



Minutes of County Think Tank

Sunday 28th November @ 10.30am

Present	Jo Cundy, Paul LeManquais, Lisa John, Dave Steiner – see attended sheet (David Hawkes, Brian Wilkins, Stephen Toop, Russell Semple, Paul Williams, Chloe Bruton, Dave Malpas, Ruth Molineaux, ChrisTaafe, James Baker, Steph Tilson, Anthony Robson, Neil Taylor, Lynn Squib)		
Item on Agenda	Discussion/Points raised	Who	Action
1. Opening Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you all for giving up your time for the meeting. Welcome to the meeting. We were due to have a meeting last year but due to COVID we had to delay the meeting to this year. • Unfortunately we have not had any ICC Championships for 2 years which has been very sad. Hopefully now that bowling has come back we will be able to proceed with ICC's for 2022. • Historically the home of ICC finals was always Nottingham, but going forward Nottingham is not on the table anymore for finals for a number of reasons. Paul and I have had long conversations about what we will do going forward. In terms of formats for finals it does have an impact on venues due to sizes of centres. I have been speaking to lots of people regarding what we can do going forward. • Paul sent out an invitation for questions so we will be looking at various options on how we can move forward. I am the Inter County Co-Ordinator so I oversee all of the county age groups. Jo – Adults, Paul – Seniors, Stephen – Juniors. 	JC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Points raised will be discussed throughout the meeting.
2. Previous Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of changes to the rules where they were amended. • Junior Age Groups – will come up again this year. • Shorts – could come up again in discussion today. 	PLM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most will come up today in the meeting



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniors – suspend the award of age bonus which we did do, ratification of whether we do that again will come up later in the meeting. • Charging Structure. We cannot run ICC's at a loss so we need to work out a way of doing this year on year. • Finding a venue for tournaments has become more difficult and now that they are open they need to get their revenue back, which puts us in a tough position to get a good deal. Bowlers always want more for less which narrows down our options for venues. • We have been very busy over lockdown. We have had more meetings in the last 18 months than prior to lockdown. We formed an Inter-County Working Group earlier in the year and one topic we covered was the county boundaries which PLM will cover shortly. The 1961 County Boundaries was discussed. 		
<p>3. County Boundaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The biggest issue was the 1961 boundaries. What we set about doing was to take postcodes and put them into the county boundaries where they currently sit. Dave S did the bulk of it. We now have an excel spreadsheet which allows you to put in the first part of your postcode which tells you which county you are eligible for. We also suggested that these should be reviewed every 5 years. We haven't put this in place yet as we haven't been able to integrate it into the website, but we are working on a way to get this out into the public domain. If you were originally registered to a county and that is where you still are, you would remain in that county even if you are now living in a different county. We can record on the BTBA database which ICC you are affiliated to. • We've had a lot of issues where counties cannot form a team due to lack of numbers, particularly juniors. We will discuss that under the Junior section. 	<p>PLM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLM to send out a copy of the spreadsheet to those attending today and then to National Council Members.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NT – can a copy of the spreadsheet be provided to the LA? Yes 		
4. General playing rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only rule to discuss was the one of Local Associations not having a charter if they do not have any centres. The National Council agreed that we were happy for Local Associations to carry on if they had a functioning committee, even if they had no centre within their LA. This came from Northumberland. • BW – Staffordshire haven't had a centre in their LA for quite a few years. • JC – this could be added into the rules. PLM – there are some wording changes that need to be amended. • Shorts? This would need to be ratified by National Council. There will need to be some caveats on it. The Cundy rule should apply if shorts are acceptable. If you can touch the skin on your legs, your shorts/skorts are too short. • RS – Shorts should be tailored, no cycling shorts or swimming shorts. • BW - Colour of the shorts should match the rest of the team. • Chris – can we allow the tournament manager to have the final say on the day, bearing in mind any rules or guidance from Council whether the dress code has been adhered to. This will give the tournament manager the authority over those who wish to interpret the rules their own way? JC – Yes • Do trials need to be bowled in a sanctioned centre? JC – preferably yes, but you cannot always do this. If you are unsure you can always speak to JC or PLM for clarification. • AR – County Durham have twice taken their trials out of the county. PLM – this is quite common. 	JC/PLM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To take to NC - PLM to amend the wording for Local Associations without centres but with a functioning committee. • To take to NC - Shorts – need to be tailored, no cycling shorts must have belt loops.
5. Juniors	<p>Questions raised by counties – See attached</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the last Think Tank we had quite a big shake up with regard to age groups. The under 12 age group came in to try and encourage our younger members to bowl. Unfortunately it 	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Council to ratify the proposal. • ST and his team to look at how the Junior events would look including mixed teams and the format.



