



Issued: 5th October 2020

UPDATE: MEMBERSHIP, NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS AND NATIONAL COMPETITIONS 2021

We circulated headline information to clubs and county associations in August to assist you with the initial administration of affiliation fees and National Championship entries for the 2021 season.

This early notification of the key decisions was designed to enable clubs and county associations to plan accordingly for the 2021 season. A full reminder of these is included at Appendix A but headlines were:

- No affiliation fees to be collected on 30th September 2020;
- Affiliation fees for 2021 to be based on playing members at affiliated clubs as at 1st May 2021;
- Entries in National Championships and National Competitions to be accepted from any individual that will be a member of a club affiliated to Bowls England on 1st May 2021;
- The closing date for return of National Championship entries and National Competitions to Bowls England to be 1st March 2021

We promised a further update on some of the finer detail and pleased to provide this in the form of a 'Frequently Asked Questions' in light of correspondence received since our preliminary announcement.

Our consultation to date has already shown that there is a desire to reduce administration at all levels, in order to support those volunteers who are the backbone of our sport. 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.

With the end of the current summer season fast approaching, it's also time to look ahead positively to 2021. The past few weeks have proved that there is little doubt in the appetite for people to enjoy our sport in a social and informal manner, which is complimentary to work and family life. Through national support and communications, and by empowering existing club volunteers and players, we can encourage new people to come along to our clubs, take part and be active.

Our research shows that over 20% of bowlers begin playing off the back of club open days. With this insight, and following the success of our Let's Roll marketing initiative, plans are already underway for a national recruitment initiative ear-marked for the Spring Bank Holiday of the 2021 season.

[Sign-up to our e-newsletter](#) to be the first to hear about it.

SAVE THE DATE – National Open Weekend Friday 28th May to Monday 31st May 2021

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[Why has the date for return of National Championships been extended to 1st March 2021?](#)
Some county associations had requested additional time to get entries together due to Covid-19. Therefore it was decided to extend the return date for all. We recognise that some county associations, due to their own timescales for draws/yearbooks may wish to process entries sooner therefore we have left the date that county associations use internally to their discretion, so long as returns are made to Bowls England by 1st March 2021. This means any process already in place for collation of entries and draws/publication at county level should be unaffected by this decision.

[Who is permitted to enter National Championships and National Competitions in 2021?](#)
There have been queries from some clubs/county associations that people may wish to enter National Championships (and National Competitions) who may not be recognised as being a member of a club – either due to personal circumstance, personal choice or their club not opening in 2020. Therefore, rather than people having to be a ‘member’ at point of entry (as per current Regulations) it was decided to revise regulations to ‘member on 1st May’ in order that entries can be accepted from all those who do intend to be a member of a club for the 2021 season.

[Are there any changes to National Championships and National Competitions in 2021?](#)
We have made two changes to our events in 2021 in light of feedback received – Junior Pairs Championship and Family Pairs Competition.

Our recent participation survey indicated support for the trial of more modern formats by those younger players that responded. The format of play in the Junior Pairs Championship will therefore mirror that used at elite level – three bowls per player; 18 ends. This offers an excellent opportunity for our younger bowlers to enjoy the same format as played at the Commonwealth Games and World Championships, as we look to build the pathway for young bowlers to High Performance level.

The eligibility criteria in the Family Pairs has been extended to include Husband and Wives/Civil Partnerships. We are aware that many couples have expressed a desire to participate in this competition and we hope many will enjoy the shared experiences that this change will provide.

[What club contact information will you require?](#)

Our experience over the past few months has proved that there are many people involved within club management that wish to connect with Bowls England on topics that are of interest to them. Following discussions with the counties, we are in agreement that channelling communications through county secretaries and club secretaries is not effective in this digital age. Whilst ensuring counties are well-informed, as part of the affiliation process, we will be seeking contact details for those key club personnel in order that we can send direct communication to them. The final detail will be worked up over the coming months, but we anticipate that those roles will fall into a number of categories as shown below:

- Lead (Chair/President)
- Finance (Treasurer)
- Secretary (Point of contact for county association and Bowls England)
- Coaching, safeguarding and/or Junior Development
- Communications
- Development (National Open Weekend/Commonwealth Games)
- Greens Manager

We shall provide further information on this requirement in due course, however we anticipate that the deadline for return of this information to Bowls England will be 1st March 2021 in order that this can be completed with the National Championship entries.

