

# **English Bowls Umpires Association**

## **Minutes of an Executive Meeting held on 27 April 2014 At Leamington Spa**

### **Present**

Mavis Wellington – Chairman  
Jessie Clark Deputy – Secretary  
Vernon Findell - Treasurer  
Allan Thornhill - Development Officer  
Phyl Jones – Deputy Chairman  
Val Coldwell – Area Secretary  
Michelle Van Putt – Executive Member  
Sue Trott - Executive Member  
Carol Watt Sullivan – Area Secretary/Child Protection Officer  
Ray Keen – Area Secretary  
Brain Burton – Area Secretary  
John Davies – Area Secretary  
Bob Penny – Area Secretary

### **1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Mavis welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologising for the early start because this meeting had had to be held before the AGM as it had not proved possible to rearrange it from the original date.

She commented that what has passed has passed, Vernon is acting as Secretary. Things will settle down.

### **2. Apologies for Absence-- Nil**

### **3. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed as correct by John Davies, seconded by Carol Watt Sullivan and duly signed by the Chairman.

### **4. Matters arising**

### **5. Correspondence –**

Vernon had received the following

- a) A letter of thanks from the EIBA Ltd for the work done by members at the National Finals
- b) Details of a diary for purchase by members. It was proposed Jessie Clark, seconded Ray Keen that no action be taken.

### **6. Secretary's report - Nil**

## 7. Treasurer's Report

Vernon's report was the financial statements to be presented to the AGM which had already been issued. He had the following clarifications to make.

'It again shows a decent amount for the NDO to go forward with his plans of visiting all areas, and I am pleased that when I raised travelling to 40p per mile I could cover this. With a couple of glitches the membership seems to be very pleased with this!

The auditor has included 'umpired donations' £1,875.00 a reduction from last year of £430.00

Telephone calls are down, I think we must have very rich area secretaries, I do ask for a claim from you all

Travelling surprisingly is down, but there again does not seem to be the call for so many umpires these days (very worrying).

Postage is way down, as I commented in last year's accounts I brought £1,000.00 of stamps at the reduced rate of 40p each and they went up to 50p.

Grants again EIBA Ltd £2,300 and £5,500 Bowls England.

## 8. Development Officer's Report

As originally intended for the postponed meeting in March.

'The new procedures and development programme commenced in January following a review of what was currently going on around the country.

In August I presented a summary of the review and the actions to be taken from that and this report presents the results of those actions.

### **Proposals**

- Application form to be revised. **COMPLETED**
- Entry level for Umpires will now be Regional Grade. **COMPLETED**
- Written theory module to be completed as previously. **Modules have been renamed and the structure simplified.**
- Upon passing the candidate will be sent a log book and a list of mentored duties to complete before attending a workshop and examination. **A Log Book has now been printed and will be given to candidates upon passing their examinations.**
- Markers course to be attended plus working assessment as a marker which will count towards umpire qualification. **Markers courses have now commenced – assessments have not yet commenced.**
- Existing Club Umpires will proceed with an upgrade to Regional Umpire. **COMPLETED AND ONGOING.**
- Those that wish to remain as Markers may do so after completion of a markers course. **Some have already indicated this and will attend the next round of courses.**

## Examinations

Examination questions have been reviewed and additional papers are being prepared. Mapping of the questions currently used shows that there is no duplication of questions for each grade. For the first round of examinations this year I propose that Vic Perry act as main National examiner to attend each session where possible. I will act as National Tutor on each course.

