

# FINAL Redacted Board Meeting Minutes 13 November 2024



## PRESENT

**Location:** All England Room, Badminton Centre, Bradwell Road, Milton Keynes MK8 9LA

**Meeting:** 9 am – 1 pm

**Board Members:** Nick Donald (ND) Chair, Adrian Christy (AC) CEO, Don Parker (DP) Deputy Chairman, Kwadjo Adjepong (KA), Richard Ayers (RA), Mark Boote (MB), Katharine Curran (KC), Sally Hughes (SH), Ray James (RJ), Jos Kelly (JK), Ritchie Venner (RV), Anna Whowell (AW)

**Additional Attendees:** Sally Lockyer, Incoming CEO (observer), Jackie Bryson, Board Evaluation Consultant (Observer), Sarah Loader, Board Evaluation Consultant (Observer)

**Staff Attendees:**

**Part Attendees:** Joanna Keay-Blyth (JKB), Sam Garey (SG), Keely Armit (KA), Gavin Evans (GE), Emma Sutherland (ES), Andy Wilesmith (AWi)

**Minutes:** Sue Wressell (SW)

**Apologies:** None

Agenda Item	Paper No	Discussion	Decision/ Action	Who	When
1	N/A	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Sally Lockyer, the incoming Chief Executive and Jackie Bryson and Sarah Loader who were observing the meeting as part of the Board Evaluation process.</p> <p>The Chair reminded everyone of the recent, sad passing of Harvey Webb, TTE Honorary Life Member. The Board took a moment to reflect on the work and support from Harvey for table tennis over many years. The Chair and SH were planning to attend Harvey's funeral, once details were known.</p>			

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2		<p><b>Update on actions and decisions made since previous meeting held on 14 August 2024</b></p> <p>It was noted that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 August had been approved on 30 September.</p> <p>The actions, not covered in the agenda, were reviewed and updated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As previously suggested, our current technology doesn't allow for us to collect detailed insight into those attending the Manchester Hub. The proposed focus on Ping to be discussed at this meeting, will address that.</li> <li>A facilitated, half day on risk would not likely be held before the end of the year. This would be followed up in the new year.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action:</b> Set up of facilitated half day on Risk.</p>	AC	Following the Board meeting
3	24.11.1	<p><b>Chief Executive Report</b></p> <p>The Board received the Chief Executive's Report, which included an update on Welfare, People, Safety and Environmental Social Governance, together with updates on Commercial Search, Engagement with the Chinese Embassy, Public Investment and the Major Event Series and the following comments were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The WTT Star Contender event would take place at the Copper Box Arena in London in October 2025.</li> <li>A further review of the budget for the whole major event series had been undertaken and it now included the figures presented to the ITTF and TTIE Board.</li> <li>AC would share the Ping! deck for commercial partners to Board members, noting the commercial confidence. The commercial rights for the Worlds were still unknown. It was recognised that ITTF currently hold these and were unlikely to explain what was available to TTE until nearer the time.</li> <li>Discussion was held on the liaison with the Chinese Embassy and how they might support local Chinese communities and businesses across the country.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action:</b> Ping! commercial deck to be shared with Board</p>	AC	Following meeting

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Embassy was interested in some diplomatic exchange with coaches and players and Gavin Evans was currently drafting a paper to identify the needs of TTE which would be shared with the Embassy later in the year.</li> <li>The Chair had written to the Departments of Culture, Media &amp; Sport and Business, informing them of the support from the Chinese Embassy, and pointing out the use of Ping Pong as a diplomatic tool in the past. He had offered support to both Departments if they felt it might be helpful.</li> <li>The welfare and safety of people section of the report detailed staff being affected by behaviour described as bullying, harassment and intimidation from a few members. RV was happy to support staff but felt that this was a two-way street and he was aware of lots of accusations of where staff had bullied and harassed members during his tenure as a Director. AC confirmed that the organisation's Policy spoke of all, not just staff. TTE needed evidence to investigate any matters of bullying and/or harassment of members.</li> <li>It was recognised that this kind of behaviour was condemned of anyone, not just staff, but of members too and this was inherent in the organisation's Policy.</li> </ul>			
4	24.11.2	<p><b>Finance Report</b></p> <p>1 To receive the Q2 Report and updated H2 forecast to March 2025</p> <p>The Report was received by the Board and the following points were raised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the end of Q2 a £15K surplus was being forecast. There were some changes that might affect this by the end of year, including £18K for the outstanding regional funds we are holding.</li> <li>The organisation has experienced unbudgeted, increased legal fees for the current year to date to protect Table Tennis England and more should be expected but the amount is unknown at the moment.</li> <li>£3-4K had been paid on the rebranding for the British Clubs Leagues. The imagery had been well received but the re-naming of the league would take some time for members to acclimatise to.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Decision:</b></p> <p>The Board approved the Q2 Finance report and the year-end forecast</p>		

