

Annual Review

2019/20

Responses to questions and comments



We thank all our members who have submitted questions and points of accuracy regarding the Annual Review 2019/20. Our responses are detailed below. The final version of the Annual Review is available on our website. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, printed copies are not available at this time.

From: Diane Webb, Hastings & District TTA
Company Member, Vice-President

Page 7

At the 2016/17 AGM, Sport England funding was lost as the Board's Governance Rule Change Propositions as directed by Sport England were not accepted by the membership. An EGM followed on 12th August 2017 and with the promise of a review the AGM decision was reversed and Sport England's money was reinstated.

The main recommendation of the review was to set up a Members' Advisory Group (MAG) as "The Review recognised the need to improve the advice available to the Board and to ensure effective two way engagement between the Board and the wider table tennis community".

MAG was to be independent of the Board and responsible for its own recommendations and actions under its own procedures and Terms of Reference. Minutes of each meeting of MAG were to be recorded and published on the Table Tennis England website along with other appropriate information relevant to the Group. Membership and Terms of Reference were to be reviewed annually.

a) Given that it took a year for the review to publish its results and several months to set up MAG, there has still been plenty of time to have seen some results. There seems to be little independence from the Board with the group being chaired initially by a Board member and this year's Annual Review refers to projects having to be agreed by the Board. How is this compatible with MAG being independent?

b) There appear to be no minutes of meetings on the website although there is a discrete MAG section which contains minimal information. Can all minutes be available on the website and can we be assured future minutes and other relevant material

is publicly available?

c) There are presently three vacancies on MAG two of which have been vacant for a considerable period. Why is there such a lapse in vacancies being filled?

d) The Annual Review refers to projects which are under way or in the pipeline. Could clarification be provided as to which projects MAG have reached completion and the recommendations and whether or not the Board accepted those recommendations?

e) MAG does not seem to have met the expectations of the membership from the review. What is being done to address this and deliver what the membership voted for?

Answers provided by Neil Hurford, Chairman of MAG

a) MAG is independent of the Board. MAG members have a diverse and impressive range of backgrounds. This means they are fully equipped and with the experience to assert that independence should the need arise.

The very first meeting was convened by a Board member (Susie Hughes) and was simply to enable the newly appointed members to meet each other. We did not feel that we were in a position at that time to appoint our own Chair. So we asked Susie to chair the second meeting. At the next meeting, MAG appointed its own Chair. I have chaired all the subsequent meetings.

We want to ensure that we use our resources as volunteers where they make the most impact. Before undertaking a new project, it is sensible to seek feedback from the Board. Ideally, we want to undertake projects that will contribute to the broad aims of the Mission 2025 strategy. And we certainly want to avoid wasting time and resources that

simply duplicate other activities that are already taking place. There is an agreed process between MAG and the Board for identifying and agreeing project briefs.

b) Since being appointed Chair, I've produced summaries of meeting and current activities as part of a report to National Council. These are available on the National Council page of the Table Tennis England website.

After producing the June report, it occurred to me that it would be useful to make these summaries available more widely. As a result, the report for the June National Council meeting was published in the News section of the Table Tennis England website. My plan is to continue publishing these reports via the website.

Rather than being scattered across the website, it makes sense for these reports to be compiled in one place. I will arrange for these to be on the MAG pages of the website.

c) We took the view that we needed to make further progress in developing our forward work programme before embarking on recruiting new members. This would enable those who were interested in joining MAG to have a clear understanding of how they could contribute to the work of MAG. I'm in no doubt this was the right thing to do.

The recruitment process started at the end of May and is now complete. Those who applied will all be notified of the outcome of their application. Once this has been completed, there will be an announcement on the website very shortly.

d) We have completed a project on coaching that maps out the landscape of challenges in coaching. The Board has then identified two priority projects on specific aspects of coaching that it has asked us to undertake. These will be starting shortly.

MAG received a presentation as part of the ranking review and provided input.

We led a discussion with the Board on how creative use of social media can be a key way of changing the perception of table tennis, particularly amongst young people. The Board has set up a

Working Group to explore how this can be taken forward.

The project on Volunteering Strategy has recently been completed and has been submitted to the Board. We expect to receive feedback shortly.

All other projects are on-going.

e) Sorry that you feel that MAG is not meeting the expectations of the membership. But the evidence suggests otherwise.

