

National Council Minutes 25th September 2021



PRESENT

Great Holm Community Centre & Zoom

11:00am

Estyn Williams (Chair – Warwickshire)*

National Councillors: David L Hockney (Avon), Peter Charters (Berkshire), Alex Murdoch (Bedfordshire) Susan Hayes (Buckinghamshire)*, Brian Freer (Cambridgeshire) Alan E Ransome OBE (Cleveland), John Cowell (Derbyshire)*, Reinhard Lindner (Dorset) Ken MacLeod (Hampshire – technical issues), Harmesh Jutle (Herefordshire), David Edwards (Hertfordshire)*, Jim Bolton (Lancashire) Shirley Pickering (Leicestershire), Tony Dias (Middlesex) Malcolm Allsop (Nottingham), Gareth Pearson (Northumberland), Margot Fraser (Surrey), James Skinner (Sussex), Charles Noel Sewell (Wiltshire)*, Martin Clark (Worcestershire)*, Richard B Hudson (Yorkshire)*

Deputy National Councillors:

Jonathon Hopson (Berkshire) Clive Hollinsbee (Kent)

Other:

Mike Smith (British Universities and Colleges Sports (BUCS), Kim Mudge (SE Regional Committee Chair), Martin Clayton (West Midlands Regional Chair)

Board Members: Sandra Deaton (SD)*, Sara Sutcliffe MBE (SS)* Susie Venner (SV)*, Ritchie Venner (RV)*, Don Parker (DP) Ray James (RJ) Kwadjo Adjepong (KA) Tom Purcell (TP) Steve Kemish (SK)

Staff: Jo Keay-Blyth (JKB)* Greg Yarnall (GY) Matthew Stanforth (MS)* Steve Joel (Centenary Project Manager) (SJ)*

Minutes : Victoria Wiegleb (VW)*

Apologies / Non-Attendance: National Councillors, Deputy National Councillors & Board

Mike Atkinson (Buckinghamshire), Diana Jermyn (Cornwall), Karen Tonge MBE (Cheshire), Mike Starkie (Derbyshire), Phil Ashleigh (Essex), Tim Giles (Isle of Wight) Neil Le Milliere (Kent) Mike Holt – Deputy (Leicestershire), Martin Ireland (Lancashire), George Tyler (Lincolnshire), Neil Hurford (Oxfordshire) Ivor Jones (Northampton), Chris Dangerfield (Shropshire) James Kenny (South Yorkshire), Jos Kelly (Somerset), Malcolm MacFarlane (Warwickshire) Priya Samuel (Board)

*attendance was in person

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Agenda Item	Paper No	Discussion	Decision/Action	Who	When
1	N/A	<p>Chairman Opening Remarks, Update & Welcome EW (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting, and thanked JKB / VW and all the staff who helped to get today's meeting arranged.</p> <p>Introductions around the room were held.</p> <p>Obituaries Those we have lost since National Council last met were recognised and remembered with a 1 minute, standing silence.</p> <p>Minutes from last meeting The minutes from 3rd June 2021 were put to National Council to approve – a show of hands was given in the room and online and 100% of National Councillors approved the minutes. These were taken as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Matters Arising No matters arising.</p> <p>Change to Agenda PC (Berkshire) had to leave today's meeting early so there was a proposed change in order to the agenda as advised by EW (Chair) - this was approved by National Council.</p>	<p>Decision: National Council approved the minutes of 3rd June 2021 with 100% - this is recorded for accuracy</p>		
2		<p>Talent & Performance Sub Committee</p> <p>DP (Board) recapped on the T&P Sub Committee meeting of 3rd Sept and provided a verbal update to National Council to complement the written report provided.</p> <p>The Committee is up and running, with a robust structure with everyone checking and challenging, working closely with the performance team.</p>			

