

# MINUTES OF MAG MEETING - SATURDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2020

## **Present**

Neil Hurford (NH) (Chairman), Kevin Buddell (KB), David Maddison (DM), Sandy Nash (SN), Steve Pratt (SP), Dan Simms (DS), Susie Hughes (SH) (Board Liaison), Simon Griew (SG) (Board Member) (Part of time).

### **1. Chairman's Introduction**

NH welcomed those present. Apologies had been received from Craig Bryant, Jo Green, Dean Nabarro

### **2. TTE Ranking Review**

SG provided a detailed update of the Ranking Review. This would shortly be going out to consultation to get the views of TTE members on the key principles and various options for implementation. Issues raised by MAG had influenced what was in the consultation. A key theme of Simon's presentation was that there was no ideal or perfect system and that whatever system was chosen would involve trade-offs and compromises. Accordingly, it was important to take a holistic view and not just attempt to solve one problem. SG also referred to the need for a lot of manual input of data with the existing system, which was a significant draw-back.

Input from MAG would be welcome.

### **3. Notes and Actions from Previous Meeting**

The Letters of Appointment for MAG Members had still not been issued. NH to chase.

### **4. Meeting with TTE Chairman and Chief Executive**

NH gave an update on his meeting with Sandra Deaton and Sara Sutcliffe in October to discuss how MAG was progressing.

What he took from the discussion was that:

- The project-based approach that MAG has adopted was viewed positively by the Board.
- MAG was free to choose to undertake whatever projects it felt was appropriate. However, in practice, the most useful outcome would be achieved when MAG projects were aligned with Board/TTE objectives as set out in Mission 2025. Realistically, the Board and staff had limited "bandwidth" for responding to projects and taking things forward.
- Where possible, the Board would be looking for MAG to be recommending solutions, rather than just identifying problems.

- It was emphasised that MAG should keep its focus on strategic issues, rather than day-to-day operational issues. Though in practice the distinction between strategic and operational issues was not always clear-cut.
- The need for MAG to build links with the wider community TT community and to actively engage with the community was emphasised.
- To facilitate the process of submitting and agreeing project proposals, the first stage would be a short one-page project brief followed by a project plan outlining methodology, timelines and participants. The project brief and plan for the Volunteers project was identified as providing a suitable template.

In the subsequent discussion, clarification was sought on how queries from TTE Members on operational issues should be handled. TTE's new Zen Desk should be the first point of contact for all queries. Queries would then be routed appropriately for a response.

It was also noted that MAG would produce an Annual Report of its activities. NH felt it would be best if this done via the TTE Annual Review submitted to the AGM.

## 5. Projects Update

- MAG 1 – Ranking:** KB would continue to be the lead for co-ordinating MAG's response to the Ranking Consultation
- MAG 2 – Coaching:** Following the submission of the coaching issues document, the Board had said that two issues fitted with its priorities – increasing women and ethnic minorities in coaching, and reducing the drop-off rate of coaches post-qualification. NH said he would be happy to act as co-ordinator/facilitator of the two projects but hoped all of those with a coaching background on MAG would want to participate. He also thought this would be an excellent opportunity to involve non-MAG members in a MAG project. Various names were mentioned. NH agreed to get the ball-rolling by consulting on the scope of the project with MAG members and then contacting the other coaches to see if they wished to participate.
- MAG 3 – Volunteers:** SP provided an update on progress. He had received a number of responses from MAG members and was now compiling these. Jim Skinner (Sussex) was also contributing to the project
- MAG 4 - Engagement and Network Building:** Building a network of advisors (sub-groups) and engaging with the wider TT community are essential tasks for MAG. But these are challenging tasks, particularly in the early stages of the development of MAG whilst we are still formulating its role and way of working. As a first step, we can involve members of the TT community in our projects. This will build up a network of people with relevant skills who can be invited to be involved in projects as they arise. In terms of wider engagement and raising the profile of MAG, we can use our existing contacts and geographical location ensure that we engage with a wide range of counties, leagues and (major) clubs. Attending county meetings and AGM will be a manageable, achievable objective. And now that we are building our portfolio of projects, we will have a good message to tell which will encourage further engagement. NH will draw up a list of which MAG members can tackle which counties. NH will be happy to support MAG members in attending county meetings – particularly those who do not have existing connections with the county network. In addition, it is standard practice for TTE to offer counties and leagues the chance for a Director or senior member of staff to attend county/league AGMs. Where this offer is taken

up, it might be appropriate for a MAG member to also attend to update the wider membership about MAG activities. NH will contact SS on this point.

- (e) **MAG 5 – Changing Perceptions.** NH provided an update. DN had led a discussion after the recent Board meeting on the need to change the perception of table tennis – particularly with an external, non-TT audience. He'd also outlined how this might be achieved. SH confirmed that the discussion had been well received by the Board. It had been decided to set up an Action Group to prepare a project plan covering short-term, medium-terms and long-term actions.
- (f) **MAG 6 – IT.** NH said this project was on hold whilst TT Leagues and TT Memberships were brought fully up to speed. DS felt it was not necessary to wait for this to happen. There were many areas of the sport that would benefit from more effective use of IT. For example, we had heard earlier in the day that a major issue in ranking was manually entering (and re-entering of) data into the ranking software. This was an obvious area for streamlining. It was agreed to discuss this project in more detail at the next meeting. NH and DS would work up some ideas to initiate the discussion at the next meeting.

## 6. Project Pipeline

- (a) **Giving Clubs a Voice.** NH provided some background. Clubs were seen as key drivers of development within the Sport. It was appropriate to examine the ways in which Clubs could be given a voice within the Sport. A key element of the approach would be asking clubs themselves what they wanted.

DS broadly supported the idea of a project on clubs, but thought it should more directly address the issues of what it was that TTE could do to support clubs.

NH agree to work up an initial project outline for discussion at the next meeting.

- (b) **British League Consultation.** Following the appointment of a new Chair of British League the opportunity was being taken to review the role played by British League in the promotion and development of the Sport.

## 7. Replacement of MAG Members who had stood down

NH confirmed that Brian Keen and Raj Patel had both stood down from MAG. SH reported that the Board had noted that two MAG members had stood down. The Board did not want MAG to become sub-critical in terms of numbers and did not want it to lack areas of expertise. MAG could consider either co-opting additional members or running its own appointment process.

NH would give the matter some thought and report back before the next meeting.

## **8. Any Other Business**

### ***(a) Interaction of the Performance Team with Coaches, Players and Parents***

Various issues were raised about how the Performance Team interacted with players, coaches and parents.

In the subsequent discussion of this issue, it was recognised that this was a difficult area for MAG. MAG should be concerned with strategic issues, not day-to-day operational decisions. Nonetheless, operational problems often had their roots in problems that required a strategic solution.

NH and SH would discuss further and decide how best to raise this issue.

## **9. Dates of Next Meeting**

NH would contact MAG members to identify suitable slots for the next two or three meetings.