

National Council Minutes 3 June 2023



PRESENT

Online only meeting by Zoom Conference call

9 am

Estyn Williams (Chair – Warwickshire)

National Councillors:

David Hockney (Avon), Phil Ashleigh (Essex), Alexander Murdoch (Bedfordshire), Karen Tonge OBE (Cheshire), Alan Ransome OBE (Cleveland), Jon Bayliss (Derbyshire), Reinhard Lindner (Dorset), David Edwards (Hertfordshire), Tim Giles (Isle of Wight), Clive Hollingsbee (Kent), Shirley Pickering (Leicestershire), Ivor Jones (Northamptonshire), Neil Hurford (Oxfordshire), Stephen Longmoor (Somerset), Margot Fraser (Surrey), Tony Catt (Sussex), Martin Clark (Worcestershire),

Deputy National Councillors:

Peter Charters (Berkshire), Brian Whitehead (Buckinghamshire)

Board Members: Sandra Deaton (SD), Adrian Christy (AC), Ray James (Appointed Director), Jos Kelly (JS) Don Parker (DP), Susie Venner (SV), Ritchie Venner (RV)

Staff: Jo Keay-Blyth (JKB), Sue Wressell (SW)

Minutes : Sue Wressell (SW)

Apologies for Non-Attendance: National Councillors, Deputy National Councillors, Others & Board

Susan Hayes (Buckinghamshire), Brian Freer (Cambridgeshire), David Adamson (Gloucestershire), Harry Jutle (Herefordshire), Neil Le Milliere (Kent), Tony Dias (Middlesex), Tom Purcell (Lancashire), David Brown (Lincolnshire), Gareth Pearson (Northumberland), Noel Sewell (Wiltshire), James Kenny (South Yorkshire), Richard B Hudson (Yorkshire) Mike Smith (BUCS), Kwadjo Adjepong (Appointed Director), Richard Ayers (Appointed Director), Steve Kemish (Appointed Director), Priya Samuel (Appointed Director).

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Agenda Item	Discussion	Decision/Action	Who	When
1	<p>Chairman Opening Remarks, Update & Welcome</p> <p>EW (Chair - Warwickshire) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked JKB and SW for the administration of the meeting. He welcomed Jon Bayliss (Derbyshire) to his first meeting.</p> <p>Feedback from National Council is welcomed following this meeting and is to be sent to SW and copied to Estyn Williams (Chair – Warwickshire).</p> <p>a. Register of Business Interests None</p> <p>b. Obituaries</p> <p>EW (Chair – Warwickshire) asked everyone to remember Mike Short and those we have lost since the National Council last met. The meeting held a one-minute silence in their memory.</p> <p>Members were reminded that their terms of office would come to an end at the end of the AGM on 8 July and they needed to elect or re-elect their Councillors and Deputy Councillors no later than 20 June. All forms should be sent to the TTE office.</p> <p>There were three applications for the role of Elected Director, and these would be posted to the website for all members to see, ahead of the voting that will open at the end of the coming week. Everyone was encouraged to vote.</p>			
2	<p>Minutes from last meeting</p> <p>TC (Sussex) said he had sent in amendments to the minutes but these had not been taken on board. These included the due diligence undertaken, or not, by the recruitment agency and that there were now only four Area Managers.</p>	<p>Decision: The Minutes of the meeting of 22 April 2023 were approved</p>		