### *Proposals*

- Review procedures documents and publish to ALL personnel involved in the process.  
**Completed and distributed to those that have attended examination sessions so far.**
- Review examination questions for all levels. **COMPLETED**
- Review score sheets for all grades and ensure relevance to exercises.  
**COMPLETED**
- Review procedures for candidates who fail at any level. **COMPLETED**
- Review recruitment of examiners. This **MUST** be done nationally and not regionally as we cannot maintain control and training and hence procedures are not being followed. **COMPLETED.**
- Recruit new examiners where there is a shortfall.  
**New examiners are required in some areas as some have dropped out of the process. These will be found as we move round the country.**
- Set up “Train the Trainer” sessions for existing and new examiners to ensure consistency throughout the country.  
**This is now being done at each examination session.**
- Introduce Markers examination to the existing examination sessions (see separate Markers Proposal) **COMPLETED**
- Maintain National Examiners to prevent dilution of the procedures and maintain the top down structure. **COMPLETED**
- ALL examiners must attend a workshop to ensure that they are understanding what is being taught. **ONGOING**
- Examiners coaching (tutoring) candidates **MUST STOP.** **ONGOING as part of training**
- Introduce examination time slots for candidates. This has worked extremely well in trials. **ONGOING**
- Establish a single portal for papers for all personnel to access ensuring that the most up to date version is being used. Sorry but I will drag you into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.  
**All papers and procedures are contained in a cloud server and the links are being shared with those that require the documents. It is important to utilise this method of maintaining current documents to avoid the debacle last year where an ancient exam paper was used in one area.**

## **Workshops**

The workshops have commenced and the Tutors Handbook has been revised. Again, as with examiners, National Tutors and assistant tutors **MUST** be selected nationally and not on a regional basis to avoid such issues. I will be covering the majority of workshops this year to ensure that existing and new tutors are aware of what needs to be covered.

### **Proposals**

- Review tutoring material and media to ensure consistency nationally. **COMPLETED**
- Recruit new tutors where there is a shortfall. **ONGOING**
- Set up “Train the Trainer” sessions for existing and new tutors to ensure consistency throughout the country. **ONGOING at each workshop session being held**

### **Markers Course**

Markers courses have commenced and numbers of attendees is good. Demand is good and we are looking to role out more dates around the country whilst cascading the training to selected Marking Course Tutors.

A Marking Course Tutor handbook has been produced and will be sent, along with the course material to those that have attended a course and shown a desire to run them.

### **Home Study Manual**

A new batch of manuals has been printed. Only 200 have been ordered this year due to the proposed changes to the laws in 2015.

It is clear, looking at those proposals, that a complete review of the manual will be required. I would propose that the photographs in the manual are also updated at the same time.

### **Next Steps**

There will inevitably be tweaks of the procedures as we progress through this first batch of workshops and examinations. This is why I would much prefer to hold a centrally located copy of the documents so that the most up to date versions can be accessed at anytime by those requiring them.

I would like to start working towards the assessment of umpires whilst trialling the assessment of those that have attended the markers courses.

Allan answered questions on the how the position has changed since his original report had been written.

The markers course was now being delivered and was well received, and generating new members for the Association, some of whom were interested in progressing.

He was looking to recruit new tutors as there were now only three; he also needed examiners in some areas.

His current stock of manuals would last until the rewrite due for 2015 because of Law changes which would mean a text revision and new photographs. He intended to start on this towards the end of the year.

He is at present reviewing the position re on the job reviewing, and hopes to have this in place for Leamington next year (2015) building on the work at Worthing over the last few years.

The Log books were also being well received.

The question of why 3 exams tended to be in the Spring rather than the Autumn was discussed, but it was agreed that this fitted best with the certificate dates which ran to the year end.

The report was accepted – proposed John Davies, seconded Sue Trott.

## **9. Area Secretaries Reports**

### Area 1 – Val Coldwell

Val reported as follows;-

It has been quite busy in the Northern area. We are, as I speak, at this moment hosting a PBA event at Carlisle. There has been a Premier Three at York and this year Darlington has hosted the semi-final and final of the Denny Cup and Yetton trophy, which was very well supported. We are very fortunate to again host the ladies and men's Home Internationals and British Isles event at Stanley Co Durham.

