

National Council Meeting

2nd July 2016

Pre-Meeting

As an experiment the National Councillors were invited to a preparation meeting just before the actual meeting. This was to mirror the meeting that the TTE board holds in preparation for the questions that may arise in the National Council meeting.

It took a while for the NCs present to understand the benefits of the preparation meeting, but it did enable some preparation and the generation of questions.

As it was generally thought to be a good idea, the meeting will be held again at the November gathering. It was also suggested that NCs could email questions to me that arise when they are reading the documents. This should enable the meetings to have more questions to take the opportunity of holding the TTE office holders to account.

This meeting was a shortened meeting as the TTE AGM was being held in the afternoon. Time was allotted only for the election of the Chair for the coming year, the officers' reports and any other business.

Chair election

I stated that I would be willing to continue as Chair and asked if they were any other nominations. There were no other nominations so I am continuing in post.

Obituaries

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

Roy Hazell – International Umpire, President of Wiltshire for 31 years

John Mytton – President of Evesham League, played in the league for nearly 70 years and Treasurer for 27 years.

Chair of TTE

Sandra Deaton's report was based on a business schedule of meetings and attendance at various events.

Questions were raised about the London Table Tennis entity and that the London Cup was not proceeding as the level of sponsorship was insufficient and the event has been shelved for the time being.

Also some discussion took place regarding the inclusion of team events in the Cadet and Junior National Championships. Sandra advised that all of the tournaments and events are subject to review and any feedback was gratefully received.

Board Report

The Board Report covers the meeting that took place on 12th May to review the latest Government Strategy, review the Mission 2025 project and priorities for the short and medium term.

A question was raised regarding the new competitive table tennis regulations and these reviewed to the inclusion of transgender clauses in the rules.

A question was raised about the future status of National Council within the governance structure of TTE. This is under continued review, but assurances were given regarding the importance of the views of the National Council to the board.

A question was raised about the voting rights issue and this is to be discussed in a meeting scheduled for 12th September and we will receive a report back following that meeting.

Chief Executive Officer

Sara Sutcliffe reported regarding the Sport England strategy Towards an Active Nation summary. There is now a sponsor for the Ping! Project – Datto, a company that specialises in cloud based business recovery solutions.

Sara also confirmed that Great Britain has a team in the Olympics in Rio which will enable Sam Walker to participate and Tom Jarvis to go as travelling reserve. This is in addition to the qualification of Paul Drinkhall and Liam Pitchford playing in the singles event.

Operations and Financial Report

Jonathan Bruck and Keith Thomas presented the Operations and Financial report.

There were several questions posed around the finances and it was felt that more explanation of the figures would make the reports more understandable and also that anomalies should be clarified with notes. This would lead to less questions in the future. This would involve the report being reviewed by a lay person rather than an accountant to make it understandable. I have offered to do this.

A question was raised about service levels for replies to queries for TTE personnel. It seems that there is a written procedure in place. But if people feel that they have not received a response, then they should highlight the problem to Jonathan Bruck.

Commercial Report

Mark Taffler introduced himself and outlined his new role with TTE. His initial focus is to get to know the sport and understand where the key assets are and the opportunities that exist.

There is more communication with regular emails direct to members. Also there are projects such as Ping!, National Table Tennis day and the participation in Rio which will bring the sport into the public eye. These will all help to build the profile of the sport in the media.

It is considered that profile of table tennis was getting higher with increased television and radio coverage.

Development Report

Emily St John presented the Head of Development report. The Loop and Priority Zones projects are showing significant progress. These are all subject to a Plan – Do – Review process and reports are to be produced to show the value of each of these projects.

TTE is currently recruiting for a National Clubs Officer to lead on proactive club support. This will provide expertise in club support and grant programs and will schedule a calendar of engagement opportunities for clubs outside of Priority Zones.

Performance Report

Sara Sutcliffe presented the performance report. This went into some detail regarding the Sport England Year 3 measure and the contractual changes for year 4 have been updated following the additional funding from Sport England

The progress of the Talent Development Centres was discussed and Marcus Gustafson will be completing an update report.

Workforce Report

Greg Yarnall presented the Head of Workforce report. The new coaching licence requirements have been published on the TTE website. These involve a relaxation of the requirements for first aid training and CPD.

Any Other Business

John Arnold produced an attractive display celebrating 50 years of English Schools Table Tennis Association competitions. He asked that if anybody has any articles or momentos from ESTTA events, he would be very grateful to receive them.

