31 October 2026

Dear Bowlers and County Representatives,

The future of BCGBA and the Special General Meeting on 14 November

We are writing to you ahead of the Special General Meeting on 14 November because BCGBA is facing an unprecedented situation. We know there has been a great deal of information, disagreement and understandable confusion. We believe members deserve a clear and factual account of where matters currently stand. Above all, we want the decisions made on 14 November to be based on facts, not hearsay.

The Temporary Board

Four new independent members have recently joined the Temporary Board. It is important to make clear that they were not involved in the previous decisions that contributed to the current dispute. They were appointed by the CEO and existing Chair to strengthen the Board, improve governance and help BCGBA find a way through the present difficulties.

Importantly, our legal team has confirmed that the Temporary Board has been lawfully appointed and has the authority to act on behalf of BCGBA. The four new members have joined with a clear purpose: to help resolve the current issues, strengthen governance and return the focus to protecting and developing crown green bowls.

We recognise mistakes were made

If we are asking members to consider the facts honestly, we must be equally honest about where mistakes have been made and provide some context about what has happened. An external HR and governance review identified weaknesses in existing processes and structures, including areas relating to data protection, pensions, HR and financial controls. It also identified the need to review staffing structures to better support the organisation.

Work began to address these issues. This included creating shared cloud-based storage controlled by BCGBA, documenting key processes and workstreams and strengthening financial controls, including introducing an additional bank signatory.

We recognise that the pace and scale of change may have been difficult for some employees, and we are sorry if this was not managed or communicated as well as it could have been. However, changes were needed to strengthen compliance and put BCGBA on a more secure footing.

Another significant area of concern was the proposed move towards a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG). It is important to clarify that the CEO did not create the CLG. It already existed and remained dormant. The intention behind considering its use was not to change our sport, but to modernise BCGBA's governance, provide a clearer legal framework and better protect the volunteers and Board members taking responsibility for running the organisation. The information available to the Temporary Board records that the CLG remained dormant and that the existing unincorporated Association continued to operate under its Bye-Laws.

To progress this work, the board asked a then-serving Board member who had a legal background, whether a member vote was needed. The advice received was that it was not. This was accepted without further independent legal advice being sought. The CEO acknowledges that relying on that advice without seeking further independent legal advice was a mistake, and we apologise for the confusion and concern this has caused.

For clarity, the CLG remains dormant and the existing unincorporated Association continues to operate under the BCGBA Bye-Laws. Going forward, we want proper consultation, transparency and member involvement in significant decisions about the future governance of the Association.

What happened on 22 August 2026?

On 22 August, a meeting took place organised by a group identifying itself as the "BCGBA Executive Committee". Following that meeting, the group began claiming authority to act on behalf of BCGBA. We have sought legal advice on this matter. Our legal team has confirmed that the meeting held on 22 August was not lawfully held and the decisions purportedly made at that meeting were not lawful.

The BCGBA Bye-Laws contain specific requirements for convening a Special General Meeting. Our legal advice is that the 22 August meeting did not meet those requirements, including because:

- not all Member Associations were invited; and
- the required notice period set out in the Bye-Laws was not met.

We have been made aware that concerns about the validity of the proposed meeting were raised with those involved before 22 August and that the meeting proceeded regardless. *We have not been able to independently verify this, so we do not present it as fact.* We include it only to distinguish clearly between information reported to us and information that has been established.

What we can state unequivocally is the legal advice we have received:

- the Temporary Board was lawfully appointed and has authority to act on behalf of BCGBA;
- the meeting on 22 August 2026 was not lawfully held; and
- the decisions purportedly made at that meeting were not lawful.

Our legal advice therefore confirms that the group deriving its claimed authority from the 22 August 2026 meeting was not lawfully authorised by that meeting to act on behalf of BCGBA.

How did we get here?

The events of August followed a staffing restructure in which the Finance Officer and National Administrator roles were made redundant. Both roles appear within BCGBA's organisational arrangements. The Temporary Board understands that the redundancy process was supported by an external HR consultancy firm and no formal challenge was received at the time, so both individuals concerned subsequently entered their notice periods.

Those individuals no longer work for the organisation. However, serious issues remain regarding BCGBA's access to and control of its banking, organisational systems, information and membership data. This is preventing those whom are lawfully authorised to act for BCGBA from having access to and full control of the Association's records, systems and processes.

The Temporary Board has identified banking access, financial liabilities, organisational systems, employment matters and information security as matters requiring urgent attention. There are also questions regarding payments that may have been made without the authority of the lawful Board. We will not make allegations about individuals until the financial position has been fully verified. If inappropriate or unauthorised payments are established, they will be dealt with through the appropriate professional and legal channels.

We want to resolve this

Despite everything that has happened, the Temporary Board wants to resolve this dispute, not prolong it.

Over the last couple of weeks, we have been working with Steve Cochrane and Dan Newton to prepare accordingly for the SGM on the 14 November, during this time there have been factors that have affected the pace we have been able to work at. We are overcoming these challenges and accessing the necessary legal advice, which will lead to the necessary presentation of facts to support the decisions necessary on the 14 November. We are grateful for the patience of the crown green bowls community.

We have made attempts to engage with those claiming alternative authority, with both practical operational matters through Steve Cochrane & Dan Newton and most recently, a Temporary Board member approached them to hear their position and explore whether an amicable resolution could be reached. That opportunity was declined.

The four new Temporary Board members have no interest in revisiting old personal disputes. They were not involved in the decisions that preceded this situation. They have joined to strengthen governance, establish the facts and help move BCGBA forward. That is where our focus must now be.

Why 14 November matters

The Special General Meeting on 14 November 2026 is extremely important.

This should not be a vote about personalities or which "side" someone supports. It should be about how BCGBA is lawfully and effectively governed and how we protect the future of our sport.

There is a real risk that continuing division will cause lasting damage. If counties lose confidence in the governing arrangements and the Association becomes divided, the consequences could ultimately be felt across national and county competitions and the wider organisation of our game.

None of us wants that.

Crown green bowls has faced challenges for a number of years. Its governance and business arrangements need modernising. We need proper financial controls, protection of member data, fair and lawful treatment of employees, clear accountability and appropriate protection for the volunteers who give their time to govern our sport.

Most importantly, we need a clear strategy for the future of the game we all love. Modernising BCGBA is not about changing crown green bowls. It is about protecting the organisation responsible for supporting it.

We accept that mistakes have been made, and we apologise for those mistakes. But those mistakes cannot make an improperly convened meeting lawful, nor can they provide authority that was not lawfully obtained.

The SGM on 14 November 2026 gives us an opportunity to move beyond the dispute, restore stability and determine the way forward through the proper process.

We ask every county representative and every bowler to read the information provided for the SGM carefully, ask questions where necessary and distinguish between fact, opinion and rumour.

Whatever our differing views, surely we can agree on one thing:

The interests of crown green bowls must come first.

BCGBA does not belong to a Board, an Executive Committee or any individual. It belongs to its members and to the sport.

We now have an opportunity to put proper governance in place, restore trust and concentrate again on protecting the future of crown green bowls.

Yours sincerely,

The Independent Temporary Board Members

Jim Drain

Chris Lambert

Michelle Jones

Domenic Condello

British Crown Green Bowling Association