere thanks to both of them.

I and my County Coordinators will not allocate an umpire to a game that we feel would be beyond their capabilities and umpires who have chosen to impose their influence or inaccurate law interpretation on games will also be carefully considered for future game appointments.

The training and development workshop held at Acle IBC in Norfolk in May was successful and my appreciation to Allan who helped with the examination.

Tony Hatch of Essex has been very active in arranging Markers seminars and these have been well supported by other umpires and well attended by players leading to the membership of several new marker members. A sincere note of appreciation for all Tony's efforts. A markers seminar was held at County Arts BC Norwich which went off well and due to the success, enjoyment and feedback.

Area 4 – Carol Watt Sullivan

Carol reported as follows:-

A busy summer certainly trying to staff and manage county events. My thanks to all members who gave their services throughout the area. In Kent in particular, we had to staff 5 county quarter final events at different venues on the same day (3 within 'spitting distance' of each other) and with some members playing as well, we had to turn to members who not renewed license (because they only wished to be markers) to help out.

As a result of this and efforts by the Kent Ladies Divisional secretaries for Ladies Divisions 2 and 3, a markers course is being arranged on 8 November at Dartford Stone Lodge IBC (our thanks to the generosity of the club) and we hope that we will recruit back to the fold some of the members (Ladies in particular) that we have lost as well as entail a couple of existing members to revert back to Markers.

A Markers course is also being held at Horsham on 2 September and is well subscribed,

Successful assessment weekends were held at Bromley in June and July (the former unfortunately falling on a Johns and Walker cup weekend). The latter enabled those members 'cup-tied' to re-license. Some candidates came some distance from well outside the area, showing that any assessment centre is not solely for that area. Indeed members due to re-qualify this year, or slightly overdue have already signed up for the next nearest assessment weekend in early October at Barking and Bob Penny has kindly 'slotted them in'.

I am still chasing a new outstanding soles wishing to retain memberships and if at Leamington am attempting to 'hunt them down' to get their reassessment (or reversion back to Marker) organised. I am now looking at remaining members due to re-qualify in 2015 and 2016 to ascertain best locations for assessment centres over the winter/ spring/ early summer period, along with the latest information on forthcoming new regional and upgrade applications.....

Sussex will be looking for a new county co-ordinator as Angela Barker is looking to retire, having found the demands of the job, not onerous, but has been impacted by the increasing challenges of the oversee of care of her 90+ mother and babysitting duties for her grandchild. She has done an excellent job in Sussex, building numerous relationships with all county executives and demanding respect from all the umpires under her care. It will be a challenge to find a replacement who will be as fair in allocating duties!

Among the retirees who are not re-qualifying (I have written to all thanking them for their long-standing service) is Brenda Bailey, long time International Umpire from Sussex, and Examiners when the Ladies were separate. Anno Domini and care for her husband has caused her to come this decision. I long valued her advice and support at events (including assessments) in the Ladies South East area and we all will miss her greatly.

Re Markers: a plea to review and send out Certificates of Competence for Marking – am still waiting for mine –as I think is Mavis? Can we put some guidance on the web-site regarding when this can be applied for as I am sure that a number of members are due this?

Top Club duties: am glad to hear that some of the newer regional umpires and Marker members in the Area have been given duties at the Top Club events in September and are looking forward to it. One marker took the opportunity of working with the Under 18s (Sutton Winson) in marking for them and has already admitted that she has learnt a lot and gained much needed confidence – also learnt a lot by being mentored and watching other senior umpires at work on the green and will be taking items seen on board. It shows that a lot can be learnt by observation and asking questions.....

May I wish all success to all our EBUA members taking their ITO Assessment on 9 August, with the ever positive hope that we will retain and grow our membership within this qualification?

Area 5 –Ray Keen

No report made

Area 6 – John Davies

We have unfortunately had to cancel two training workshops; one because of a lack of numbers making it financially unsustainable and the other because of the lack of a Tutor. This is a problem that will be ongoing, I feel the Executive needs to address. I have to tender my apologies for missing the meeting as I am not allowed to drive at the moment.

11. Any other business

Mavis had invited Vic Perry the Chief Examiner to attend the meeting feeling that this was an opportunity for him to see what happened at EC meetings.

- i. Vic told the meeting that he felt that things were at the moment going well with the marker courses, but he was concerned that what was being taught was not consistent over all counties. After the first delivery there did not appear to be any control. He proposed that someone should 'drop in' unannounced on courses to check that what was now being delivered had not diverged from the original course. He particularly suspected that there were problems with the practical side of the courses now being delivered.
It was agreed that Allan would bring to the EC a process to deal with divergence from the original and his thoughts on what was happening at the moment. He has authority to visit a course to check what was being delivered. If Allan felt it necessary he would 'visit' some courses.
- ii. Val asked for advice on how to deal with a couple of greens in Cumbria where the ditches did not have a proper 'holding surface'. It was actually the responsibility of the Governing Body (the County) to raise this with the Clubs, but it was suggested that she report to them along the lines that 'umpires have shown concern'.

12 Next meeting

The next meeting would be on October 18 at 11.00am at Oxford City & County

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 15.50, and wished everyone a safe journey home and looked forward to seeing them at the next meeting.

M Wellington
Chairman