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	<p>TOR are available on the website: https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Talent-and-Performance-Terms-of-Reference-June-21.pdf</p> <p>The key area of self-funding was discussed, and DP (Board) advised the T&P Sub Committee would like to see all players, regardless of their parent’s financial background, not being restricted because of finance issues. This is supported by the Board.</p> <p>The next T&P Sub Committee Meeting is scheduled for 4th November.</p> <p>EW (Chair) asked for any questions then SD (TTE Chair) can reply. AR (Cleveland) welcomed the appointment of the committee and felt it is very good to have international player input, the developments of the guiding principles were seen as positives.</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) also raised the Cleveland / Kent proposal that passed at the AGM. AR (Cleveland) asked for Board confirmation if the committee had full delegated powers or was there to check and challenging, AR (Cleveland) also asked for an update on whether the Board had found the additional £200,000 for the programme.</p> <p>NS (Wiltshire) commented that he would like to see us capitalising on the Committee by promoting publicity.</p> <p>CH (Deputy National Councillor, Kent) supported AR (Cleveland) comments and felt the Committee should have authority and not just checking & challenging.</p> <p>PC (Berkshire) advised that Berkshire were in full support with what DP (Board) has said and felt that AR (Cleveland) was also correct in that the subcommittee needs to ‘have teeth’.</p> <p>SD (TTE Chair) was welcomed to speak and answer the questions.</p> <p>She responded that the overriding responsibility for the sport, and final decision-making lies with the Board. Checking and challenging is a vital part of the subcommittee’s responsibility, but collaboration is vitally important and the Board supports this.</p> <p>The issue of the finance gap was discussed and how there is not an additional £200,000 available to put into this committee/programme. The additional financial input this year in order to support the players (c£100,000) is due to an under spend in the performance budget last year. The Board agrees it is</p>			
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		<p>important to find more income but this will need to be additional revenue not a repurposing of existing revenue.</p> <p>DP (Board) assured National Council that he has the utmost confidence in the subcommittee, with their experience, male: female ratio etc, the subcommittee will do what it does best and provide advice on performance. DP (Board) asked for National Council to allow the subcommittee the time it needs to make progress.</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) raised the GB TT committee and the £1.25m UK Sport grant. In his opinion the people running this committee should be experts in table tennis.</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) advised he has received a lot of information from Scotland to form his opinions.</p> <p>SD (TTE Chairman) advised that there is a separate GB TT committee to oversees the governance, performance and organisation of the programme which includes senior representatives from all Home Nations.</p> <p>SS (CEO) expressed disappointment that AR (Cleveland) had again come to National Council to make comments about GB TTC based on misinformation when she had invited him to speak to her directly. It was suggested that AR, SS and DP meet offline.</p>	<p>Action: Meeting to be held offline with AR (Cleveland)</p>	<p>SS / DP</p>	
<p>3</p>		<p>Matters Arising from the AGM (including paper and motion from Peter Charters)</p> <p>EW (Chair) welcomed PC (Berkshire) to present his motion to support the calling of an EGM to vote again on the proposition of a 4th Elected Director.</p> <p>SH (Buckinghamshire) felt that an EGM is going to cause many unnecessary costs to the Association and also felt that the membership needs skills in <i>all</i> areas, not just Table Tennis experience> SH (Buckinghamshire) and does not support a call for an EGM.</p> <p>JS (Sussex) advised National Council that his county will support an EGM. Four elected directors gives a ratio of 2:1 in favour of appointed directors.</p> <p>NS (Wiltshire) asked if the EGM needs to be face to face, or if this can be done by Zoom. To be advised.</p>			