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Jack Petchey Foundation were keen to continue to support table tennis, now that Jack Petchey had sadly passed.</li> <li>• The sponsorship from Mark Bates continues into 2025 and AC would introduce Sally Lockyer to Mark. Discussion on the Nationals would need to be held about the setup and costs and these would take place outside of the meeting.</li> <li>• Recovery of membership numbers was discussed. There was an 87% retention rate and a 4% growth, although numbers were down at 88% of those in 2019/20.</li> </ul>			
5	24.11.3	<p><b>Table Tennis United</b></p> <p>The Board received an update from the executive on progress to date of the current years TTU implementation plan. The presentation would also be shown to at the Company Members Meeting, following the Board meeting. The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Implementation Plan was delivering growth.</li> <li>• Ambition, vision and expectation continued to meet financial reality and the organisation continues to live the four Pledges, with a focus on what matters most.</li> <li>• Increase in participation will be through PING! project.</li> <li>• Partnerships were being made with organisations like Wheelpower, Mencap and the Special Olympics who are supporting participation for people with disabilities. This item was due to be discussed at the Development Committee.</li> <li>• Significant focus has been given to the talent pathway.</li> <li>• Quality coach learning, development and coaching practice is vitally important and more coaches were needed in order to support players across the pathway, including coaches at the ETC.</li> <li>• Some players are living full time in Sheffield so they can attend the Elite Training Centre. Para Table Tennis players were training with the able bodied in one Centre rather than as two parts.</li> <li>• The infrastructure of support for players, including sports scientists, psychologists, and nutritionists had now been set up.</li> </ul>			

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gender parity had been written into the agreement with the Performance Development Centres to bring on the female pathway.</li><li>• Some of our talent group will go to China for three weeks in December.</li><li>• Players from other countries were requesting to come over to England and spar and practice with the athletes because of the increased level of athletes reaching the latter stages of WTT events.</li><li>• GE felt there was a huge opportunity for mixed doubles.</li><li>• Some younger players don't have the financial means to take a place on the Pathway and some thought was being given as to how this could be mitigated, including the potential of investing in property to support players.</li><li>• Anyone who meets the standard can train at the ETC. This included those at university, who have the ambition and a high enough standard, would be able to train as often as they were able to at the Centre. Reaching the pathway and performance standard though is the gateway to the ETC</li><li>• There had been good growth of the contactable database and engagement had been high.</li><li>• We were starting to generate small levels of monetisation on Meta and YouTube.</li><li>• Connor Whitehead and Jack Ramful were noted for their excellent work.</li><li>• Five new chaperones had been appointed to support the under 18s in the performance programme and they would now be going through an induction programme before they start helping the performance team.</li><li>• The safeguarding training plan for 2025 was being developed.</li><li>• A lot of work had been undertaken on developing TTLeagues. Thanks were given to Neil Hurford for his work to support League Managers across the infrastructure.</li><li>• The Chair recognised the huge amount of work undertaken in the past six months.</li></ul> <p>The board noted the progress made on the implementation of TTU</p>			
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6		<p><b>Table Tennis United – Forward Planning</b></p> <p>The Board received a presentation from AC which provided his thoughts on how further, and greater, success of <i>Table Tennis United</i> could be achieved in the months and years to come: A copy of the presentation would be provided with the Minutes.</p> <p>The following points were noted as AC described sharpening our focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All development team activity to be focused on growth – reaching mass participation, table tennis without barriers. All Sport England funding to be repurposed towards our obligations to public funding - participation, talent and governance</li> <li>• RA presented a concept about an App to support Ping! and increase the database of contactable people.</li> <li>• An unambiguous focus on being world class and winning Olympic medals with a short term focus on securing Podium level funding post LA2028 that would accelerate the medal journey</li> <li>• GB primacy and performance over politics was necessary if we were to be a successful medal winning programme. The performance team needs to focus on the performance programme rather than being caught in the politics of whether an athlete is from England, Scotland, NI or Wales. A fully aligned GB programme was essential.</li> <li>• Invest in coach learning and development – right through our pyramid and the key to our medal ambitions</li> <li>• Deliver a competition calendar that our members want but can live within its means</li> <li>• TTE focus on national competitions; delegate open events</li> <li>• 100% of member income (membership and competition) to be invested into the formal game to support governance, competition and performance</li> <li>• Engagement activity to focus on opportunities that deliver greatest growth potential</li> <li>• Invest into our digital and tech capability – the key to efficiency, audience knowledge and participation growth and commercial opportunity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action:</b> Consideration would be given by the Chair and new CEO to how best to take this discussion forward.</p>		
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to the TTIE (the Business of Major Events) AC encouraged consideration of three separate pillars to drive operations by enabling greater focus and growth on key business areas:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business of Growth</li> <li>Business of Members</li> <li>Business of Performance</li> </ul> </li> <li>Additional funding was required to put into the governance of the organisation, especially around legal support; this to be generated from within TTE own means.</li> <li>A proposed budget was included in the presentation.</li> </ul> <p>The Board noted the Forward Planning presentation and the Chair thanked AC for his work on this.</p> <p>The Chair asked for first thoughts from Directors to be sent to him and Sally Lockyer and consideration would be given as to how best to take them forward and review in greater detail.</p>			
7	24.11.4	<p><b>Developing World Class Performance</b></p> <p>The Board received the paper from GE which explained the Coach Learning and Development Plan and the required investment to support it. GE took the Board through the paper in detail and the following comments were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great coaches were necessary to create great athletes and the current hierarchal system creates a fragmented system by coaches moving into different areas that they have no experience of, even though they are licenced.</li> <li>Consultation had taken place with stakeholders, including coaches which had provided a lot of useful information and highlighted that qualifications did not make better coaches.</li> <li>Coaches wanted an opportunity to come together and learn and develop on a continual basis; to be communicated with by the NGB and to be as skilled as possible in their own coaching environment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Decision:</b></p> <p>The Board approved the Coaching Learning and Development Implementation Plan</p>		