We've put in place a developing working programme that will improve the advice available to the Board. We are actively engaging with the membership – initially with clubs, leagues and counties. We plan to extend this engagement to other parts of the table tennis community. We are keeping the membership up to date with our activities via regular reports on the website.

There is still an enormous amount to do. We have a highly experienced team. But there is no guarantee that we will be successful. The evidence suggests we have made a solid start.

From: Estyn Williams, National Councillor for Warwickshire and National Council Chairman

Page 8

The Review does not really mention County Associations and Table Tennis England does not seem to have engaged with them this year.

Our Articles envisage County Associations as a key part of Table Tennis England. The best organised ones generate considerable table tennis activity and others have the potential to do so given help and encouragement.

What plans do we have to engage with them in the coming year?

The development work that takes place up and down the country currently focuses on supporting clubs and leagues, however some work undertaken has on occasion been through county groups. We currently provide direct support to clubs and leagues through the Be TT programme and have directly supported over 150 projects over the past three years. There is the opportunity for county associations to apply for a Be TT programme in their area and we have actively encouraged clubs and leagues to work together to do this.

We have found that it is often most beneficial when working with a club and league direct, however we are looking at the best ways of connecting and engaging with the game at grassroots level, taking into account the changing circumstances over the past few months and we will consider county associations within this.

From: Estyn Williams

Page 8

Table tennis is played in all sorts of different organisations but only traditional leagues and clubs are affiliated at present.



Should we consider actively recruiting other organisations to help us engage with their members and encourage them to affiliate?

We have formed partnerships in recent years with a number of other membership and client-based organisations and charities to reach a much broader demographic of current and future table tennis players - this is an area we continue to work hard to expand.

Our new membership categories will provide relevant options for them to affiliate to us in the future, something we have not had previously.

Through our Loop at Work offer, we also now have over 500 businesses and nearly 9,000 people regularly playing table tennis in the workplace and have created a Business Membership for these organisations.

We are also in active discussions with organisations such as U3A and the Armed Forces Table Tennis to try to ensure a fit for their participants within our membership structure and how we can work closely with them.

From: Estyn Williams

Page 9

The Review reports on the high quality of training and other help available for volunteers but this tends to attract volunteers from leagues and clubs which are well organised already. Have we any plans to target help towards leagues and clubs which are struggling to find volunteers in the first place?

As part of the Be TT programme over the past two years we have been conducting targeted intervention work, where we have gone direct (knowing that clubs or leagues that need support may not always come to us) to clubs and leagues to support them following significant reductions in club or league numbers/teams over the past few seasons, and/or those leagues with low retention rates or low levels of female participation. We plan to continue this work moving into the next two seasons.

From: Estyn Williams

Page 9

The Review reports some excellent work to deliver projects which promote membership and that these attracted good participation and feedback. But it also reports a continued decline in player membership which implies that our overall approach to recruitment (as opposed to project delivery) should be reviewed.

a) What work has or will be done to analyse which leagues and clubs (and other organisations if they affiliated) have the most untapped potential to increase membership and how we can help them fulfil it?

b) Do we have, or plan to devise, a comprehensive



membership strategy?

a) Firstly, it is worth noting that the main reason for players to become members in the membership structure in place for the 2019/20 season was if you were playing the sport competitively and it was rare for players to become full player members if they were just playing socially. Therefore, looking at player membership as a gauge as to whether programmes are successful is not necessarily the appropriate measure.

There was also some data cleansing in the move from TT365 to Sport 80 which removed some duplicate records.

Part of the membership review conducted recently and the new membership categories being introduced, particularly the Club Play category, should help to engage all of those players not playing competitively as a Table Tennis England member and allow us to understand participation levels better and the success or otherwise of increasing participation in clubs through various programmes. We will be encouraging clubs to support the introduction of the Club Play category.

The Be TT programme evidences more than 7,000 new participants to have taken part in programmes in clubs and leagues over the past three years, from TT Kidz sessions, to Bat and Chat to new short format leagues. We will also be introducing extensions of programmes such as TT Kidz to support retention, with the TT Kidz awards scheme being launched in September 2020.

We have recently been able to implement a new club and league dashboard through the TT Leagues platform, which will enable us to monitor and review retention levels, female membership levels and average age of participants within individual clubs and leagues. We will utilise this data to complete targeted work with clubs and leagues to help them overcome any challenges they may be facing with participation levels.