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	<p>AR (Cleveland) advised that the Select Committee (Constitution) supports PC (Berkshire) EGM motion. The main reason is that there will be Board Nominations in Spring 2022, and if this is left until the AGM 2022, then there will be more Board Members appointed and the opportunity for an election will pass.</p> <p>SV (Board) advised National Council that this topic has been discussed at Board including recently at the 9th Sept Board meeting and Board wants to hear National Council's views today. The Elected Directors feel they do wear two hats but are aware of their corporate responsibility to support the Board's decisions. SV also urged that it is not about whether individuals from table tennis are better or more important, that is divisive and a mix of skills and backgrounds is important and finding the best balance.</p> <p>RV (Board) advised that he fully supports the motion for 4 Elected Directors.</p> <p>TP (Board) advised National Council of his own skills in Table Tennis, (playing for over 50 years and being involved in umpiring at the highest level). TP (Board), an appointed director, did originally support the AGM proposition. However, he believes that the skills matrix is very important in finding a balance of skills and backgrounds and it cannot be guaranteed that the person with the skills that are needed will apply for election and if they do that they will be elected. TP does not support the proposition for 4 Elected Directors and certainly does not support a call for an EGM which would incur significant costs and time commitment.</p> <p>MC (Worcestershire) felt the crux of the matter is that an EGM before the AGM is required due to the Spring Board nominations, and if we wait until the AGM, then if the proposition is successfully passed an election will not be possible until the next vacancy arises. MC (Worcestershire) feels there is no one on the Board who has the financial experience required.</p> <p>SD (TTE Chair) clarified that the Board had a long and detailed debate at the Board meeting on 9th Sept, with lots of different opinions. It was decided at that meeting that SD (TTE Chair) will put the Board's view forward to National Council today.</p> <p>SD (TTE Chair) confirmed that 8 of the 12 Directors <i>are</i> from table tennis including herself and Tom both with 50 years' experience who are appointed not elected and that all the Directors want the best for the sport, they are all volunteering their time to work hard for the sport. SD finds it offensive that some people think that only elected directors know about the sport or have the right experience and passion</p>			
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	<p>to serve on the Board. SD (TTE Chair) said if we could have the confidence that through the election process, we would get the right mix and balance of people then the argument would be stronger. SD recounted that a potential applicant for the last election decided not to stand because he was told that he would not get elected as he wasn't well known enough. That can't be the basis for establishing a well-balanced Board. The right balance is key – the appointment process gives this but there is no certainty with an elected Board member who may not bring the skills or diversity and inclusion requirements needed at that particular time, it could mean several directors with similar backgrounds or experiences.</p> <p>SD also clarified how the appointment process works. The Nominations Committee including the elected directors see all the CV's and watch the interviews, they provide their feedback and views. A mutual and collaborative decision is made by the whole of the NomCom.</p> <p>https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Nominations-Committee-Terms-of-Reference-April-2021.pdf</p> <p>PC (Berkshire) was asked to respond. He reiterated that this is not personal, but it is about increasing the table tennis knowledge on the Board.</p> <p>EW suggested an option to hold one of the Spring Board appointments (vacancies to be created when Simon Griew and Tom Purcell's terms of office end) until after the AGM. That would allow the propositions for a 4th elected director to come back at the AGM without the expense of an EGM.</p> <p>SD stated it was a sensible idea and would discuss it with the Board.</p> <p>EW (Chair) asked for a vote to be held to show the level of support for PC (Berkshire) motion for an EGM:</p> <p>Total: 12 For (8 on zoom, 4 in the room) 9 Against (7 on zoom, 2 in the room)</p>			
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		<p>The Motion for an EGM was carried however, this is <i>not</i> confirmation that an EGM shall be called but an indicative vote of support from National Councillors (see the question from SH (Buckinghamshire under AOB)</p> <p>SD (TTE Chair) advised that similar to the ITTF Rules Committee could be involved in explaining the rationale of some of the technical point of proposed article changes.</p> <p>EW (NC Chair) said he thought in a number of cases speakers objected to particular parts of an Article change, rather than the Article change as a whole.</p> <p>SH (Buckinghamshire) supported EW's view. She also suggested that a meeting prior to the AGM to explain the amendments / resolutions would be well received by some company members.</p>			
4		<p>Centenary Programme</p> <p>SJ (Centenary Project Manager, Staff) was welcomed to speak by EW (Chair) and provided a presentation to National Council updating them on the Centenary plans. As National Councillors they will all be invited to the Gala Dinner so were asked to keep the date free. A guest can also attend but will be required to purchase a ticket.</p> <p>Questions were welcomed. EW (Chair) advised that if anyone has any questions outside of this meeting, then they can be emailed directly to SJ: steve.joel@tabletennisengland.co.uk</p> <p>JC (Derbyshire) asked if SJ (Staff) requires any assistance from County / Leagues. SJ (Staff) advised this is very welcome and they are to be a large part of the Centenary.</p> <p>NS (Wiltshire) asked about the accountancy advice regarding the proposed Foundation, and SJ (Staff) advised that we have already sought advice from Hayes Macintyre on charity set up, VAT, Corporate Tax issues etc.</p> <p>SJ (Staff) also advised that Diane Webb (Hastings) has done an enormous amount of work on records / facts etc for the Coffee Table Book. Colin Clemett has also given an enormous amount of input with his knowledge. Thanks to both of them was acknowledged and recorded.</p>			

