

BRITISH CROWN GREENBOWLING ASSOCIATION LOOKS FORWARD TO THE START OF THE 2021 OUTDOOR SEASON

Today's roadmap for the easing of lockdown restrictions enables BCGBA, counties and affiliated clubs to prepare with confidence for the 2021 outdoor season. The Prime Minister's announcement confirmed that outdoor affiliated bowls clubs will be able to open from 29th March.

Our overriding objective is for as many bowlers as possible to enjoy our sport in a safe manner this summer. Bowls is a naturally socially-distanced, non-contact activity and plays a key role in the mental and physical health of many across the country. The positive prospects for the new season provides a great boost to bowlers and the sport in general.

Whilst the overwhelming majority of existing bowlers are eager to start playing and are likely to have received their first vaccine, we understand there is a degree of nervousness about returning to the sport. We will be working alongside our development partner, the Bowls Development Alliance, to support affiliated clubs across the country to create Covid-safe environments, building on the fantastic efforts of many club leaders last year. This work will include:

- 'Return to Play' guidance for affiliated clubs
- Resources and best practice to support the safe running of clubs
- Online booking
- Promotional material and funding advice

We also aim to facilitate as much domestic competition as possible. We have developed a series of Covid-contingency scenarios and, with the information now available, will look to reshape our national competition schedule.

The National Open Weekend 28th May 2021 planning will continue and we believe there's a good opportunity to encourage people, who are looking for a new fun, family outdoor activity, into our sport. We will be working with affiliated clubs who sign up to empower them to deliver Open Weekend events that are Covid-safe and give new players a fantastic first experience.

We have been in discussions with our partner organisations to ensure a safe return to play, with the Prime Ministers road map we look forward to clubs being able to open safely within government guidelines

We will be working in partnership with all stakeholders, notably affiliated clubs, to navigate through any challenges and, whilst mindful to retain a level of caution, are very excited about the outdoor bowls season beginning soon.

We understand today's developments will provoke a range of questions and we would ask people to bear with us as we work through the various implications. As soon as we can, we will be issuing more detailed guidance on the BCGBA website.

Mark Bircumshaw
CEO BCGBA