As part of the Be TT programme over the past two years we have also conducted targeted intervention work, where we have worked with clubs and leagues

to support them following significant reductions in club or league numbers/teams.

The PremierClub programme also helps us identify those clubs which are keen to work on development initiatives to develop and grow their clubs – these clubs receive priority support from staff members and funding that is available through the Be TT programme, Young Ambassadors and other linked funding schemes.

Now that we have launched the first phase of the new membership categories, we can target specific groups better.

b) Over the past 12-18 months we have been working behind the scenes to develop refreshed membership categories to be more relevant to both current members and potential new members and to diversify the benefits.

The reason behind this update was we recognised and acknowledged that our current membership strategy and structure was not suitable for those outside of leagues or the national competition framework. We also recognised that we needed to evolve to continue to attract as well as retain members to Table Tennis England and felt that the current categories did not properly engage and also represented the breadth of players, volunteers and fan base that table tennis has as a sport.

These new membership categories are launching for the 2020/21 season, and will be closely reviewed during and at the end of the season to ensure the benefits and communications provided to the different membership groups were suitable and what our members are looking for.

We are also in active discussions with organisations such as U3A and the Armed Forces Table Tennis to try to ensure a fit for their participants within our membership structure.

From: Diane Webb

Page 9

It is pleasing to see that the inflated membership figures from the last few years, due mainly to members who had not renewed being included as Associate Members year on year, has now been addressed. Many of these 'members' were unaware that they were still counted as members of the Association.

The reassessment process has reduced the membership figures by over 30% but represents a more realistic figure which should now only include signed up members.

The major reductions are in the Associate Member category, as would be expected. However, what is surprising and rather disconcerting is the reduction by significant numbers in the Junior Licence and Player categories from 354 to 214 and 1,106 to 546 respectively in the last 12 months.

Last year, I asked about the fall in Junior Licence players which went from 437 to 354. The response was "we have not as yet been able to fully analyse the figures as we are only just getting the full

picture as the season comes to a close".

There are also drops in numbers for the Senior Players and Senior Licence holders although the Cadet numbers have both risen appreciably for Licences and Player Membership, which is promising.

However, if you compare total figures of Player and Licence holders from 2013/14 to 2019/20 then there has been an overall drop from 26,608 to 25,273 in the six-year period. It is the Player Members and Licence holders who are the bedrock of the Association and the paying members. Despite all the social projects and Be TT funding to selected clubs and leagues the overall position is one of reducing numbers.

a) What conclusions are forthcoming from last year's analysis of the drop in Junior numbers and to what do you attribute the further drop and what is being done to address the issue of this and overall reduction in Player/Licence holder numbers?

b) Significant money is being injected into the social side of table tennis, (generally not membership income generating), but these players are not converting into paying and competitively paying members. What are the plans for changing this?

c) The Cadet categories show that numbers have increased. However, as anyone who signed up for the TT Kidz programme received free membership how many of the Cadet members are paying members and how many are in this category due to their free membership?

d) What is the overall split male to female and what is the total number of affiliated Local Leagues?

a) Whilst looking into this it became apparent that the figures we had published were erroneous and did not in fact tally with the statistics we had been using to monitor throughout the year. Having worked with Two Circles they have identified the reporting problem and the correct figures are now:

| Membership by age - Licensed | | |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Cadet | 668 | 595 |
| Junior | 354 | 436 |
| Senior | 614 | 579 |
| Veteran | 725 | 758 |
| Membership by age - Player | | |
| Cadet | 2,020 | 1,871 |
| Junior | 1,106 | 1,123 |
| Senior | 3,938 | 3,421 |
| Veteran | 16,105 | 16,040 |

There are some small variances up and down across the categories, much of which is attributable to data cleansing.

In addition to the above, there are just over 300 TT Kidz members in the Cadet player membership category.

b) It is not simple to separate out social and competitive table tennis players any more as we have deliberately developed and built programmes across all areas of the sport that blurs the lines for people. This is because our research and experience shows that some 'social' players want to play competitively and some 'competitive' players want to play socially and therefore our offers have to be flexible and meet the wants and needs of the participant.

The development of our new membership structure took this into account and the introduction of the Supporter, Just Play and Club Play categories ensures there is an appropriate option for everybody. At this stage, these are not 'paid for' categories as placing a fee on these memberships would almost certainly create a barrier and prevent many people from taking them up.

