

STATEMENT: MEMBERSHIP AND COMPETITIONS 2021

6th August, 2020 by **Matt Wordingham**

Covid-19 has presented an unprecedented challenge for us all.

As we enter what would have been the first week of the National Championships, it is a reminder that the past few months has seen us working with our clubs in a very different way. As competitions and events have not taken place, we switched to providing information and guidance as the sport returns to the green.

This week will see the launch of our recruitment campaign, Let's Roll, with discussions already underway for a nationwide marketing initiative at the start of the 2021 season. Over the coming months, and embedded in our strategy development work, we will be exploring ways to enhance club services, reduce administration and support volunteers.

Bowls England has continued to provide a positive service to our clubs and county associations despite having refunded all affiliation fees, resulting in a significant projected loss. Coupled with the substantial government support to our clubs, we hope that this will have gone a long way to reducing the negative effects of Covid-19 on our sport.

As we look forward to next season, and hopefully a return to some form of normality, we have been balancing the importance of receiving affiliation revenues in order for us to function as a governing body with an understanding of the challenges that our clubs face.

Following consultation with 12 counties, it confirmed to us that it may be challenging for clubs to provide relevant membership information on 30th September this year. Therefore, at its meeting on 29th July, the Bowls England Board agreed to revise the affiliation date to 1st May annually. This will enable clubs to prepare their return based on the number of members that have signed up for the forthcoming season and ensure that we all have a better understanding of the membership within our clubs.

The Board also agreed to amend the Regulations for National Championships and National Competitions to provide players with greater flexibility and confidence when entering our competitive events.

The key decisions are summarised below:

Membership

1. No affiliation fees to be collected on 1st October 2020
2. Affiliation fees and list of all bowling members (name and gender only) to be returned by clubs to County Associations not later than 1st May annually
3. County Associations to return affiliation fees and list of all bowling members to Bowls England not later than 31st May annually

4. Details of key Club Officials (including contact details) to be returned to Bowls England by 1st February annually

National Championships

1. The date for return by County Associations to Bowls England of entrant numbers and fees be 1st March annually (County Associations may choose to retain the current 1st February deadline subject to their own internal requirements and arrangements)
2. County Associations to accept entries from any individual that will be a member of a club affiliated to Bowls England on 1st May annually
3. County Associations to deal with 'rollover' for 2021 season according to local agreement

National Competitions

1. The closing date for National Competitions be amended to 1st March annually – with no deadline extension
2. Bowls England to accept entries from any individual that will be a member of a club affiliated to Bowls England on 1st May annually

As a condition of entry in National Championships and National Competitions, all entrants must give contact information in accordance with current 'Test and Trace' requirements, with the choice to 'opt in' for Bowls England communications.

All entrants must be informed, at point of entry, that should the National Championships and/or National Competitions not take place in 2021 due to Covid-19 a full refund will be offered.

We are working through further detail, which will be made available week commencing 31st August, however we anticipate that this early notification of the key decisions will enable clubs and county associations to plan accordingly for the 2021 season.