



BOWLS SCOTLAND PLANS FOR 2020 SEASON DUE TO CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Following on from the latest Scottish Government advice the Board Bowls Scotland has taken the decision to cancel all Bowls Scotland events for the 2020 season.

As the National Governing Body for lawn bowls in Scotland we have a duty of care to all our members and clubs to put people's health first. Bowls is an inclusive sport accessible to people of all ages, genders and abilities. We have been closely monitoring the ongoing situation regarding COVID-19 and have taken on board advice from the Scottish Government. Following significant deliberation, the Board has taken this decision in the interest of protecting our members, particularly those in the most vulnerable groups.

At an emergency meeting of Bowls Scotland Board on Wednesday 18th March 2020 it was decided to cancel the following events:

- Bowls Scotland National Championships (Stage One & Stage Two)
- Ladies National Top 10
- Linda Brennan Ladies U25 Pairs
- Andrew Hamilton Trophy

Moving forward we will not be accepting any applications from clubs for our Try Bowls programme pending further government guidance. We will also not be running any Introduction, Level 1 or Level 2 Bowls Coaching Courses until further notice.

We fully understand that many clubs may suffer financial or operational difficulties due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and we have therefore put in place a series of support packages as set out below.

Club Support:-

- Capitation fees, National Competition entry fees and Tournament Licences fees for the 2020 season will be **returned to all clubs and Associations** that have already paid.
- On Thursday 19th March, we will be releasing a **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)** document on our website for all our clubs and members.
- We will also be setting up a **Bowls Scotland Helpline** that will be available for any officials of member clubs to phone and receive assistance with any queries or concerns.
- Development Team will continue to host **Online Webinars** for anyone looking for additional Safeguarding and club support.
- Bowls Scotland is also looking at setting up a new **Club Support Fund** to assist clubs through this difficult period. More information to follow shortly.

The Board are currently considering options for competitive bowls later in the 2020 season if the current circumstances change in sufficient time.

Bowls Scotland recommend that our member clubs consider the health and welfare of every player, coach and volunteer and carefully follow Government advice relating to the delivery of any activities during this period of uncertainty. We hope that everyone will follow this strong recommendation. Bowls Scotland will notify all clubs when there are any changes to the Scottish Government's advice.

We are also encouraging all Scottish bowlers to, where possible, continue to pay their membership fees for the upcoming season to help your club manage through this unprecedented situation. We will also continue to work closely with the Scottish Government to identify any new funding and financial support/relief which will hopefully be made accessible to all sports clubs in Scotland.

Finally, please follow all the relevant advice on how to avoid catching or spreading the virus. We would encourage you all to look after your own health and the health of your members. Bowls Scotland recognises that these are uncertain and unprecedented times for the bowling community and will remain in contact with clubs at this difficult time.

Bowls Scotland Chair, Sue Beatt, said: *"Bowls Scotland, our clubs, members and the whole sport are unfortunately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.*

"We have had to take these difficult decisions to cancel all our key events for the year. The welfare of all our members is a top priority to us as an organisation and we have carefully considered all options to do what's best for the bowling community in Scotland.

"The Board would like to thank our CEO and all the staff for their hard work over the last couple of weeks. They have worked tirelessly, long hours and have reacted to an ever-changing situation. The Bowls Scotland Board and key staff will continue to hold weekly meetings to review and co-ordinate the organisations response to this ongoing and fluid situation."

The National Centre for Bowling at Northfield in Ayr has now closed; however the Bowls Scotland Office remains open with all staff available by working remotely to support your club. If you have any urgent requests please send them via email to info@bowlsscotland.com or phone the office in the usual manner on 01292 294623.

The following links contain crucial information for clubs and members:

- Scottish Government - <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- NHS - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- UK Government - <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

We also take this opportunity to notify our members that the following external competitions have been cancelled by the relevant organising bodies:

- 2020 World Bowls Championships
- 2020 IBD World Championships (Para-Bowls)

- 2020 World Bowls Indoor Championships
- All BIBC & BIWBC Championships & International Series - except BIBC Junior Internationals in September (BIBC/BIWBC Statement available here)
- 2020 Para Bowls Home Nations