We have a few people who have successfully answered their questions and are now waiting for their practical assessment. We have not yet arranged exams, these are planned for the autumn.

### Area 2 – Brian Burton

Brian reported for the March meeting as follows

'It's been a weird season. Up to early January was the quietest on record with relatively few requests, but since then I have been busier than a one armed paper hanger with requests coming in hourly on some days & they are still coming in!! Still, it's better that way than the other.

In January, an EBUA team played an exciting match against an EIBA team. Whilst we technically lost on points, we only lost on three rinks, so I declared it a draw!! The match was played in the real spirit of the game and was enjoyed by all. My sincere thanks go to all those who played or supported us especially Val & Ray who were able to provide an area team each.

Next time it's our turn to host it, so we will have a chance of revenge.

This year, we are losing a number of umpires, mainly due to the uniform issue - mainly men, but some women - plus those who feel that "Anno Domini" has caught up with them. Unfortunately, these are all experienced National or International umpires and I has really hit hard with the number of National finals. We now have a real shortage of National grade umpires across the board.

This has caused me to appoint from further away than I would have liked under normal circumstances, especially to National finals. I am now having to bring on

many of my promising Regionals to fill in the gaps and am having to use them in some cases “above their pay grade”.

We also lost the services of Moira Horriben and Jean Daghish,(which then takes husband Peter out) both of whom had a brief spell in hospital but fortunately they are both on the mend and we wish them a speedy return to the fold.

I am pleased also to report that I have received some complimentary comments on the performance of our umpires, which is always nice – usually it’s only complaints!

We have run a couple of Premier 3 events and we expect to be providing umpires for the Planet Bowls meeting at Nottingham later this month.

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, we are running a Marking Course at Erewash to the new format and to date we have around 30 candidates, some of whom have indicated an interest in umpiring. A number of existing umpires will also be in attendance in order to improve their own marking and to help disseminate the information to others.

We are running our first Workshop of the year on April 12/13 at Leicester Slater St., and looks like this will be well supported as usual with around 25 candidates – the usual mixture of tests, retests & upgrades.

Our congratulations go to Francis Fletcher for being appointed to officiate at Potters for the World Match Play Championships.’

Brian added that the markers course was very successful as was the workshop.

He was busy now, although he was losing some members

### Area 3 – Bob Penny

Bob reported as follows

‘Armed with a job description and a CD full of documents I have taken on the batten from Trevor Hackett as Area 3 Secretary. I am still getting used to the idea of Area 3 rather than Eastern Area as it is my philosophy to keep things simple and call things as they are. What is apparent is the excellent job that Trevor has done over the years as the Area Secretary and all Association members in the Eastern Counties owe him a great debt of gratitude. Thanks Trevor.

I believe I am getting to grips with the role but in the absence of several County Co-ordinators the focus is on getting things moving and filling the umpiring requests. Role on the time when all umpires are on email!

It is apparent that there is quite a legacy of umpires due for regional assessments, 4 yearly testing or upgrades. At the last count there were over 70 that may fall in this category. This will create certain challenges for arranging workshops and examinations and I may be seeking to arrange 2 events during 2014 particularly as some umpires feel reluctant to travel to distant venues (albeit only once every 4 years!)

I hope to encourage umpires to come forward as County Coordinators to help spread the duties but I am getting some alarming comments from one county that the uniform issue still lingers on and many umpires will not be renewing their membership when the requirement to wear the new uniform is obligatory. Something for the Executive to consider and I believe this feeling is not restricted to Area 3.

In my new role I am currently very heartened by the willingness of umpires to assist at short notice or at unfamiliar venues. I strongly believe the workshops are an essential element of team building and I put a lot of hope in getting the venues and dates confirmed soon with National Tutors and Examiners so that umpires at all levels and most importantly those who are new to the Association can learn from others and we can stem the current trend of reducing membership.'

Bob added that he had now arranged a workshop in Cambridge in May and was getting a good response to invitations to attend. However some members were retiring and thus would not retest and others were saying they would retire rather than wear the blue uniform.

