
Proposals to Bowls England for relocation of the Mens National Championships and Bowls England Headquarters to Royal Leamington Spa

Introduction

The Executive Committee of WDC have given their wholehearted support for officers of the Council to work with Bowls England in order bring the Mens Championships and Bowls England HQ to Leamington Spa.

The Executive will formally consider a Feasibility study from officers at their meeting on 8 August 2012, which will bring together the findings from three independent impact assessments:

- Economic Impact (Economic Development Team)
- Impact on local residents and bowls clubs (Neil Allen Associates)
- Technical Impact Assessment (STRI)

The decision made on 8 August 2012 will allow WDC to make a definitive offer to Bowls England in time for their Board meeting in September and Company meeting in November 2012, with the intention, subject to Executive approval being agreed, of welcoming Bowls England to the district from 2014.





Championship Venue – Victoria Park

Royal Leamington Spa lies in the heart of England. It has good communication links by road, rail and air making it easily accessible to all parts of the country. The town and the surrounding district, in addition to a great facility offers a range of attractions - shopping, tourist, eating and drinking for the Bowls community to complement the National Championships and indeed other national and international events that might be held here. The local community, business and residents welcome and support the location of the Men's Championships and the HQ to Royal Leamington Spa.

The venue at Victoria Park, with its 5 high quality greens, has hosted the Womens Nationals since 1975 and the Womens World Championships on 2 occasions in 1996 and 2004. The pavilion in Victoria Park has long been the HQ for the EWBA and since then operated as a satellite office for Bowls England after the amalgamation and the creation of Bowls England. The bowls pavilion also provides a base for the tournament office during the Nationals with the added benefit of the adjacent club room and bar, café, toilets and changing provision.

The greens at Victoria Park have benefitted significantly from a comprehensive programme of maintenance in the last three years. This has involved changes to maintenance regimes, investment in new equipment and improved working with the green keeping team, all of which have resulted in the greens being considered "very high quality", a judgement supported by qualitative data from the STRI who have worked in a unique partnership with WDC and Bowls England to get the greens back to this standard.

Victoria Park is a large piece of open space owned and managed by Warwick District Council with significant space for the location of marquees, sponsors tents and displays. The Park also offers car parking spaces for approx. 350 cars (with additional over flow parking close by in the event of wet weather rendering the park unsuitable for daily parking), a stand alone pavilion with water and electricity which has in the past been used for meetings, storage and refreshments during the Championships.

The venue has recently benefitted from an upgrade to the power supply which feeds the sponsors tents and Bowls England gazebos during the championships, and an upgrade to the public address system. There are provisional plans in place to replace the current PA system with a more modern version that will allow announcements for each green to be controlled independently. This project would be made apriority in the event of the Mens Championships relocating to this venue.

The Council is also proposing a number of improvements to the bowling and ancillary facilities which could include an improved/replaced irrigation system; improvements to the "banks" around the greens, improved/extended changing and toilet provision. A commitment is given for these works to be completed before the 2014 championships if there location gets approval.

We welcome the position outlined at a recent meeting to the Royal Leamington Spa Bowls Club (RLSBC) in which Bowls England will be in a position to offer up a number of days when 1 green could be made available for day time club fixtures/play during the 30 days. **The details of these days will need further discussion, but the principle is gratefully received by ourselves and the RLSBC.**

We recognise that should Bowls England relocate the Mens Nationals and HQ to Leamington Spa, there will be a desire to bring other events including internationals, trials and international events. WDC would be very keen to enable this to happen through the provision

In response to your previous request we can confirm that we will be able to provide additional seating (approx.500 chairs); space on the "old tennis courts" for a storage container; and are supportive of there quest to-rename and number the greens to make the current "Egreen" the premier green and number rinks 1-6 on each green.

All the above facilities would be made available to Bowls England for the womens and mens championships from 2014 onward for a period of 30 consecutive days from Saturday of week 31 (9am – 6pm approx.)

of greens and other facilities whilst being fully aware of the need to ensure that RLSBC and other users of the greens continue to have appropriate access in order to allow them to fulfil their fixtures and clubplay. We do need to understand in more detail the requirements for these bookings but we are also confident that we could work with Bowls England to accommodate the additional bookings alongside other users of the greens and essential maintenance. As with the Nationals, there would be no charge for the green hire for such events. Further dialogue would be required on what other costs could be incurred by WDC in support of these events.





Financial proposal

As an update to our letter of 13 June 2012, WDC would like to offer Bowls England usage of the greens for the 30 days at no cost to Bowls England for a period of 10 years from 2014.

In practice this would mean that the current recharge of £10,000 for the women’s championships would cease from 2014, representing a saving to Bowls England of £10,000 immediately. WDC would, therefore, be responsible for the costs of security (at the current levels); barriers; skips and waste collection; attendants for carpark and greens, toilets for caravan site. Just for clarity, the costs of marquees, catering, VIP/sponsors evenings, administration and staffing by Bowls England staff of the championships would continue to be at a cost to Bowls England. There would be no charge for the use of the greens for the 30 days of the Nationals.

