

National Council Select Committee

National Council has always been a very important part of the constitutional framework within English Table Tennis for the last 50 years or more. For the majority of that time it has been the ultimate decision making body except for the AGM. Since the Portas report when Sport England wanted to change that decision making authority to the Board there has been a different role for National Council providing communication between the membership and the board as well as carrying out a vital scrutiny role for the association which is a very important part of any democratic organisation.

Sport England within their various documents do recognise the importance of this and recognise it as a “critical friend”. This is a role that National Council is equipped to provide and does provide when circumstances allow.

Within the National Council members there is a wealth of knowledge and experience of the sport. The resource currently is not being used by the sport to provide its maximum effect.

This proposal is designed to address this and provide greater valuable advice to the associations board and management.

This proposal follows a similar line which is conducted by the UK Government within its parliamentary process. The Government has a range of Select Committees which are made up largely of MP's many of whom have a specialist knowledge of the subject under consideration and who are able to study a wide range of aspects of the government's work and to provide reports and recommendations that can be considered by the Cabinet and the Parliament at large. There is no doubt that the Select Committees make an important and valuable contribution to the government process within the United Kingdom. Their proceedings are often televised and when a report is produced by a Select Committee it is taken very seriously by the Government and it receives wide political coverage, by television news and in the press.

The reason why this mechanism may not have been introduced in the past would have been the cost. For a group of National Councillors come together for this series of meetings to discuss a particular topic in depth would have been expensive in terms of travel, rooms and possible overnight stays. Technology has produced a way of being able to do this without the cost. Table Tennis England has been using the Zoom platform for people to be able to meet while staying in their own homes or offices and, therefore, avoiding any significant cost or in fact any cost at all.

Therefore, the National Council Select Committees when formed can meet with this process and, therefore, can contribute to the work to the association at minimal cost.

Any National Councillor can put forward a recommendation to the Chairman and to Council to establish a Select Committee and the National Council Chairman work with the member to establish a Chairman of that Select Committee and a group of national councillors to work with that Committee Chairman. There will be no reason why the Select Committee cannot bring within their group experts from outside

council, although I would recommend that Select Committee should always have a majority of national councillors within their group.

Select Committee would then take whatever time it needs, it could be a month or two, it could be six months, to study and discuss the particular subject and would produce a report. That report would then come to National Council for further consideration and possible amendment. It would be submitted to the Board of Table Tennis England for due consideration.

To begin with there may be only one or two Select Committees which would be set up, with the opportunity to work and produce their report and recommendations. The expectation is that this could work very well and would become a very valuable tool for the Association in due time.

As this would not be in any way a decision making body it would not cross the line of Sport England in terms of its constitutional role but would comply with the current grant conditions as imposed by the Government.

In addition, as National Council are responsible for the running and administration of its own affairs, a decision to proceed with Select Committee's would be entirely that for National Council as there are no financial implications that would require any funding to be approved by the Board.

Alan Ransome
National Councillor for Cleveland

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