

National Council

Contents

Contents

PRESENT:	2
COUNCILLORS	2
DEPUTY NATIONAL COUNCILLORS	2
STAFF	2
REGIONAL CHAIRS	2
INVITED	2
APOLOGIES	2
1. PRE- MEETING	3
2. INTRODUCTION FROM CHAIR	6
3. MINUTES SILENCE	6
4. DECLARATIONS OF BUSINESS INTEREST	6
5. MATTERS ARISING	6
6 REVIEW OF REPORTS	6
7. HANDOVER TO IRP AND BREAK-OUT SESSIONS	8
8 FEEDBACK FOLLOWING BREAK-OUT SESSIONS	9
COMMUNICATIONS	9
GOVERNANCE	10
STAKEHOLDERS AND STRUCTURE	11
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	11
9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS	12
DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT MEETING	12

Minutes of the National Council Meeting held at Jurys Inn, Midsummer Boulevard, Milton Keynes MK9 2HP, on Saturday 13th January 2018, commencing at 10:00am.

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS: DL Hockney (Avon), BR Freer (Cambridgeshire), Mrs KM Tonge MBE (Cheshire, Regional Chair North West and BPTT), AE Ransome OBE (Cleveland), A Thompson (Durham), P Ashleigh (Essex), DB Turner (Hampshire, Regional Chair South), H Jutle (Herefordshire), DJ Edwards (Hertfordshire), N Le Milliere (Kent), G Rushton (Lancashire), Mrs S Pickering (Leicestershire and Regional Chair East Midlands), M Close (Middlesex), R Barr (Northamptonshire), G Pearson (Northumberland), M Allsop (Nottinghamshire), N Hurford (Oxfordshire), C Dangerfield (Shropshire), R Loxley (South Yorkshire), B Davison (Suffolk, Eastern Regional Chair), A Catt (Sussex), E J Williams (Warwickshire), MG Clark (Worcestershire),

DEPUTY NATIONAL COUNCILLORS: B Whitehead (Buckinghamshire), R Jackson (Cheshire), J Cowell (Derbyshire), P Hadley (Dorset), A Aston (Herefordshire), J Skinner (Sussex)

STAFF: J Bruck (Head of Operations),

REGIONAL CHAIRS: DB Turner (Hampshire NC and Regional Chair South), K Mudge (South East), Mrs KM Tonge MBE (Cheshire NC, Regional Chair North West and BPTT), Mrs S Pickering (Leicestershire and Regional Chair East Midlands), B Davison (Regional Chair East),

INVITED: Mrs S Deaton (Chairman), Ms S Hughes (Deputy Chairman), K Thomas (Treasurer), S Griew (Director), T Purcell (Director) J Johns (VETTS), G Wood (British League), M Quartermaine (Directors), S Parsley (IRP member), M Mazzucco (IRP, Chair), J Hall (IRP member), K George MBE (IRP Member)

APOLOGIES: Mrs S Sutcliffe (Chief Executive), J Arnold (ESTTA), A Murdoch (Bedfordshire), M Mitcham (Berkshire), S Hayes (Buckinghamshire), Mrs DM Jermyn (Cornwall), LA Chatwin (Derbyshire), L Smith (Gloucester), J Kirby (Gloucester), T Vincent (Norfolk), Miss M Fraser (Surrey), CN Sewell (Wiltshire), RB Hudson (Yorkshire)

1. PRE- MEETING

1.1 Tony Catt (AC) welcomed the NCs to the meeting.

1.2 Gary Wood asked to join the meeting, which was accepted by all present.

1.3 Introduction by AC regarding the review process and recruitment of IRP. Discussed where NC fits in with structure of TTE as a whole, but should be independent of TTE.

1.4 No administrative support from TTE for NC meeting. So, AC will be producing minutes from the recording being taken. Minutes should be out quite quickly.

1.2 There had been some discussion about the date of the April meeting, but it was to be left on 21st April as whilst that date was not the best date, people would have made their arrangements now and it may cause more problems to change the date. April meeting, we will set dates for the meetings for the next year.

1.3 Alan Ransome (AER) reminded us that we only had an hour before the AGM last year for our meeting. He feels that we should have at least 3 hours or preferably longer, a sensible time. Say 10am to 1pm. This may involve the meeting being on a different day to the AGM or conference.

1.4 Chris Dangerfield (CD) likes the idea of the pre-meeting, but it is poorly implemented as so few people attend and come in throughout the meeting. He has things he wants to say to the whole council rather than just part of it. He feels that the whole meeting should start at 10am on a formal basis, or get rid of the pre-meeting. It should be formalised into the main agenda. Important council business should be to full council, people will complain that decisions have been made without them.

