

## **European Development Seminar-Creating a solid foundation for development**

When I was invited as Chief Executive by the board to provide my input to the World Bowls Development Strategy I drew upon my 15 years of experience as Chief Executive of World Bowls dealing with our members, especially our smaller developing nations, to advise the directors of the need to include assistance in the area of administration. This is a pre-requisite to ensure firstly that any authority seeking development assistance from World Bowls has in place a solid administration foundation including effective communications systems with their own member states/provinces and their sports authorities from which to effectively move forward to develop the sport throughout the nation. They should also have defined a clearly detailed strategic plan and development strategy.

Just as a tree grows tall and strong and remains stable in all conditions because it has good roots the same applies to any bowls organisation.

So what is a solid foundation and in terms of development why is it such a vital requirement?

In simple terms, unless the authority concerned can firstly ensure that it is well structured, with the right people with the required skills in the right places and that it has clear and effective communications systems in place with its members and potential members and has clear priorities then the ability to effectively deliver development initiatives in wider areas of the sport such as coaching, technical official development does not exist. There is no solid, respected leadership platform from which to move forward effectively.

Development initiatives in wider areas of say coaching and technical official development must be designed to furnish the authority with the capabilities to become self-sufficient. In other words our development programmes need to ensure that individuals are trained or up-skilled to be able to be left to deliver effectively what is required on an on-going basis in that nation. We need to provide the training and tools to those who will then be responsible to train others in these areas.

Authorities cannot run before they can walk.

We must provide the fishing rod not simply keep throwing fish when providing development assistance or we will simply be faced with ongoing demands to keep going back to do the same thing year after year with all the financial implications that entails.

That is why the constitution of the authority is so important. For new member applications we receive they must be accompanied by the authority's constitution, we need to be assured that the terms of the constitution demonstrates effective administration and committee structures.

Myself at World Bowls headquarters and others within our Laws & Constitution Committee have had many years' experience looking at and indeed writing constitutional documents and indeed assisting new membership applicants to ensure that not only do the terms of their draft constitution meet our requirements but provide the framework to administer their authority effectively in a transparent manner.

How often do our smaller authorities especially review their constitutional documents to ensure they provide or continue to provide the framework for effective administration of their authority?

The presentations this weekend have clearly demonstrated the need and benefits of good, effective communications with your membership be that by newsletter, website or social media.

Having in place a detailed Strategic Plan and national Development strategy, which are reviewed and updated regularly with clear national targets are vital.

Ensure that you fully engage with not only your members but just as importantly your national sports authorities and potential funding agencies.

In conclusion, I would just like to return to a subject I highlighted in my presentation yesterday on events i.e. forward Planning and indeed financial forecasting. It is evident that in some cases our smaller authorities leave it too late to consider their potential financial requirements to participate, as they would wish and should be aiming and planning to do, in major world and international events. It is no good waiting until the last minute to plan and forecast for say the 2019 Atlantic championships which, wherever they may be held, will be your qualifier for the 2020 World Championships, which we do all already know will be on Gold Coast, Australia. Start planning and forecasting now and start on the basis that you hope to qualify in all disciplines i.e. the worst possible financial scenario. Engage with sports authorities and potential funding agencies and sponsors now. It is never too early to start the process.

We at World Bowls are here to assist you, do not hesitate to call upon our considerable experience and knowledge resources.

Gary Smith

Chief Executive