Car parking income would continue to come to WDC. We would not introduce charges for entry to the greens.

Beyond the initial 10 years WDC are keen to develop a set of principles which would be applied to recharges from 2024 onwards. These principles are as set out below and as per the previous correspondence.

- Beyond the initial 10 years the following principles would apply:
1. The package of services (as currently provided) to be provided by WDC in respect of the championship to be specifically defined and agreed with Bowls England.
 2. The cost of these services to be separately identified by WDC, with details of these costs being shared with BE annually.
 3. The actual costs for year 10 (2023) to be the Base Year for considering the costs for future years.
 4. The Base Year figures to be increased annually for inflation as measured by RPI to produce an annual Uplifted Base Cost for each subsequent year.
 5. The RPI to be used will be the April figure (published in May), that is, the April 2024 RPI for the 2024 championship.
 6. The Actual Costs for the championship to be determined as soon as possible after the championship for the each year in question.
 7. If the Actual Costs exceed the Uplifted Base Cost, the difference will be shared equally between WDC/BE, with BE due to pay their share to WDC.
 8. There would be an annual review of costs from Year 10 onwards

However in an attempt to illustrate how these principles would be applied an example (based on current costs) is shown below:

Costs to be picked up by WDC in 2023:	
Security	£25,000
Attendants	£15,000
Barriers	£4,000
Skips and waste collection	£2,500
Toilets	£1,500
Total	£48,000

This figure of £48,000 would be the base cost.

So if in 2024 the RPI is 3% the budget for WDC would increase to £49,440. If the actual costs for the 2024 championships come in at £52,000 then the difference of £2560 would be split 50:50 between WDC and Bowls England. Assuming that RPI remained at 3% the base then for 2025 would increase to £50,923. Any costs above that would again be split 50:50 between WDC and Bowls England, and soon for future years. This way Bowls England will only be picking up half of any increase in costs above inflation over the 2023 costs. Should costs increase by less than RPI, then Bowls England would have nothing to pay.

WDC are also keen to work with Bowls England going forward to consider other sources of income that could off set the cost of the championships to us. For example, is there potential for a “profit share” arrangement on sponsorship and/or catering income?





Headquarters/Office Accommodation

We understand that Bowls England are very interested in the option of temporary office at the Council Headquarters in Riverside House. From discussions since your visit to Riverside House we understand that you would be looking for “transitional” accommodation from 2013/14 which could grow as you move more of your operations to the new location.

These offices would provide a flexible space, with Reception services provided by WDC staff at the main reception; security as part of the WDC contract with Mitie, access to the building Mon – Fri (7am – 7pm). Further discussions would be required regarding telephone and network connections but we are confident that they can be provided.

WDC are willing to offer you the office space at Riverside House on a rent free basis from autumn 2012 if required and for a period up until WDC vacate the premises or for a period to be agreed by both parties, whichever is the sooner.

In respect of more permanent HQ accommodation we are keen to continue the dialogue with yourselves to identify suitable properties, be they WDC owned or privately owned assets.

The offer of 26, Hamilton Terrace remains an option if Bowls England felt that it meet their requirements, although we understand that it may have some limitations in terms of accessibility. The Council will review its property portfolio to consider if there is any other property which might be suitable for a longer term permanent location including evaluating future how Bowls England might be accommodated in any new Council HQ if this was considered to be a viable option by both parties.



The Council is also open to discussions about the alternative funding models to support Bowls England in acquiring a suitable property. This could include, but is not restricted to the option of “longlease/99 year lease” in order to offer Bowls England long term security of tenure. It is understood that this detail would need further discussions and Chris Elliott, Chief Executive and appropriate officers would be happy to meet with whichever ever of the Bowls England team needs to be involved to consider options. It is not possible at this stage to answer the detailed questions in your letter of 16 July in respect of lease costs and associated services costs. Whilst the Executive have agreed in principle to finding a site for a new Council HQ, the detailed work has not yet commenced and there will as you will appreciate a significant lead period before we have detailed plans and costings. This does not in anyway preclude us considering the option of including space within any new build HQ for Bowls England to share some of the property and we would be very keen to discuss this with you at an appropriate time. We can also facilitate discussions with commercial agents to consider what other properties may be available in the local area.

It is also understood that Bowls England would wish to continue the use of the satellite office at Victoria Park (on the recently approved terms) along with access to the “middleroom” as a Tournament office and for one off meetings/training sessions. I hope that the information contained in this document demonstrates the enthusiasm and commitment from officers and elected

members of Warwick District Council to work with Bowls England for many years to come, to build on the positive relationship that has been enjoyed for many years and work together for the benefit of Bowls England, their members, and the local people and businesses of Warwick District.

Chris Elliott
Chief Executive

Cllr Michael Doody
Leader, Warwick District Council

Rose Winship
Head of Cultural Services

Cllr Sue Gallagher
Portfolio Holder for Culture



