

Annual Review

2020/21

Responses to questions and comments



We thank all our members who have submitted questions and points of accuracy regarding the Annual Review 2020/21. Our responses are detailed below. The final version of the Annual Review is available on our website. Printed copies are not available at this time.

From: Estyn Williams, Warwickshire County TTA and National Councillor; Chair of National Council

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The Review reports that an external evaluation of the Board resulted in six recommendations. What were they and what progress has been made towards implementing them?

*** a similar question was received from Diane Webb, Hastings & District TTA Company Member and Vice-President. This answer encompasses both questions.**

The Code of Sport Governance requires Boards to undergo an external evaluation every 4 years to provide Boards with assistance through a critical friend to ensure good governance.

We were able to apply for a grant from Sport England to cover the cost of the evaluation which was conducted by the Governance team from the Sport & Recreation Alliance.

There were a number of recommendations which are set out verbatim below. The Board has adopted them all and is implementing the recommendations.

1) Matters Reserved for the Board – Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Accountants (ICSA) developed a comprehensive guide which sets out clearly what matters are reserved for the board. One of the key areas of knowledge gap is around where the board role ends and where the SLT's begins. This is allowing directors to divert their focus to operational issues, thereby confusing their roles and undermining the SLT's work. Our recommendation is for the board to adopt elements of this guidance, where suited. This should be a key document for directors to have during their induction process.

2) Code of Conduct for the Board – One key element missing from your policies is the Code of

Conduct for Directors. Whilst the Board Guidance pack touches upon board roles and conduct, this document should also set out the potential consequences of breaching this Code. All directors should sign a declaration that they have read and understood the Code and that they understand the consequences of breaches. We recommend that a standalone document is included in the board induction pack.

3) Board Induction Pack – Our review indicates that the board induction process could be strengthened. It is imperative to have a robust induction process and that all directors are aware of and understand the documents provided in the induction pack for new directors. Directors must go through a rigorous induction process which will aid in bridging the gap of their knowledge of the role they take up.

4) Board Training – We have noted that there is a significant need for training for directors on governance and legal matters such as their fiduciary duties. There is some division of views on good governance and how TTE board operates from the elected and appointed directors. This is a roadblock which is hindering from the board operating smoothly and to its highest standards. Therefore, we recommend training for the entire board to ensure everyone is on the same page and the board understands its legal duties.

5) Board Structure – There is a need to clarify the role of elected deputy chair and how these roles align with the SID. To help clarify this, consideration should be provided to the changing of the role title of elected deputy chair.

6) Board Agenda – There is a need to review the board agenda. The current agenda structure includes multiple operational updates such as the CEO report and then departmental updates.

Our recommendation is to provide all operational updates through the CEO report and only include selected project updates which require the boards attention and/or decision.

7) Annual performance reviews – As highlighted under Survey Theme Four, 41% of the board disagree that the chair ensures that a performance evaluation of the board and individual directors is undertaken. Due to this, we recommend that any upcoming annual performance evaluations are better communicated by the chair. This evaluation provides an opportunity for the board to have reflection time on their role, the progress made and to also discuss any issues with the chair on a 1-2-1 basis.

Progress on these points is as follows:

1) Training has been organised for the whole Board in this area focusing on the difference of strategy verses operations – to be completed by December 2021.

2) Although the code of conduct for Board members was in the Board Guidance Pack, a separate document was developed and all Board Members have signed up to it this can be found on the website [here](#) – COMPLETE.

3) Although a Board Induction was undertaken with all Board members in person and with supporting documents, this has been thoroughly reviewed and updated, approved by the Board and all new Board Members have undertaken the new induction – COMPLETE.

4) Training has been organised for the whole Board on governance and legal matters such as their fiduciary duties – to be completed by December 2021.

5) This has been agreed by the Board and documented in the Board Guidance Pack and can be found on our website [here](#).

6) This has been completed.

7) This will be completed over the next 12 months once the new Board members have settled in.

From: Estyn Williams

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What progress has been made towards the various



Sam Walker and Liam Pitchford train under elite protocols at the University of Nottingham

goals in Mission 2025 since the progress report in the 2018/19 Annual Review?

