

National Council

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Minutes of the National Council Meeting held at Jurys Inn, Midsummer Boulevard, Milton Keynes MK9 2HP, on Saturday 21st October 2017, commencing at 11:00am.

PRESENT:-

COUNCILLORS: DL Hockney (Avon), A Murdoch (Bedfordshire), BR Freer (Cambridgeshire), Mrs KM Tonge MBE (Cheshire, Regional Chair North West and BPTT), AE Ransome OBE (Cleveland), Mrs DM Jermyn (Cornwall), P Ashleigh (Essex), DB Turner (Hampshire, Regional Chair South), DJ Edwards (Hertfordshire), G Rushton (Lancashire), M Close (Middlesex), R Barr (Northamptonshire), G Pearson (Northumberland), N Hurford (Oxfordshire), C Dangerfield (Shropshire), I Hooper (Somerset), R Loxley (South Yorkshire), Miss M Fraser (Surrey), A Catt (Sussex), E J Williams (Warwickshire), CN Sewell (Wiltshire), MG Clark (Worcestershire), RB Hudson (Yorkshire)

DEPUTY NATIONAL COUNCILLORS: R Jackson (Cheshire), P Hadley (Dorset), M Holt (Leicestershire), J Skinner (Sussex)

STAFF: Mrs S Sutcliffe (Chief Executive), J Bruck (Head of Operations), G Yarnall (Head of Workforce), Miss A Gabb (Minute taker)

REGIONAL CHAIRMEN: DB Turner (Hampshire NC and Regional Chair South), K Mudge (South East), Mrs KM Tonge MBE (Cheshire NC, Regional Chair North West and BPTT),

INVITED: Ms S Hughes (Deputy Chairman), K Thomas (Treasurer), TV Purcell (Director), M Smith (Director and BUCS), Mrs KM Tonge MBE (Cheshire, Regional Chair North West and BPTT), J Arnold MBE (ESTTA), J Johns (VETTS)

APOLOGIES: M Mitcham (Berkshire), S Hayes (Buckinghamshire), LA Chatwin (Derbyshire), P Goulding (Devonshire), R Lindner (Dorset), A Thompson (Durham), Mrs EJ Kirby (Gloucestershire Deputy NC), LJ Smith (Gloucestershire), A Aston (Herefordshire Deputy NC), H Jutle (Herefordshire), N Le Milliere (Kent), Mrs S Pickering (Leicestershire and Regional Chair East Midlands), GE Tyler (Lincolnshire), T Vincent (Norfolk), M Allsop (Nottinghamshire), C Bell (Staffordshire), B Davison (Suffolk, Eastern Regional Chair), B Chan (Yorkshire Regional Chairman), C Davison (North East Regional Chairman), B Davidson (Regional Chair East), C Clemett (Rules), Mrs Jill Parker MBE (President), A Nixon (Director), S Griew (Directors), Ms K Skeggs (Director), M Quartermaine (Directors), Ms D Paterson (Directors), D Livingstone (Directors), M Clayton (West Midlands), Mrs S Deaton (Chairman), Mark Taffler (Head of Commercial), S Mills (Head of Talent & Performance)

1. INTRODUCTION FROM CHAIRMAN

- 1.1 Tony Catt (AC) welcomed everybody to the National Council meeting.
- 1.2 Due to uncertainty, AC clarified that the pre-meeting before National Council is intended for National Councillors only.

2. MINUTES SILENCE

- 2.1 A minute's silence was held for the Linda Hales, who had passed away since the last National Council meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF BUSINESS INTEREST

- 3.1 Alan Ransome OBE – TeesSports and Chris Dangerfield – Tabletennis365.

4. MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE IN THE AGENDA, INCLUDING A REVIEW OF THE AGM AND EMG

- 4.1 Alan Ransome OBE (AER) expressed concern about the Annual General Meeting, in particular that the opportunity for the membership to go through the Annual Report in detail, was removed from the agenda. He said that he hopes the Board will re-consider this for next years. AER added that the matters relating to the Standings Orders and the way it was all handled, was also unsatisfactory.
- 4.2 Alex Murdoch (AM) said that his main concern was about the voting procedure, in particular the way the voting slips were collected on the day and the way the Tellers were not allocated a separate room away from the meeting, as they should have been.
- 4.3 Estyn Williams (EJW) referred to how the Company Members cast their voted and said that it isn't clear in the Articles of Association whether it should be made public or kept private. EJW said that he believes the members are entitled to know how their Company Member voted and whether they voted as instructed by the members.
- 4.4 Mike Holt (MH) said that he supports Alex Murdoch as his wife was sat by the Tellers on the day and knew the verdict before the attendees of the meeting, therefore the Tellers should be situated in a separate room for security reasons.
- 4.5 Neil Hurford (NH) referred back to comments about the format of the AGM, and said that it was announced in advance of the AGM that the format would be slightly different. He felt Colin Wilson had done an excellent job in facilitating the meeting. NH added that Colin was not given a fair chance by some of the attendees and they should consider apologising to him for this as he had done a brilliant job. NH said that, as a forward-looking organisation, he would like the new format to be accepted in the future.

5. REPORT BY TABLE TENNIS ENGLAND CHAIRMAN, TO INCLUDE REPORT FROM BOARD:-

- 5.1 Susie Hughes (SH) presented on behalf of Sandra Deaton who was unable to attend due to illness.

- 5.2 AC requested to bring forward the update regarding the GRG (Government Review Group) and the IRP (Independent Review Panel), which is covered later in the agenda.
- 5.3 SH said that the AGM has received mixed reviews overall and explained that it is an item on the next Board meeting.
- 5.4 SH also explained that on medical advice Sandra Deaton will be restricting her attendance to meetings for the rest of the year. SH said that she is currently going through necessary treatment, continues to make very good progress and will make a full recovered. SH added that Sandra is still very involved with Table Tennis England on a daily basis. Everybody wished Sandra a speedy recovery.
- 5.5 SH welcomed questions to the paper.
- AER referred to item 3 on the paper and stated that he was shocked at the membership who do not participate in national matters and how they do not have any interest or knowledge around such matters.
- 5.6 AER also spoke about the Commonwealth Games and mentioned that the event has not been awarded to Birmingham yet however he is concerned to see that para isn't within their bid proposal. AER congratulated British Para Table Tennis for the excellent results achieved in the European Championships and the PR they achieved for the sport. AER said that as Karen Tonge MBE is present at National Council as the Chair of British Para Table Tennis, she should take the praise back to the committee.
- 5.7 SH agreed with AER that the number of members who are unaware of what was going on is shocking, and that during today's afternoon session everybody should look at how governance can be made relevant to more people.
- 5.8 SH proceeded to provide an update on the Government Review Group (GRG) and the Independent Review Panel (IRP).
- 5.9 SH reminded the Councillors that the proposal which would have made Table Tennis England Code compliant, was rejected at AGM and then accepted at EGM. SH said that the reason the proposal was accepted at the EGM was due to the promise from the Board of the open and detailed review of the governance and structure of Table Tennis England. SH stated that this process has begun and is well underway.
- 5.10 SH said that the GRG has been created and they will oversee the processes and procedures of the IRP. The group consists of the Chair of National Council (Tony Catt), the Chair of Table Tennis England (Sandra Deaton), the CEO (Sara Sutcliffe) and the Chair of the Rules Committee's delegate (Estyn Williams). SH explained that the group have met four times during last six weeks and have agreed a timeline for delivery of the project. SH added that they have drafted scope for reference of the review. During the process, SH said that all views were considered and taken into account. They approved and advertised the tender document for the Chair of the IRP and they received seven diverse and highly-quality applicants. Out of seven, three applicants were interviewed. The preferred candidate has

been selected to take on the role of Chair and an announcement will be made shortly. SH added that the GRG Chair is Mark Quartermaine (Senior Independent Director).