Gathering participant data and being able to regularly engage with these markets is far more important to us right now and there may be ways to monetise this through sponsorships and partnerships.

Once we can demonstrate the real value of these new memberships to people, we will look again at whether making them paid for is viable.

c) There are just over 300 TT Kidz members in the Cadet player membership category.

d) There are 203 affiliated local leagues on our electoral register. The male-female ratio among Player or Player Licence members remains relatively static at approximately 90-10.

From: Peter Charters, Berkshire TTA

Page 10

Under Community participation, third paragraph, it states that 'there are numerous examples of people who started playing in Parlours going on to join 'traditional' table tennis clubs.

- a) Can you please quantify 'numerous'?
- b) What is the evidence that shows that the investment in the number of 'Ping' related initiatives and activities, actually increases the

number of players affiliating to Table Tennis England, thereby increasing the NGB's income?

c) The anecdotal evidence in terms of club teams competing in local leagues, is that there continues to be a decline. Would the investment in 'Ping' not be better directed towards finding alternative methods of recruiting people in to 'traditional' table tennis clubs?

a) It is impossible to accurately quantify this, as we rely on clubs providing us this data, which they don't always do.

We have a new question on our membership application that asks about people's journey into table tennis, but again, this relies on people becoming members and giving us this data.

b) See above regarding memberships and difficulty in obtaining data. However, it should be noted that our Ping! project is entirely funded by ring-fenced money from Sport England with the aims of the project focused on engaging large numbers of inactive people in physical activity.

Changing people's physical activity behaviours is a long and complicated process and our traditional table tennis offering of clubs and leagues hasn't been appropriate for the vast majority of people taking part in Ping! to date. This is why we have invested time and energy into developing other opportunities for them to continue participating in the game in a way that suits them.

The launch of the new membership categories, including 'Just Play' early next year, should ensure that we have greater engagement with this market and help us to build a database of subscribers. Over time, there may be opportunities to monetise this through sponsorship.

We have received extremely positive feedback from our funders for the work we have done on Ping! over the last six or seven years and are optimistic that the NGB will continue to receive support and investment in this area going forward.

c) This is not an option as the money is Sport England ring-fenced money provided to us to get inactive people active and changing people's activity behaviours, in line with the Government's strategy.

From: Peter Charters

Pages 14-15

Regarding the results of the self-funding playing activities on both pages, which for juniors is all table tennis activities apart from the European Youth and Mini Championships, are the results used towards Criteria for England Selection and/or the England Ranking list?

The cost in England to ambitious parents of ambitious young players for training and competition, is now prohibitive for most. Everything, competition and training, has to be paid for apart from the European Championships mentioned above. It simply accentuates this disadvantage to talent over wealth if selection and



ranking can be influenced by results obtained in foreign events where the players were not selected by Table Tennis England, but were private entries and were privately funded.

The situation is of course different for senior, adult players. Of the top four men, of whom we are all justly proud, none came through a system where their parents, unlike today, had to meet all costs in training and foreign competition.

The finance available to support international competition is limited and needs to be applied appropriately. It is prioritised towards supporting teams representing England and ensuring we can sent a coach to events with players.

However, we have worked hard to support athletes to access other funding streams. Of the c70 athletes on the programme, 34 are now in receipt of or were nominated for external funding such as Backing the Best (nine players are receiving £5,000 per annum) with an overall value of nearly £80,000. From October, a further 12 players will be joining the Diploma in Sporting Excellence.

All ITTF events are included in both our ranking system and our selection processes (unless the policy describes differently). However, simply competing in events does not convey any ranking or selection benefit, rather the players have to win matches and get sufficiently far in the events to earn any points and achieve any selection standard. Furthermore, in order to enter an ITTF event a player has to have sufficiently high domestic ranking and thus have demonstrated some level of talent.

From: Diane Webb

Page 14

Whilst there have been some notable performances on an individual basis the England/GB teams have not performed well at the three major senior tournaments in the last year. The Annual Report refers to the Men's performance at the European Championships as disappointing, whilst the women did not qualify for the finals in Nantes. Similarly, the GB teams performance at the Olympic Qualifying Tournament was also described as disappointing and despite the Men's team being World ranked 10 they failed to qualify for the Olympic Games in the team event. At the Commonwealth Championships although England won several medals, in the majority of events the players underperformed and did not meet the placings that were expected according to their seeding.