Noel Sewell from Wiltshire wanted to raise awareness of drugs in sport. It was agreed that Jonathan Bruck would take this forward.

Noel Sewell also raised an issue regarding the cost of surrounds. It seems that he had previously raised this issue with Rob Sinclair, who advised him that this was a subject of a review. Jonathan Bruck has agreed to take this matter forward.

Overview

It was generally agreed that some of the reports need to have more explanations in order for the presented information to be clear. But the preparatory meetings in the future should enable the generation of questions to make the officers of TTE more accountable.

It was suggested that when there are greater numbers for meetings, such as before the AGM, the meeting should be held in a university style lecture room, which would enable all delegates to have a table for their papers.

The meeting ended at 1pm.

Tony Catt
Chair, National Council

Table Tennis England Annual General Meeting

After lunch, the AGM of TTE took place. This is a rather more formal affair, although it is open to any members of TTE that wish to attend.

There were 3 propositions put to the meeting.

- The proposed increase of affiliation fees 2016/7. This was to increase for seniors from £10 - £12, juniors from £5 - £6 and for associate members to remain free of charge.

Considerable discussion took place and the points of the increase are to pay for an update of TT365 and also the addition of personal accident insurance to the public liability insurance that is already in place.

The motion was measured on a card vote and was carried 91% for and 8% against.

- Special resolution by Table Tennis England Board – change of wording in Articles to replace “Honorary Life Vice-Presidents” by Honorary Past Presidents”

Despite the fairly innocuous nature of this change, it was subject to some discussion. Mainly centred around the understanding the wording and the people affected by this.

The motion was measured by a show of hands and carried almost unanimously.

- Proposition – Table Tennis England adhering to equality statements.

This was raised by Jose Ransome as she wants the same opportunities for female players as for males. This stems from the National Championships being restricted to 32 men and 16 ladies.

There were various discussions around the maintenance of quality in such events. It was pointed out that the previous season had only 19 ladies entering the event.

Anyway, the upshot was the general agreement that female should have similar opportunities to male players, which was proved by an almost unanimous hand vote.

Time was taken at the meeting to go through the annual report. Various amendments were suggested. Again it was thought the clearer explanations of figures for membership and the figures in the accounts should be included to make those parts of the report more understandable.

The meeting concluded with the presentation of awards and honours.

President 2016-9

Jill Parker

Honorary Life Member

Peter Bradley

Michael Close

Vice- President

Colin Dyke

Ken Field

Margot Fraser

Stuart Gibbs

Brenda Hudson

Richard J Hudson

Martin Ireland

Ken Muhr

Derek Sherratt

Keith Ponting President's Memorial Award	Doreen Stannard
Malcolm Scott Award	Chris Dangerfield
Leslie Forrest Memorial Award	Roger Fensom
Ivor Montagu Award	Margaret Welch
AK Vint Staff Award	Chris Brown
Victor Barna Award	Paul Drinkhall
	Liam Pitchford
	Sam Walker
Johnny Leach MBE Most Improved	
England Player of the Year Award	Tin-Tin Ho
Mike Watts Achievement Award	Mollie Patterson
	Israel Awolaja

A special award was made to Alan Ransome celebrating 50 years as a National Councillor and an unbroken attendance record of 200 meetings.

Overview

Whilst the room was quite full, it is disappointing to see how few leagues are represented at the meeting. The counties are represented, mainly by National Councillors. When so few people attend, the democratic representation of any decision taken at the meeting is questionable. This was particularly noticeable at the British League and County Championships AGMS that were very poorly attended. Perhaps the need for these meetings should be reviewed or their format changed or that all the meetings are held on the same day/weekend.

The Portas report has suggested that all members should be able to vote on issues, rather than representatives with proxy votes and block votes. This should be reviewed to move matters to enable votes by post/email on specific issues. This should lead to a more representative view of all (interested) members. (This is my personal view, which is almost definitely at odds with many members of the National Council.)

The Sport England Strategy is guiding table tennis to improve participation and has confirmed the continuation of financial support. The increase in our affiliation fees still does not provide much more money for projects and we really need to try to move towards greater self-sufficiency to mitigate against the effects of reduced support in the future.

The mood within the sport at the moment is positive with greater exposure on television, the performance of the team in the World Team Championships and the qualification of players for the Olympic Games.

Tony Catt
National Councillor, Sussex
Chair of National Council