

**General Purposes Committee Meeting**  
**Held at Carterton BC on**  
**Wednesday March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 7.00 pm**

**Minutes**

**Apologies** Alan Scholan, Tony Wright, Sam Watts, John Henwood, Ryan Full.

**In attendance** Martyn Cooper, Mike Morris, Chris Weller, Alex Fleming, David Leighfield, John Hurren, Ron Smith. (Tim Jupp, and Nigel Rawlings - Carterton)

The GPC were invited to hold the meeting at Carterton BC. As a result, Carterton Chairman Tim Jupp and Secretary Nigel Rawlins were invited to attend the full meeting and take part, although if voting were required on any decision, they would have no vote. The two questions on the agenda were put forward by Carterton for discussion.

**Minutes of the GPC meeting held on Wednesday February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, having been circulated and signed as a true record. (Distributed with Agenda)**

**Minutes Proposed** Martyn Cooper                      **Seconded** John Hurren

**Matters arising**

There was an issue with the Longford and Hawker Cup entries which would be resolved at the next Mens Section meeting on March 24<sup>th</sup>, according to Sam Watts. David Leighfield asked if the problem with the draw in the Mens Pairs, and 2 wood competition, mentioned at the last meeting had been resolved, and was told they had.

**Correspondence. HCL response**

The Hon Sec began by thanking both Carterton Chairman Tim Jupp and Secretary Nigel Rawlins for attending and to Carterton for offering to host the meeting.

The HCBA had asked for the GPC response, following correspondence last year about the amount of money held in the HCBA account, and the fact that Counties were still being asked for an annual subscription of £150.00. After the initial response from HCBA to these questions from the GPC, the last minuted response from the GPC was that they would continue to monitor the situation. These minuted comments were the reply given by the Hon. Sec to John Lonergan the HCBA Secretary, which according to minutes provided by Mike Morris had been delivered at the HCBA meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup>, but no further discussion had ensued.

President Mike Morris gave an update on the HC competitions and draw, which were being played at Old Coulsdon BC, Surrey, on May 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May,

**Treasurer's report. ( this same report is featured in the Minutes of the March OBA Council meeting 6.3.2024)**

The current balance in the OBA account is £13,566.

There has been limited financial activities since my last report to the council in the autumn. Income received includes the sale of shirts and ties for the coming season plus a payment from Bowls Oxfordshire for competitions managed by the OBA in the coming season. This year the amount was £2,498, which is very similar to last year.

Expenditure has been limited to affiliation fees and comp entry fees for inter-county activities, we also made a donation to a charity following the recent loss of Peter Cross on

behalf of all county bowlers. The past presidents medal cost us £339 and there were printing costs including the competitors contact cards, which are available for you to take back to your clubs for distribution today. All other outgoings were small.

At the last GPC meeting it was agreed that we would provide funds for new bowling attire to be used by the County's Junior squad, which has grown very well thanks to the academies that have been set up in the county. We are seeking sponsorship for the section, which will include this expenditure, but an order was placed early to ensure juniors had what they needed for the start of the season. The value of the clothing is circa £1,600.00.

Should anyone be aware of a business' in the county who would be willing to sponsor the junior section, please put them in touch with me and we'll see how we can mutually support each other. We also want to achieve income from advertising on the new county website which is under construction and goes live in April 2025.

All monies in the OBA will be transferred to the Bowls Oxfordshire account at the end of the playing season and before the end of March 2025.

#### **Vice Presidents badge.**

The Hon Sec said he had enquired at the Witney Trophy Centre for a design for a new OBA VP Badge. The previous OBA VP badge has been lost, and a new VP badge was needed for the role of VP within Bowls Oxfordshire from 2025.

The last Past Presidents badge had cost over £300.00, and the firm used then wanted £259.00 for one VP badge, plus considerable additional costs if tooling were required to set up the design for a new badge,

Hence using Witney Trophy Centre, John Winstone, the owner, was extremely helpful and came up with a design which would cost £8.00 + vat, for each badge!!