If you look at our Junior players, the highest ranking a Junior boy has on the ITTF World list is 229 although we have two junior girls in the top 100. In the Cadet Girls category the highest placing is 226 and in the Cadet Boys only one player is in the top 100. Figures as at April 2020, the latest ranking list. England Senior Women's team is World Ranked 40.

The Annual Report states that the Home Internationals was self-funded by the players who

participated. With more income being generated by membership and other sources and slightly less reliance on Sport England there is more flexibility to allocate money which is not ring fenced.

a) To what do you attribute the disappointing performances at all three senior major tournaments?

b) What is being done to halt the decline and where are the next generation of world class senior players coming from considering the low junior and cadet world rankings?

c) Why are players being asked to pay for the privilege of playing for their country and what is being done to ensure they are fully funded in the future?

d) With the high costs which the top junior and cadet players have to meet (figure given approximately £15,000 pa two years ago), is playing for England now a question of being able to afford it and do you consider this is a contributory factor in the number of junior players giving up the sport?

a) We disagree that all three tournaments were completely disappointing. In the European Team Championships, the men reached their seeded position in getting to the quarter-finals, although the performance in that match against Sweden, a 3-0 defeat, was below par. This is been debriefed with the players on several occasions and they have each taken responsibility for their role in that performance and the fact that they found it difficult to deliver their best under pressure. This is something we are working with the players to help them with in the longer term. The change of coach after this tournament has seen a greater support available to players in training, something previously limited by geography.

The Olympic qualification tournament was a great disappointment and, again, has been debriefed. The availability of players was limited leading into the tournament, due to club commitments. This hindered doubles preparation, which was a contribution to the loss to Croatia – a narrow defeat to a team of very similar ranking. The defeat against Hungary was very frustrating and again the players have taken ownership of not performing under pressure. They and we continue to work on this aspect of the game.

Two team silver medals at the Commonwealth Championships, behind the hosts and Commonwealth Games champions, represents a good performance, particularly by the men, who led the final 2-0 but could not get across the line against players who individually out-ranked them. The individual events were mixed, however Tom and Tin-Tin reached the singles semi-finals, as did Sam and Tom in the men's doubles and Sam and Tin-Tin in the mixed doubles.

b) The pathway has been revised in the last two years in recognition of the 'gaps' in players development as they arrive in the cadet and junior age bands. This has seen the creation of two new

programmes (*Hopes and Aspire*) which together with the award system that accompanies them is seeing a significant shift in the number and quality of players coming into the pathway. A total of 85 players applied for these squads last year and a similar number have come forward again this year. More players are now doing more of the necessary things for them to progress. The Junior (formerly Youth) squad is now a smaller, more focused group of players who fully engage with the programme. Team selection has been revised and separated from squad membership, meaning that squad membership is not a requisite of selection.

c) All major championships are funded by Table Tennis England. However, lower-tier events are not of sufficiently high standard to justify priority investment from the limited pool of funding available. We continue to work with Sport England and UK Sport to develop funding support to the programmes, but neither organisation funds events of that level.

d) We have managed to secure significant individual support for players in the pathway through *Backing the Best*, *Sports Aid* and the *Diploma in Sporting Excellence (DISE)*, which invest up to £5,000 per player per annum and some of which provide multiple year support. Where players are demonstrating a commitment to finding out what they are capable of, we support them to manage the cost implications. As we are talking about a relatively small number of highly talented, aspirational players, we do not believe this contributes to junior players giving up the sport.

From: Martin Clark, Honorary Life Member

Pages 28-30

I was surprised to see that TTE prepared a budget deficit of £61,000 bearing in mind that historically we have always aimed to either break-even or make a small surplus.

