

The Role of MAG

The role of the Members Advisory Group (MAG) is to provide strategic and operational advice to the TTE Board on a broad range of issues relating to table tennis. Ensuring effective two-way engagement between the Board the wider table tennis community is an essential part of the role of MAG. MAG fulfils its role by undertaking specific projects, raising issues with the Board and engaging with the membership and volunteers.

Membership and Recruitment

In the summer of 2020, we recruited an additional seven member of MAG. This was initially to replace the three members who had stood down during the previous six months. However, we realised that by increasing the number of members of MAG we could increase the diversity of MAG membership and provide a wider range of expertise. The current sixteen members of MAG are shown in Fig 1.



Fig 1 – Current Members of MAG

Meetings

MAG members have met on five occasions in the 2020/21 season – in July, September, November, January and March. A further meeting will be held in June. Prompted by the restrictions due to Covid-19, we have held all our meetings on-line. However, the on-line format has proved both popular and productive. Accordingly, we expect that once the pandemic restrictions are lifted, we will continue to meet predominantly on-line, with occasional face-to-face meetings, perhaps once a year.

At the meetings, we review projects underway, identify areas for future project activity and discuss issues that we may need to raise with the Board. Minutes of Meetings are published on the MAG pages on the TTE website.

Engagement with Members and Volunteers

Engaging with the table tennis community has been a key priority over the last year. We have engaged with about 150 members and volunteers at 15 on-line engagement sessions. Some of these engagement sessions have been as part of our project work, others have been to identify issues that are of concern to members and volunteers, whilst others have been to raise awareness of MAG and its activities.

The main engagement activities have been:

Counties & Leagues – all 39 counties were offered the opportunity to have an on-line discussion with MAG. This provided a chance for participants to hear about MAG’s current activities as well as being able to shape our future work programme. Seven counties took up the offer of an on-line discussion. The seven meetings have proved productive with a consistent theme being that TTE and the Board need to improve communication and engagement. The Board has already taken up one of our ideas on how this can be improved. A summary of the issues raised has been published on the MAG pages of the TTE website. The offer of a discussion with MAG remains open to both counties and leagues. Simply contact us via our email address (see page 6).

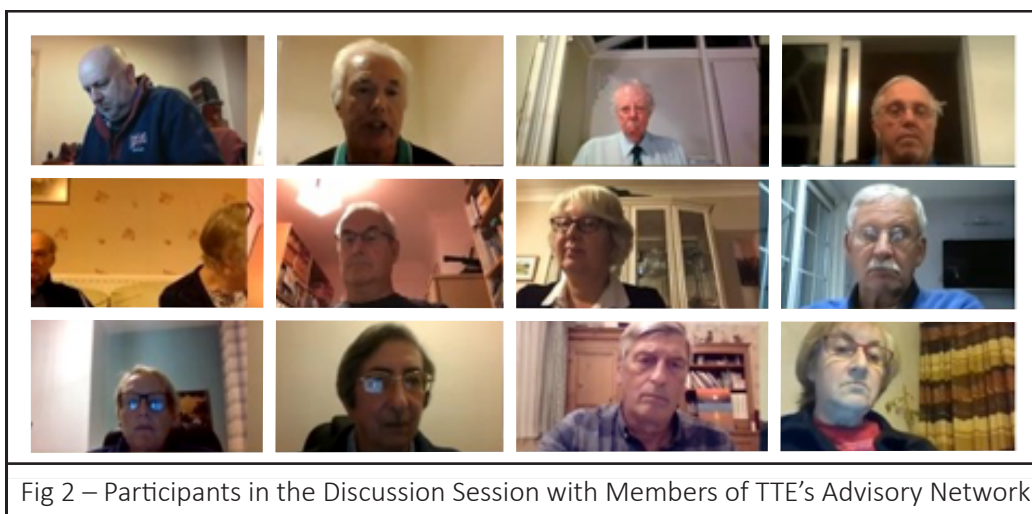


Fig 2 – Participants in the Discussion Session with Members of TTE’s Advisory Network

Clubs – as part of our project on clubs development, we engaged with leading clubs on how they can be assisted in their development role. About 40 clubs participated in four engagement sessions. More details in the project section below.

Volunteers (TTE Advisory Network) – these are the volunteers who are essential to the running of TTE activities. We took the opportunity to explain the role of MAG and how they could input into our activities. Participants in the discussion are shown in Fig 2.

Members – we took the opportunity to explain the role of MAG to a number of members who we know are passionate about table tennis and have expressed views on the future direction of our sport. We outlined the work that had been undertaken and what was planned next.

Performance – as part of our work on Performance, we engaged with leading coaches, parents and players on how we could take forward the issues raised in our report on Performance. The output from the session will be discussed with the TTE Performance team.

Projects

Clubs Development – we engaged with leading clubs to get their views on how they can be assisted in their development role. Thirty-nine clubs engaged in the process through four on-line discussion sessions. The clubs who participated are listed in Table 1. The fourth session was by open-invitation enabling any club with more than 50 members to participate if they wished to do so. The open-invitation was via the TTE website and subsequently promoted via social media. On

conclusion of the final session, an initial “feedback report” was been published on the website. It captures the key issues raised during the four engagement sessions with clubs. The feedback report was sent to participants to check that all the key issues had been correctly captured. Following feedback on the initial report, the main report was drafted and we again contacted participants to seek their views on how the various issues had been prioritised. The report will be submitted to the TTE Board and we will be recommending the development of an action plan to take forward the issues identified.