SH explained that Sport England has allocated funding for Governance projects, which the group have applied for. SH said that more members will be recruited to join the panel, at least two of which will have a strong table tennis background and others will have involvement with other sports. SH encouraged everybody in the room to push the advert out and help identify individuals who might be beneficial to have on the panel.

SH said after the recruitment process there will be a consultation, evidence gathering and reporting, and the consultation will be open to anybody wanting to contribute. The process began yesterday (20th October) and overall was very positive in the Regional Forum.

- 5.11 Diana Jermyn (DJ) questioned who will make the decision who is on the IRP.
- 5.12 SH explained that the GRG are tasked with this decision.
- 5.13 Chris Dangerfield (CD) asked if a copy of the updated terms of reference could be provided.
- 5.14 Sara Sutcliffe (SS) said that a copy is readily available on the website.
- 5.15 CD said that a coordinated approach should be taken by National Councillors and a collective document should be submitted to the IRP rather than individual approaches.
- 5.16 SH responded by explaining that people may have a different view from outside of a National Council perspective which they may want to submit, however the Councillors are welcome to submit a collective document. SH reiterated that no view will be ruled out.
- 5.17 AC suggested that the IRP are invited to the January National Council meeting and then asked for the room to vote for or against this proposal.
- 5.18 Everybody was in agreement.

6. BOARD REPORT

- 6.1 SH welcomed any comments or questions.
- 6.2 AER addressed the lack of retention of members and questioned Greg Yarnall's long term plans to resolve the issue.
- 6.3 Greg Yarnall (GY) said there are many factors to consider including making sure players stay in contact with the sport as lifelong members. He said, for example, providing more adult coaching within clubs and generally making it more enjoyable for them to stay. GY added said that from a figures perspective it does appear as though members are dropping off at a certain age, however they are usually still playing socially in places such as university.
- 6.4 AC suggested that this should be a topic on the agenda for the next meeting National Council meeting.

6.5 EJW said that he is encouraged by the targets Greg Yarnall have set in order to approve player retention and that he should be congratulated. EJW suggested that the way table tennis is encouraged and organised within universities, should be evaluated and improved.

7. REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE TO INCLUDE DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

7.1 SS apologised for the absence of Simon Mills who was unwell and Mark Taffler who was at the Copper Box in London, shadowing a sport event happening there, in preparation for the World Cup. SS added that Emily St John has departed and has re-joined England Netball and we wish her well in her new position. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) decided not to replace her and Mark Taffler has taken on leadership of 'Mass' and the Competition and Events team will now be under the management of Simon Mills.

7.2 SS welcomed any questions to her report.

7.3 AER pointed out from the CEO's report that there is 30% less lottery funding available. AER said if funding continues to reduce, he is concerned that Table Tennis England will not be able to afford the Senior Leadership Team and volunteers will be relied upon at top level as a result, which will become a problem. AER added that knowledge and experience will be lost and that this issue will need to be considered.

7.4 Mike Smith (MGS) said there are more national volunteers involved in table tennis that there has been in the last 5 years.

7.5 SH added that every person on the Board is a volunteer, including a number of Directors with a diverse set of skills at the highest level. SH also said that this matter can be added to the GRG topics.

8. HEAD OF OPERATIONS APPENDIX 1 17.4.3

8.1 Martin Clark (MGC) - See appendix 1 for his full statement.

8.2 In response to MGC, Keith Thomas (KT) explained that the format of the reports will be a discussion topic at the next Finance Audit Committee meeting, where comments will be taking into consideration.

8.3 AER said that he finds that the expenditure reports are unclear and the set of accounts offer less information than what has been provided in the past. AER asked for the Treasurer to take these comments on board.

8.4 EJW asked if anybody has questions about the accounts please can they be submitted in writing and circulated beforehand, as it is difficult for people to follow when they are not accountants.

9. HEAD OF PERFORMANCE APPENDIX 1 17.4.4

9.1 SS welcomed questions

9.2 AER said season 2016/17 was one of the best ever seasons yet, however since then performance has declined. AER highlighted that we didn't qualify for the latest stages in the

top division European Championships and we only have 2 teams in the European Youth Championships. AER added that he is concerned about the England Youth Squad, as players are being charged £200 towards their selection for the Six Nations. AER said that he understands Simon Mills' policy of players can't go unless they are good enough, however it doesn't appear to be the same as other policies.

