**News release – Friday 10th July 2020**

**£2.4MILLION CASH BOOST EMERGENCY FUND**

Bowls clubs across the country have secured more than £2.4million from Sport England’s Community Emergency Fund, latest figures show.

Following guidance issued by Bowls England, 1,062 clubs across all codes have been awarded a cash grant with the overall value of approved funds for our sport totalling £2,404,765 – an average of almost £2,250 per club.

We were delighted to learn that Ingatestone BC in Essex is one club that has already benefited, having been awarded a sum of £2,916.

Barry Crane, treasurer of the club, said: “As a small (50 members) mixed outdoor club this will be a lifeline to our future presence in the village. Particularly at a time when unavoidable bills for ground rent, insurances, utilities (especially water for irrigation) and other essential green maintenance have continued, but revenue has ceased due to the lockdown having prevented any games being played. Although it does not cover the whole of our expected shortfall, it gives us the breathing space to get our finances back on track next year. The application procedure was straightforward, so I would urge other clubs in a similar position to put their case forward if the fund reopens.”

Wyrral Park BC in Somerset is another club to have received financial support from the Sport England Community Emergency Fund, receiving £1,500.

Club Secretary, John Clare, said: “We took the decision not to call for a membership fee this year. We are striving for new members, but retention of the existing membership is at least as important. With the prospect of little or no bowls this year, the last thing we wanted to do was lose the loyalty of those who have enough difficulties to face. Nevertheless the need remained to maintain the green and incur the usual running expenses, just like any other year. This award will help considerably in managing our finances at this difficult time and we were delighted with the outcome.”

The initial £20m fund was launched at the end of March as a rapid response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact on sport and exercise.

The Fund was topped up by an additional £15 million of National Lottery money to meet the demand from organisations delivering community sport and physical activity.

The Fund is currently paused to new applications, but we will widely circulate all updates in respect to its future.

Has your club benefitted from the Sport England Community Emergency Fund or any other grant opportunities during the Covid-19 pandemic? Let us know by contacting news@bowlsengland.com – we would love to hear how any funding has helped you.

If your club wants to find out more about general funding opportunities in support of its longer-term development, visit: <https://www.bowlsengland.com/funding/>

You can also contact John Hughes, Bowls England Club and County Support Advisor on 07879 812416 or by emailing john@bowlsengland.com and he would be pleased to assist you.

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