



## West Somerset Bowls League

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING was held at **North Petherton Bowling Club** on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at **7.00pm**

### **In attendance-**

Don Bridges (DB), Chair - Burnham on Sea BC  
John Swayne (JS), Vice Chair - North Petherton BC  
Mark Reeve (MR), Treasurer - Taunton BC  
Jay Merrell (JM), Secretary - Wellington BC

Rod Stoodley (RS), - Eastover Park BC  
Graham Lewis (GL), - Bridgwater BC  
Graham Brown (GB) - Wellington BC  
Mike Kennedy (MK) and Sany Kennedy (SK) - North Petherton BC  
Alan Dicks (AD) and Tony Donaldson (TD), - Taunton Deane BC  
Nick Gardner (NG) and Royston Ball (RB) - Minehead BC  
Alvin Affleck (AA) and Roger Suchley (RS), - Taunton BC  
Colin Gay (CG) and Chris Mead (CM) - Victoria Park BC  
Alan Preston (AP) and Norma Pugh (NP) - Ilminster BC

The chair, Don Bridges, opened the meeting at 7.05pm

**1. Apologies for Absence-** No apologies were received. All member clubs were in attendance apart from Williton.

**2. Minutes of AGM Thursday 26th September 2024-** Acceptance of the 2024 minutes were proposed by GB, seconded by AA, and approved unanimously.

**3. Matters arising-** Nil

**4. Secretary's report** (Jay Merrell)

I would like to start by congratulating our winners, Taunton A team in division one and Taunton C in division two, commiserations to North Petherton B and Taunton B on their relegation. Well done to Ilminster B on gaining promotion in their first season as members of the league.

The 2025 season ran much smoother than 2024, incredibly we lost no matches due to the weather, and just one match due to teams not being able to field a team. Also, the almost daily incidents that seem to affect the M5 managed to avoid Thursday afternoons!

Before the start of the season, we were disappointed that Watchet were forced to withdraw, we very much hope to welcome them back at some point soon.

I am delighted to report the results website has been working well with almost 100% of results being entered by the clubs, which from my perspective is fantastic news, I hardly know what to do with myself between 10pm and midnight on Thursday evenings!

The only slight issue at the start of the season was the SBAs disappointing decision to move the play on days for several national competitions from Tuesday to Thursday. I wrote to Charmian Pearce who is the SBAs competitions secretary. She responded quickly and pointed out that across Somerset there are midweek leagues on all evenings. She also stated that play on dates should be read as play by dates. John has spoken with Bowls England on this matter who confirm that it is up to individual clubs to develop their own strategy on whether their members are given priority to play national competitions on any given occasion. With this in mind I am pressing the SBA to inform players which night of the week play on dates will be well before the competition entry deadline which is usually 31<sup>st</sup> January. This will give players and their clubs chance to agree on a strategy moving forward. I remind member clubs that at this meeting last year we did agree to amend rule 12 of the constitution to include the following paragraph ***Where a club is hosting county or national matches and do not have enough rink space for all matches, in the first instance they should try to convert one of the home fixtures into an away fixture. If that is not possible then an attempt can be made to rearrange the fixture, if both teams cannot agree then the matter will be referred to the Executive Committee for resolution.*** The Executive will be enforcing the converting home games to away games part of this rule more fastidiously next season.

As far as I know all matches ended with a light snack with a drink in the clubhouse. This does not get any easier year on year, but it is great to see clubs putting the effort in to maintain this enjoyable tradition. It was a problem at my club, Wellington, in particular and last season we were buying in rolls from a local supplier, the club subsidised this and it was a topic that provoked great discussion internally though we are very hopeful that we have volunteers for next season to return to producing the snacks in house.

Thanks are due to the other members of the Executive, Mark in particular with his work as treasurer which runs smoothly. Don and John in their roles are always available for a chat and to bounce ideas off and I am grateful to John for his help with the national competitions issue.