1.5 CD was concerned that his suggestion regarding the agenda was taken out of context. He had meant that he felt that questions about the contents of reports should be put in advance of meetings with full answers given. he had not wanted to be unable to ask further questions at the meeting.

1.6 CD felt that changes had been made by the Chair to the agenda of meetings without the approval of the Council. Certainly, there should still be time to ask questions.

1.7 AC replied that people should move away from relying on raising all their questions at the meetings as there is not enough time to provide quality answers. Questions should be directed to TTE at any time. Then TTE should produce a list of questions raised by NCs and answers given in preparation for the meetings. There is time set aside on the agenda to sweep up on the questions and answers.

1.8 Martin Clark (MC) agrees with AER that perhaps a further day should be set aside after the AGM for an NC meeting. Will not get 3 hours for NC on the day of the AGM.

1.9 MC said that we know the date of AGM (7th July), but we do not know the venue. This is important for people to make travel and accommodation arrangements as necessary. Needs to be decided sooner rather than later.

1.10 MC said that whilst questions have been put in advance, that they will need to be answered in advance as NCs cannot be expected to read and understand them and react if they are simply handed out at the meetings. It would be useful if replies were circulated to all NCs in advance of the meetings.

1.11 Estyn Williams (EW) suggested that we circulate the standing orders. We seem to have moved away from them. we need to review how meetings should be run. should go out with every agenda. Then we can look at changing them, if necessary. AC agreed to send them with the meeting minutes.

1.12 AER stressed the importance of being able to debate issues and ask supplementary questions to clarify answers. Papers came out later than expected which gave less time to send in questions. Answers need to be circulated before meetings to enable further questioning, if necessary.

1.13 Geoff Rushton (GR) asked whether questions and answers had been produced and was advised that papers were available.

1.14 Karen Tonge (KT) suggested that we set up a small review group to review the standing orders. We need to beware of setting the start times any earlier due to people travelling long distances if they have not stayed in the hotel overnight. Not good that decisions made in the pre-meetings before everybody had arrived.

1.15 KT also said that the questions and answers should be circulated as they take a long time to read and absorb.

1.16 CD suggested a solution to enable more discussion between National Councillors. We had discussed an online forum. He has set up a website for National Council that would contain a password protected online forum. This would enable more discussion than can be shoe-horned into a 3-hour meeting every quarter.

1.17 NLM advised that the questions that he asked are not on the list of questions and answers provided.

1.18 AER expressed concerns about the changes brought in 3 or 4 year ago being damaging to TT. He feels that there is a lack of TT knowledge, nobody with international experience on the board. feels that if the review recommends disbanding NC, that would be dangerous as NC is a safeguard for the members.

1.19 NLM stated that Kent has difficulty finding people willing to attend NC meetings.

1.20 EW said that under current guidelines there is nothing stop the NC recommending that when a board member is replaced, then the next prospective member ought to have more TT or even international experience.

- 1.21 EW went to say that if the review recommends anything that needs an article change, it would need 75% majority to be accepted at AGM.
- 1.22 Also EW said that we seemed to have moved away from voting at NC meetings. We should encourage people to put forward motions on which NCs could vote and restore some formality to NC meetings. provided for in standing orders.
- 1.23 David Edwards (DE) said that date of meeting should have been dealt with in the main meeting. If we think that the pre-meeting is valuable, we should formalise it.
- 1.24 DE also said that we do need to know the venue for the AGM/conference to enable people to firm up on their arrangements.
- 1.25 DE said that as we will not have enough time for our NC meeting on the day of the AGM, we should look to have a separate NC meeting, say 2 weeks later.
- 1.26 MC stated that the articles of TTE need to be changed to make changes to NC, but NC should be autonomous. TTE is a company limited by guarantee, which gives members a liability of £10 each of the company goes bust. This liability gives us the right to ask questions and not be tongue-tied.
- 1.27 CD said that he has concerns about the review. It was promised at the EGM and there are worries that it will simply be lip service and not achieve anything. He was concerned that the survey stated on the first page that “the IRP will only make recommendations which are (Governance) Code compliant.” It was supposed to be able to consider the views of everybody, including the 25% that voting against accepting the Governance Code at the AGM. CD is not advocating a strive for a non-code compliant recommendation, but it sets the wrong tone to rule it out before it has been considered. He feels that he has proposals to give to the IRP which solve lots of issues, but remain code compliant. CD wants the NC to make it plain to the IRP that the NC expects the IRP to give a fair, unbiased range of options and the review should be truly independent and free from any influence and any interference.
- 1.28 NLM said that he has concerns about interactions with TTE. The chair and secretary of Kent have not had a single communication from TTE recently.
- 1.29 NLM said that the new regional representative did not really understand the nature of most clubs.
- 1.30 NLM asked that when TTE sends out messages that the recipients are identified. He holds more than one post and needs to understand the context of the message and to whom to reply. He feels that people are more estranged from the Governing Body than they have ever been.
- 1.31 CD asked that we have a show of hands to see whether he could give the chair a mandate to make his points to the IRP. To show whether he was on the right tracks and had general agreement. AC replied that the IRP will be outlining the review and starting the process with NCs for the remainder of the meeting.
- 1.32 AER agrees with CD that the review should be wide ranging. There review should enable the re-opening of dialogue with Sport England to review the changes made 3 or 4 years ago that were

