

STATEMENT BY TT365

Background

We have been supporting grass roots Table Tennis since 2009. We maintain over 300 websites for many members, TT365 has been seen as a progressive step-forward, simplifying administration and improving player experience. A portion of your member's Table Tennis England (TTE) affiliation fee has always been used to support TT365, via licencing agreements, adhoc development or direct support for League Manager.

Reality

We are a business that has running costs like any other; running TT365 requires a 6 figure income each year. As a result of the TTE decision to move membership provision to another provider, our income will take a significant drop next season. We cannot survive on income from advertising alone and we have been unsuccessful in agreeing terms with TTE to provide League Manager (LM) as a benefit of TTE membership. TTE declared their intention to try to replace LM by 1st August this year.

Winding Up

If our bid for survival is unsuccessful we require a minimum period of 10 weeks to wind-up the company. Our staff deserves to be treated with respect and given proper notice. We will need time to handle the hundreds of requests for historical data and support. We have contractual obligations to hosting companies and other IT providers which must be correctly closed down. Some have 60 day minimum notice periods.

Proposal which has evolved in line with feedback from leagues, clubs, counties and players.

3 year League Manager Agreement STC.

We will implement our own individual membership scheme at £7 per senior player, £4 for juniors. Pay once, Play as many leagues as desired. Players subscribe via league or online. Organisations will ensure every player is a paid basic (£7/£4) player member. Associate members (those that do not play competitively) will be free. Maximum annual increase in basic player subscription of 3%. We require a minimum of 15,000 members to make this proposal viable.

Benefits

Tried & tested solution that you know and can rely on.

Zero risk to your organisation or our sport.

Zero training required before 1st August 2019 and no loss of data.

Many new heavily requested features planned in the future.

Continuation & expansion of the National Ranking system.

Email Manager Pro, provided free as part of the agreement.

Use TT365 regardless of TTE affiliation.

Affordability

£7 is a reasonable amount to ask each player to pay, given the amount of additional voluntary work that will be required without TT365. A proposition put forward by several leagues, is going to the TTE AGM this June to reduce affiliation fees by £7. If all leagues that support TT365 support this proposition, it will pass with considerable margin and offset the new TT365 subscription.

It's clear what players get for the £7. £7 is less than the cost of 3 TT balls from several well-known brands.

Facts

TT365 has had a decade of continual development to-date. The commercial cost of developing TT365 over the last decade was over 2 million pounds. This is not a joke. We have spent over 100 thousand pounds on web hosting to-date. There are over 300,000 lines of code that make up TT365. Over 45,000 hours of time invested. Supported over 1000 admin users.

Still think TTE can do it in 4 months?

Risks

Without TT365 will your current league administrators return to a manual system or risk the unknown with an un-tested system from TTE. If (and we stress if) TTE do provide some alternative system, you will have very little time to learn it. TT365 has matured over a decade, no new solution

could support every feature or rule your league currently uses. Significant loss of functionality has to be expected. Expect increased TTE membership fees in the future to pay for new system development and support.

Timings

We request you provide your response to this proposal by the 17th May 2019. On the 20th May 2019 we will announce the future of TT365. On 31st July 2019 our current agreement with TTE expires, if this proposal is unsuccessful TT365 servers will shut-down at 10 am on 1st August 2019. It is suggested that you hold an EGM in order to get member agreement to this proposal, if your AGM is after our deadline.

Summary

TT365 is generally seen as a key strategic resource for our sport and it should be protected. Act now to save TT365. Once it's gone, it's gone.

We ask for your response to this proposal by 7th May 2019, preferably earlier, to help us make the relevant decisions.

Respond by logging into the admin area and completing the simple form for your league.

You must be authorised by your league to complete the form.

Questions and Answers

Q: Please clarify Pay once, Play as many leagues as desired.

A: TT365 will be running its own individual membership system, in essence it will work the same as TTE membership. As a league that uses TT365 you will be required to ensure all your players are members of TT365. Every player will pay once and can then play in as many leagues as they wish. We have decided to go this route to ensure that every player, pays the same, notwithstanding the difference in price between juniors and seniors which was again something we decided to do in reaction to feedback from the community. The idea of players paying multiple times has been scrapped.

Q: How is the commercial development cost of TT365 over £2,000,000?

A: When you commission software from a company, you don't pay the cost of the staff that are developing it, you pay a higher commercial price. TTE are not employing 2 developers to build them some software, they are commissioning a software company, which means that company is also covering other costs and of course making a profit. In truth 2 million pounds is actually a very conservative value for a project that took 10 years to develop.

Q: Do we need to be affiliated to TTE to use TT365?

A: TT365 supports leagues and clubs in countries other than England. Our new proposal is also relevant to Wales for example that also has lots of leagues that use League Manager. As every league will be paying TT365 directly there is no requirement to be affiliated to any NGB. Previously because our income was coming from you, but via TTE, you could only use TT365 if you were affiliated. As of now this is no longer the case, any league from anywhere can use TT365. The League gets to choose which platform they want to use, it's a fair level playing field.

Q: TTE say they will provide a free version of League Manager, so why should we pay for TT365 League Manager?