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further feedback highlighted that there were not enough coaches in the club environment to support activity and develop players.</li> <li>• Further to this feedback, three areas of need had been identified; growing number of coaches, particularly in the community and club space; developing coaches within their environment and embracing a culture of continual development.</li> <li>• A Player Development Framework has been developed for players from the age of six through to adult.</li> <li>• Off the back of the Player Development Framework, four main strategies have been developed: creating a culture of learning – developing a coaching philosophy and framework that matches the player development framework; creating a good coaching system – how do we develop people to be able to develop people; quality coaching – coaches become accredited by TTE through a learning journey; and developing a network of expert coaches.</li> <li>• Need to remove barriers to coaching which would help to capacity build coaches for specific areas.</li> <li>• Need to look at coach developers across the country to support learning through a mentor approach.</li> <li>• A digital learning platform is very important to support the coaches, together with a more inclusive and diverse workforce.</li> <li>• A number of delivery sites were due to be set up across the country to help grow the number of coaches.</li> <li>• An allocation of £200k to be ringfenced was being suggested in the budget. It was noted that savings had been made from the post vacated by Aled Howell and that the post of Head of Coach Learning and Development would not likely be in post until the new financial year. Additional spend would include two Coach Developers and opportunities for developing workforce mentors.</li> <li>• Coaching learning and development needed to be considered systemically across the organisation, with support from the Areas and Area Managers.</li> <li>• England Hockey were currently doing this work very well. They are their own awarding body and GE would be keen for TTE to consider this too. Exercise, Movement and Dance (EMD) were also working in a similar way and would be able to assist GE.</li> </ul>			
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was recognised that this was an area where the four home nations could work together.</li> <li>While scoping out the new coaching system, pilots would be put out on a small scale, and the current licence system would continue. This would help to engage and keep coaches within the sport.</li> <li>The Board approved the Implementation Plan with the understanding of the £200K spend to be ringfenced in the forthcoming budget, which would require approval.</li> </ul>			
8	24.11.5	<p><b>Competition Review</b></p> <p>The Board received the update from the Competition Review Task and Finish Group and the recommendations within it. The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RV thanked everyone who had taken part in the Task and Finish Group.</li> </ul> <p>The Board approved the paper and the recommendations within it.</p> <p>The 4* Regulation Amendment paper was received by the Board. This paper put forward amendments that would make it easier for tournament organisers to hold 4* events. It was confirmed that six month’s planning had been added to the requirements, rather than the original three months, due to the standard required of these tournaments and the amount of preparation time required.</p> <p>The Board approved the 4* Regulation Amendments.</p>	<p><b>Decision:</b> The Board approved the recommendations of the Task &amp; Finish Group and the next steps</p> <p><b>Decision:</b> The Board approved the 4* Regulation Amendments</p>		
9	24.11.6	<p><b>Transgender Policy</b></p> <p>The Board received the paper, prepared by Emma Sutherland, which laid out a plan for reviewing the Transgender Policy. A discussion was held and the following points were noted:</p>			