The Board is commencing the process of a wholesale review of Mission 2025 which is likely to lead to a period of consultation and publication of a revised and updated strategy in the coming year.

The Mission 2025 review was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic as it is important to fully understand the impact that has had on the sport to shape the next few years.

As part of that process a review of progress against the existing Mission 2025 will be undertaken and this will form part of communications about the revision of the strategy.

From: Estyn Williams

Page 3

Do you think we should review the criteria used for appointing directors to give greater weight to skills, knowledge and experience related to table tennis and TTE?

Only seven of the 24 present criteria are directly related to table tennis and there is no reference to large areas of TTE's work - for example schools, counties, regions, MAG, National Council, young people, veterans, para, universities and colleges and service on national committees.

The skills matrix was reviewed by the Nominations Committee and updated ahead of the most recent round of appointments.

It is intended to provide a balanced approach of identifying skills and experience gaps that cover core governance skills, specific professional skills and table tennis skills/experience, all of which are important to create a diverse Board. The skills matrix will continue to be reviewed periodically.

From: Diane Webb

Page 14

Could you explain why so few senior players were classified as elite (four women and five men)? This enabled that small handful of players to train during lockdown whilst other top players were prohibited.

The five top ranked men were given elite status whilst the women were ranked 1, 2, 3 and 8. Why were those ranked at 4, 5, 6, and 7 not considered?

I understand many other sports permitted many more players to be classified as elite. Your comments please.

If you consider too the World Ping Pong Masters were able to take place with more named elite players in England than TTE had and this for a privately run competition that has no NGB, national or world status.

The Government elite sport exemption was both athlete and venue specific and required each

individual player and each venue we used to be cleared and managed by us.

We only had capacity to approve those venues that we could control and so we used our training base at University of Nottingham and, before the University opened, Milton Keynes.

We also were required to limit the athletes and staff cleared as each person had to be medically screened at cost to us. Therefore, we only chose to clear those who could access our training base at UoN and who were able to abide by the strict protocols. Athlete numbers were expanded as players returned to the UK.

As a result of the careful management of this during lockdown we only had one positive, asymptomatic case, whilst many other sports had many cases, often resulting in training closing down.

World Ping Pong would have been operating under different guidance for events and we cannot comment on their application of the rules.

From: Peter Charters, Honorary Life Member, Berkshire National Councillor

Pages 14-15

1) Have Simon Mills and the Performance Team had opportunity to review and analyse the English results from the European Youth Championships and, if so, what do they intend to do in order to improve the level of performance by the English Juniors and Cadets?

Will the new Board Performance sub-committee, chaired by Don Parker, be given the authority, by the whole of the Board, to make strong decisions for improvements?

My proposition at the AGM was passed by the members, requested that the Board set targets

(KPI's) for Performance to improve Junior and Cadet results by the next EYC in July 2022.

The Performance Team and the newly formed Talent & Performance Committee will be debriefing from the European Youth Championships. The committee will be holding its first meeting in the coming weeks and will report to the Board in September.

2) I am pleased that additional funds are available under the BTTF proposals.

I understand that Simon Mills has been moved to a similar role to the one he has held within TTE; Performance Director of now BTTF whilst at the same time retaining his authority over English Performance table tennis.

Therefore, will the BTTF Performance Programme, designed to improve the quality of the nations young players, be in the hands of the same persons who have been in charge of the English Youth Programme for the last six years or more?

Also, can you confirm that this will not compromise the independence of each of the home nations?

The Home Nations have all signed an MOU that sets out the roles and responsibilities of the committee, the Performance Group (comprising the head coaches from each home nation) and the employed staff.

The structure ensures that the independence of each Home Nation is maintained whilst working towards a stronger Great Britain performance pathway.

From: Diane Webb

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Competition Review: On 17th December 2020 and again on 8th June 2021 the membership were informed an open consultation would take place and all members would be able to have their say in a once in a generation opportunity.

Yet, on 2nd August 2021 details of changes were made before any widespread membership consultation with the rider "If the ongoing Competition Review suggests a different direction or further refinements, that would take precedence and result in further changes in the 22/23 and 23/24 seasons".

Why have changes been made before the promised members' consultation and for the forthcoming season when they were not due until at least the following season? The changes hardly amount to more than tinkering and can hardly be described as innovative.