A: On the surface that is a fair question, until you look closer and realise that it is player affiliation money that is being used to fund the free provision, therefore it's not really free. The proposal by Oldham league reduces the fee paid to TTE by £7, if that passes at this year's AGM, then your players will pay £9 next season to TTE. It is then your choice to subscribe to TT365 League Manager, but as a league you choose to do it because you see the value in the £7, not because you have no choice, which is the position you are in with TTE affiliation. One of the most commonly questions asked is what do we get for our TTE affiliation fees; that is for you to determine, but we can clearly demonstrate what you will get for the £7/£4 TT365 subscription.

Q: What are the features of Email Manager Pro?

A: Email Manager Pro is a tool built directly into TT365 and it provides you with a reliable and GDPR compliant way to communicate with your members.

Features:- Attachment Support, Fast send to all members option, Email Custom Groups, CC & BCC functionality, Sent Emails History, Draft Email Functionality, League Manager & Roles Manager Groups, Detailed Email Statistics, Embed Media Library Items, Configurable Email Signatures, HTML Templates, Create Custom Contacts, Web Browser Integration, Schedule sending, Send 3,000 emails per month completely free. Read more on the TT365 admin area.

Q: Can non-affiliated leagues use TT365?

A: Yes, any league whether you are a traditional league that is not affiliated to any NGB, or a club that runs a more social or development junior league or even a small group of players in a league at work, TT365 will work for you.

Q: Will TT365 really fold in August?

A: Without support of this proposal, Yes. We have done everything we can to try and find an amicable solution with TTE, but despite our best efforts this has proven to be impossible. We have also looked at other sources of revenue but they have proven to be either unsustainable or undesirable for the TT365 community.

Q: What new features are in the pipeline?

A: Too many to list here that's for sure. We have a huge development list the majority of which has been requested. It has been suggested that we should publicise the development items we are considering and allow admins and players to vote for their favourite, this is something we would consider. Here is a taste of some potential future additions.

TT365 App – Online score entry on your phone, social media type features.

Player stats enhancement, we have had loads of requests for features in this area, your players will love the updates.

A member centric view, fixtures & results & news, from all leagues & events in one place. A bit like a Facebook wall.

Knock-out cup competition module, bring the fixtures and results of cup competitions into League Manager.

A range of new innovative competition formats such as all-of-X, singles league, ladder league and more.

New admin tools, such as invoicing via PayPal for league fees, online sign-up for league and competitions.

TT365 regular newsletter, bringing together results, future fixtures, ranking and local news direct to the player's inbox.

Ranking – we plan to roll-out a national ranking website which has lots of features; players will love it.

Handicapping tool, we plan to invest further in our handicapping tool functionality.

New content via partnerships with other TT sources, videos, blogs, coaching tips, course and event listings.

Q: What if the TTE affiliation fee reduction is not voted in, are we still tied to a 3 year agreement?

A: No, but the maths work out in such a way that if every league that signs up, also supports the proposition, it won't fail. We require a certain number of leagues to support this proposition to make it viable, that number is over 50% of the league community, on that basis, as long as you lobby your county to support the majority view of the leagues in your county, the proposal will pass.

If for some unknown reason the proposal did not pass, every league that has committed to this agreement will be faced with a choice:

Pay the TTE fee of £16 or £18, plus the £7/£4 TT365 subscription.

De-affiliate from TTE and only pay the TT365 subscription.

Pay the TTE fee and pull out of this agreement, thus going it alone, with no TT365 League Manager as of 1st August. Those will be your options, however, the chance of this situation occurring is

extremely unlikely.

Q: How are clubs and counties affected by this proposal?

A: As a club that plays in and is affiliated to a league that subscribes to TT365, it's free; we see this as a benefit of league affiliation. If you are a county and all the leagues in your county use TT365, then again it's free. If you are a club that does not qualify, then you will be asked to subscribe on the same basis as a league. If you are a county that does not qualify then those members who are not subscribed via a league must do so directly or via your county.

Q: Why is Email Manager Pro valuable?

A: Not only does EM Pro safeguard your organisation against GDPR risks, it is an extremely powerful tool that improves communication with your members. You can use it to communicate messages to everyone with a few clicks or target very specific groups of players using a variety of different filters, such as age, gender, division, club, status, membership type, role and a whole lot more; and you can combine all these filters to really hone in on a specific group of members. The system is in use by around 70 leagues & clubs; here is what the Bristol League had to say about it.

"I am the Membership Manager for the Bristol & District Table Tennis association. We have over five hundred members making us the largest association in the country. We found that previously trying to communicate by email to all our members was a time consuming task. Since the introduction of the email manager pro, this task has been made simple with one press of a button all our members receive the email." Brian Ellison, Bristol.

Q: Why would the loss of the National Ranking system be catastrophic?

A: Our ranking system is just reaching the point of credibility, a process that has taken 5 years worth of results history to achieve. We are only now just starting to see its true value, which goes way beyond encouraging players to play more. We are the verge of a Cambrian explosion of new grass roots events, like you have never seen before. Until now... unless you were ranked in the top 500 in England, broadly speaking, there was nothing for you outside of local league. Who wants to travel hundreds of miles to an event and get whipped, equally who wants to win match that was not competitive. The ranking system opens the door to players of all ability, so they can compete more locally against players of their own standard. Why should players in division 2 or lower have less opportunity to compete than those in division one and above. It is our opinion that in time our ranking system will be seen as TT365 greatest triumph, as it increases participation, creates revenue generating opportunities and brings true equality to all players.