Table 1 - Clubs Who Participated in the Clubs Development Discussion

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ackworth Club • Ackworth Academy • Ashford • BATTs • Birmingham Academy • Bishop Auckland • Blackpool • Bristol Civil Service • Chorleywood • Crippenham • Colebridge • Corby Smash • Darlington | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draycott • Ellenborough • Falmouth • Graham Spicer • Greenhouse • Goodwin • Halton • Hampstead • Horsham Spinners • Joola Plymouth • Kingfisher • Knighton Park • Leeds Judean | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mossford • Norwich • Nottingham Sycamore • Ormesby • Portishead • Portsmouth • South Croydon • St Neots • Swerve • Torbay Academy • Woodfield • Woodford Wells |
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Fig 3 - Participants in one of the on-line discussion sessions with clubs

Projects (Cont.)

Volunteers – volunteers are the back-bone of our sport and the aim of this project was to develop a strategy for enhancing the volunteer experience.

Specific objectives were to:

- o Provide guidance on best practice for the creation of a volunteer network
- o Show examples of ways to enhance the volunteers' experience
- o Provide examples of ways to encourage and retain local volunteers

The Volunteers report makes recommendations to address these three objectives. The recommendations have been accepted by the Board including the recommendation that (subject to funding) a new post be created within TTE of Volunteer Coordinator. The full report of the project has been published on the MAG pages of the TTE website.

Reducing the Drop-out Rate for Players in the 18-22 Age Group – data suggests that a significant number of young players drop out of table tennis between the ages of 18 and 22. Membership numbers remain flat across the age groups until about the age of 45. At this point there is a significant increase in membership. This project is investigating the reasons for players dropping out once they reach the age of 18. We are also investigating how we can bring forward to a younger age the point at which membership increases.

Transparency & Accountability - this project has recently got underway and is investigating how TTE and the Board can provide an effective level of transparency and accountability. We are identifying a range of options and then plan to discuss them with members of the table tennis community. Although the specific recommendations will apply to the Board, it is our intention that the recommendations will apply more generally across the organisation.

Issues Raised with the Board

“Ask Us Anything” - MAG suggested to the Board that they take advantage of the popularity of TT discussion programmes on Facebook/YouTube to hold their own discussion programme to respond to issues of concern to members. The Board fully embraced this suggestion resulting in the “Ask Us Anything” programme on Facebook on 6th September. A member of MAG helped structure the format of the programme, whilst another MAG member chaired the session. The discussion went well. The TTE participants directly addressed the issues raised by members. About 250 people joined the discussion live on Facebook and there have subsequently been over 5,000 views of the recording on the TTE Facebook page. We are encouraging TTE and the Board to hold further discussions of this type.

Issues Raised with the Board (cont.)

Performance - MAG have suggested to the Board that the interaction of the Performance team with players, coaches and parents could be improved. We discussed this issue in detail with the Performance Team (Simon Mills, Alan Cooke, Gavin Evans and Matt Stanforth) during a 2-hour meeting at the beginning of September. This proved to be a productive discussion. The team recognised the need to improve communication and engagement and welcomed suggestions from MAG on how this can be achieved. We provided feedback to the Board through a detailed report and recommended that the Performance Team produce an Action Plan to address the issues identified in the report. The report and Action Plan have been published on the MAG pages of the TTE website.

Director Appointments – Ahead of the term completions for certain Appointed Directors, we suggested to the Board that such appointments should be re-advertised and be subject to open competition. We felt that this was the best way to make sure that the Board had access to the full range of skill sets required and the best people appointed. This recommendation from MAG was fed into the Board discussion. We were pleased that the Board shared our view that making the appointments openly advertised was the appropriate approach.

Support for TTE Initiatives

We have provided support for various TTE initiatives. These include:

Diversity & Inclusion - TTE have initiated a new project on Diversity & Inclusion. Diversity and inclusion will become an increasingly important aspect of the Sport England strategy, and TTE recognises that it needs to invest in this area. The aims of the project will be to:

- i. Review progress against the current Diversity Action Plan
- ii. Create and recommend an updated Plan for the next 4-5 years
- iii. Create an implementation plan for the sport

Two members of MAG (Juliet Bertie and Stephen Bertie) are participating in this initiative. The priority areas have been confirmed as communities that are ethnically diverse, women & girls, disability, and lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Ranking – We provided input into the second phase of the ranking review. Particularly topics that we discussed was how to handle returning players, new players, withdrawals/no-shows and integration with ITTF results. We also discussed the challenges of the ranking system for young girls which often made it difficult for them to secure ranking points.

New League Product - We were asked to input into the development and marketing of TTE's new league product. This is a short-format competition based around 2AS and 3AS formats. It was clear that packaging a shorter format in a standard way would be of interest to leagues and other organisations that run league-based competitions.

Nominations Committee

Under its Terms of Reference, MAG is eligible to appoint up to two representatives to sit on the Nominations Committee. We proposed two MAG members, namely Steve Pratt and Steve Bertie, and they have joined the Committee.

Future Priorities

Our sport faces a significant challenge in re-starting table tennis as we emerge from the restrictions of the pandemic. Our main priority over the next 12 months will be assisting that process and ensuring that we not only build back, but build back better.

Direct Costs of MAG

As all our meetings have been on-line, no costs have been incurred by TTE for the operation of MAG in 2020/21.

How to Engage with MAG

Web Pages: <https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/mag-information/>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/TTEMAG>

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/624548831342753>

Email: ttemembersadvisorygroup@gmail.com

**We are very keen for our forward work programme
to be shaped by the table tennis community**