The Hon Sec had circulated a picture and details of the new badge to GPC members, and BOL President Ann Lattimore, who was chairing a BOL meeting that night. The badge design was approved unanimously by the GPC, it was hoped that BOL would do the same, and then the Hon Sec said he would order and pay for the badges.

#### **County Friendly update/ Middleton Cup/HCL/ Selection meetings.**

The Hon Sec said he had so far received 30 responses, some of them new bowlers to the County scene, and would send out a reminder to those first contacted, reminding them of the deadline for sending back the forms which was 31<sup>st</sup> March.

Alex explained that the Fire Service had changed their secretary and the new Secretary had decided to cancel the fixture.

Alex confirmed that the MC game against Sussex would now be played at Egham BC, a neutral venue, instead of Worthing. He said he had spoken to a number of friendly mid-week players who were happy with the fixture list this year, and that new Clubs/venues were being given the opportunity to host matches. Alex was still waiting to hear from Chadlington as to whether they required further assistance/advice with the County game they were hosting in June.

The first selection meeting would be on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. HC, MC and first friendlies will be picked.

Middleton Cup and HCL invites had gone out at the end of February. Alex added he had spoken to the Middleton Cup Manager earlier in the day, and to date had not had that many replies from those he had asked to be squad members for either Competition.

#### **What to replace OBA Council meetings with, post-unification.**

The Hon Sec said he felt this issue was becoming a real concern. Following last Octobers OBA Council meeting where the delegate attendance was the lowest ever, he didn't think

that the March meeting could be worse, but in fact the total attendance had been 17, one less than in October!

Therefore, when Unification happened next year, he wondered how to attract more delegates to each meeting as 15 clubs had sent nobody, with only 3 offering apologies. He was aware that BOL used to meet in the afternoons, but when meetings changed to evenings, attendance increased.

One suggestion was to fine Clubs that did not attend, and did not offer an apology, but the consensus felt this a negative reaction and wished to engage with all Clubs not penalise them.

Another idea was to communicate via Zoom or to stream meetings. This though involved technical know-how from both those setting up the meeting and those receiving it, and judging from experience where technology was involved it was felt this was unlikely to work. At the AGM last year, where both Female and Male delegates attended, it improved the attendance, so perhaps this was part of the answer.

The prospect of appointing a Communication Officer within the new Unification structure was a positive thing to do and might help, but firstly one needed to be found and appointed!

The Hon. Sec suggested that part of the problem might be that the Bowls Oxfordshire website is now so good and kept up to date that Clubs/members are now using that to keep updated with what is happening within the County.

He went on to say that Kidlington had been used as a meeting point for most meetings as it was fairly central in the County, and had good facilities and car parking, but like this evening maybe other Clubs could host meetings as Carterton had offered to do.

Tim Jupp said that Carterton and Charlbury, had produced junior academies and this in turn had generated interest, and encouraged parents to come to the Club and take up the game. He wondered, to generate further interest, if the County could look at staging a competition for the U16 age group, to try and generate interest in the County, change the mindset and looking at a younger generation of bowlers.

Some discussion followed on this point, and David Leighfield said he would look at dates with a view to a second junior competition for either U18, or U14 or both.

**Carterton Had been asked to provide up to 3 questions that they would like to discuss. They provided two, the questions asked are in bold, and the answers beneath.**

**Has the County ever approached a major business in Oxford for sponsorship? Sponsors could be obtained for, say, the Middleton Cup side to help reduce the costs involved in playing and travelling.**

John Hurren explained that potential sponsorship would be one of the jobs that would be included in the brief of whoever takes on the new role of Communications officer.

When the yearbook was in existence, there were a number of companies willing to advertise in that and maybe they would again on the website, as several Clubs, Thame, Adderbury, Charlbury and Carterton themselves encourage.

There would undoubtedly be a need for extra finance to support the two new sections, Junior and Mixed, but before approaching any potential sponsor, some groundwork was needed to establish what exactly was needed and how much money would be required.

