

Notes of MAG Meeting 9th June 2022

Present: Neil Hurford (Chair), Sandy Nash, John Mackey, Jo Green, Phil Ashleigh, Liam McTiernan, David Maddison, Susie Venner (Board Liaison), Neil Rogers (Competition Review)

Apologies for Absence: John Andrews, Steve Pratt, Dave Randerson, Kevin Buddell

1. Chair's Introduction

NH welcomed those present to the meeting. He thanked Neil Rogers for attending the meeting to present an update on the Competition Review.

2. Competition Review Update

Neil Rogers gave a detailed presentation on the Competition Review. He summarised the background to the Review and where we had got to now that the Consultation phase had been completed with the data analysed. The key principles and vision which have been agreed by the Board for the next stage of the Review are listed in Appendix A.

In the discussion the following two questions were raised:

Q1 – How will the output of the consultation be communicated?

A1 – After the consultation with MAG and National Council, there will be a News Article on the TTE website outlining the feedback and describing the vision and principles agreed by the Board

Q2 – Periodisation of the Calendar. If events are not longer strictly separate geographically, will it affect the financial viability of certain events?

A2 – The key thing is to simplify the running of tournaments so that it makes it more financially viable for clubs to run events. TTE had a responsibility to progressively increase the officiating requirements for higher-level events. But there were many lower-level events where officiating requirements could be simplified.

The presentation and discussion is available as a recording which has been sent to MAG members, and can be re-sent on request. The slides used by NR in his presentation and the more detailed analysis are available at:

<https://www.tabletennisengland.co.uk/content/uploads/2022/06/Competition-Review-Update-Phase-1.pdf>

<https://www.tabletennisengland.co.uk/content/uploads/2022/06/Competition-Review-Open-Consultation-Results.pdf>

3. Notes of Previous Meeting – 16th March 2022

Noted.

4. Actions

All would be handled under the respective agenda items.

5. TTE Annual General Meeting – Key Resolutions

As at the 2021 AGM there are a number of Resolutions to be considered at the 2022 AGM. Two of these are Special Resolutions and are absolutely critical to the future our sport. The background to

these two Resolutions is that Sport England have indicated that they will award £11m of funding to TTE over a 3-5 year period. But before the funding can be confirmed, they have undertaken a normal process of due diligence which has indicated in two respects TTE is not conforming with the SE Code of Governance. This deficiency has existed for some time but has only now been spotted.

One aspect is the need for the Nominations Committee to set out its views on the skill sets for Elected Directors. The other is that Affiliation Fees should be set by the TTE Board and not by the AGM. Two Special Resolutions have been proposed to make the appropriate changes to the TTE Articles of Association. They will require a 75% majority in order to be passed. Unless they are passed, TTE will not secure the funding from Sport England which will have a hugely negative impact on table tennis.

SV confirmed that the Special Resolutions had been developed to meet the requirements of Sport England but also recognising the legitimate concerns that had been raised by Company Members. In particular, on Affiliation Fees, the Board would consult widely prior to setting Affiliation Fees. It was essential that the Special Resolutions were passed at the AGM. Unlike when we faced a similar challenge in 2017, there was unlikely to be a second chance for the Resolutions to be passed.

MAG members were encouraged to speak to their League and County Representatives to make the case for supporting the two Special Resolutions.

6. MAG Annual Report

NH had drafted the MAG Annual Report to go in the TTE Annual Review. Any comments on the draft should be sent to NH ahead of it being forwarded to Paul Stimpson at TTE.

7. Projects Update

- (a) ***Recruitment and Retention*** – The “qualitative research” has now been completed. This involved engaging via an extensive FB survey with a range of current and ex-members to understand the reasons why they have stayed with the sport, left the sport or recently returned to the sport. The results of this qualitative research have now been merged with the earlier quantitative research to produce a final report.

The data this project will provide will be extremely valuable in understanding the membership profile. Ideally, it will provide an understanding of how we can reduce the proportion of members who stop playing between the ages of 18 and 22, and how we can bring forward the age at which players return to our sport. This would have a massive impact on our membership. These insights need to be at the heart of any strategy to increase membership.

The Report will be submitted to the next Board Meeting.

- (b) ***Cost Effectiveness of Tournaments*** – the project had shown MAG at its best – fleet-footed and assembling an excellent project team who could provide real insight into the operation of tournaments. A key element was to have a wide range of experience that provided a diverse range of opinions. A first draft of the report had been circulated. What NH and LM should do was revisit the draft in the light of what we had now learned about the output from the Competition Review – highlighting both areas of agreement and areas where there was a divergence of opinion as well as any topics not fully covered by the Competition Review. The revised report would then be submitted to the Board.

JM noted his concern about the suggestion that Referees could undertake more than one role. He would suggest revised wording for this section to be included in the report. Initial impressions were that the conclusions of the MAG Tournaments report were broadly compatible with the direction of travel for the Competition Review.

8. Any Other Business

None

9. Date of Next Meeting

NH to arrange a meeting for September

July 2022

Appendix A – Vision and Principles Agreed by the TTE Board for the Next Phase of the Competition Review

The vision and principles are considered to provide a robust basis on which to deliver the agreed aims of the Review. Among the key principles are:

- Competition structure to consist of three strands: i) invitational National Championships/Cups/series, ii) tiered open tournaments, iii) national leagues. In addition, schools competitions as a discrete strand.
- Table Tennis England to structure and regulate more and deliver less.
- Introduction of a periodised calendar, with specific dates for competitions and tiered tournaments.
- Lower-tier tournaments to run at local level, mid-tier tournaments at regional/zonal level and higher-tier tournaments at national level.
- Make lower-level open events easier to access (eg potentially non-licensed, non-ranking) and more affordable to deliver (eg fewer umpiring requirements), with flexibility for innovative formats.
- Hosts to apply for events/ dates, which are apportioned centrally to maximise appropriate geographical spread for each age-group.
- Critical focus for national events on Cadet and Junior, with the introduction of regional series for U11/U13.
- More U21/U23 opportunities to bridge Junior-Senior transition and reduce dropout.
- Supporting increased women and girls' participation via dedicated events and mixed gender opportunities.
- Offer Para categories at all core age-groups at National Championships (with support from BPTT) and support inclusive options and adaptive rules at open tournaments.
- Reducing boundaries and distinctions between event stakeholders (counties, regions, clubs, leagues) to create a consistent approach and opportunities for all.
- Recognition to be made in national league events of 'proper clubs' in order to support club development.