



Men's Section



Benevolent Fund
Charity Registration
215632



2022 Annual Report to Trustees

This year has seen the first full season of outdoor bowls since the pandemic restrictions were lifted. During the pandemic donations to the Benevolent Fund stopped and despite our best efforts and communications, 2022 has seen a dramatic drop in contributions.

In order for the fund to operate efficiently, there is a level that donations need to reach and currently that is not happening. This means that the fund is not sustainable long term with the level of support we have seen for 2022.

As you know, the Benevolent Fund is a Registered Charity and we don't currently receive funding or donations from any other sources than the Counties bowls clubs and affiliated associations. Therefore, the support of all the bowls clubs within the Leicestershire County, who are affiliated to Bowls Leicestershire, is vital.

Awareness of Benevolent Fund

It is clear from comments made by David, at our meeting, that awareness of the Benevolent Fund, is likely to be at a very low level with the Counties Clubs.

So along side our own individual promotion of the fund where possible, I remembered that during last season, Bowls Leicestershire sent by email a document they requested be posted on club notice boards. It was about bowls etiquette. I assume like most club secretaries (as I was at the time), this was

actioned by the majority of clubs (?). Is it worth considering putting together an A4 poster that clubs can post on their notice boards and sending this via the Bowls Leicestershire mailing list? Would clubs be more likely to take notice if it came from a governing body? No mention of the donation process but just information about the Fund and what/who it's for. I am happy to create a draft idea for consideration.

Committee

The final meeting of the Fund Committee for 2022, saw the stepping down of George Sim and the unanimous election, by the Trustees, of David Keegan.

It was also agreed that the financial year would change to be the same as the calendar year and that the nomination criteria would be reworded for 2023. The changes to the make up of the Committee have now been amended on the Fund Constitution. The new Constitution has been uploaded to the website, Bowls Leicestershire and a request has been made with The Charities Commission to replace the document they currently display with the new version.

Donations and Nominations.

Of the 81 clubs listed, 30 made a donation to the Benevolent Fund. Some generously hosting match events and a few made larger donations between £50 and £150.

However, just under half the clubs that donated gave £25 or less, and 5 of those clubs sent in requests for between 3 and 7 nominations, clearly not sustainable. On top of that there were requests from 7 clubs who donated nothing, ranging from 1 to 3 nominations. Equally, there were donations from 17 clubs that have not yet made any requests.

Following the pandemic donation drought, it was felt that the Trustees should review the nomination criteria and this was revised in November 2021. It was hoped it would encourage more clubs to donate, but as you can see from the figures above, that was not the case.

2022 has seen requests for nominations so far a little lower than last year, but the level of funding support has been low. So far this year nominations received stand at 51, of which 70% have been granted. The value of the gift card, per nomination, remains at £25. To date donations for 2022 total £1575 and the value of gift cards granted is £850.

Although we, the Committee, support the fund by giving our time freely, the costs of administration have increased. Postage alone has seen some large

increases in cost. Special Delivery postage has increased by nearly 11% and second class postage has increased by 2p, an increase of 3% from 2021 to 2022. There is also the cost of £6.50 for the Special Delivery of the gift cards to the Fund Secretary, every time 10 cards are ordered. So far this year, that has amounted to just under £20. There are also printing costs to consider and the cost of travelling expenses that as Committee Members we absorb ourselves.

The Charities Commission.

The Committee believe that due to the Benevolent Funds Charitable Status, any request for donations we communicate to the County clubs, cannot suggest a minimum donation level. However, with so many charities pleading for donation amounts on our TV screens, this is being investigated with the Charities Commission. If the Benevolent Fund Committee were to ask clubs to donate £1 for each male bowler affiliated to Bowls Leicestershire, based on figures for the 2022 season, this would see income to the fund of circa. £2250.

However, we need to be mindful that we don't want clubs, who currently donate a much larger amount, to reduce their donations. Looking at the value of gifts given in 2021 and 2020, the value hit £2450 and £2350 consecutively. This doesn't include postage and expenses, so donations based on affiliations would not cover all the costs. It may be that we have to have two versions of the donations request letter - 1 to clubs who donate higher value monies and 1 for those clubs that donate £25, less or nothing.

Actions already taken

Following the final quarterly meeting of the Committee on November 10th, I can confirm that, as agreed:

- the fund financial year has been changed to 1st January to 31st December, on the Constitution Document, which in turn has been added to the website, Bowls Leicestershire Benevolent Fund webpage and a change requested with The Charities Commission.
- the name of the fund and the bank details have been updated on The Charities Commission website. (When I checked all our registration detail I found these were not up to date).
- the Trustee names have been updated on all relevant documentation i.e. George Sim removed and David Keegan included.
- I have reviewed the wording of the nomination criteria and forwarded a draft to the Trustees for comment/approval. Feedback required.

- new artwork for the Committee insert was agreed at the final meeting of 2022 and artwork has been sent to TW to arrange printing.
- copies of all relevant documents have been sent to the new Trustee, David Keegan.