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5		<p>Review of Mission 2025 Strategy</p> <p>SD (TTE Chair) introduced the paper that was provided to National Councillors describing the process and direction for the strategy review.</p> <p>A Board Strategy Day was held on 25th August, and Jill Parker (President) also joined this. There was a lot of constructive debate during that day.</p> <p>The draft strategic priorities were discussed and how the most important priority at the moment is recovery from covid pandemic.</p> <p>Comments on priorities and strategic directions were welcomed to SS (CEO) & SD (TTE Chair) by the end of Oct 2021. A Board/SLT working group has been established and it will review the feedback ahead of the Board Meeting in Dec 2021. National Council will receive further updates at the Dec meeting.</p> <p>EW (Chair) referred to the 2-year updates from 2017 and 2019 and asked if further updates will be provided. SS (CEO) confirmed that there will be comms about the transition from the current Mission 2025 into the revised strategy which will include progress updates.</p>			
6		<p>Honours Awards</p> <p>Just before lunch SD presented the following Honours Awards for 2021:</p> <p><u>Malcolm Scott Award:</u> For outstanding service to TTE in a senior role in the last calendar year.</p> <p>Estyn Williams</p> <p>For his service as Chair of National Council and for chairing the 2021 EGM.</p> <p><u>Ivor Montagu Award:</u> For significant service to the administration of TTE.</p>			

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		<p>Caroline Williams</p> <p>For her service as Returning Officer, notably with the AGM 2021 & EGM.</p>			
7		<u>Lunch</u>			
8		<p>Accelerated Playing Order</p> <p>NS (Wiltshire) provided an overview on his paper about different league playing models aimed at appealing to younger players in particular. This paper had been circulated before the meeting. A general discussion took place.</p> <p>DE (Hertfordshire) advised that conditions and prices at his school hall have changed recently and his county has now found an alternative venue at a community centre, however this is only available between 7-10pm. Therefore, they are looking to change structure and format accordingly.</p> <p>GY (Staff) was pleased to hear that people are being more flexible. A Good Practise Guide is available to all with thoughts and ideas on how different ages / groups can play. This is to be circulated.</p> <p>SV (Board) advised that Liverpool League plays a combination of 3 people divisions and 4 people divisions. The majority of their clubs can now play their matches at home. This was met with some negativity; however, it is an additional benefit not only for time but so parents can be sure where they are playing and at what time.</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) advised that the vast majority of matches for his league are played over 2 tables, ending at 9pm.</p> <p>GY (Staff) felt it is worth leagues considering the late finishes, from surveys etc it goes far beyond just juniors who find the late finish restrictive – women and girls for example.</p> <p>DE (Hertfordshire) asked how TT Leagues can adapt to the new format. JKB (Staff) advised this can be adapted accordingly.</p>	<p>Action: Send round Good Practise Guide</p>	GY	ASAP

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		NS (Wiltshire) recapped his paper, and EW (Chair) thanked him for his contribution and a very good discussion was had on this topic.			
9		<p>Level The Table</p> <p>GY (Staff) provided a presentation on Level the Table, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to National Council which is being launched on Monday 27th Sept.</p> <p>A video was shown to National Council on Level the Table. Thanks was given to GY and the team for the strategy work</p> <p>The 5 Key Strategic Goals were discussed and GY (Staff) touched on all 5 areas in brief: Listen Educate Increase the Diversity Grow participation Challenge discriminatory behaviour</p>			
10		<p>Clubs Development – Break Out Rooms</p> <p>National Council went into Break Out Rooms to discuss the Club Development Paper from MAG.</p> <p>This session took 30 minutes.</p> <p>Feedback to be sent to VW (Staff) & EW (Chair) via email and will be attached as an appendix to these minutes</p>	<p>Action: Send MAG Break out room feedback to VW & EW</p>	ALL	ASAP
11		<p>Department Reports (available in advance on the website)</p> <p>Chairman’s Report – no further questions</p>			

