

04/10/2023

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To all Members of National Council - National Council Chair Election

The Select Committee on the Constitution is made up of:

Alan Ransome – Chairman

Alex Murdoch – Deputy Chairman

Malcolm Allsop

Peter Charters

Neil Le Milliere

Dear Members,

Following the decision of National Council to give the Select Committee authority to act in the interim, whilst there is no elected Chair to National Council, the Select Committee have been active in managing the election issues and report the following:

Stephen Longmoor and Somerset County

1) Following representation from some Councillors, the first point that we wanted to check if there could be a resolution Somerset CTTA and Stephen Longmoor. We have looked into this in some details, due to some of the Somerset Committee being on holiday this has taken a number of weeks. We have had a positive meeting with the Somerset Committee, and they agreed to consider it further and have made proposals to Stephen Longmoor with an attempt to find a way forward. Having received the proposed agreement, Stephen Longmoor had a number of questions around the terms which they required and has requested clarification. As this is taking further time, the Select Committee felt it could not wait any longer to produce the report to Council and, therefore, it has not been possible to reach an agreement between the two parties within the timescales required.

National Councillor Independence

2) One issue which has become apparent, because of the differences between the two parties, is the perceived role of a National Councillor and their level of independence. The view from Somerset was that as they appointed Stephen Longmoor, they were entitled to terminate his appointment prior to the following Table Tennis England AGM.

National Council matters are a matter for National Council to decide and the Councils Standing Orders and TTE Article 13 state that "Between 1st May and 15th June each year the managing committee of each County Association may elect an affiliated member as its National Councillor to represent the County from the next ETTA AGM to the following one, after considering all nominations submitted to them by members of that Association."

There is no authority under this Article or Standing Order for the County then to cancel their nomination. The Select Committee have investigated this with the help of a Select Committee member, Malcolm Allsop, who has informed the committee that this matter was discussed in

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the early days of National Council through the Rules Committee at that time, which was Chaired by Keith Watts with Secretary Tony Wickens. Malcolm was Vice-Chairman Administration and a member of the Rules Committee at that time. The Rules Committee advised Council that a Councillor, once elected, was independent and, therefore, could choose on how he represented the County in terms of any contribution to Council meetings, and how he voted in that capacity and was, therefore, independent from the County.

There are other examples more recently of where statements have been made about the independence of National Councillors and, therefore, this committee's view is that as this has been a longstanding tradition that this should be respected.

In this respect, and as matters stand today, Stephen Longmoor can stand for Chair of National Council, and can attend the October meeting.

National Councillors, however, do have the power to amend the Standing Orders and, therefore, this matter can be discussed at the October meeting. The Select Committee are recommending that the independence remains, but this is subject to any contrary view receiving majority support at the October meeting.

Current Election of NC Chair

3) The Committee's view is that because of the Somerset intervention the current election process is less than satisfactory and should not be resumed. We have discussed this with both Stephen Longmoor and the other candidate, Neil Hurford. Neil Hurford has advised the Committee that in the event of default for Stephen Longmoor that he would not want to be elected Chair of the National Council without a normal, perhaps contested, election. In these circumstances the Select Committee believe that a new election is the appropriate way forward.

To clarify the Council's decision about Stephen Longmoor and Somerset the Select Committee have decided to recommend to Council that a new election should take place in a timely manner following the October meeting. This would take place during the remainder of October and should be completed by the end of November, which would give the new Chair the opportunity to handle all preparation for our January meeting.

The normal procedure would take place whereby there would be a request for nominations with a closing date. There would be a few days for the people nominated to decide whether they wished their name to go forward into the ballot. The nominated members that decide to allow their name to go forward would then be on the voting slip for the Councillor to vote and submit to the Returning Officer by the due date.

Election of NC Chair going forward

4) The problem with the election of Chair this year, has identified a void in the National Council Standing Orders. Standing Order 2.1 states "At its first meeting after the AGM each year Council shall elect (or make arrangements for the appointment of) a Councillor to act as

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Council Chairman until the following AGM.” and the Committee are mindful to follow this Standing Order for the current appointment.

However, with the new normal being that the first NC meeting does not happen on the day of the TTE AGM, Standing Order 2.1 has proved to be unsatisfactory because it has created the position that there is technically no Chair in place until after the first meeting takes place. Recently the Chair in the previous year has continued until the first meeting but strictly speaking this is not in accordance with the Standing Orders 2.1 so that the Chair has no official status. The Chair retires at the end of the AGM and may decline to continue albeit in an unofficial capacity so there is no Chair to organise the first meeting and the situation, which was presumably never intended to be the case, but nevertheless now exists. This matter has been raised with the Select Committee by Charles Sewell of Wiltshire and the Select Committee agree with the Wiltshire Councillor and, therefore, propose that Standing Order 2.1 is amended to say “The election of Chair of National Council will commence as quickly as possible after the close of nominations for the Councillors on the 15th June and that the election will take place during June and July, so that it is concluded as early as possible in July.”

This would mean that the current National Council Chair retires as at the date of the TTE AGM and the new Chair or the same one if they are re-elected would take office after the TTE AGM.

October Meeting arrangements

5) The Select Committee has worked with Table Tennis England staff who carry out the work and produce the agenda for the meeting on 21st October. As there is no Chair the first items on the agenda would be the election of Chair for the meeting.

A member of the Select Committee, Neil le Milliere, is prepared to Chair the meeting but of course this would be subject to any other nomination to carry out this role at Council, and a vote to either accept Neil le Milliere or to elect another NC is required as the final item on the 21st October meeting.

Alan Ransome

Chairman

Select Committee on the Constitution

27th September 2023