**SWF Zoom Meeting 13.4.21: Accessibility**

**First of all: News update**

* We’re always looking for interesting snippets for Cygnet – send them to Linda at any time and she’ll take it on from there
* A reminder the CA Child Safeguarding Policy is to be implemented by all clubs by 1st May
* Future Zoom meetings – agreed topics to include
  + Speaker from CA Executive Committee
  + Crowdfunding
  + Lawn Care
  + Active Partnerships
  + Duke of Edinburgh awards
  + How to run a tournament
* Sharing lawns with Bowls Clubs – if you’re looking for info / advice on this, contact Paul who will be able to point you in the right direction
* Next Zoom meeting: Tuesday 11th May 7.00pm. Topic to be confirmed

**Accessibility**

12 clubs were represented at this enlightening and thought-provoking presentation from Jonathan Toye, East Anglian Federation’s Development Officer. We received excellent feedback:

*Really useful, worthwhile and interesting meeting. Thank you for putting it together.*

The recording of this meeting may be found here:

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| Topic: SWF Zoom Start Time : Apr 13, 2021 06:44 PM  Meeting Recording: <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/ovq8-tOeh0nHAs6AFIAYmR8B50zo2TK2MjwsSeBWOCsW9wiglho3hETudYXjEh2U.JMMrRFqPCd5IGVii>  Access Passcode: e83Yz1@4 |

**Context**

The CA is developing a more pro-active approach to inclusivity which encompasses disability and impairments. This has an impact not only on our recruitment and attracting new players, but also on our ability to sustain the involvement of our existing players.

He asked us to reflect on our perceptions of disability, noting that despite it being the stereotypical image, only 5% of disabled people use a wheelchair. The term disability covers a myriad of conditions: physical, mental or learning disability. A number of disabilities may not be at all obvious at first or even at all. For example, impaired sight or hearing: or even balance or mobility difficulties. And of course, especially as we get older, we all become more likely to experience these.

**What we can do**

Jonathan reflected on a disabled person’s experience as they came to the club

* Parking facilities – are spaces reserved for people with disabilities or mobility needs
* Access to buildings – ramps, rails
* Accessible toilets – consider having one accessible toilet that can be used by all, rather than more but poky men’s, women’s and ‘disabled’. And don’t fill it with junk!
* Look for hazards around the lawns – leave 2-meter gaps in boundary boards so people with mobility needs can get away from the lawn more easily
* Leave a double-buggy wide route around the lawns and facilities where possible

This makes it easier for everyone, not just for people with disabilities. People will use the slope in preference to the steps!

There is a lot that each club can do with a little forethought

* Consult with members themselves to find out what they would find helpful
* Make provision for people who need to, to play on lawns nearest the facilities
* The provision of half-size lawns improves accessibility considerably
* Remember, this will make it safer and easier for everyone

People with balance or mobility needs on the lawns have devised various aids to assist them. And there’s a lot of suggestions to. For example

* Weight-spreading devices on mallets or walking sticks that can be used for balance and rest
* Space for buggies to enable people to sit there when they are off the law
* Short mallets for use by wheelchair users
* A two-handled mallet is being developed in Oz!
* Adapted wheelchairs – be careful about mixing electricity and water!
* A trolley to carry an oxygen supply around the grounds
* Scooping devices to pick up balls

And these needn’t cost you – see possible sources of funding below

**Further help**

Jonathan, is able to undertake access audits for clubs. Adopting a ‘keep it simple and realistic’ approach he will come along to your club (for the price of his petrol) and look at the experience for people with a range of disabilities or impairments as they come to the club grounds, club house and its facilities, and around the lawns.

He has agreed to trial a virtual access audit in conjunction with Bath CC – so an interesting experiment. We’ll keep you abreast of developments.

More locally, there is a network of Disability Information and Advice Line services who may be able to offer an access audit. Find out more: <https://www.dialuk.info/>

**Ball colour and CVD / Visual Impairment**

One member submitted a question prior to the meeting about this. While provision may be made for people with CVD, there is no mention by the CA of other visual impairments and one member asked for clarification about the choice of colour. This is a matter under consideration by the CA.

First of all, clubs should remember that for club competitions, they can set any conditions they want to. They are not bound by the CA Tournament Regs. Similarly, federations can set conditions for their Leagues and events.

Jonathan points out: Regardless of any CA regulations, if someone has a visual impairment/colour blindness, they must be given the colours they can clearly see. Opponents should be prepared to clarify which of their balls is which and which clip is on which hoop, if there is a problem distinguishing them.

The consensus of this discussion was

* Someone with a visual impairment should be able to choose the set of balls they wish to play with
  + This would also apply in double banked games
* They should be able to choose the pair they wish to play with
  + In AC this should mean the opponent automatically has the choice to go in first or second
  + In GC, a toss should be made and the winner starts with whichever colour they are playing
* At least two types of tertiary sets are available which may be better

**Behaviour in play**

One member raised concerns about the impact of someone with mobility difficulties playing in high level tournaments and events when balls may be moving hard and fast (this was with specific reference to GC).

The responses are

* In all games, every player has a responsibility to look out for everyone else on the lawn
* If such a shot is to be played, all players should be warned
  + People may be hearing-impaired or looking in another direction anyway
  + There is an argument that the risk is greater in club tournaments and events where there may be less awareness of what else is going on
* There is a desire (and responsibility) to make the game and all games inclusive, that means taking everyone’s needs into account

**Funding and information**

Funding

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-england>

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-wales>

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/our-funds>

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-england#section-2>

Do be aware that funds’ criteria do change from time to time, so check it out carefully.

Information

Bradshaw Buggies: <http://bbbugs.co.uk/>

Bowls Royce chairs: <https://www.bushhillbowls.co.uk/>

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| The CA has made a commitment to increasing diversity in the game and Beatrice Glen is heading up a working group on this.  The topic has been discussed at two Zoom meetings ably hosted by Eugene Chang – the Federations’ Focus Group and the open CA monthly meeting. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aymHAaTWD0A&feature=youtu.be>  These indicate a widespread commitment to increasing diversity but a less widespread practical approach to making this happen. |