

MINUTES OF MAG MEETING - SATURDAY 4th JULY 2020

Present

Neil Hurford (Chairman), Kevin Buddell, David Maddison, Steve Pratt, Dan Simms, Joanne Green, Dean Nabarro, Stuart Sherlock, Susie Venner (Board Liaison).

1. Apologies for Absence

Sandy Nash

2. Notes of Previous Meeting

No comments

3. Actions from Previous Meeting

- (a) **Letters of Appointment** – NH encouraged all those who had not returned their Letters of Appointment to do so as soon as possible.

4. Projects Update

- (a) **Ranking** - SV said that there would be a second-round of consultation on ranking. It had been decided to stay with the “Relative System” and the consultation would address the details of improving the current system, eg issues relating to separate lists/categories.

NH said he thought the work done previously on ranking would be useful as a MAG contribution to the consultation. JG noted the anomalies that arose as a result of cadets taking their ranking points into the junior ranks. These would be the sort of issues that MAG could raise in response to the consultation.

The low response rate to the Ranking Consultation was noted – only about 80 responses. This raised more general issues about how TTE undertook consultations with the membership. The approach was reliant on traditional approaches based on emails and the TTE website. These were somewhat out of date, particularly amongst the younger demographic. This was a topic for MAG to address, particularly how to make more effective use of social media.

SP noted that when we did an internal review of MAG, we should specifically identify cross-cutting issues such as communications.

- (b) **Changing Perceptions of Table Tennis** – DN provided an update on the Board Working Group that had been set up. He had identified 3 simple steps that was a basic starter plan that would not be expensive and would kick-start the process.
- (c) **Volunteering** – SP reported that the Final Report had been completed and would shortly be submitted to the Board. The report identified key issues and offered to review implementation in 12 months’ time.

KB noted that key volunteers were standing down from important roles and leaving gaps that were difficult to fill. There was a discussion on how it was possible to get the right balance of volunteers and TTE staff when running major events and competitions.

- (d) **Building the Network/Engagement with the TT Community** – NH reported that all 39 counties had each been individually contacted offering an on-line meeting with the county committee and league representatives. About 10 had replied. Meetings had taken place with Hertfordshire and South Yorkshire, with meetings with Sussex and Dorset taking place shortly. A meeting was being arranged with Yorkshire. There might be a meeting arranged for the end of the process that involved people from several counties.

A record was being kept of the meetings which would be written up to summarise key issues raised. A common theme from the first two meetings was the need to improve communications.

- (e) **Clubs** – 10 clubs had been contacted about engaging in an on-line discussion on the topic of the “Table Tennis Clubs – 2021 and beyond”. Eight clubs had already replied confirming their intention to participate. The key task was now to put the arrangements in place for the first on-line discussion.

5. Project Pipeline

- (a) **Coaching**. NH had prepared the two project briefs in bare-bones, outline form. We had a lot on our plate at the moment, and he suggested we wait till the new members had joined MAG before proceeding with these projects.

- (b) **IT Strategy & Systems**—There were two elements to this project. The first was to ensure that the Board and the SLT fully acknowledged the importance of IT as a key strategic issue for TTE and had appropriate governance arrangements in place (both within the Board and the SLT) that enabled appropriate strategic decisions to be made. The second was to outline the specific tools that would streamline operations, provide benefits to members and cut costs.

6. Issues Raised with the Board

In opening this discussion on this topic, NH noted that whilst MAG was fundamentally project-based, there would be issues that would arise that MAG would wish to raise with the Board. Sometimes, these would require a discussion within MAG before approaching the Board. But on other occasions, the topics would be sufficiently non-controversial that they would be raised immediately.

- (a) **TTE Engagement with On-line Discussions/Debates** - Lock-down had seen the proliferation of a number of table tennis forums/debates across social media platforms. They have all addressed some key strategic issues which very much fall within the domain of what MAG and TTE more generally are addressing. NH and DN had emailed Sara Sutcliffe noting what a phenomenal resource all of this is for MAG and the Board. In many respects they have provided something we all have been looking for a while to get, namely to hear the opinions of the passionate, engaged, and experienced section of the membership.

It was suggested that this was a valuable resource and process with which TTE should actively engage. The reply has been positive, and a meeting would be arranged on how to take this forward.

KB noted that he had seen the involvement of Matt Stanforth in the “Pitch & Paul” show and had thought he’d come over well. Aled Howell had done a fantastic job in the recent Coaching webinars.

- (b) Interaction of Performance Team with Players, Coaches & Parents** –The likely next step was a discussion with Don Parker the newly-elected Director/Deputy Chairman, along with members of the Performance Team. SV and NH would discuss next steps with a view to a discussion with relevant people at a future MAG meeting.

7. Recruitment of New MAG Members

NH provided an update. Whilst no decisions had yet been made on who to appoint, it was likely that more than 3 people would be invited to join MAG, perhaps up to seven new members. This would add to the diversity and robustness of MAG, widening its skill base. Increasing the number of MAG members and revising the MAG Terms of Reference accordingly had been agreed with the Board.

It was noted that recruiting a significant number of people would present a challenge in terms of integrating them into existing MAG ways of working. NH acknowledged the challenge and would take active steps to ensure the smooth integration of new members into MAG.

8. MAG Annual Report

The MAG Annual Report had been included in the TTE Annual Review prepared for the TTE AGM. The Report outlined the projects undertaken by MAG during the year, along with plans for the future.

9. Any Other Business

- (a) Tournaments Approval Panel (TAP)** – NH reported that Gail Johns had contacted him asking for a MAG representative to join TAP. SS said he would like to take up the offer. He noted that TAP would play a leading role in the forthcoming Competition Review, so it would be good for a MAG member to be on TAP. NH would advise Gail Johns accordingly.

- (b) Review of Mission 2025** - SV noted the current mid-term review of Mission 2025. There was an overview document that was fairly general, but the real meat was in the Impact Report. She would send links to both documents. NH noted that the Impact Report was an excellent document of which the whole table tennis community could be proud, and it would hopefully do its job in securing on-going funding from Sport England.

- (c) Return to Play** – KB noted the problems with using schools as venues during the current restrictions. His own table tennis club was not allowed to use their venue at a school and it

seemed unlikely that the situation would change before the end of 2020. Others noted similar restrictions on the use of school-based venues. These problems were not limited to schools – other venues in businesses, community centres and leisure centres would have limited availability for some time. Those clubs that owned their own venues would be able to decide when/how to open – but would have to follow TTE guidelines. Clearly, this was an on-going issue that had the potential to impact on table tennis for some time.

10. Date of Next Meeting

On-line meeting on Saturday 12th September at 10am. NH to send out the Zoom invite nearer the time.