He still had vacancies for county co-ordinators for Norfolk and Bedfordshire and was seeking volunteers.

He had not yet arranged marking courses in the area and was seeking advice on how to do this. It was agreed that he and Allan would liaise on this.

#### Area 4 – Carol Watt Sullivan

Carol reported as follows

Things finally seem to be coming together in improving and building up relationships with County Executives, both indoor and out in communicating with myself and also the Area Co-ordinators to improve take up of EBUA resources, particularly with the new arrangements regarding payments and allocations coming in for the forthcoming summer season. Middlesex is now working well with a good relationship, so is Kent with the divisional co-ordinators working well to share out duties. My thanks in particular to my Sussex Co-ordinator, who has more than most managed to break down barriers with the ladies in the county (both indoor and outdoor). I am still chasing to ensure relationships built with Surrey are working satisfactorily from all sides.

It has been a busy winter season with many requests for umpires in the area coming through the door, either direct to me or via the County Co-ordinators and we have been busy sharing out the duties fairly amongst our team for the various Atherley, Liberty and other inter-county matches, coping also with last minute withdrawals due to a variety of reasons, including sprains etc. County Co-ordinators have also been busy allocating resources to cope with Planet Bowls etc. at local levels. (We still have to cope with a number of 'pushy members' who think they should have more than their fair share.) A number of minor issues, mostly due to acceptable dress

code have come out of it, which perhaps could also be addressed in the next newsletter?

In terms of dress, the forthcoming end of use of old uniform (under the transition period) has undoubtedly caused a number of the 'team' to reconsider their status, and a number have now 'handed in their callipers', reducing our ranks in the region. I have had to make a number of reassuring telephone calls to concerned umpires on the situation at present. I hope, however, the introduction of the new Markers grade and course will go some way to reversing a trend whereby a number of Ladies who were re-designated as Club Umpires who were going to retire will continue with us – but time will tell! Was also heartened by the number of new recruits applying and regional umpires considering upgrading in the area.

Anno Domini catches up with us, so I was saddened to hear of the sudden death of Patsy Walker from Middlesex just before Christmas, who was a regular attendee at the Ladies Nationals at Leamington for many years.

An assessment/workshop weekend has been arranged at Horsham on 15-16 February, with no doubt a full list of attendees. No doubt some others from the area will be taking advantage of the closeness of (Southampton) Bannister Park in May. Agreement has been reached in principle with Eastbourne IBC to use their facilities on dates in the summer season and there is the possibility of timetabling an assessment at Bromley IBC – dates still to be settled.

A regional meeting was held at Horsham on 24 November, with a good attendance – no doubt sparked by interest in our key speaker – my grateful thanks to Allan Thornhill who briefed those attending on the developments in training and our new marker course. My thanks also to Vic Perry, Alex Duckworth, Ian Gilbert et al, who, after lunch, gave the assembled umpires a flavour of the practical elements of the new course. This no doubt sparked considerable interest, in so much that following on from the trial courses in Middlesex and Kent, a course has been arranged at Horsham on 26 April and 3 May with a cap on 40 attendees (mixture of players and umpires from Sussex, Surrey and Kent) down to attend. There has also been considerable interest in becoming accredited tutors for the course. No doubt this will be the first of a number of courses to be slotted in for players as well as EBUA members throughout the Area – we just now need the formal requests to come through in writing.

Given travelling costs etc, the move of the Men's National Outdoor Championships from Worthing to Leamington this coming summer has undoubtedly had an effect on the applications to work from the Area – the regular ladies are probably used to being organised to travel (as we were always there), but the lack of men applicants from the Area (from Rick's lists circulated) is distinctly noticeable, probably because EBUA members from the Area who worked at Worthing were used to the daily commute – it will be an education process to encourage them to travel up for a day or two and stay over (as us girls have been used to doing). Again time will tell! Given the winter of 2012-3 and things like fuel costs no-one wanted to travel from the



South East to play in the match versus the EIBA and I must thank Brian for ably finding replacement players for it.

