

The Catt's Eye View from the Chair

The meeting started with a minute silence in memory of Liz Wilson, who was an international umpire.

Each person present introduced themselves to the room. This was to identify people as there were very few people who knew everybody and perhaps getting people to feel more comfortable standing up to address the room.

Sandra Deaton made a presentation to Rob Sinclair who is retiring as General Secretary after 40 years of service.

The board minutes that were provided in preparation for this meeting were considered to be not fit for purpose and Jonathan Bruck produced a report which gave detailed notes of the board meeting. Since this was only written on Friday and given to the NC on Saturday, there was no discussion of this document. This report was considered to be what the NC requires rather than the meeting minutes. Although, getting both would be preferable

Alan Ransome presented information about Commonwealth table tennis. Table Tennis is now a core sport in the Commonwealth Games, which means that it does not need to apply at each games to be featured. There is also some consideration of British Venues offering to hold future Commonwealth Championships.

Sara Sutcliffe advised that negotiations are under way concerning televising of the English Closed championships.

Sara also talked about the DCMS consultation and the response to Government will result in a new Government strategy prior to Christmas with Sport England beginning its consultation in January. The results of the Comprehensive Spending Review regarding Government cuts to its funded bodies via Government departments and thereby to grass roots sport would be announced on the 25th November. There is a new campaign called "Get your kit on" to encourage greater participation. Also we need to make our case for greater funding. This may involve contacting our MP and the website will contain templates for this purpose. Part of this campaign will also involve submitting pictures to show people in sports kit.

The plan to share facilities with Badminton is still ongoing and table tennis is still part of the plan as a tenant within the new premises.

The operations and financial report was presented by Jonathan and Keith Thomas. Martin Clark asked for the financial information to be made available earlier in order to give NCs time to digest the information and send written questions for Keith to be able to reply at the meetings. It was agreed that this could be made available as early as possible after month end and the time to produce a written report.

The Marketing and Communications report was presented by Gerry Cronin. We need to look at which membership figures are important and useful and how they should be presented in

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future. We need to be able to identify new members and renewing members. Comparisons are also important to show progress. Much of the information will become easier to produce in the future with the new CRM.

The new England kit has now been produced. It is a bespoke kit design and is made of good quality materials.

Emily St John presented the Development report which centred around Loop, children and young people and Priority Zones. Since the development is an important issue, it was agreed that the main discussion for the next meeting will be a development strategy, which would involve the consideration of volunteers, facilities strategy and a review of the Priority Zones.

Simon Mills presented the coaching and performance report. There is a major shake-up in the management of coaching which will involve a new CRM system going live at the beginning of December. Licencing should become more straightforward and there are a couple of seminars being run shortly and there is a newsletter aimed at coaches being produced.

On the performance side, there have been some encouraging performances on the international stage. There was a discussion about team and individual events where the team has qualified and individuals have not.

Tom Purcell presented the Voting Review Group document. It was felt that this was not well phrased and also some of the ideas need to be re-considered by the board. The point was made that the views of the NC would be taken to the board, but the motions taken would not necessarily mean that the board would adopt the motions.

Whilst it was considered to be good democracy to allow all members to vote, there were certain points where it was thought to be preferable to restrict voting to representatives who would have greater knowledge of issues and consequences. After a considerable amount of discussion, three motions were taken on the wordings of the document. Thus the votes went as follows:

Elections of Directors – For 10 Against 21

Directly Affiliated Club to appoint Company Members – For 27 Against 0

Voting at AGM – For 4 Against 21 Abstentions 6

NC Guidance and standings orders were accepted on the proviso that an extra point be included relating to procedure for appeals against decisions of NC.

Les Smith suggested that meetings revert to the earlier start that was the previous custom. The meetings should start around 11am, with some time allotted beforehand for registration. The reports would be the morning agenda. Then there would be a break for lunch. The

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afternoon session would be devoted to the discussion of a particular topic. The meeting should be scheduled to finish around 3.30pm. This was agreed by the meeting.

The main topic for discussion was about Children and Young People and Schools presented by Emily St John and Caroline Howkins. This was a shortened session due to the voting review discussion over-running. Rather than breaking out into groups a general discussion took place.

This is an important subject as this is seen to be where all the players of the future will get their first exposure to table tennis. The general consensus was that we need to embrace modern and new technology to make and maintain contact and provide information in the format that young people will find most popular.

Emily and Caroline would be pleased to receive feedback from their report and also ideas for moving forward. This is likely to move forward quite neatly into the next meeting as the main discussion topic is due to be development – looking at volunteers, facilities and priority zones and how to maximise our development efforts.

The next meeting is scheduled for 30th January 2016. In the meantime, have a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and successful New Year in 2016.

Tony Catt
National Council Chairman