

## NEW YEAR GREETINGS FROM THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

1 January 2021

To GBA Club Secretaries, GBA WD Delegates and all GBA Officers and Officials

[to be hopefully passed on to all GBA members]

Dear Colleagues,

I'd like very much to convey my own and the GBA Joint Executive's warmest greetings to you for 2021. We all share, I know, a hope that this coming year will see a return to something much more akin to 'normal' for our great sport, within Gloucestershire and beyond.

The portents are good, particularly with the beginnings of mass Covid-19 vaccination, which many of the bowling community should be able to access within the next few months. We must obviously keep our fingers crossed that the actual production of the vaccines can keep pace with demands and that the process in the UK can likewise cope. It would be so good to be able to get back in the Spring into the social hubs that are our clubs, beginning to meet and to play bowls reasonably normally, plus be able to resurrect the competitive aspects of our sport, which lay dormant through 2020.

The sole benefit from 2020 was the time that our National Governing Body, Bowls England – alongside doing all that it could to keep us actually playing outdoor bowls, albeit at a fairly muted level - was able to devote much time to looking at the future of the sport in England. Many of you will have been able to contribute to the wide-ranging club and individual surveys that were undertaken in Autumn 2020, or maybe take part in the 'focus groups' that are still under way. Along with other consultations at the county level, these fed into the developing strategy for the future that is now beginning to emerge. Though some of the results of the surveys and the plans for the future have been made generally known (have a look through the News pages of the BE Web site <https://www.bowlsengland.com/news-items/>) - always a good source of up-to-date information - the audio-visual presentation at the BE (Zoom) 'Counties Meeting' in late November is a good summary and – though it was not intended for widespread circulation - I would be happy to provide this to anyone who has the interest to view the plans as they presently exist \*.

Some of you too will have been following the new Bowls England channel on YouTube. There are some really interesting Podcasts by key individuals and very useful Webinars and guidance on a variety of topics (such as : Social Media use; Data Protection; improving your club's communication; funding sources). All of these at: <https://www.youtube.com/c/BowlsEnglandTV/videos>

The Joint Executive Committee has been trying to second-guess what 2021 might hold for us in various ways. Generally agreed that, though the GBA should approach 2021 optimistically, the likelihood of 'normal' play remains uncertain. We will necessarily plan, as an Association, on the basis that everything will happen as usual, including getting on with the production of our publications. Everything depends on halting the progress of Covid-19 and on associated government regulations, despite hopes about the vaccine. BE would be issuing guidance at some point, but it was felt by the JEC that they (BE) should not make decisions for the whole season, and particularly in relation to competitions, too early or too quickly \*.

In a disconcerting 2020 - for me personally – when I didn't actually play at all, the one really bright spark was the beginnings of the Gloucestershire Youth Academy, with 'Taster Days' on 30<sup>th</sup> August and 20<sup>th</sup> September. In case you haven't looked at the many photos on the 'News' page on the Web Portal yet [ <http://gloucestershirebowls.org.uk/page29.html> ] you can see there the 17 youngsters

involved and appreciate the enthusiasm that came out of those two days and - not least – the vital support from parents and some grandparents. On the basis of all these factors, the JEC has agreed that the Academy will be set up and funded, with an ongoing programme for 2021. Further information on the way forward will in due course be found in our 2021 handbooks, in a statement from David Rolls, our County Coaching Supervisor. If, in some way, you have any young players in your clubs that we don't already know about, please get in contact with myself or with David Rolls.

In conclusion again, a Very Happy New Year to all bowlers in Gloucestershire.

Best wishes,



Mrs Lindsay Collin. GBA Administrator



\* More thoughts on both the outline of the BE Strategy and on what 2021 might hold for Gloucestershire can be seen in the (draft) minutes of the most recent (11 December 2020) JEC meeting on the Gloucestershire Web Portal.