An open membership consultation is planned take place later this summer as part of the Competition Review.

The changes you mention have been made in



Joseph Hunter and Adam Dennison (nearest camera) in action at the European Youth Championships.

advance of that process, for the reasons stated in the news story you refer to - [Competitions: Changes come into effect for new season.](#)

From: Diane Webb

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I note the criteria for the majority of the honours and awards have been changed and are no longer in line with the original intent. Could you explain why the changes were made?

The criteria to become an Honorary Life Member, according to the Honours Committee, now appears to be at variance with the criteria in the Articles. I would request that the original criteria for all honours and awards are re-instated. Your comments please.

It is also very disappointing to see that, once again, the Association's most senior awards were not mentioned or presented (virtually) at the AGM. Instead they will be at the Annual Conference, a much lower status meeting. Will you ensure that all are presented in future at the AGM so that proper respect is given to those who receive those awards?

It was agreed by the Honours Committee that there should be a review to refine the awards guidelines to enable consistency and clarity to help the decision-making process. This was undertaken by Mike Smith and Colin Clemett. This was presented to and agreed by the Honours Committee and the Board.

The point of not presenting the awards at the AGM this year was to make sure they could be promoted and appreciated not to be lost at the end of what was invariably going to be a long virtual meeting. It is absolutely intended to present future honours awards at future AGMs in person and suitable occasions will be identified for presentations of this years recipients.

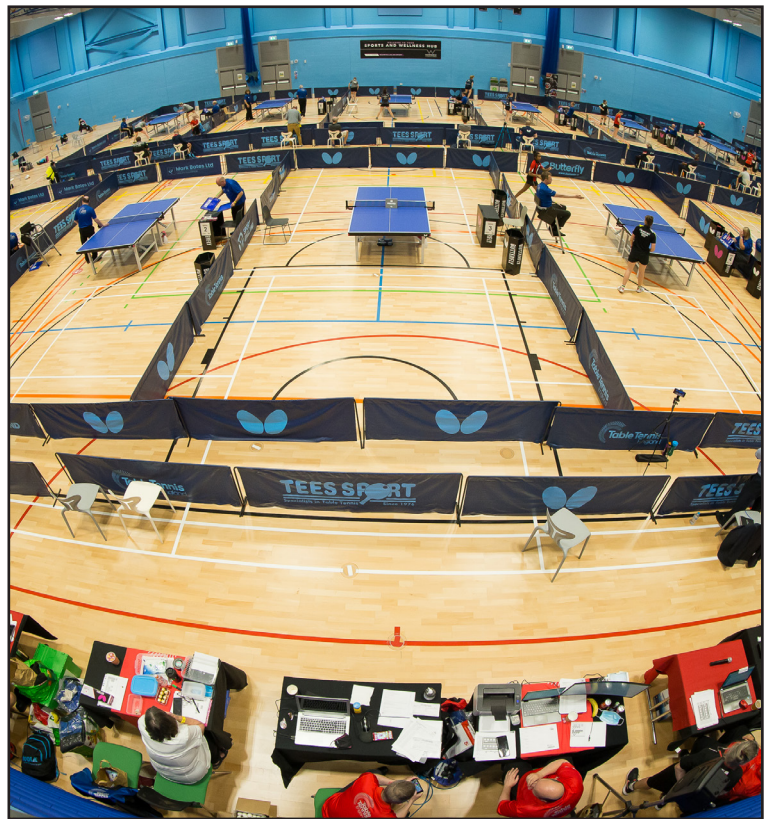
The Honorary Life Member award is still around the concept of voluntary service to the sport at national level over a considerable period and is not inconsistent with the articles.

From: Diane Webb

Page 23: Individual Advisors and Focus Groups. Would you provide details of who has been appointed as an Individual Advisor and what Focus Groups have been created and the membership of those?

The Annual Review should be the Review of the last twelve months. I note the committee members are only mentioned as they stand at the time the report was written. Would you provide details of any changes during the year so that all who served on the various committees are named?

All [committee structures](#) and members including [staffing structures](#) are on our website and are updated as when changes are made and identified



An open membership consultation is planned this summer as part of the Competition Review

In future we will record mid-year changes to committee membership in the Annual Review.