damaging to how TT is run. For example, limiting the term of service on committees to 8 years which loses valuable experience. always found Sport England helpful and willing to listen.

133 EW agrees with AER that we should be able to go back to Sport England to consider the applications of the Governance Code, however, he sees no point in the IRP making non-compliant recommendations as TTE would simply lose its funding as happened last summer.

1.34 CD replied that not considering options, however bad, would put unacceptable limits on the options that could be put forward.

Pre-meeting closed for other guests to be invited into the room.

2. INTRODUCTION FROM CHAIR

2.1 Tony Catt (AC) welcomed everybody to the National Council meeting.

3. MINUTES SILENCE

3.1 A short silence was held for the following people, who had passed away since the last National Council meeting.

Tom Honey – Honorary Vice President, ETTA

Kenny Lindsay – aged 30, played for Halton in SBL Premier last season

Bernard Carter – involved with TTAW and on their board for many years.

3.2 Tony Chatwin is unwell and AER has a card that NCs can sign to send to Tony with best wishes.

4. DECLARATIONS OF BUSINESS INTEREST

4.1 Alan Ransome OBE – TeesSports and Chris Dangerfield – Tabletennis365.

4. INTRODUCTION TO IRP MEMBERS AND REVIEW

4.1 AC first introduced Mark Quartermaine, who is the Senior Independent Director, appointed as Head of Governance Review Group (GRG). Then went onto to introduce the Head of the Independent Review Panel (IRP), Marc Mazzucco (MM), Jonathan Hall JH, IRP Member and Shaun Parsley (SP). IRP Member. the IRP has 3 independent members and 3 people with table tennis history. NC looking for the review to take TT forward and that all matters are open to consideration and nothing should be off the table.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Sandra Deaton (SD) advised that Sara Sutcliffe is away due to family issue.

6 REVIEW OF REPORTS

6.1 Answers to questions already provided, but need to be provided before the meetings in future in order for NCs to be able to read and digest and possibly have further questions on

- the answers given. By receiving the answers before the meeting, this should give the opportunity of more effective discussion of the reports in the future.
- 6.2 Susie Hughes (SH) advised that the senior management and Board would do their best to answer any questions being put today in the time allowed.
- 6.3 MC said that the answers provided on the day of the meeting gives insufficient time for NCs to be able to react.
- 6.4 MC felt that the answers to his questions were unsatisfactory, indeed disgraceful. As members of the association, NCs have the right to ask questions and expect clear, understandable replies. MC found the replies insulting.
- 6.5 Keith Thomas (KT) replied that he stood by the replies given. The main control of the accounts was undertaken by the Board. checked and challenged quarterly by the Board and audited externally annually.
- 6.6 AER reads the documents carefully. Over time he has built a decent knowledge of accounts. Previously he could understand the layout of the accounts and could see how various budgets within the accounts worked. Most recently, he has been unable to do this. Not helpful for the Council to receive information in a format that it cannot understand. Suggested that information is presented in the format that it has been historically.
- 6.7 NLM said that his questions do not appear on the list of questions and answers and he has not yet received an answer from TTE.
- 6.8 Jonathan Bruck (JB) replied that the questions had only come in at 9am the previous day and that was too late, after 10th January for a response to be provided.
- 6.9 AC confirmed that a better timescale is set in the future.
- 6.10 CD the deadline for questions was not formally approved by the Council. He read the agenda on Wednesday and had missed the deadline for submitting questions. If procedural changes are made, they should be approved.
- 6.11 SH reiterated that there is time to ask questions, but we seemed to be spending more time arguing about asking questions than actually asking them.
- 6.12 AER said that previously we have been advised well in advance of the date for propositions and amendments to be put forward for the AGM. Wants to receive a timetable as soon as possible.
- 6.13 SD responded that TTE has only just been able to confirm the date of the AGM to be Saturday 7th July. Now that there is a definite date, the timelines will be published early next week.
- 6.14 AC finished this session and moved on to MM introducing the IRP and the review.