	<p>wasn't as successful as we hoped it would be. We've had a couple of questions about Juniors.</p> <p>Middlesex Question – Age Groups and Mixed Teams. The recent World Championships had mixed teams so this is not a bad idea. We are all in agreement that the under 12 age group is not sustainable. Do we go back to just 1 age group or 2?</p> <p>ST – I've looked it purely from the numbers and of those that are registered. Spreadsheet attached with breakdown of numbers.</p> <p>NT – suggested Under 15 and Under 22.</p> <p>ST – Mixed is a definite strong option and would bring more bowlers into the events.</p> <p>RS – For under 15 you would definitely need to go to mixed but you would need to include some kind of stipulation on numbers.</p> <p>DS – Under 18's for juniors</p> <p>CB – I like Under 15 mixed and Under 18's as male/female rather than Under 22.</p> <p>AR – I agree with Chloe with regards to the Under 15 and I agree with Dave regarding Under 18.</p> <p>Chris – We could have 1 age group and give age bonus. When there were hundreds of young bowlers it was justified to have gender teams and different age groups. But today we are struggling so fewer restraints will include more young bowlers.</p>		
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	<p>RS – By only having an Under 18 group we are not aligning ourselves with our own rules.</p> <p>JC – there has always been an issue with Juniors aligning with our own rules. Suggestion – Under 16 and Under 22.</p> <p>PW – are we looking for a long-term solution or are we looking for a solution by reacting to current numbers with a review at the next Think Tank. JC – Yes.</p> <p>ST – we have Under 22 in Triple Crown so this would align with that. Would we run Under 16 and Under 22 at the same time? JC – No, they are different events so would run at different times.</p> <p>JC – ST and his team have taken on the responsibility of the Junior ICC's. They will decide when these events are.</p> <p>NT – There's a huge gap between 8 year olds and 16 year olds so I think it is too big a gap.</p> <p>Chris – we can then give age bonuses for the younger bowlers.</p> <p>Proposal - Under 16 (mixed) and Under 22 (male and female).</p> <p>Vote – For 12 Against 3</p> <p>PLM – Can I suggest that ST and his team look at the format for the mixed team and come back to us with suggestions.</p> <p>Middlesex Question – amalgamating teams. RS – there are 3 powerhouse YBC's around the country.</p>		
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	<p>JC – I feel very strongly about the Orphan Rule. In the current climate there might be more juniors that are affected by the ruling.</p> <p>Chris – we need to ensure that the rules we have do not prevent young bowlers. Perhaps some counties could invite orphan bowlers to participate in their trials.</p> <p>DS – what happens when they become an adult and they are already tied to a county?</p> <p>AR – We could talk about this all day. This needs to be discussed overall and agree how we take it forward, not just for juniors. Middlesex say they have 9 bowlers not eligible but do not say if they have another county to play in.</p> <p>NT – If there is an active association, you cannot cross counties because there is no junior team. I agree with Dave, if there is an adult team, the junior can join them. You'd need to change county eligibility.</p> <p>Fundamentally no current county knows who is eligible for their association/county. We need to know who our eligible bowlers are.</p> <p>DH – I believe that if you have a county that you are eligible for that is where you bowl.</p> <p>DS – Current rules say that if you do not have a county association and you bowl a league in another county, you can bowl in that county.</p> <p>RS – On the point of bowlers bowling for another county because they have a better chance of winning. We inherited some bowlers</p>		
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from Staffordshire because they couldn't get into a team. We need to consider the bowlers who cannot bowl because their LA cannot field a team.