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a lack of research to support production of a Policy. Consideration might be given to look at attaining some research.</li> <li>• Board recognised that ‘fairness’ needed to be considered alongside inclusion when considering a Policy.</li> <li>• It was recognised that other sports and international federations were having difficulty when considering a transgender policy.</li> <li>• In regard to performance TTE would expect to be led by the ITTF and the IOC. It was then up to TTE to decide if those decisions were followed in the domestic landscape. The ITTF position would be useful to assist in moving forward.</li> <li>• It was acknowledged that it was highly unlikely that someone would go through transitioning for a performance reason.</li> </ul> <p>The Board agreed that the discussions would move forward as laid out in the paper.</p>			
10	24.11.7	<p><b>Regulation Approval Process</b></p> <p>The Board received the paper about a review of how Regulations are approved and the process that any amendments should go through in future.</p> <p>AC had proposed an approach to substantive and non-substantive regulation changes within the paper and the step-by-step process for each.</p> <p>The paper was approved and ND would speak with the Tier 1 Committee Chairs to ensure everyone was aware of the process moving forward.</p>	<p><b>Decision:</b> Board approved the Regulation Approval Process</p> <p><b>Action:</b> The Chair to discuss the process with each Committee Chair</p>	ND	Following meeting
11	24.11.8	<p><b>Risk Management</b></p> <p>The Board received the Risk Register. A thorough review of the risks needed to be undertaken and SLT would review them ahead of the next Board meeting.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b></p>		

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		A new risk had been added to the Register about staff morale due to aggressive and demotivating attacks by some members. Consideration had been raised about how to deal with these and what steps could be taken to support staff. These governance issues were causing a lot of additional legal support, as raised earlier in the meeting.	Thorough review by SLT/Committees ahead of next board meeting		
12	24.11.9	<p><b>Integrity Report, including safeguarding and disciplinary matters</b></p> <p><b>Integrity:</b> [REDACTED]</p> <p><b>Safeguarding:</b> [REDACTED]</p>			
13	24.11.10	<p><b>The Voice of Table Tennis</b></p> <p>The Chair spoke to his paper, received by the Board, which set out his thoughts about engagement with members in the future and his proposal to set up a representative forum of the broad table tennis community; set up of an advisory panel that can provide balanced advice to the Board which is separate from the membership forum; a new affiliation model; and a voting system which respects democracy ‘a voice for all’.</p> <p>The Board discussed the paper and agreed that the Chair should move forward with the points in his paper to pull together a small group to take the paper forward.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> Board approved the Chair to take the recommendations in the paper forward</p>		
14	24.11.11	<p><b>AGM 2025</b></p> <p>It was agreed to take this item offline for Board to discuss and decide electronically, due to time constraints.</p>			

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15	AOB	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. JK would discuss with Andy Wilesmith about an alternative partner to GLL that he was aware of.</li> <li>2. KC felt that there were too many principles/objectives listed within board papers. We need to be clearer and prioritise. This was recognised.</li> </ol> <p>The Board thanked AC for all his work as Chief Executive and wished him all the best for his retirement and any future endeavours.</p>			
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The meeting closed at 2.50 pm

Date of the next meeting was confirmed as 12 February, in the Table Tennis Boardroom, Milton Keynes

## Decisions

The Board approved the Q2 Finance report and the year-end forecast

The Board approved the Coaching Learning and Development Plan

The Board approved the recommended actions of the Competition Task & Finish Group  
The Board approved the 4\* Regulation Amendments

Board approved the Regulation Approval Process

The Board approved the recommendations in the Voice of Table tennis paper