The budget figures along with period detailed interim accounts are no longer made available to National Council despite the claim for transparency within the current Annual Review section of 'National Council'. Consequently members were not given the opportunity to question the budget figures.

a) Given, one presumes, that on preparation of a budget, it became apparent that income was not adequate to support expenditure, why wasn't budgeted expenditure limited to eliminate any such deficit?

b) The Financial Report claims the deficit included one-off costs related to 'additional systems development'. However, it would appear that such costs were capitalised with only £7,150 being amortised in the year as distinct that prior year substantial costs relating to TT365 are no longer incurred. Can that claim be substantiated please?

c) Sport England funding over the Funding Cycle is known well in advance of each year. Much of which is ring-fenced in specific cost centres. That



being the case, why is it that not only in 2019/20 but also according to the Finance Report, there is an implication is that we can expect a further deficit in 2020/21?

d) As it is expected that in the next Funding Cycle, Sport England funding will reduce, what plans does TTE have to protect the level of reserves that was built up by the previous administration? One presumes that a budget has been set for 2020/21, bearing in mind the issues relative to loss of grants, can members have sight of it?

e) I am disappointed that yet again there is no increase proposed for increase in affiliation fees bearing in mind that a £2 per annum increase for Senior Players and £1 for Juniors/ Cadets in accordance with the policy adapted from the previous administration would provide approximately £50,000 additional income to offset any anticipated deficit.

We look at budgets on both an annual and a four-year cycle basis. The priority is to ensure a break-even position at the end of a four-year cycle, which we are aiming to achieve. That provides for ability to invest in projects in certain years that then produce an income in later years, for example TT Kidz.

Sport England contribution to back office was always known to reduce in Y3 and Y4. This further highlights the need to resource our own income to support functions such as membership services, marketing and finance.

While we worked hard to reduce expenditure wherever possible, there were costs incurred last financial year for TT365, as the contract didn't end until the end of July 2019. This included a quarterly fee as well as the membership kickback totalling more than £50,000. As well as legal fees associated with concluding the contract with TT365 and the development and investment costs for TT Leagues. Some additional unbudgeted expenditure was also needed on the ranking system.

The original 19/20 budget had included an increase of membership fees from £16 to £18 for adults. As members are aware, that proposition

was withdrawn by the Board in the face of the proposition to half affiliation fees to £7 which was defeated at the 2019 AGM. This had a detrimental impact to the association's budgeted income in 19/20.

Reserves will fluctuate depending on if we have a surplus or a deficit. The difference between the end of the last cycle 13/17 and the current reserves is (£26,450). The reserves policy is reviewed annually by the Finance Committee.

National Council see a high-level pictorial budget, which also includes the budget-vs-actuals performance.

As members are aware, the Board submitted a proposition to increase affiliation fees by £4 in 20/21. However this was withdrawn in light of the coronavirus crisis. Forecasts against the 20/21 budget are being updated regularly to reflect the changing situation. The biggest risk is in relation to membership income, which is unknown.

From: Gerry Martin, London Banks & Civil Service League

Page 29

What was the total amount paid to Rocca Creative/Sport:80 for their work on the TT Leagues project during the 2019/2020 accounting period? What were the operating costs for the TT leagues system during the 2019/2020 accounting period?

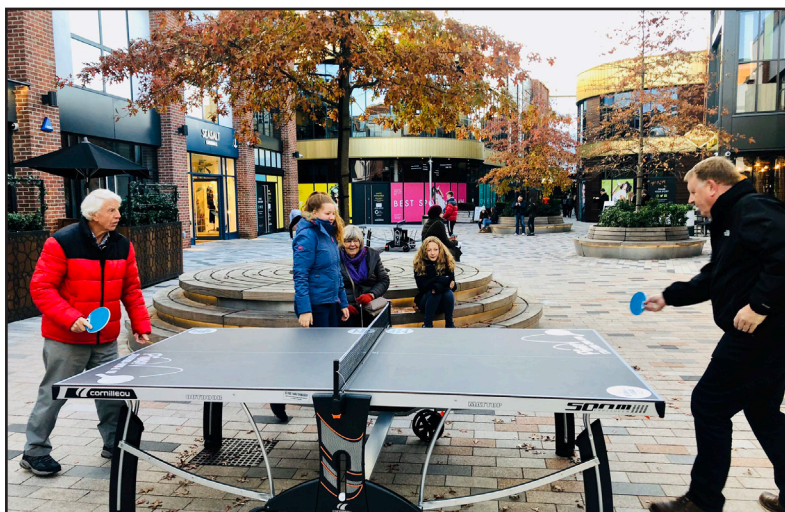
Development costs for TT Leagues in 19/20 were £46,480 which were capitalised as an intangible asset. Operating costs for TT Leagues in 19/20 were £10,030.

