

Video World Team Championship

The meeting started with a video clip of the World Team Competition where the England team achieved the bronze medal position.

Obituaries

We then went on to take a minute silence in respect of the recent deaths of:

Brian Brumwell – ex-England international, influential in Essex for many years

Alan Bennett – Thames Valley league official for many years

Fred Garbet – Thames Valley league official for many years

Mike Barry – Treasurer of Surrey Schools TTA and London South Schools TTA for a total of 25 years.

Neil Houghton – coaching in Derbyshire for many years

Keith Rodgers – ex-Scottish international based in Cleveland.

Chair of TTE

Sandra Deaton's report centred on the success at the World Team Championships. England has gained the opportunity to host the ETTU Youth Top 10 to be staged in Worcester in September 2017. Alan Ransome spoke about the new Commonwealth ranking list.

Sandra said that the new database and email system is enabling more messages to go out direct to the membership rather than information needing to be cascaded.

Board Report

The Board Report covers the discussions that took place on 18th March. Due to the currently lack of clarity around the new Sport England strategy and extra board meeting has been set for 12th May, which is shortly before the new strategy is due to be announced on 17th May.

The paper on development prepared from the January National Council meeting is going to be considered with all the other gathered information in the strategy meeting on 12th May.

At the meeting, the point was made that despite some opinion within National Council, the board gives great consideration of the views expressed at National Council meetings. The report from National Council is a separate agenda item at the board meetings.

Chief Executive Officer

Sara Sutcliffe advised that Sport England has confirmed that the 2016/7 award remained unchanged following the "payment for results" process.

Operations and Financial Report

Jonathan Bruck and Keith Thomas presented the Operations and Financial report. Gerry Cronin has now left and her role is largely being replaced by a new Head of Commercial. A candidate has been identified and is due to start on 9th May 2016. The new talent Development Centre Manager role is due to be taken by Marcus Gustafason who is due to start in June.

There were several questions posed around the finances and a paper was circulated with the answers.

Marketing & Communication Report

Sara Sutcliffe also presented the head of Marketing & Communication report. The recent National Championships and the television coverage of that event were considered to be a success. It seems that ITV4 was satisfied with the 120,000 viewing figures.

It is considered that profile of table tennis was getting higher with increased television and radio appearances by Paul Drinkall. There was also a documentary about table tennis promoting health in older people.

The database is being built to ensure more accurate marketing and information to the membership and potential members.

Pop Video

We watched a video produced by Zack Abel (Zac Zolesnic, former junior international.)

<http://www.promonews.tv/videos/2016/04/20/zak-abel-everybody-needs-love-i-owe-youth>

This represents the sort of use of social media that is likely to promote table tennis as a "cool" sport.

Development Report

Emily St John presented the Head of Development report. The Loop and Priority Zones projects are showing significant progress. A background report was provided to show the criteria used for the selection of Priority Zones. Figures were also provided to show the number of clubs in the leagues around the country.

Performance Report

Simon Mills produced and presented the performance report. Obviously the recent success at the Word Team Championships was good to be able to report. The main points made were that the preparation and team attitudes have been improved to enable our players to compete at the highest level. This has been achieved despite the lack of money made available for performance.

The progress of the Talent Development Centres was discussed. Issues were raised about the geography involved in so few centres being available and it was thought that some talented players would be lost if they could not get to the centres.

Workforce Report

Greg Yarnall presented the Head of Workforce report. The new coaching database is now up and running. A lot of work needs to be done to ensure that courses are provided to fill the gaps of some of the coaching licences. The coaching courses are being revised. There are various levels of coach qualification and a review of which courses apply to which level is being undertaken.

There is also information being gathered about volunteers. Where they come from, how long they are going to be operative (parents of juniors only work during their children's interest lasts) and how they can be encouraged to continue.

Video – National Championships

A video was shown from the recent National Championships to start the afternoon session.

Anti-Corruption

Jonathan Bruck presented a paper on Anti-Corruption. Betting on sport has hit the headlines over the past year and it is thought that whilst this is not currently a problem for table tennis in this country, we need to be aware of the potential. Most of the major betting issues emanate from Asia and the largest sport in Asia is table tennis. A set of regulations has been drawn up on Anti-corruption and circulated with the other papers for this meeting.

Affiliation Fees

Jonathan Bruck and Keith then held a session on affiliation fees. Chris Dangerfield left the meeting as he has a conflict of interest in this discussion. The general consensus of the meeting was agreement that fees would need to be raised. There was general approval of the 5-year plan to gradually increase the fees at £2 per year. It was thought that this gradual increase is much more transparent, than trying to increase each year in isolation. It managed people's expectations and also suggested a longer term planning being undertaken.

The £2 in the first year is to cover investment in the membership system, the league manager system and personal accident insurance cover. A comment was made that the league manager system alone makes this good value for members.

It was considered as a pragmatic exercise to put the increase in fees in 2 separate motions.

1. £2 increase to fees this year.
2. The £2 increase to be made on each of the next 5 years. This figure is provisional and could be subject to change budgetary requirements against improvement plans in any of the 5 next years.

There was some negativity that some leagues may not like this and threaten to de-register from TTE. If councillors experience this on a local level, the concerns should be flagged up to TTE for the senior management to address the issues.

Next NC Meeting

The next National Council meeting is to be held on the morning of the TTE AGM on 2nd July 2016 in Birmingham. The agenda is likely to only allow time for the delivery of the departmental reports and the election of the Chair of the National Council for the coming year. I would advise that I am willing to stand (more accurately sit!) to continue to be Chair. Anyone else willing to take on the role should contact Jonathan Bruck and Abigail Abbs so that they can be formally nominated.

The meeting ended at 3pm.

Overview

Overall the meeting was quite positive. It was nice that there was so much good news – World Team Performance, National Championships appearing on TV, documentary about table tennis helping in old age, the new communication capability from the CRM, the new coaching portal, new members of staff in key roles.

However, there were not many questions for the various presenters of reports. This is our quarterly opportunity to ask questions. If questions are not asked, then it is difficult to complain about decisions being made.

The board meets for an hour before each NC meeting to try to pre-empt difficult questions and work out plans for answers to be given. I would suggest that in future, the NCs have a similar informal meeting for 15-30 minutes to prepare ourselves before the meeting. This should ensure a better quality of meeting in the future.

Tony Catt
Chair, National Council