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	<p>EW (Chair – Warwickshire) explained that TC had been asked a few times to send in the text that he wanted to be altered or added and he had not done this. EW reminded everyone that all corrections of accuracy for the minutes should be sent to him and if he felt they were correct he would allow the changes.</p> <p>MC (Worcestershire) said that Item 6 made reference to an ‘Elected’ Director and it should be ‘Appointed’. This would be amended.</p> <p>PC (DC Berkshire) raised the issue of the sound at the last meeting, during a point that he raised and he saw that this was raised again later in the meeting so he would speak then.</p> <p>AC (CEO) confirmed that there were in fact six Area Managers in post and a seventh was currently being recruited. Further he explained that the intention, in future, was to raise this number but this will be finance dependent. He also reiterated that the work of the Area Manager was to work with the Local Organising Committees and Chair to support Table Tennis in their area. They were working their way around their areas, getting to know the members but patience was requested while this work was getting off the ground.</p> <p>The with minor change to Item 6, the Minutes of the last meeting of 22 April 2023 were agreed by show of hands.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>TC (Sussex) raised three matters from the minutes: one of the Board Directors and their business interests and accounts on Companies House; Honorariums being replaced by a payment to attend Board meetings which might have unexpected consequences of making the Directors all Workers; and the GBTT accounts, which although were on Companies House they were in a different company name. He felt that with £1.3M in funding, it was surprising that</p>	with minor amendment.		
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	<p>the Performance Team have been requesting use of some clubs free of charge, which showed a lack of understanding about how clubs were run.</p> <p>JB (Derbyshire) had never been asked by the Performance Team to use the club for free.</p> <p>AC (CEO) reminded the meeting about the status of the GBTT investment was ‘Progression’ funding and is designed to support system development across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p> <p>There was no secret about the accounts and there had been an agreed name change of the GBTT mid-way through the finance year. Every single penny is accounted for by UK Sport and AC was happy to share how the money is spent at the next Council Meeting in October. Gavin Evans (TTE Head of Performance Development) would attend that meeting and give a presentation of the England pathway and the GB programme, which will include a summary of how UK Sport’s monies are invested into the GB system.</p> <p>AC stated that NC was not the place to make accusations against any individual. If TC has any evidence about a Director he inferences, that should be put in writing to the Chair so that a proper investigation could take place.</p> <p>EW (Chair – Warwickshire) asked if a short, written statement on the constitutional status of the GBTT could be provided to the Council to explain the governance relationship. AC agreed. (ACTION: AC)</p>	<p>Action: To provide a written statement on the constitution of GBTT</p>	<p>AC</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Farewell to Sandra Deaton</p> <p>SD (TTE Chair) was warmly thanked for the years she had provided support to the organisation, not only as Chair, but for all the work before that. She was in the unique position of being the only person to have been voted into the position in three different ways: as an Elected Chair,</p>			

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	<p>through a voting process of the members; as an Elected Chair unopposed and as an Appointed Chair through an open and transparent recruitment process.</p> <p>SD thanked everyone for all the support she had received over the years and was particularly excited that the chance to host the World Team Table Tennis Championships 2026 might be possible after all the work to bring it back to London.</p>			
4	<p>Welcome to the new TTE Chair</p> <p>The process to recruit the new Chair was still taking place so an update was given by AC (TTE CEO).</p> <p>The Nominations Committee were due to meet on Tuesday morning, 6 June, to discuss the candidates and it was intended that a proposal for the preferred candidate would be put forward to the Board later that day.</p> <p>Discussion ensued about the merits of the system and proposals for a natural candidate to have been given the role of Chair that would please the Membership. Several members, which included KT (Cheshire), indicated that the discussion should not be taking place and it was outside the remit of the Council to discuss.</p> <p>The matter continued to be discussed and SL (Somerset) queried whether the two remaining candidates had a TT background as he understood from the Articles that if the CEO or Chair were non TT people, then the other needed to be.</p> <p>Conscious that her name had been referenced in the discussion, SV (Elected Director) confirmed that she was a candidate. She also confirmed this would be her last NC meeting as her term as a Board member comes to an end this month.</p>			