CB – I think the current rules work really well and we are already quite flexible. People moving around drive me nuts because we are never going to be able to cover everyone. We need to be recruiting bowlers to increase our numbers.

JB – Speaking as RAF I know I don't have much input. Is there any possibility of doing a non-affiliated team? The Olympic do it so it might give an option especially for juniors. JC – it is an interesting point and would need to be looked at in further detail about.

PW – University days – 'mongrel' team, individuals were eligible but teams were not. Could Middlesex field a team that is full of Berkshire players, should Berkshire not have an Association? JC – you need to have a committee to run the association, but if they don't have them then technically they do not have an association. PW – we need to be encouraging people to set up Associations.

AR – You cannot just change your county because you want to be in a winning team, you should bowl where you are eligible to bowl.

NT – Every member has a county of birth. This never changes. Can this be put on the membership database and be made available to Secretaries? JC/PLM – this is on JustGo.

I know there are bowlers in other YBC's that are eligible for London but how do I contact them? How does the bowler know they are eligible for that county?

LB – I agree with what Chloe said. Our rules already cover enough and if we dilute it any further we are going to make it too



	<p>complicated. We need to put our efforts into recruiting more bowlers at grassroots to ensure that we get more bowlers in to help those bowlers who don't currently have teams.</p>		
<p>6. Adults</p>	<p>Questions raised by counties – See attached</p> <p>Bucks – size of teams from 5 to 4 and possibility of mixed.</p> <p>PLM – bearing in mind I already run different format in seniors I can give you any issues.</p> <p>JC – Adult ICC is the last remaining event where 5's takes place in both gender groups. World Champs went to 4's. 5 has always been the optimum number for me for a team event but we need to look at how this will impact on the Local Associations. From looking at this do we do ladies to 4 and men 5 or do we do a blanket of 4 across the board.</p> <p>PLM – Senior ladies play slower than the adult ladies so tend to finish at the same time as men with 5, but we need to look at how this would work.</p> <p>Chris – we would struggle to get 4 for Kent so we would like trios for ladies and 5 for men.</p> <p>CB – we would like to keep both at 5.</p> <p>AR – I'm a traditionalist and would like to keep it at 5. Going to 3 would be a massive drop and doesn't feel like a team event.</p> <p>DS – I accept the traditional view of 5 man team. It takes an hour and 15 minutes to bowl one game of 5's. I am not a fan of going away from 5 but common sense tells us to move to 4 because of</p>	<p>All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Council to ratify proposals. • Teams to stay at 5 person team for both male and female. 16 For and 2 Against. • Cut to 20 teams for finals, 3 from each region and then the winning team from the previous year – if unable to field a team then the place goes to the region 18 For and 0 Against. • Qualifying to be 5 person team and the finals to be Baker – 9 For and 6 Against.



	<p>timescales. The time taken is one of the reason why the worlds has moved from 5 to 4.</p> <p>NT – it took us a few years to get us a ladies 5 team but we achieved it. We've had comments on whether we are competitive but we have to have a team to compete in the first place.</p> <p>DH – I agree we should keep it at 5. Lowering it would perhaps prevent some players from playing. Seniors can always make up the numbers.</p> <p>JC – Adults are in the unique position where they can take from the juniors and the seniors so it has a wider scope for selection.</p> <p>PW – we don't have great numbers either but manage to get to 5 and 5. Reducing the numbers may give the better counties a greater chance of winning.</p> <p>NT – if juniors are playing in an adult team do they need an adult card. JC – yes they do.</p> <p>AR – I agree with the comments made by others. What sort of numbers replied and what numbers are we looking at from both points of view?</p> <p>PLM – there are few missing from the numbers but in the adults there were 25 positive responses.</p> <p>RS – for me it is about participation. If you gain more bowlers by dropping to 4 then it is worth it but if you lose more bowlers than the teams you gain then it isn't worth it.</p>		
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AR – moving to 4 may lose people trialing if they think they wouldn't make the team. Leaving it at 5 gives more bowlers the opportunity to play. I genuinely think you'll get more bowlers not trialing and overall we will lose out.