From: Diane Webb

Page 29

My usual annual queries. What was the total staffing bill for 2018/19 and what was the loss of the National Championships?

Staff costs for 19/20 were £1,514,898, which includes the Elected Director Honorariums. This is



£41,000 less than 18/19.

The staging of the National Championships is one of the most important functions of the Governing Body. Not only is it an opportunity to crown a number of National Champions, but it is the showcase event in terms of profile, marketing and broadcasting of the sport domestically. These multiple strategic aims drive the decisions about the budget for the event.

The 2019/20 Senior National Championships incurred a net event cost of £47k including £8k prize money, but excluding the broadcasting/sponsor costs which are in the marcomms budget. This represents a reduction in event costs from 2018/19, against significant gains in participant and spectator feedback. The event has also now attracted a five-year sponsorship deal from Mark Bates Ltd, not included in these figures.

From: Diane Webb

Page 31

At the AGM last year I asked, via Harvey Webb, about notification of deaths to the membership and in particular the senior members of the Association, ie Honorary Life Members and Vice-Presidents

Although there has been improvement, notification is still variable and those without email addresses still are not informed.

There is only one Honorary Life Member and five Vice-Presidents I am aware of who do not have email addresses. Please can notification to this small handful informing them of those who have died who are likely to have been friends and colleagues?

Thank you for acknowledging recent improvements. Once the office is able to re-open, we will look at how we notify the few individuals who do not have email addresses.

General comments/questions

From: Diane Webb

As the Annual Report is not being presented at the AGM and I am unsure whether there is any opportunity to ask questions via Zoom, I have a number of questions to ask on various aspects of the Report as well as other areas of TTEs work. This appears to be the only opportunity I have to do so.

On carrying out research for TTEs Centenary book I came across this quote from Ivor Montagu the founder of the ETTA and ITTF. I hope his principles continue today. "The AGM was the occasion when members had the constitutional right to express opinions, to criticise or air any sense of grievance. He hoped that everyone would relieve themselves frankly and freely before they left. They will have the opportunity for doing so."

The Zoom call is only 2 hours along, and has to include the AGM business as well as the Annual

Conference which will provide the very important and timely updates to our members on how to return to playing table tennis safely and in accordance with latest Government guidelines.

It is also very difficult to manage and chair a zoom call with over 100 participants. Therefore it has been decided that there will not be an opportunity to ask follow-up questions on the Annual Review during the meeting itself.

Members have had the chance to submit questions in advance and our door is always open for further follow-up questions after the AGM should anyone wish.

From: Diane Webb

Once again I wish to express disquiet about the lack of information and reporting in the Annual Report of much of the Association's activities. For example, there is no information about the work of committees, no statistics on the number Local Leagues and clubs and no information about facilities grants.

There has been no Directory for the second year running. This has been an invaluable resource for current usage as well as an important historical document. I appreciate under GDPR there are certain restrictions regarding permission to publish personal details but even a basic Directory giving details of officers for Counties, the General Secretary for Local League, staff names and positions etc. would be of immense value.

Will consideration be given to a more detailed report next year and the production of a Directory?

Details of the National Councillors and the local leagues directory can be found on the website.

From: Alan Ransome OBE, Cleveland TTA and Honorary Life Member

a) I am sure that the Board share my concern as to the potential damage the Covid-19 can inflict on our Association.

Our most important asset are our volunteers, whether they work at National County League or Club level and our membership at large. There is a significant possibility that these groups will be reduced in number as a result of the effect of the virus.

Government guidelines relating to sports clubs advise that anyone in the vulnerable categories should not participate in their clubs and many of these people are the ones that carry out the work that ensures that the administration continues to a good level.

There is a possibility that a large number of our members will not have access to their previous playing facilities, as there is a strong possibility the school facilities, for example, will not be available next term due to the virus, and I know that a number of clubs are very concerned about this possibility.

The UK Government recognised the damage that the Coronavirus and the lockdown would do to the economy and took important economic steps to protect the companies and workforce that would be seriously affected by this. I do hope that the Table Tennis England Board take a similar approach and use the resources available to them to protect the key volunteers, leagues, clubs and playing members from the potential adverse effects that this can have on participation at local competition level in England.