- 9.3 SS explained that many sports experience a decline in their performance in the year after the Olympics and that the funding situation doesn't help. The teams are working hard and are committed to maintaining their high standard, without the funding we need to support them.
- 9.4 John Arnold MBE (JA) stated that table tennis is not being included in the School Games going forward and questioned if there is a list of sports to be included and whether there is a reason the format has changed.
- 9.5 SS said that the School Games recently reached its 10th anniversary and had been instructed by Government to undertake a review of the programme. The review resulted in a refresh of the programme and will now include some new non Olympic/Paralympic. SS explained that there isn't a complete list of sports available yet included, however several of the founding sports have either withdrawn voluntarily (e.g. badminton and gymnastics) or been removed to allow for new sports to be introduced to the event.
- 9.6 SS reiterated that players selected for EYS with financial difficulties would be supported either directly or indirectly. AC questioned how many people are on the EYS funding scheme.
- 9.7 SS said there are about 15 people receiving some support currently.

10. HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT APPENDIX 1 17.4.5

- 10.1 There were no comments or questions for this report.

11. HEAD OF COMMERCIAL APPENDIX 1 17.4.6

- 11.1 SS welcomed any comments.
- 11.2 AER congratulated the Board for attracting the Team World Cup to London however has concerns about accepting a gambling company (12Bet) to be the event's sponsor. AM also expressed concern.
- 11.3 AER questioned the source of the data, in the Mass paper, reporting 62% of all participants involved with Ping! were previously inactive.
- 11.4 SS stated that the ITTF initiated the sponsorship from the gambling company, this is the industry most likely to support with serious sponsorship money currently. A comment from the floor pointed out that the National Lottery is also gambling and we are very reliant on that money.

SS added that Ping! cities are required to conduct surveys and monitor their participants which is then fed into a formula to produce the statistics. Sport England is in favour of Ping!

because it is seen as an accessible gateway for inactive people to become active with no barriers.

- 11.5 Jan Johns (JJ) said that the date of the Team World Cup clashes with Vets British league which will result to a lot of members having to miss the event.
- 11.6 SS noted that the date was set by the ITTF and that alternative dates were also considered which clashed with other events. A review of whether it was possible to move Vets British League had also been considered but the non- availability of the venue and hotel made that difficult. SS said that the clash is of course regrettable and it is a shame, however the event will be live streamed online. The TWC is a four days event so hopefully some of the Vets players will attend on the first two days.
- 11.7 AC referred back to sponsorship and questioned whether it would be worth re-approaching the idea of breweries as that would bring in a lot of money.
- 11.8 SS said that at present tobacco and alcohol sponsorship is off-limits for ITTF events however Mark Taffler always looks at every possibility for income.

12. CONFIRMATION OF NATIONAL COUNCIL DATES FOR 2018

- 12.1 The dates for the next meeting was agreed to be 13th January 2018 and 14th April 2018.
- 12.2 NH stated that the National Council meeting before the AGM is not valuable because of the time restrictions and due to the National Conference and AGM.
- 12.3 In response, AC suggested this should be a topic at the next National Council meeting.

13. DISCUSSION GROUP SESSION

- 13.1 See appendix 2 for discussion group notes.
- 13.2 AC stated that he will produce a full consultation document, to present to the IRP, covering topic 1 discussed during this session and that comments are to be submitted directly back to him via email in order to be included.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 14.1 AC proposed that at the next National Council meeting, less time is spent covering each report and that more time is spent discussing the GRG
- 14.2 AER instead requested a longer meeting.
- 14.3 NH said that the priority is GRG, therefore the meeting should start with this discussion and then in the afternoon the reports can be reviewed.
- 14.4 To avoid an extended meeting, CD suggested that National Councillors submit questions regarding the reports, in advanced and then answers can be received during the meeting.
- 14.5 The Councillors were in agreement of CD's suggestion.