CB – AR worded it better than I would have so I agree with his points.

ST – Norfolk lost a lot of bowlers in leagues and thus impacting interest for county trials. We would be likely to enter if 4s, but 5s is probably a no no. But I understand the need to keep it for the majority. And once the size drops, it's hard to increase back up again.

DS – difficult to change it now as we don't know who is coming back so I would leave it for now and see what we get.

JC – as DS said we don't know who is coming back. I'm with AR in that I want as many people to participate as possible. At the last registration there were over 700 bowlers registered. People do like playing counties and that is the general feedback that we get. The feeling I'm getting is that you would like to keep at 5.

LS – numbers on lanes during Covid? 10 bowlers on a pair of lanes, would this be an issue. JC – we genuinely don't know the answer to that. LS – we have some bowlers who want to bowl in the county and want to do trials but some have vulnerable family members so may not want to play in the team environment. JC – adult event is next September so who knows what that will look like.

AR – I agree with LS but centres do appear to be back to normal at the moment. Covid is not going away. Whether you have 8 or



10 won't make much difference. Maybe only having bowlers in the players area would work. These are rules that you'll have to put together based on the situation at the time. It will be personal choice for the bowlers going forward. We're at a point where we don't know what is going to happen in a month's time let alone in 6 months.

JC – it is important to consider.

Proposal – to keep at 5 for both.

Vote – For 16 Against 2

Qualifying and Finals

JC – currently 12 male and 12 female teams make to the finals. Unfortunately we have run out of options of where to go for the finals if we keep it at 24. I have written lots of different versions of how we can look at this. Paul Moor's idea – have you thought about the team that wins the year before gets an automatic place in the final the year after? You could qualify 3 from each region and this would make up your odd team number to make it 10 teams at the final.

RS – if you still want to keep the same numbers at the finals. You could do two days of finals and keep the numbers the same. And you could move to baker and bowl the men and the women on the same day – 1 in the morning and 1 in the afternoon.

JC – it's the final that is the issue not the qualifying round.

PW – defending champion is the same as how FIFA used to run the world cup. Would they still bowl the qualifying round? JC – yes. PW – if the winner cannot field a team the following year



would that happen there? PLM – second place? PW – is it time to change from 3 regions and maybe go to 4 regions. DS – we don't have the manpower to run 4 regions. I do agree with what happens if they cannot field a team the following year? That could be a problem. My argument would be that we have to cross that bridge when we come to it. It is the best idea that I have heard in I don't know how many years. JC – regions also fit in with Sport England.

LB – I agree with Paul's suggestion and Russ's suggestion of moving to Baker.

AR – The region the winner comes from gets the extra place if the winner cannot field a team.

PLM – nothing to do with how you get to the final as such. What if you effectively had 1 centre where you have different squads and all regions play their qualifying round there. And then you can work out who qualifies based on pinfall or points.

AR – Baker at 5 man team is brilliant. The Silk Cut changed their format from 5 man team qualifying and 1 game of baker. Then the finals were baker. Baker on the final day is really really exciting. JC – I like the idea of qualifying being 5's and then the final being baker and it does make it very exciting. Qualification is about building that team and relationships and then finals are quick fire. Only negative is that sometimes people when they play baker feel that they have been short changed as you only get a couple of frames per game if they have travelled further. AR – on the flip side it cuts down costs for the Local Association at the final. JC – it would considerably cut down the cost of the final – for lineage costs.