7. HANDOVER TO IRP AND BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

7.1 MM advised that IRP is in information gathering stage rather than offering solutions and had prepared slides to outline the progress of the Review to date.

7.2 Review panel was set up following issues over the summer to undertake a Governance Review. GRG is to check progress of IRP rather than the results and to ensure that the timetable is maintained. Independence of the IRP was reiterated.

7.3 MM went through CV highlights to prove a history of activity on sports reviews.

7.4 JH outlined a history of sports governance as well as a personal history as a volunteer in various sports.

7.5 MM talked about Karl George, who has written various publications on sports governance.

7.6 IRP helped by Phil Ashleigh, Neil Hurford and Shaun Parsley to give assistance on table tennis specific matters. A completely independent panel has been tried in the past, but the results have proved to be at odds with the needs of the sports and thus the need for table tennis expertise.

7.7 Also MM has back up from other personnel within RSM in order to help with dealing with the volume of information.

7.8 MM then went through timeline. the survey went out in December and the closing date is 20th January. about 500 responses have been received so far.

7.9 Already held individual meetings with various people, NCs and other stakeholders and have more planned. can communicate by telephone, email, town hall events.

7.10 Looking to provide a report that will make positive recommendations to develop table tennis in the future.

7.11 Feedback session to the Board has been booked for 2nd March.

7.12 Important that the report produced is an independent report and not the Board's report.

7.13 Nobody in TTE will see the individual responses to the survey.

7.14 MM introduced the breakout sessions, which would be fact finding, brain storming. Looking for people to be positive.

Session run by MM

Communications throughout the organisation, both upwards and downwards

Session run by JH

Stakeholders and structure, including competitions and voting rights

Session run by KG

National Council position within TTE including representation, attendance, how business is organised

7.15 AER was concerned that the Review was supposed to enable changes to be considered at the AGM. Therefore, the report needs to be made available in good time to enable propositions to be put forward to the AGM within the specified timelines.

7.16 MM advised that the first draft report should be available by the end of March. It is important that it is early enough for some change to happen as this gives momentum to the process as a whole.

7.17 Jim Skinner (JS) asked how confident is the IRP that all the membership has received the survey? MM advised that the TTE email system has been used to send out 26,000 surveys. There is also a link on the website that people can use to complete the survey. Otherwise there are a number of different ways of contacting the IRP to be part of the Review.

7.18 JS also asked that whilst looking at the Governance has a SWOT analysis been undertaken? MM confirmed that this will be part of the Review.

7.19 JS also asked whether the organisation has set out a vision in order to benchmark progress? MM replied that although 5 -year plans are useful, he is looking for the review to provide bite-size changes to ensure that change actually happens.

7.20 Karl George (KG) introduced himself as a specialist in corporate governance and has worked in private, voluntary and public sectors looking after Board effectiveness reviews.

7.21 MM then set out the groups for the breakout sessions.

8 FEEDBACK FOLLOWING BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

COMMUNICATIONS

8c.1 HQ and communication downwards – who to communicate with. Produce list to enable people to know who to communicate with for various issues. When a message comes out it should be clearer about what response is required and to whom. We need to understand structure and responsibilities.

8c.2 Need to find out most effective method of communicating league-league, county-county, club-club – knowledge sharing. Ascertain whether this should go up to centre and out or whether it can work directly.

8c.3 Personalisation of messages from website to ensure that the right people are receiving messages that apply to them.

8c.4 Interesting to consider the impact of decisions made by staff and Board.

8c.5 Need to have a publicity strategy from TTE to the wider world.

8c.6 Upward communication – what is interesting? What do people want to know?

8c.7 There are lots of different websites with information - the problem is knowing where to look to find the information that we want.

8c.8 Meeting reports currently all come separately and need to be downloaded. We need to have all the reports produced on a single pdf.

GOVERNANCE

8g.1 KG gave a definition of governance is the system by which companies are directed and controlled.

8g.2 KG advised that there had been 3 key areas were highlighted in each group regarding role of National Council

- sometimes not being understood what its role is
- not agreed upon what that role should be
- a feeling that it does not have any authority and worth

8g.3 NLM questioned the worth of National Council pointing out that no Board members were present to hear this feedback.

8g.4 Kim Mudge (KM) replied that the board had stayed away as they did not want to be seen to be influencing the review.

8g.5 KG advised that there was a general feeling of apathy at the engagement of National Council regarding how National Council engages with and communicates with a wider disparate group of stakeholders.