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	<p>NH (Oxfordshire) reminded all the members that the role of the Chair had been discussed at Council in January 2023 and all the feedback from members had been incorporated into the job role before it was advertised.</p> <p>SD (TTE Chair) was amazed that this was being discussed at this level in an open forum when the process was still ongoing and very confidential.</p> <p>AC (TTE CEO) was very disappointed that this discussion was allowed to take place in the first instance, and despite objections from several members, was allowed to continue. He was also extremely disappointed that some NC members had shared the name of a candidate despite the process being managed in a professional, respectful and sensitive way. The confidential process was still ongoing and should remain that way. He explained that there was no article that made reference to the Chair and CEO and their involvement in Table Tennis, as raised by SL (Somerset).</p>			
5	<p>Arrangements for the AGM</p> <p>JKB (TTE Head of Governance and Operations) reminded that the AGM would be taking place on Saturday 8 July at Cranfield University, as the previous year. The Annual Review meeting would start at 10.30 am until 12.30 pm and the AGM would commence at 1.30 pm, following lunch. Members were asked to raise any questions on the day; there will be no opportunity for written questions / answers beforehand.</p> <p>TC queried the resolution that was rejected by the Board and why this had happened as the issue of the API affects 40% of the membership. JKB explained that this resolution was operational and legal advice sought felt that this was not a suitable resolution to be presented to the membership. JKB has spoken to the person who put forward the resolution and he was happy with the outcome. In addition, two additional dates for members to raise these kinds of questions were being set up throughout the year and details would be provided to the membership with the AGM information.</p>			

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	<p>AC (TTE CEO) further explained that the resolution put forward was also a matter that was currently subject to possible litigation and therefore not appropriate to be discussed at the AGM.</p>			
6	<p>Competitions Review</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) was invited to attend the first meeting of the Competitions Advisory Committee. The meeting concentrated on the other tier levels of committees for much of the meeting, so the only item of the National Council Report that was discussed in detail was the cadet and junior competition programme, as this had been raised by the Talent & Performance Committee as an important area to focus on. At the meeting it was agreed to consider the benefit and feasibility to extend the 4* events to overseas players as was suggested by the National Council Report. This will be considered by the Talent & Performance Committee but is ultimately the decision of the Head of Performance Development.</p> <p>It was hoped that the further areas raised by the Report would be discussed at future meetings of the Competitions Advisory Committee.</p> <p>RV (Elected Director and Chair of Competition Committee) updated the Council on the first meeting of the Competitions Advisory Committee which also discussed the National Championships and a trial for getting a foreign county over to give the top juniors and cadets a chance to play against other high-level players.</p> <p>The Competition Review was approved at the meeting and RV anticipated reviewing this regularly to ensure all competitions were fit for purpose moving forward. It was hoped that the Seniors would be reviewed at the next meeting followed by the VETs.</p> <p>DP (Elected Director and Chair of T&P Committee) was very pleased where the competition programme was going and was looking forward to there being 4, 5 or 6 tournaments whereby the juniors and cadets might have an opportunity to play against other good players, including</p>			

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	<p>possibly those from other countries. The performance team and GE were very good and doing a great job. It was important that these opportunities should happen quickly.</p> <p>JB (Derbyshire) made the point that the WTT selection has changed from using national ranking and European rankings to be that only juniors who were part of the performance training are now allowed to pay in WTT events. This seems to be taking away from the national ranking whereby a ranked 1 player might not be part of a WTT event. DP explained that the next meeting of the T&P Committee was in two weeks and this issue would be discussed then. DP had full confidence in the team and the reasons behind this change.</p>			
7	<p>Strategy Implementation Plan 2023/24</p> <p>The Plan had now been published on the website.</p> <p>TC (Sussex) was very much in favour of the Table Tennis United strategy and found it encouraging. He also appreciated receiving the regular CEO Updates.</p>			
8	<p>Proposed new standing order on reappointment of NC Committees</p> <p>Following the discussion at the last meeting about the National Council Committees and their terms of reference, EW (Chair – Warwickshire) had provided the wording for new Standing Order to suggest that all appointments of Sub Committees of the National Council should come to an end at the end of the AGM and be re-appointed at that time. At that time a committee could shut down or continue, terms of reference could be amended or new members could be agreed. It was suggested that this happens at the October meeting each year.</p> <p>NH (Oxfordshire) felt that part of this process should be made clear that the structure of the set up was such that any National Councillor who wished to be a member of a committee</p>			