	<p>RS – the reduction of cost is massive. It is more team building in baker. In team events it is a lot about better bowlers carrying the team.</p> <p>Proposal 1 – cut to 20 teams. Top 3 from each region and the additional team to make it to 10 would be the winning team. If the winning team cannot field a team that region gets an additional place.</p> <p>Vote – For 18 Against 0</p> <p>PW – why not baker at qualifying? JC – as people haven't had the chance to bowl together we would like to keep it at 5's for qualifying and baker for the final to make it quick fire.</p> <p>Proposal 2 – qualifying would be 5 man team and final would be Baker format.</p> <p>Vote – For 9 Against 6</p> <p>JC – Dinner at the finals. We tried a buffet which had pros and cons. Depending on where we go, depends on what we can provide for the evening.</p>		
7. Seniors	<p>Questions raised by counties – See attached</p> <p>PLM – if we were to follow the proposal for the adults, it would make life difficult for the seniors. I would be interested to hear views from those present regarding Baker format.</p> <p>Going back to an Age Bonus system is something we need to look at. It made my life easier but I am happy to look at it. All other groups are based on scratch so why shouldn't seniors be?</p>	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Council to ratify proposals. • Removal of age bonus to be included in the rules 15 For. • Keep Seniors at over 50 15 For.



Age Bonus
JC – did you get initial feedback after the event? PLM – none that I recall. It did not affect the number of entries. I reviewed the results and the age bonus did not make any difference to the final result.

BW – in the previous think tank meeting it was suggested to bring in 45 year olds? If this was to happen I think age bonus should be brought back in but that is my only opinion. PLM – 50 plus is where I would like to keep the Senior Counties.

AR – I think it should stay at 50+

DS – There is no justification for bringing in 45 year olds. 965 BTBA members are over 50.

NT – was there a reduction in ladies numbers when the age bonus was removed? PLM – No

Proposal – Removal of Age Bonus is made a permanent inclusion in the rules

Vote For 15

Proposal – Keep Seniors at 50+

Vote For 15

Qualification

PLM – do we follow the route we are taking with adults of including baker? JC – I don't personally want to mess too much with the seniors as we don't know who is coming back. PLM – I am happy with that but we will need to go back to the same centre



	<p>as before (Guildford). JC – Centres we are look at are Acocks Green, Dunstable.</p> <p>BW – talking of Guildford – what about Airport Bowl? LB – In agreement to move it to Airport for the final. PLM – I am happy to look at Airport and will look at it when I'm making enquiries.</p> <p>RS – Airport is idea for accommodation too! Steve Wright is a good point of contact for hotels near Airport Bowl.</p>		
<p>8. AOB</p>	<p>JC – at the beginning of the year Matt Smith, sent myself and LB the idea of a County League like the SSL, MSL etc. It was a very comprehensive proposal. The biggest thing for me the idea for a travelling league was really good. When I spoke to the Exec Council about it, I didn't want it to go down the travelling league route. We generally felt that ICC needs to be a prestigious stand-alone event. BW – The Southern Area Challenge gives the Southern Counties a chance to play in events other than the ICC events.</p> <p>Thank you everyone for today, it has been a really positive meeting. I will be taking the proposals to National Council in 2 weeks on the 11th December.</p> <p>Chris – do we know dates for next year's ICCs? JC – Adults will be 3rd and 4th September and 5th and 6th November. Seniors will be 4th and 5th June and 8th and 9th October. Juniors are to be confirmed.</p> <p>PW – Just for clarification – the sanctioned centres is online; looks like 7 for 2022. Is there a period of grace for these centres that are not certified? What dates do we need to register teams by? Adults – Middle of July</p>	<p>All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Council to ratify votes at their next meeting on Saturday 11th December. • JC/PLM to send out the minutes to those who attended and National Council.



	<p>Seniors – End of April Can we have our trials in an uncertified centre? PLM/JC – Yes PLM – Certification list will be updated shortly as there are lots of centres applying for certification.</p> <p>NT – can we use trials results from 2019? JC – no, it was too long ago.</p> <p>LS – Lane Certification. We have been asking for Lane Certification to be completed. Our manager has left and I will take it up again with the new manager.</p> <p>DS – We need to take the opportunity to talk about the 65+ age group. AR – I suggest we leave it as it is for this year and let everyone get back and then re-address it at the next Think Tank. DS - There are 422 members who are 65+ at present.</p> <p>PLM – We will hold another Think Tank in 2022 rather than every 2 years. For ST, I have the Junior results which I can send to you. ST - yes please.</p> <p>LB – thank you to everyone for your time today. We really do appreciate your time and your comments. Please feel free to contact us at anytime with any comments etc. Thank you again.</p>		
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