Our congratulations go to Allan for again being on duty at the World Indoor Bowls at Potters (including marking the Final) as well as the summer's forthcoming Commonwealth Games - and also for his blog of 'happenings' at Potters, which were very entertaining!

Carol added that the Horsham weekend had taken place and had been successful, and this meeting was actually taking place on what should have been day 2 of a marker course, which would now be concluded next Sunday.

The Egham Trophy final had almost 'fallen through the net' but Vernon had 'covered' that in the end

Carol asked Vernon to remind outdoor county secretaries (and members) that an umpire was not appointed by the Area Secretary then expenses would not be paid by the Association. Vernon agreed to write to all County Secretaries reminding them to make their requests via their Area Secretary.

#### Area 5 –Ray Keen

Ray reported that a workshop weekend had been held in the Area at Westlecott (although he had been disappointed by the results) and another had been arranged for the same venue for 2015. A marker course had also been arranged for Bucks in November.

He now had two County Co-ordinators for Somerset and this was working well.

He would be holding an area meeting in October.

#### Area 6 – John Davies

John reported that there had been two PBA tournaments in the area.

Workshops had been arranged for Hampshire, Dorset and Devon in the next couple of months.

#### Child Protection

Carol reported that there was no change or action needed on this.

It was proposed by Jessie, seconded Brian that Carol's title be update to 'Safeguarding Officer'. This was unanimously agreed.

### **10. Any other business**

The position concerning the appointment of a new Secretary for the Association was discussed. It was agreed that because of the timing of Rick's resignations the best course was for the Executive to make a recommendation to the AGM for the appointment of Vernon as 'Interim Secretary' for a year followed by a 'proper' appointment at the 2015 AGM.

The EC unanimously agreed that the following proposal; be put to the AGM for them to vote on to show their approval.

'This EC proposes to the AGM that Vernon Findell remains as Interim Secretary until the next AGM'

- i) Ray asked the meeting to confirm the date that the 'old' uniform would cease to be able to be worn. It was confirmed that the 'changeover date was 1 May 2015. It was also pointed out that the only item of uniform that members had to buy from the Association was the shirt which sold for £24.
- ii) It was agreed that a tribute to the work that Rick had put into the Association over many years should be included in the next Newsletter.
- iii) Carol raised the question of suitable 'adjustments' to be made for people at the workshops who were dyslexic etc. It was confirmed that extra time etc. would be allowed in this situation.
- iv) Jessie said that she was still short of volunteers for some dates during the nationals at Leamington. It was agreed that this would be 'advertised' at the AGM
- v) Bob asked for guidance on arranging workshops. Other Area Secretaries explained how they went about this.
- vi) Vernon said that Rick had undertaken duties as part of EBYDS. After a discussion it was agreed that no action would be taken concerning this
- vii) It was suggested that Vernon approach BE and EIBA Ltd to be allowed to 'advertise' the Association in their handbooks. This was agreed.

Vernon asked to read a statement to the meeting

'Firstly I would like to thank Rick Moore for the work he had done in the past for this Association. Also thank you all for the vote of confidence you have given me in the past 2 months to allow me to carry on as your temporary secretary, and more now that you have seen your way clear to let me carry on for another year.

I realise that it is not an ideal situation, and also know that some of you do not wholeheartedly agree, but I am sure that I can do a good job as Secretary as well as Treasurer.

In passing I would like to mention that for the past 8 years I have been doing quite a bit of Rick's work anyway.

I want, and I am sure you are of the same opinion, that we get the Association back on its feet again and all the problems around us will soon be sorted.'

### **11. Next Meeting**

After a discussion it was agreed that the next meeting would be on 19 October 2014

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 11.35.

M Wellington  
Chairman