8g.6 KG advised that there were various concerns regarding representation, effectiveness of running of council, size, composition running of meetings, agenda, communication to and from the Board.

8g.7 The general feeling is that it is not working effectively and needs to a complete overhaul of how National Council works.

8g.8 It is important that National Council has some kind of authority, not necessarily power, but some idea of self-worth. to make sure that it can represent various group and have some credibility.

8g.9 Lots of ideas for solutions put forward, which included communication, induction and training of National Councillors.

8g.10 There was expression of general apathy toward National Council with councillors advising "I am only here because no one else will do it" "If I step down, nobody else will take my place."

8g.11 AER said that National Council has a very important role in monitoring and questioning what the board and senior management are doing and feeding back to the members. Since the Portas Report we have had a lot of senior people without the knowledge of table tennis and the National Council is very important in keeping the association on the right track. If it has not been in place, the sport would be in a much worse position. National Council's authority and position is not appreciated by the senior management. Gratifying to know that our views will be taken into account within the review.

STAKEHOLDERS AND STRUCTURE

8s.1 JH said that probably the clearest message coming out from everybody is that the current structure is not working, or not as well as it should.

8s.2 In terms of what it should look like is proving to be more of a challenge. This is because the picture is so different in various parts of the country regarding the role of regions and counties. Some counties and regions work well, other less well. Therefore, there is no single solution.

8s.3 There is a disconnect between the traditional competitive players, the members and all the people who want to play recreationally or socially. Need to consider how much members want to engage with the social players. We need to try to provide a structure that will deliver for everybody. The Assumption is that that members will want to engage with the social players and this represents a challenge of how this can be achieved.

8s.4 Another issue to come up was board accountability. We need to find a way to ensure that the Board does the best job for the members and National Council.

8s.5 Voting was another issue that came up with the history of our voting system and in future we need to find a way of engaging with members to ensure that in future they will engage in the process and positively exercise their vote. This will need some work to get a workable system.

8s.6 Table tennis is no different from any other sport in that it is incredibly reliant on volunteers. It is harder to get volunteers and the challenge for table tennis is to know where the volunteers are going to come from in the future.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

8q.1 Jan Johns (JJ) founds the sessions very useful and thought-provoking. She found that the different views expressed made her re-assess her own views in a positive way. It is interesting to see how things work in one area of the country and not in another. It is all about the level of engagement achieved.

8q.2 AER expressed concerns that the Portas Review made changes to the sport that he felt were damaging. It lessened the volunteers' executive role on the board and limited participation of members on the board. There is no international TT experience or expertise. The Sport England Governance code brought further damage to the sport. He hopes that the review will enable TTE to take up our issues again with Sport England to review certain aspects of the Governance Code.

8q.3 MM replied that the IRP will put forward what the hope to be the best solutions for as many people as possible, but will probably not be able to please everybody. The recommendations would be code compliant as far as possible, or if not, produce a strong case to take to Sport England.

8q.4 NLM asked whether it would be possible for people who were not comfortable with completing the survey to meet with the IRP. There are several people in Kent who would welcome a meeting.

8q.5 MM replied that various town halls were planned, but if there is enough interest in a particular area, then a member of the IRP would attend, if the numbers were worthwhile. Otherwise people can communicate with the IRP by email, telephone or ask for face-to-face meetings. Any requests for meetings should be directed via Jonathan Bruck to ensure co-ordination.

8q.5 NLM asked what the timeframes are for the report.

8q.6 MM replied that the report is due by the end of March. The IRP envisages doing most of the fact-finding by Mid-February, although the members of IRP will be at the World Team Cup and National Championships at the beginning of March.

There will need to be a point when they stop accepting further input as the whole project is complex with different structures operating in different areas all needing to be taken into consideration. Thus, one solution is unlikely to be suitable for all areas. So, there will have to be several strands of solutions for application to the different areas.

8q.7 There were no further questions.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 CD advised that following the British League meeting yesterday, the British League requires a dedicated press/publicity officer. This would be a voluntary role working closely with the BL committee. The role would not be writing articles, but rather marshalling the administration within the various clubs. It is important that people know that BL matches are taking place in their locality.

The meeting was closed at around 4pm.

Post script – Gary Wood, Administrator of the British League has attended the last couple of meetings and would like to continue to do so as he has found the meetings interesting and useful. I have advised that he will be welcome, but as he is not a National Councillor, I shall have to confirm that there are no objections at the beginning of the meeting.

DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT MEETING

21st April 2018 at the Jurys Inn, Midsummer Boulevard, Milton Keynes MK9 2HP.