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	<p>Board Report 9th Sept</p> <p>EW (Chair) advised he was disappointed that the full Board minutes were not available and will discuss with SD (TTE Chair). He did note however that the summary provided was very detailed and informative.</p> <p>Board sub-Committee Minutes (available in advance on the website)</p> <p>Gov & Risk: No questions</p> <p>Finance:</p> <p>MC (Worcestershire) commented that the report was much more detailed than previous ones and thanked the relevant staff. 'Profit and Loss' should be replaced by 'Income and Expenditure'. He asked why the report was only to Q1 and not end of August. He also commented that a balance sheet should be available.</p> <p>MC (Worcestershire) raised that whilst he was pleased to see the forecast deficit reduced to £16,919, he was concerned why the Board had agreed to a budget deficit of £54,434 in the first place.</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) was pleased to see the method of reporting as it has improved and it is a step in right direction – thanks were given to the Finance Team for their efforts.</p> <p>SS (CEO) responded to those comments. It was advised that the finance papers National Council had received were more or less the same papers as the Board received.</p> <p>SS (CEO) on the deficit budget advised that the budget was draft and approved in March 2021 when the country was still experiencing lockdown and restrictions. It was therefor felt prudent to budget for the same membership income as 20/21. Likewise, it was unknown how long restrictions would last for however the budget includes a full competition season from April 2021. It was also known that Q1 and Q2 would be very uncertain and that the Board would consider the financial position then and if necessary, require the execute to find savings. However, pleased to report that membership numbers</p>			
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		<p>are growing, savings were realised from the longer restrictions and there is confidence that the position will be a break even or better result.</p> <p>CEO & Dept Reports (available in advance on the website)</p> <p>SS (CEO) advised an update on the Employment Tribunal case with Tony Catt in that he has lodged an appeal which will be defended. To date we have not sought to recover costs which are partially covered by insurance with a £7500 excess. EW (Chair) asked if Tony Catt was aware of the costs to the Association, and if he wasn't, maybe he would change his mind about the appeal?</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) asked about the current membership figures and what confidence there was of recovering to the 19/20 membership figures? SS (CEO) advised that membership has surpassed where it was this time last year. It is unlikely that we shall beat the 2019 – 2020 figures however, it should be around 70-80%.</p> <p>JKB (Staff) advised that there are some new members (3,500), this is members from before 2018 which is encouraging. With some leagues not starting until Oct 2021 or Jan 2022 there is increasing optimism of steady return.</p> <p>The new website is on track to launch in the autumn and will be accompanied by a comms plan for launch.</p>			
12		<p>AOB</p> <p>NS (Wiltshire) had some ideas on the centenary – Challenge to set to clubs of 1 new player, 1 old player. EW (Chair) advised NS (Wiltshire) to contact SJ (Staff) with his ideas.</p> <p>NS (Wiltshire) suggested old handbooks donated – EW (Chair) advised to send this idea to SJ (Staff)</p> <p>SH (Buckinghamshire) asked for clarification on the earlier motion vote on an EGM and if that means that an EGM will now be called. EW (Chair) confirmed this does <i>not</i> mean an EGM will be called, National Council is an advisory group and the motion passed today does not determine a decision.</p>			

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		<p>MC (Worcestershire) asked about the costs of out sourcing to Jockey Club Services and was it still value for money. SS (CEO) advised this will be referred to Finance Committee to review.</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) reported that it had been difficult for those on zoom to hear and follow the conversation in the room. JKB (Staff) will look into a microphone for future hybrid meetings but EW (Chair) did advise this was the first hybrid meeting and we can learn from this one going forward. Overall, it was a successful meeting.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 15.30hrs.</p> <p>Date of the next meeting is 4th December 2021 and this will be a virtual meeting only.</p>	<p>Action: Finance Committee to consider Jockey Club Services cost/vfm</p>	<p>SS</p>	
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<u>Action</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>When</u>
Meeting to be scheduled with AR (Cleveland) and SS (CEO) DP (Board)	SS	ASAP
Send Good Practice Guide to National Council	GY	ASAP
Send MAG Break out room feedback to VW & EW	ALL	ASAP
Finance Committee to review Jockey Cub vfm/arrangement	SS	Ahead of next contract renewal process