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	<p>could do so. In addition, outside expertise could also be brought onto the Committee. The principles for this should be included in the process.</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) reminded the Council of the set up of the Disability Committee, Chaired by Karen Tonge OBE, that has helped to bring disability back into the forefront for the organisation. The way this has happened is via agreement at National Council for any members of the Committee.</p> <p>TC (Sussex) agreed that Select Committees had been successful in providing information in more detail than could be gained at National Council. Some of these will be project based and once the project has finished the Committee closes down. Perennial Committees should be reviewed yearly for their usefulness and to see if others want to join.</p> <p>The Standing Order as it stood was agreed by the National Council and additional wording was agreed to be included. Following discussion, the Standing Order was amended and the wording, suggested was agreed. EW would provide the full wording of the Standing Order to SW to include in the minutes.</p> <p>This was approved by Council.</p> <p>(Subsequent to the meeting, EW provided the draft new wording of the Standing Order, below:</p> <p><i>19.1 Council may appoint such committees as it thinks fit and determine their terms of reference, chair and membership. At its first meeting after the AGM each year, Council shall decide whether reappoint its existing committees for the coming year and, if it does so decide, whether to make any changes to their terms of reference, chair or membership.</i></p> <p><i>19.2 Committees shall be open to all national councillors. If the number wishing to serve on a committee is more than Council thinks practical, the selection shall be made by a ballot of</i></p>	<p>Action: Members to provide their thoughts on the new wording of the Standing Order</p>	<p>National Councillors</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
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	<p><i>Council. A committee may, with the agreement of Council, also appoint persons who are not national councillors.)</i></p> <p>Councillors were asked to let EW have their thoughts on the wording above.</p>			
9	<p>Reports</p> <p>a. TTE Chair</p> <p>There was no Chair Report.</p> <p>b. CEO Report (including Management Report to the Board, CEO Updates)</p> <p>AC (TTE CEO) updated the council that the closing date for the Appointed Director was Sunday 4 June and interviews would be held w/c 12 June. The Nominations Committee would be reviewing the applications over the next week. This was running in parallel with the Elected Director process.</p> <p>Work on the World Team Table Tennis Championships 2026 bid was ongoing and a successful trip to the Durban World Championships by AC, SD and Richard Scruton (RS) had taken place. AC and SD had met with the ITTF Group CEO and Finance Director together with a separate meeting with the President, Petra Sorling. AC, SD and RS had spoken with many of the other Associations to garner support. Four other nations had expressed an interest in hosting the Championships in 2026.</p> <p>Funding documents had been reviewed by UK Sport at its case conference and the final set of documents would be submitted by 12 June, ahead of their Major Events Panel meeting later in the month. The final bid documents to the ITTF (the Bid Book) needed to be submitted by 28 June and AC would be attending the ITTF Summit and AGM at the end of August to bid in person for the Championships when a vote by the members will take place.</p>			