What membership information from clubs will you require?

We shall require the names (and gender) of each playing member of each affiliated club, together with contact details for key club volunteers in order that we can personalise information to the correct people at the right time.

Will you be providing a template for the return of member information?

We shall be working collaboratively with county associations to further consider how we can utilise technology to make the process for return of member information user friendly wherever possible. We are aware that a number of county associations already collect this information as part of their affiliation process, and we will seek to utilise their knowledge in developing a national solution. Whilst this may present some short-term challenges, it will save time and effort over the medium and long terms.

What impact will these changes have on the Bowls England Yearbook?

The Bowls England Yearbook largely comprises of competition information and contact details. We therefore plan to use this opportunity to modernize our approach. We will develop a digital publication that incorporates our annual report, financial information and showcases our work and future plans to all stakeholders. Details need to be worked through, but we trust this will alleviate some of the work over the closed season for club and county officials. Archery GB is just one of the many NGBs to follow this approach – [click here to view](#).

We are aware that we may need to provide a hard copy version for some members, but this can be done without the expense and complexity of the current yearbook. We shall ensure clubs and county associations are kept abreast of developments.

As we're asking for more club data as part of the affiliation process, we will provide this information in online – therefore ensuring that the very latest information about our clubs is available to those within and outside our sport. All competition information will also be available online, including historical records. To support this process we shall dedicate staff resource to ensure our website becomes our 'go to' communications resource.

How do we submit information regarding Bowls England Patrons?

We shall provide further information on this requirement in due course, however we anticipate that the deadline for return of this information to Bowls England will be 1st March 2021 in order that this can be completed with the National Championship entries. A list of all Patrons will be published on our website.

What information is required for entrants in National Championships?

The named entrant must give contact information in accordance with current 'Test and Trace' requirements. At the time of writing, we would recommend this be limited to:

- Name
- Date of birth (age-related championships only)
- Contact details – Telephone and E-mail

The details are currently only required for the 'named entrant' – so for example in a four you are only mandated to request contact details for the named entrant. This will provide entrants with as much flexibility as possible in the current climate. All named entrants must be offered the choice to 'opt in' for Bowls England communications.

The named entrant would be responsible for contacting the rest of their team should there be any obligation during the season to do so. 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.

Is the 1st May deadline for collection of affiliation fees from clubs a permanent change?

Yes – this is a permanent change and we shall be updating our Regulations to reflect this decision. The return to County Associations (and Bowls England) should be for all playing members of an affiliated club as at 1st May annually. The return of information to Bowls England will be by 31st May annually.

National Open Weekend – Friday 28th to Monday 31st May 2021

Our research shows that over 20% of bowlers begin playing off the back of club open days. With this insight, support from counties and following the success of our Let's Roll marketing initiative, plans are already underway for a national recruitment initiative ear-marked for the Spring Bank Holiday of the 2021 season.

Our insight suggests that this is the optimal time as it will give clubs a few weeks of the season to prepare and promote their activity, greens to be up to speed to ensure a better experience for potential new recruits and (hopefully) warmer weather than is usually experienced earlier in the season to attract the widest possible audience.

With a window of four days for the national campaign rather than a single day, we trust this will enable clubs to organise activity that best fits within their club's calendar. For example any activity on the Friday night could lend itself to a 'social' event whilst a Saturday or Sunday morning session may be more attractive to families.

It will be for clubs themselves to determine exactly what day/times suit them – there is no expectation that clubs will organise activity on every day. Bowls England's role will be to provide guidance on how to run your National Open Weekend experience, resources to support every affiliated club that signs up and training for club volunteers. We will support your efforts with a national media campaign so together we can grow participation within our clubs.

APPENDIX A: Summary of Key Decisions (Issued August 2020)

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

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. Entries will be accepted 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. Entries be accepted from any individual that will be a member of a club affiliated to Bowls England on 1st May annually