



England Bowls Board Designate: Preparing for a Unified Future

Leading a clear route for the proposed amalgamation of Bowls England and the English Indoor Bowls Association

The England Bowls Board Designate has been established to provide leadership, oversight and continuity as Bowls England (BE) and the English Indoor Bowls Association (EIBA) prepare for their proposed amalgamation. The Designate Board will guide the work required before the proposed date of formal merger on May 1st 2027. It will ensure a clear proposition can be presented to members of BE and the EIBA for a vote on the merger in Spring 2027. And it will prepare for the smooth establishment of England Bowls should the motion be supported. Following a merger the Designate Board will transition into the formal Board of England Bowls.

Purpose of the Designate Board

The Designate Board is a practical bridge between the current arrangements and the future unified governing body. It brings together existing Board Directors from BE and EIBA so that key decisions, governance arrangements and operational preparations can be developed jointly rather than left until the formal launch of England Bowls. It will use a detailed merger work plan established by the Joint Working Board over the past 12 months. It will maintain momentum and ensure that the new organisation can begin with clear leadership, functioning committees and appropriate oversight.

Why these appointments have been made

The appointments follow a selection process that drew on existing directors from both national governing bodies. Eleven members make up the Designate Board: five from EIBA and six from Bowls England. This balance combines knowledge of indoor and outdoor bowls with experience of the two organisations that must be brought together. Six of the Directors are member elected and a further one has been previously appointed by the EIBA Board. The Board includes four women and seven men. Four directors were originally appointed to their respective governing body boards through fully independent processes. Independent Directors bring skills, experience and a wider perspective which enhances decision-making. As a result, the Designate Board meets Sport England's Tier 3 Code of Governance requirement for at least 25% independent members. Collectively the Designate Board members bring the necessary skills and experience.

The appointed Board

- Chair: Jo Doust (BE), independent appointment
- Senior Independent Director: Emily Green (BE), independent appointment
- Member-elected directors: John Stewart (EIBA), Josh Pounds (EIBA), Mike Lambert (EIBA), Steve Warren (BE), Sue Bertram (EIBA) and Sue Pember (BE)
- Director appointed by the EIBA Board: Jordan Moody (EIBA)
- Independent directors: Brock Fordham (BE) and Louise Mackie (BE)
- Ex officio members: Jon Cockcroft and Peter Thompson, as the Chief Executives of BE and EIBA respectively

A strong and relevant skills base



The Board brings a broad range of expertise directly relevant to establishing and governing England Bowls. Its strengths include significant first-hand bowls knowledge at all levels; operational delivery across all aspects of indoor and outdoor bowls; strategic planning; performance management and senior-level reporting; major events; law; sports governance; finance; equality, diversity and inclusion; collaboration with other national governing bodies; marketing and communications; risk management; and technology.

The England Bowls Board members will still be subject to the limits of their terms of office as described in the articles. So, after the merger, there will continue to be an annual flow of Board departures and new members

Next steps towards an operational England Bowls Board

The Designate Board will begin meeting in October. It will meet monthly by Microsoft Teams and its agenda will be driven by the Day One work plan already established by the Joint Working Board, enabling members to oversee the practical, governance and organisational preparations needed for launch.

We will be introducing the new Board to bowlers through individual videos explaining each member's background and experience, helping the bowls community understand who will be providing leadership and what each person brings to the role.

Subject to approval at the Annual or Special General Meetings of BE and EIBA in early 2027, the Designate Board will continue delivering the Day One plan and transition into the formal Board of England Bowls. If either organisation rejects the merger, the Designate Board will disband.

Benefits for the amalgamation project

Establishing the Designate Board now gives the amalgamation project visible leadership, joint ownership and a clear line of accountability. It allows key work to progress before the formal decision, reduces the risk of delay or confusion at launch, and brings together the experience of both indoor and outdoor bowls. Because the Board already meets the independence requirement, covers the principal skills needed and can support all committees, it provides a credible governance foundation without an urgent recruitment exercise.

Most importantly, the Designate Board creates continuity between planning and delivery. It can test working arrangements, build relationships and maintain focus on the agreed Day One priorities, so that, if members approve the amalgamation, England Bowls is ready to operate effectively from the outset and can begin realising the benefits of a single, unified organisation for the sport.

About the new Board, England Bowls Board Designate Chair Jo Doust, said, *"The Designate Board brings together the substantial experiences and skills of Board members from the EIBA and BE. Bowlers should be confident that this Board will treat the potential merger with great care and diligence to make sure they do the right things for the future of Bowls."*

The first meeting of the EB Board Designate will be on Wednesday 7 October 2026.