

The Catt's Eye View

DACs v County – Request for Information

May 2025

This paper is to address this request for information. In Sussex, we have a couple of cases that fall into the areas under discussion.

Directly Authorised Club – Brighton City

- Started almost 20 years ago in an area of Brighton where there is relative deprivation in the district.
- At the start, the boys attending the club were often delinquent and the times that they attended the club were a break from a lifestyle of trouble and vandalism.
- The club has built up over the years into a community club. It is become a hub from any local people and for many of them offers their “safe place” with lots of friends that they see regularly and play with.
- The club has built up a strong brand and has several sponsors and funders to enable it to provide services to the community.
- The club used to have many teams in the Brighton League. However, in recent years, it has withdrawn all the teams from the league and provides it own internal league for its members.
- Brighton City runs teams in BCL Junior and Senior
- The club is open nearly all the time and provides coaching and training to many different groups of people.
- The club has built up a strong program that has enabled the development of top Para players.
- The club provides many players for the Sussex County Junior Teams and many players look to play in the Sussex Closed Championships.
- Members of Brighton City club do not affiliate to TTE until they are likely to participate in BCL or TTE tournaments.
- Members affiliate to Sussex to participate in events and programs run by Sussex.

Brighton League

- Has been drastically diminished and has fewer members than Brighton City club.
- Would welcome the club putting in any teams it wants.

Sussex County

- Many Brighton City juniors are invited to and participate in the county junior development sessions.
- Brighton City provides many juniors for the Sussex representative teams.

For the most part, Brighton City table tennis club is self-sufficient. It provides a wide range of services and programs to its target market. The members pay fees to Sussex and TTE on a transactional basis rather than ongoing membership or engaging at any other time, It may well have more to do with TTE as a possible source of funding.

The Tournament Organiser

Over the years, Rory Scott and more latterly, Brett Holt has run many tournaments, catering for juniors, seniors and veterans.

Rory has run Horsham Spinners for many years.

- Rory has built up a good reputation as a coach with his target market being juniors.
- Rory has developed many players who now play at a very good level.
- Unfortunately, Rory has had problems that have led him to be banned from coaching.

The Catt's Eye View

Brett has runs clubs in the past, among them Crawley Community. Currently, I am not aware that he runs any club.

- Brett is very active in tournament organisation.
- Brett also involves himself in assisting with TTE tournaments and also VETTS events.
- Brett has done coaching at clubs.

Brett has recently submitted around 20 OT1 forms to run various events in the next year.

- Some OT1 forms have been sent to TTE with a signature appearing to be the Secretary of Sussex, but not actually seen by the Secretary.
- All of the tournaments now appear on the TTE calendar.
- Brett has not got venues booked for many of those tournaments.

Sussex County should have signed the OT1 forms before they were sent to TTE.

- Sussex County has its own calendar with a specified Calendar Secretary to try to make sure that there are no serious clashes of events that may be directed at the same market audience.
- The Sussex County Development Secretary wants to run county junior development sessions. The Development Secretary has been waiting for the venues to open their calendars for next season before booking the training sessions. But many of the dates clash with the events that Brett has already put into the TTE calendar.
- Because of the current relationship between Brett and the County, Brett does not care to check whether his events clash with the proposed dates of the junior development.
- Since Counties are unlikely to be running their own events, it must be a hangover from history that counties need to give authority for events to be held.
- This may be within the current rules, but they are an anachronism these days.

TTE Calendar

- The Competition & Events department of TTE is happy to have the bookings in the calendar as it makes the calendar look busy.
- However, the competition calendar in England is no longer competently run by TTE as there are the VETTS and other Independent Organisers that run their events outside the auspices of TTE. These have sprung up due to (often) unworkable rules put in place by TTE.
- These different events have given rise to three different ranking lists being run from the data produced by each event type.
- The calendar should include ALL events, otherwise it is not useful to the membership. It needs to be 100% reliable.

I recently had an issue with Competition and Events team regarding the inclusion of a VETTS event being run by Simon Morgan onto the calendar. They refused to include it, giving rationales that made no sense. I referred it to the people running the Sussex 4* event on the same day. It seems that the Competition & Events team had promised their event "Protected Status" on the calendar. Has anybody else heard of "Protected Status" being offered to prospective tournament organisers?

TTE fees

The membership fees were recently increased. It has been described as a Board decision, but I wonder whether it is a re-run of the playbook of the Senior Leadership Team to announce things on the website, ostensibly the instructions of the Board, that have not been cleared by the Board. The Board then needs to confirm the fait accompli, or it loses face. I wonder how accurate that is?

The Catt's Eye View

Over the years, I have found it frustrating that no thought is given to the level of fees and the perceived value to members.

- Leagues are disaffiliating from counties and TTE
- At least one county has seriously considered disaffiliation, but only stayed because of participation in the County Championships.
- Leagues are autonomous and often question the value that counties provide. Leagues have no input from TTE.
- Like the members of Brighton City, people only join TTE because they want to enter events.
- The fees being charged include services that may not be used.
 - All those leagues using TT365 are paying fees that would include the use of TTLeagues.
 - Local league players get all that they need from their league. They have no need for their county or TTE.
 - What does the insurance actually cover? How much does it actually cost?
 - How many people get coaching as adults?
 - How many people make it onto the development pathways?
 - Are we paying for people to represent us on the national or international stage without knowing how we re being represented?
 - What else are we paying for?
 - Do we get value for our fees?
 - Is there a way that we could move towards modular charging?

National Council

If clubs and leagues are able to provide everything that their members need, why are they not represented on the national communication system? They should be represented on National Council. This plays into my recent suggestions about the National Council being the conduit between TTE and the Membership. The inclusion of clubs and leagues in the National Council would be more representative of how people consume their sport than being represented on a county-by-county basis.

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