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	<p>An independent ticketing report and AC thanked everyone who responded.</p> <p>Discussions were also taking place with the London Mayor's office, the Greater London Authority, for additional support for the Championships, and funding documents would be submitted to them by Wednesday 7 June.</p> <p>A technical recce of Wembley Arena and Stadium was taking place on Friday 9 June with AC and Richard Scruton. If the bid is passed through the second phase, an ITTF Inspection would take place during July.</p> <p>AC (TTE CEO) thanked Diane Webb for agreeing to help with considerations for the Centenary Celebrations. He also paid tribute to the support given by SD who has clear and obvious respect from the international table tennis family.</p> <p>In addition, further discussions were taking place with Manchester and Birmingham to host other international events as part of a wider major event strategy. AC and RS were meeting with Manchester City Council at the Velodrome on Monday 5 June to discuss a potential WTT Feeder event for the end of the year.</p> <p>AC (TTE CEO) was also meeting with TV broadcasters.</p> <p>SL (Somerset) asked what the number of votes for and against were given in the survey. AC confirmed that was not the purpose of the survey – it was more about an appetite to buy tickets; what their price point was; how far they would travel.</p> <p>c. Select Committee on the Constitution</p> <p>The Committee had not met for the last six weeks and there was nothing further to report.</p> <p>d. MAG Report (including report on director elections)</p> <p>There was nothing to report.</p>			
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	<p>e. Other Reports (including Select Committees)</p> <p>There were no other reports.</p>			
	<p>AOB</p> <p>SL (Somerset) asked about an update on progress of the replacement of a ranking system. AC confirmed that a small group had come together 4/5 months ago to decide if the ranking should be changed, and the methodology required if so. He confirmed that TTE had a different ranking system to the ITTF. Some feedback had been received from the players about the way in which the environment of the rankings works and therefore remedial work was necessary to make it fit for purpose. NR had proposed that those changes and the development of the IT system to run the rankings system should be changed last Summer but there were limited resources to do this then. Provision has been made in this year's budget and a developer has been contracted to develop the test environment to work through the testing of all the variables of the system. Once the testing of the platform has been complete it will be run, in parallel, alongside the current ranking system until we are sure it delivers what it should.</p> <p>SL (Somerset) asked about clarification on the consultation of county boundaries. JKB (TTE Head of Governance and Operations) confirmed that TTE were not redefining boundaries. TTE had received a specific request from areas within Somerset and surrounding counties specifically about their area. The timeline is per JKB's email to SL which explains that proposals from other counties needs to be sent to JKB by 12 June. Once the proposals were known there would be further consultation with the surrounding Counties.</p> <p>TC (Sussex) asked a few questions posed to him by Diane Webb (DW). Do you have to be a member of the England squad to be entered in to WTT events. AC confirmed that this was not the case but any player who was entered into an open event must be entered by the national federation.</p>			

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	<p>DW's second question was "Is there an intent to change the rules of English National Events including National Championships to dispense with the three-year rule?" AC confirmed that this was being discussed by the Talent & Performance Committee and the Board currently, particularly in light of applications from athletes who want to represent England.</p> <p>DW's third point was that in the stated England squads there are non-English players and she doesn't see how that works. AC confirmed that TTE do not enter non-English players into open events or European Championships. The misunderstanding is that the player mentioned has been selected for the European Games, which is a GB event not a European Championships. The player been selected to represent Great Britain.</p> <p>NH (Oxfordshire) confirmed that entries for the forthcoming season of the County Championships were now open and the County Championships Conference was taking place in Aldersley on Saturday, 10 June at 2 pm.</p> <p>The British League opened for entries for the 2023/24 season last week. Members were asked to remind their counties that entries were now open. The online entry system was being used and some enhancements had been made to it to make it more streamlined. An excellent video tutorial on the system was available for those who want to use it.</p> <p>SV (Elected Director) reminded the Council that following this meeting the first ever SBL Premier Cup was taking place over Saturday and Sunday at BATTs centre in Harlow. It would also be broadcast on TTE.TV. It should be a great event for anyone wanting to watch.</p> <p>EW (Chair – Warwickshire) thanked all the Councillors for their work, especially to those who would not be standing again.</p> <p>The next National Council Meeting is on 21 October 2023 which will be a hybrid meeting.</p>			
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The meeting closed at 11.30 am

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Action	Owner	Timeline
To provide a written statement on the constitution of GBTT	AC	ASAP
Members to provide their thoughts on the new wording of the Standing Order	National Councillors	ASAP