From: Diane Webb

Page 24/25

Finances.

1) My annual question – what was the total staffing cost for the year?

£1,680,083 excludes BPTT, but includes Employers Pension and NI.

2) What was the total expenditure for all legal work during the year and what was the final cost of the Stockwell Report and any related work? Where are these figures shown in the Income and Expenditure report?

In an exceptional year we spent total of £47,144 (incl VAT) on legal and professional fees. This includes £6,000 on the external Board evaluation (see question 1 above which was covered by a grant from Sport England).

The rest is further broken down as £7,926 for the Stockwell Report and associated costs, £17,046 on legal advice relating to the EGM, an accrual of £6,000 for defending the unsuccessful Employment Tribunal claim brought by Tony Catt (insurance cover provided after a £7,500 plus VAT excess), £2,815 legal advice on article changes and company law,

£1,054 legal advice on the 2020 AGM (as with the EGM additional advice was needed to deal with the implications of holding general meetings within relevant government restrictions).

The balance of £6,302 relates primarily to tax and charitable status advice and Companies House filing charges.

From: Raj Patel, Kingfisher TTC

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The Net Expenditure for Competitions was £154,262 for 2021 and £195,648 for 2020.

Can a full breakdown be provided why there is such a big net expenditure and what is being done to bring this number down.

No competition and events activity took place in season 20/21 due to Covid-19. Therefore costs incurred in this period relate to staffing, committee expenses, equipment storage, competition-related IT, a VAT-related adjustment from the previous financial year, plus competition rebates/refunds paid to members for disrupted activity in season 19/20. These costs are offset elsewhere in the Income and Expenditure - including the Sport England grant, and income received from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

From: Diane Webb

General

Last year I asked several questions which have not been fully resolved. These included lack of information and reporting of committee work, no statistics on the number of Local Leagues or clubs (all clubs not just Premier Clubs and Associate Clubs), no Directory, yet again. The responses were unsatisfactory.

Details are not on the website in an appropriate form as stated, committee work is not covered in the general write-ups and names of County and Local League officers were only permitted for

archive use. With no Directory there are no details of staff or of any staff changes during the year.

I would ask again that a Directory, taking into account GDPR requirements, is provided. It is not only a useful tool but an important historical document.

Questions on finance were not fully answered. So, I would ask again what expenditure there was in respect of external agencies for last year and also for this year, eg Jockey Club, Blue Green, Two Circles etc.

Committee reports are provided to National Council, as are details of leagues (please see the Annual Returns spreadsheet listed in the June meeting documents on the [National Council section](#) of the website).

It is not anticipated to publish a Directory going forward. [Staffing structures](#) are on our website and [County representatives](#) are also identified on our website.

In addition, Table Tennis England has [provided websites for Counties, leagues and clubs for the relevant representatives](#) to display their contact details should they be happy to do this.

In response to questions regarding the use of external agencies, sometimes this represents the outsourcing of a specific function as opposed to additional employed staff and sometimes it is to bring specific expertise in for a project. Furthermore, it represents IT systems that support specific functions (e.g. TT365, Sport 80 and Rocca – the fees represent a combination of service costs and development costs). For completeness below we set out the fees from both 19/20 and 20/21.

- Jockey Club Services - 44,968.60 (incl VAT) in both 19/20 and 20/21
- Two Circles 19/20 £39,231.90 and 20/21 £21,240 (incl VAT) and the contract has now come to an end.
- Sport 80 (membership system) 19/20 £41,850 (transaction charges and ranking system development fee), 20/21 £20,000 (transaction charge) and £1200 incl VAT (development)
- TT365 (membership) 19/20 £32,648
- Rocca (TT Leagues and TT Clubs development) 19/20 £10,371 (incl VAT), 20/21 £21,542 (incl VAT)
- Jask (new website development) 20/21 £60,000
- RJ Brand Design 19/20 £20,769 (incl VAT), 20/21 £3,840 (incl VAT)

The other agency mentioned, Blue Green, has not been paid for any work since 2018.

Several of these companies gave back to Table Tennis England through sponsoring the National Conference and Pride of Table Tennis awards.



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.