**Why does the County not ask each Club, at the end of each season, to put forward players the clubs consider could contribute to the Home Counties team and the Middleton Cup squad? The Clubs know their own players better than anyone else!**

Tim Jupp said that he felt that County trials were a waste of time. Clubs know their own players, who was playing well, and who had the potential to improve and play at the next level. He suggested scrapping trials and having a couple of matches at the beginning of the season, ask Clubs who they think is Middleton Cup/HCL standard and then pick 2 sides to play each other.

Alex added that the MC Manager does approach the majority of clubs and 15 players from Carterton had been invited to either the M Cup or HCL squads, but so far only 5 had responded.

The Hon Sec said he had been a Selector for the last 8/9 years and when he started this did take place, with Clubs suggesting players for selection. Covid happened and this stopped, as it was difficult to organise meetings. Therefore, since then the MC Manager has picked the majority of both the MC and HCL squads. It was however generally agreed that the current system does need changing and rather than sending individual invitations it might be better to send a block invitation to the entire squad,

The subcommittee that had been formed to look at various matters prior to further unification for the Mens section were formulating proposals re the whole selection and managerial process for the Mens section, which would be announced in due course.

### **Bowls Oxfordshire matters. AGM matters to be discussed/Constitution/Policy documents.**

The Hon Sec said that the Bowls Oxfordshire AGM would take place at Kidlington BC in 3 weeks' time on Wednesday March 27<sup>th</sup>, with the agenda for the meeting being circulated a week before which would include more information on further unification, including an update from all four sections, Men, Women's, Mixed and Junior.

All policy documents and new constitution which had been featured on the Bowls Oxfordshire website from the start of December to the end of February would need to be signed off by attending Club delegates at the AGM. During the 3-month consultation period from December to February not a single comment had been made by anyone, which was being seen as a positive reaction at present!

John Hurren said that work had started on the New County Website, which would contain a lot more information, almost doubling in size from forty pages, to just over seventy. On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 the old website will close, and the new website will go live on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

### **Unification update. Next 6 months following AGM.**

The Hon Sec said that roles needed to be filled, although further unification was broadly on track with the timeline presented at last year's Bowls Oxfordshire AGM. The next 6 months after the AGM would see the final preparation required for both BOL and the OBA's closure at their respective AGMs in October and November, before a Bowls Oxfordshire EGM was arranged for late November, where nominations for the positions of key officers in the new Bowls Oxfordshire would be nominated.

Fixtures for 2025 would need to be agreed through the summer, with new fixtures sought for the new mixed and junior section. The Mens and Ladies sections will carry on as they are. Entry Forms need to be re done next year with more competitions being played across the new structure.

### **Bowls England matters.**

An email sent by Bowls Oxfordshire administrator Alan Scholan had been sent to Club Secretaries at the end of the previous week, covering various subjects, which were read out and discussed briefly.

### **AOB**

Martyn Cooper raised the fact that the Officers Cup is mixed but currently the ladies are not on the contact list for information regarding this. John Hurren said he would work out a way of dealing with this.

David Leighfield asked if Bowls England were changing the age limit to U24, will the HC League now be U24 as well? It was felt generally that this was likely but needed to be clarified.

The Hon Sec said that following comments at the OBA Council meeting that Past Presidents were no longer receiving minutes from the County, Ian Whelpton has contacted him with the

email addresses of all the Past Presidents and these now formed another contact group, and he would now be sending the requested information to this group in the future.

Tim and Nigel were asked for their views on the meeting they had attended, and both said they felt it had been a worthwhile exercise, and that by going out to other clubs, as word gets around as to what was being done, they hoped more Clubs might take advantage of this initiative and invite the GPC, or going forward whatever might be its replacement to their own club for a similar event.

It was agreed to put the OBA Council Meeting Minutes from last week, on the Bowls Oxfordshire website, and this will continue in the future with OBA and Bowls Oxfordshire minutes.

**There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 20.35 pm.**