

**Communications Report  
National Council Report  
January 2014**

**General**

The Communications Department, as with the rest of the ETTA, is currently undergoing change and restructure - as well as the geographical move. I am grateful to the three permanent members of staff in Hastings, Paul Cornell, Russell Moore and Adam Collins, for their assistance at this time. While being subject to the changes themselves, they have also assisted with the distribution and dissemination of information internally and externally.

Part of the re-structuring process is the creation of a new department led by a senior manager as Head of Marketing and Communications. We are also currently recruiting a Senior Communications Officer. The former is likely to have a skill set focused on the wider remit of marketing and managerial aspects and the latter will, hopefully, have experience and skills in PR and media. As such, they will strengthen a more streamlined and specialist department structure.

**Report - October to January 2014**

I have highlighted below some of the issues which arose since the last quarter's report.

**Membership Newsletter:** We have continued to use email newsletters from the Chairman as a means of communicating with the membership. The second and third which were mailed to 23,000+ members focused on relocation and restructuring (November 2013) and the progress towards change in the first six months in preparation for the Sport England presentation (December 2013). Andy Seward was keen that we should use this means as an open and transparent communication tool to the membership. A fourth newsletter was planned which would explain the Sport England decision based on whether we had achieved enough to merit a further tranche of the funding which has been withheld. We have also overcome some technical issues relating to the distribution of the newsletter.

**Good news stories:** We have been fortunate that there have been several 'good news' stories relating to our players in the past quarter. This has allowed us to have a 'peg' to hang promotion of the sport. I will not recount all of them here but there has been publicity built around the successes of Tin-Tin Ho (resulting in BBC coverage), Liam Pitchford (significant move up the rankings into top 100) and Sam Walker (World Junior Championships). There has also been promotion of the regular Grand Prix events (locally and nationally), Sainsbury School Games, and a range of successes by our Paralympians at several events. The aforementioned publicity has revolved around elite performances. However, there has also been good exposure to publicity about more specialist or social events/performances. The World Championship of Ping Pong (while some purists might think it outside our remit) nevertheless attracted television and online audiences worldwide over two days of live coverage - and is set to become bigger. We were associated with it by way of promoting special deals for our members and liaising with the organisers, Barry Hearn and Matchroom Sport. They welcomed our involvement.

There has also been the first terrestrial broadcast of Ping, Pong - an inspirational journey of a number of octogenarians en route to the World Championships in Hohhot in which two English players featured.

Media interest often feeds on itself. Raising the profile in one area can sometimes lead to spin-off articles elsewhere such as a recent Telegraph feature on table tennis by columnist Pippa Middleton. The social aspect of Ping! and the advent of a number of table tennis bars have also featured. This also gives us an opportunity to follow up in an area of the media which would not normally be in our scope.

We have also been pleased to report positive news from the Active People Survey which shows that table tennis participation is increasing.

**Website:** The website - in terms of functionality, structure and content - requires a thorough review and a basic decision of whether to revise and build on what we have or whether to start again. There should also be consideration of how the satellite sites such as ETTA press office, British League, Spotlight, National Championships, etc. integrate into the main site. These decisions must be considered alongside budgetary implications and should realistically wait until a new Head of Marketing and Communications is in place. Therefore our improvements and changes in the past three months have been random rather than as part of a long-term cohesive strategy but hopefully they have been beneficial. There have been further reviews and updates to out-of-date pages. A new contact page has been added to the main menu while the entry forms sections now benefits from links to the online entry system where we hope more and more people will start to use the technology. Additional improvements in the pipeline are the photo galleries section, which has been removed as it was two years out-of-date, and there will be a replacement link to the contemporary Flickr section. There will also be a new regional map to reflect the new structure of the regions set by the ETTA.

The website remains a source of information for our members and interested parties. Some of the key news we have reported on the website and the 'hits' figures are available at the end of this report (Annex A).

**Satellite websites:** The ETTA's own website has grown via stand-alone satellite sites rather than an integrated system, e.g. press office, British League, Spotlight, National Championships, etc. We have been looking at ways to connect them, but this is likely to form part of a general review of the website as mentioned above.

**Live stream:** A recent innovation has been the introduction of our own 'live streaming' of the events after it was successfully trialled.

**Common standards:** We have maintained the editorial control policy outlined in the previous report, whereby I check articles for the website/publication in advance. This ensures a uniformity of style. However, it is unlikely to continue once we have recruited new management of the team.

**Entry forms:** We have promoted and assisted with the introduction of a new online tournament entry system.

**Media diary:** The media diaries continue to be distributed on a weekly basis to head office and field staff so they are aware of what has happened and can feed in their own events which require publicity.

**Spotlight:** Spotlight is still a 'work in progress'. We are liaising with the VC Membership to see how (if) it can be improved. In the meantime, its profile on the site has been reduced.

**Table Tennis News:** Thanks to the generosity of a member of the ETTA, we have all the backdated copies of TTN scanned on disc and we are currently uploading them to the website, decade by decade, to make a historic catalogue available to members.

**Photography:** We have formalised the T&Cs and usage of freelance photographers at select ETTA events.

**Local Leagues:** Liaison with local leagues and their press representatives remains on the agenda. Practical implementation of proposals awaits the new appointments.

## **ANNEX A**

### **Website news**

For the quarterly period (October–January) we have covered a number of big stories on the website, these are listed in date order below:

- Paralympic European Championships success (and a resultant world no. 1 ranking for Rob Davies)
- The European Championships featuring our Olympians
- The push for Glasgow 2014 ticket sales
- Tin-Tin Ho at the World Cadet Challenge
- Sam Walker at the European Youth Top 12
- English officials pick up two titles at the National Officiating Awards
- Liam Pitchford's German Open and resulting career-high world ranking
- The Cadet and Junior National Championships and first use of new live stream system
- The announcement of the new Talent Development Centres
- The World Championships of Ping Pong
- Job opportunities available at the ETTA

A breakdown of statistics for the website and press office can be seen below:

### **ETTA Website (period October–present)**

222,925 visits (up from 161,000)

79,295 unique visitors (up from 55,000)

610,160 page views (up from 442,000)

- 180,000 for home page (up from 132,000)
- 38,000 for news (down from 121,000)
- 36,000 for competitions (down from 42,000)
- 56,000 for rankings (up from 41,000)

(these are the top rated pages).

Note also that in three days there were 1,000+ hits on the job opportunities page following promotion of new roles within the ETTA. Ads on site, social media, Sport England, UK Sport, Sport and Recreation Alliance, Global Sports Jobs and local newspapers.

### **ETTA Press Office (period October–present)**

902 visitors (up from 722)

1,065 visits (down from 1,160)

2,401 page views (down from 2,971)