14.6 The meeting closed at 15:41pm

DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT MEETING

13th January 2018 at the Jurys Inn, Midsummer Boulevard, Milton Keynes MK9 2HP.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Comments from Martin Clark on Operations Report 17.4.3

I trust that the Board will take my comments in the spirit of constructive criticism on many factors that need to be addressed.

1. The schedule is headed 'Income & Expenditure' whereas in reality the first 3 columns are 'Receipts & Payments', whilst column 4 I presume is either the original annual budget set around April or a current revised annual forecast. At the last National Council, I was advised it was the latter, in which case no comparison with budget is illustrated. Furthermore, column 2 refers to YTD Forecast, but surely that is YTD Budget.

2. The notes make mention of changes in organisation structure making prior year comparisons not meaningful. Such changes are commonplace in many organisations; however, a one-off exercise on an annual basis to journal across the necessary items is surely not difficult. After all it will need to be done for this year's Annual Report. Without such comparative figures comparison between cost centres cannot be made.

3. I understand the rationale of prepaying a proportion of Affiliation fees into the following year albeit that previous auditors have never insisted on such a process. However, taking into account that such proportion of last year's fees of £339,860 would amount to the four month period from April to July, yet the sum of £90,730 appears to be considerably light. Can you please let NC have the calculation as to how the figure was determined? This should have been raised at the AGM. However, there was insufficient time to consider the figures in the afternoon where only a note re prior year adjustment indicated a change in policy.

4. Following on from this change it seems inappropriate to include this amount into the Actual YTD figures as it merely distorts the level of fees currently received.

5. There appear to be many more anomalies within the figures that perhaps need explanations, however, to pick on one, 'Other Income' Actual to date is £5,858 whereas the annual Budget/forecast is only £1,000. This appears odd, what is the reason?

6. Overall, illustrating an Actual YTD Net Surplus in excess of half a million pounds cannot be construed to be informative.

7. On a positive note, it is pleasing to see at long last after years of making the point that income and surplus is finally shown as a plus/positive figure whilst expenditure and deficit as a minus/negative figure.

The Treasurer's comments were that he understood the comments and advised that it was planned to split FORG to create a Finance and audit group. As he had previously offered MGC offered his assistance in providing a finance reporting template that would provide members with more meaningful information and comparable data.

Appendix 2

Discussion 1: What do you want to see in the Independent Review?

Notes not received from this topic.

Discussion 2: Future voting rights and powers (previous National Council paper included to support discussions)

Table 1

- OMOV – open to abuse
- Participation rate
- National Councillors know the issues
- One director elected by IM (discuss)
- Each person only counts once - some members play in more than one league

Table 2

- Clubs get a vote – subject to appropriate classification
- Elected Directors – vote for by all members
 - Don't change
 - Soft opinion – advised
 - Hard opinion – one man, one vote
- National Council vote loss

Table 4

Principle of one member, one vote. The table was divided – 6 for and 2 against

Those in favour: Better communication, ensure people are informed and balanced way

Those against: People insufficiently interested or informed

Who can vote? Good to get juniors and cadets involved

Discussion 3: National Council attendance – National Councillors, Regional Representation or subject specialists from each county based on subject?

Role of Counties, Leagues and Clubs in Governance

Table 1

- More flexible approach
- Deputy National Councillors attend and speak (at the discretion of the meeting)
- Invitation to selected clubs, leagues and other organisations
- Football governance – increasing pressure on Table Tennis England governance issues
- Regional representation – strengthen within National Council (once a year meet as a regional group at National Council)

Table 4

- National Council:
 - Was previously a decision making forum
 - Active roll-out of initiative/best practice
 - Conduit – from/to grass roots
- Currently spend too much time looking backwards/criticising instead of:
 - Looking forwards – each meeting have focused areas for discussion
 - Being positive – ‘agile’ fleet of foot
- Attendees:
 - Min per county
 - Expert for chosen focus area