



## West Somerset Bowls League

A **SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING** was held at **North Petherton Bowling Club** on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026 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

Paul Finch (PF) – Burnham-on-Sea  
Graham Lewis (GL) - Bridgwater BC  
Gary Owens (GO), - Eastover Park BC  
Graham Brown (GB) - Wellington BC  
Peter Ruddock (PR) - North Petherton BC  
Alan Dicks (AD) - Taunton Deane BC  
Rob Ware (RW) - Minehead BC  
Alvin Affleck (AA) - Taunton BC  
Chris Mead (CM) - Victoria Park BC  
Alan Preston (AP) and Paul Newton (PN) - Ilminster BC  
Calum Harrod (CH) – Williton

The chair, Don Bridges, opened the meeting at 7.02pm

1. **Apologies for Absence-** Nil, all clubs were in attendance.
2. **Secretary's introduction- JM** thanked everyone for attending. Four proposals to be voted on; we will discuss each proposal before voting. Please ensure your club contacts is up to date. You can also update your contacts on the results website. We are going for 100% self-reporting of results this season. I will send around the club passwords again with instructions on how to fill it in. It will be the responsibility of the home team to report results, if the home team is unable to please ask the away team, or promptly send in a photo of the scorecards. Please can both home and away teams send photos of the scorecards to [enquiries@wsbl.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@wsbl.org.uk) after the match finishes.

### 3. Proposals to be voted on

**PROPOSAL 1-** Increase the number of leagues to four made up of 6 to 8 teams playing each other home and away. The number of teams in each division will be divided as follows based on the total number of teams entering (shown in the left-hand column)

Number of teams	Division One	Division Two	Division Three	Division Four
32	8	8	8	8
31	8	8	8	7
30	8	8	7	7
29	8	7	7	7
28	7	7	7	7
27	7	7	7	6
26	7	7	6	6
25	7	6	6	6
24	8	8	8	-

Divisions of 8: teams will play fourteen games over 14 weeks.

Divisions of 7: teams will play twelve games over 14 weeks.

Divisions of 6: teams will play ten games over 10 weeks (though this could be extended into other league weeks)

This proposal was passed 10-1 with only Bridgwater voting against. **GL** explained Bridgwater were concerned about playing an increasing number of matches against the same clubs.

**PROPOSAL 2-** Division of teams at the end of the 2026 season to form the new leagues in 2027.

Each team is given a rank based on their finishing position in the 2026 season. Eg the team finishing top of division one will be ranked one. The team second ranked two. The team bottom of division two ranked twenty-eight, second from bottom twenty-seven. This pattern will be followed for all teams except the bottom two teams from division one and the top two from division two whose ranking position will swap so that the team finishing 13<sup>th</sup> in division one will be ranked 15, the team finishing bottom of division one ranked 16, the team finishing top of division two ranked 13 and second placed ranked 14. Any new teams entering will be ranked 29-32. These teams will automatically enter division four, so it does not matter in which order.

The composition of the leagues in 2027 depends on the number of teams entering. The following grid shows where teams will be placed in each scenario depending on the rank achieved during the 2026 season.

Number of teams	Division One	Division Two	Division Three	Division Four
32	Teams ranked 1-8	Teams ranked 9-16	Teams ranked 17-24	Teams ranked 25-32
31	Teams ranked 1-8	Teams ranked 9-16	Teams ranked 17-24	Teams ranked 25-31
30	Teams ranked 1-8	Teams ranked 9-16	Teams ranked 17-23	Teams ranked 24-30
29	Teams ranked 1-8	Teams ranked 9-15	Teams ranked 16-22	Teams ranked 23-29
28	Teams ranked 1-7	Teams ranked 8-14	Teams ranked 15-21	Teams ranked 22-28
27	Teams ranked 1-7	Teams ranked 8-14	Teams ranked 15-21	Teams ranked 22-27
26	Teams ranked 1-7	Teams ranked 8-14	Teams ranked 15-20	Teams ranked 21-26
25	Teams ranked 1-7	Teams ranked 8-13	Teams ranked 14-19	Teams ranked 20-25
24	Teams ranked 1-8	Teams ranked 9-16	Teams ranked 17-24	-

Subsequent seasons will be two up two down in each division.

The proposal was passed unanimously.

**Proposal 3- Donation to Taunton BC-** Following the catastrophic flooding suffered by Taunton BC the club has been left with a huge debt to pay for the clean-up and remedial measures to prevent future flooding. A crowdfunder has been set up with the aim of raising £10000. The Executive proposes the league donates £100

to this. **Vote** (Taunton representatives to leave the room).

The proposal was passed unanimously.

**Proposal 4-** From the Executive Committee. In order to speed up games we propose outlawing visits to the head and that skips must both leave the head together. **Vote**

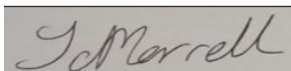
After a lengthy discussion **CH** proposed an amendment, seconded by **RW**, which reads- "Both skips must leave the head together. Skips may only visit the head after they have delivered two bowls."

The Executive retired to consider whether this amendment can be accepted and put to a vote. After a brief chat it was agreed it could be put to a vote first. The subsequent vote was 10 – 0 in favour with Eastover abstaining. The amendment was then carried as the substantive motion.

#### 4. Any Other Business

**4.1** Post-match catering- A lively discussion followed with all clubs setting out their position for the coming season. All clubs post-match catering plans were unchanged except for Taunton who stated they were going to be serving tea & biscuits. Subsequently it was agreed by **AA** and **MR** that this decision would be referred to the Taunton committee with an expectation (TBC) that some food will be served. Ilminster reiterated the position set out in a letter to all clubs late last summer that they were ceasing all catering which was subsequently amended to tea & biscuits. Several club representatives expressed their deep disappointment with this decision with **PF** suggesting that Burnham-on-Sea will struggle to find enough members offering to play away matches at Ilminster. It became apparent the other clubs have similar concerns.

**4.2** **MR** raised the issue of national competitions clashing with WSBL fixtures. He re-iterated that Bowls England have stated it is up to individual clubs to agree their own strategy on prioritising, or otherwise, national competitions over local league matches. Also play-on should be read as play-by and, if necessary, national matches can be played on a neutral green. **JM** reminded the meeting it was agreed at the 2024 AGM to amend rule 12 to include a clause reading "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."



Jay Merrell  
Secretary  
WSBL