While all four of us have indicated we are willing to stand for a further 12 months it would be remiss of us to not try to put some succession planning in place. So, if you or any member of your club is interested in possibly becoming a league committee member in the future please let me know and we can perhaps set up some shadowing, and the non-executive Assistant Secretary position remains vacant. These are not onerous tasks, I think all four of us would agree nowhere near as challenging as equivalent club roles, and with the successful introduction of the results website even the secretary position is straight forward. The important thing is to have a spread of committee members between clubs, in the event of a dispute, and there has not been a significant one in the 9 years I have been involved, executive members from club(s) involved in the dispute would be expected to recuse

themselves.

## 5. Treasurer's report (Mark Reeve)

Opening balance 2024 AGM £1,361-29

Income £810 (27 teams)

Expenditure £894.44

Balance as at 2025 AGM £1,276-85

Lloyds started bank charges in February. Currently £4.25 a month.

Website hosting and results website £134

Bowls England membership £30

Prize money £600

Donation £100 (Musgrove Park Hospital Beacon Centre in memory of the late Roland Bath who was the league chair for many years).

## 6. Chairman's report

I would like to start by thanking other members of the league Executive Committee, especially secretary Jay, for their efforts in running the league. I would also like to pay tribute to my predecessor as league chair, Roland Bath, who sadly passed away earlier this year. The league made a donation of £100 to the Beacon Centre at MPH in his memory.

Congratulations to our winners and runners-up and commiserations to those clubs relegated.

Many thanks to John and North Petherton BC for allowing the league to hold its annual AGM here and finally this is my 28<sup>th</sup> year attending league AGMs, if anyone else would like to find out about what the league chair role is all about, please let me know.

## 7. Presentation of Trophies

Division 1 WINNER	Taunton A	£300.00
Runner-up	Eastover A	£100.00
Division 2 WINNER	Taunton C	£150.00
Runner-up	Ilminster B	£50.00

## 8. Election of Officers

The following officers were proposed by RB and seconded by AP

<b>Executive Officers</b>	<b>Holder</b>
Chair	Don Bridges
Vice Chair	John Swayne
Treasurer	Mark Reeve
Secretary	Jay Merrell

## **Non-Executive Officers**

Assistant Secretary

Vacant

All Executive Officers were re-elected unanimously.

**8.1 Assistant Secretary-** There were no volunteers to take on the role of Assistant Secretary.

## **9. Any Other Business**

### **9.1 National/County competitions**

Several attendees commented on the play on dates for national competitions being moved to Thursday. Last year's amendment to rule 12 was discussed and it was re-emphasised that Bowls England state it is up to individual clubs to develop their own strategy on whether their members participation in national competitions takes priority over club league games. MR pointed out that national competition competitors can offer to play their matches on a neutral green if their home green is being fully used by league games.

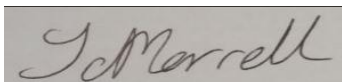
**9.2 Feedback on results website-** All present agreed the results website is a useful tool and works well with tables updated soon after the games end.

### **9.3 Teams for 2026**

The changes for 2026 are Victoria Park are entering a B team, Burnham-on-Sea are entering a C team and Eastover are withdrawing their B team. North Petherton wish to enter a D team but unfortunately there are no further vacancies. The 2026 league season will run between Thursday 14th May and Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August.

**9.4 Item for discussion** from the Executive Committee- Should we consider moving to divisions of 7 or 8 and play matches home and away over 14 weeks **from 2027**. After a lengthy discussion, an indicative vote was taken with only Bridgwater voting against this proposal. It was agreed that a Special General Meeting should be held next spring to formally vote on the proposal and, if this passes, to agree on the format of the new leagues and in particular how the leagues will be divided up at the end of the 2026 season. More details and an agenda for the SGM will be forwarded to clubs in plenty of time for discussion prior to the SGM.

The chair, Don Bridges, thanked members once again for their attendance, hoped they wintered well, and wished them good bowling for 2026 and a safe journey home. The meeting closed at 7.56pm.



Jay Merrell  
Secretary  
WSBL