What is the Board planning to do to take account of the above and to ensure that the reductions in numbers are as low as possible. I know that the Board have taken steps to encourage British League teams to continue and this appears to have been successful. Do you have similar plans to help the key volunteers, local leagues, clubs and their members. If so, what are they?

b) The Annual Review makes very little mention of the poor position which have been achieved by our Junior and Cadet players over the last year. There is no mention of our performances in the most important junior event, the European Youth Championships. None of our four teams were able to finish in the top 16 and as one of the top half dozen countries in Europe, from both a participation and financial position, this is clearly very disappointing.

In addition to this, our highest junior boy in the world rankings is only at 319 and the top girl is at 35. In the cadet lists, our top boy is at 47 and our top girl is at 226.

Do the Board share my concern at these results, and if so, what is being done to rectify it?

c) As I raised at National Council I was concerned to see that the consideration of the Annual Review had not even been included at all on the AGM agenda.

Whilst I appreciate that as a result of the Zoom arrangements, voice questions are not being permitted at this year's meeting. The consideration of the Annual Review should at least be on the agenda.

I am also concerned that written questions are only being permitted. There is currently no provision for follow up questions as is normal at an AGM and I do request that this system of written questions, which is circulated to the membership, are followed up at this AGM by allowing written questions and comments to the replies, which are also circulated.

Only 40 minutes have been allocated to the whole AGM.

I also believe that the membership should have an opportunity to ask questions of the Review at the AGM in future and that adequate time is permitted for this, and not to be restricted. This is the one opportunity a year that the members are permitted, formally, to scrutinize the work of the Board and the Association and this opportunity should not be

minimised. Can we have your assurance that this will be facilitated at AGM's in the future and not be restricted by time constraints.

a) We recognise the challenges of the potential damage of Covid-19 and from the beginning of the lockdown, support and guidance has been provided to players, clubs, leagues, volunteers, coaches and officials to continue their engagement in table tennis, and support our members to be physically and mentally active during in these challenging times.

In the first three weeks of lockdown we contacted every Premier Club and were able to speak to over 90% of these over the phone, to better understand the support and guidance that they may need at that time and over the coming weeks and months.

We have continued to provide engagement and development opportunities with weekly club and coach webinars running over the past few months, engaging hundreds of different volunteers, coaches and officials. Within these webinars, there have been several ready to return webinars to support clubs and volunteers to prepare a return, in addition to one to one support sessions being offered to every club and league across the country.



Halfway through the lockdown period a player survey was conducted to understand the table tennis landscape for players, coaches and volunteers upon returning so we could help provide clubs and leagues with a clearer picture of players' attitudes and concerns around any return to play.

Support was also provided to clubs to access the Sport England emergency funding pot, which allocated funding to 27 clubs of more than £60,000.

We have recently also opened up the Be TT funding to provide staffing and funding support for clubs and leagues to get their activities up and running and re-engage their membership, in addition to a separate pot of funding to support the purchase of PPE/cleaning equipment for clubs, leagues and self-employed coaches.

There is separate guidance in place to provide advice to leagues about the way in which they may be able to/need to adapt to allow local league table tennis to resume. We continue to work closely with Sport England and UK Active, who are working closely with the education sector to support schools in re-opening their facilities safely.

We recognise that these will be a challenging few months and not all clubs will be in a position to re-open on the 25th July and we actively want to support clubs, leagues, volunteers, coaches and officials through this process.

b) The Board are of course concerned about the progress of our players and disappointed about the performances of the teams.

However, as noted in previous responses, the development of table tennis players takes a considerable time and the creation and development of the new Hopes and Aspire programmes together with the refocused England Junior Squad we are confident that in time this will make a considerable difference.

It is also worth noting that the mixed references to European competition but world ranking do not tell the whole story. A number of players have won medals at European-based World Junior Tour events this year and in the ETTU ranking, four junior girls and five cadet boys have top 100 rankings.

We may have been a nation in the top six in participation and finance in the past, however it is unlikely that this is the case in both in recent times, with significant investment in many European countries placing England further down.

c) The Annual Review features on the Annual Conference agenda. Whilst it isn't possible to allow verbal questions on the zoom meeting with so many participants, chat questions can be submitted and will receive a response after the event. This is an exceptional year and everyone's understanding is appreciated.

In addition to the above, a small number of inquiries were received relating to the design of the Annual Review, or pointing out minor omissions or typographical errors. These were responded to individually and corrections made where necessary.