

# National Council Minutes 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021



## PRESENT

### Zoom

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Meeting ID: 921 8846

### 9:00am

Estyn Williams (Chair – Warwickshire)

**National Councillors:** David L Hockney (Avon), Peter Charters (Berkshire), Alan E Ransome OBE (Cleveland), Karen Tonge MBE (Cheshire), Andrew Millman (Devonshire), Phil Ashleigh (Essex), David Edwards (Hertfordshire), Tim Giles (Isle of Wight) Jim Bolton (Lancashire) Malcolm Allsop (Nottingham), Ivor Jones (Northampton), Chris Dangerfield (Shropshire), Jos Kelly (Somerset), James Kenny (South Yorkshire), Margot Fraser (Surrey), James Skinner (Sussex), Martin Clark (Worcestershire), Richard B Hudson (Yorkshire)

### Deputy National Councillors:

Clive Hollinsbee (Kent), Mike Holt – Deputy (Leicestershire), Eddie Roof Deputy -(Gloucester) Brian Whitehead Deputy - (Buckinghamshire)

### Other:

Mike Smith (British Universities and Colleges Sports (BUCS), Martin Clayton (West Midlands Regional Chair)

**Board Members:** Sandra Deaton (SD), Sara Sutcliffe MBE (SS) Susie Venner (SV), Ritchie Venner (RV), Kwadjo Adjepong (KA) Tom Purcell (TP), Emma Vickers (EV), Ray James (RJ),

**Staff:** Jo Keay-Blyth (JKB) Steve Joel (SJ) Matthew Stanforth (MS) Judy Rogers (JR)

**Minutes :** Victoria Wiegleb (VW)

### Apologies for Non-Attendance: National Councillors, Deputy National Councillors & Board

Alex Murdoch (Bedfordshire), John Cowell (Derbyshire), Reinhard Lindner (Dorset), Dave Adamson (Gloucester) Harry Jutle (Herefordshire), Neil Le Milliere (Kent), Shirley Pickering (Leicestershire), Tony Dias (Middlesex), Gareth Pearson (Northumberland), Neil Hurford (Oxfordshire) Charles Noel Sewell (Wiltshire), Simon Griew (Board), Priya Samuel (Board)

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Agenda Item	Discussion	Decision/Action	Who	When
1	<p><b>Chairman Opening Remarks, Update &amp; Welcome</b> EW (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanks were given to JKB and VW and all the staff who helped to get today's meeting arranged.</p> <p><b>Register of Business Interests</b> None declared</p> <p><b>Obituaries</b> Those we have lost since National Council last met were recognised and remembered.</p> <p><b>Role of National Council</b> EW (Chair) advised National Council of the updated paper now available on the website and read out a section of the introduction of what is expected from National Council.</p> <p><b>Minutes from last meeting</b> The minutes from 25<sup>th</sup> September 2021 were approved as a true record</p> <p><b>Matters Arising</b> No matters arising</p>	<p><b>Decision:</b> National Council approved the minutes of 25<sup>th</sup> September 2021 with 100% - this is recorded for accuracy</p>		
2	<p><b>Departure of Sara Sutcliffe, CEO</b></p> <p>EW (Chair) provided National Council with an update on the departure of SS (TTE CEO), and sincerely thanked SS for her contribution and hard work in making Table Tennis England the success it is today. EW proposed a formal motion of thanks and recognition from National Council.</p>			

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	<p>SD (TTE Chair) supported EW (Chair) comments, and passed her personal thanks to SS (TTE CEO) - a show of hands from National Council was given in support of this. SS (TTE CEO) thanked everyone for their support and wished everyone all the best for the future.</p> <p><b>A. Appointment of new CEO and Interim CEO</b></p> <p>SD (TTE Chair) provided an update National Council on the recruitment process.</p> <p>An interim CEO is being recruited through a Sports Recruitment Agency and it is intended that a permanent appointment will be made before the Summer. Agencies were interviewed, and the successful agency is Hartmann Mason. SD (TTE Chair) advised we have secured funding from Sport England to assist with the cost of the CEO replacement, both interim and permanent.</p> <p>Some very good applications were received. The working group and Nominations Committee using a score system, selected 6 candidates who were interviewed on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021. The panel for interviewing consisted of SV (Board) SK (Board) PS (Board) Daryl Mason (Hartmann Mason) Steve Pratt (MAG) and SD (TTE Chair). Once the rest of the NomCom have viewed the interview recordings, a decision will be made on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021.</p> <p>EW (Chair) asked for clarity on the permanent CEO position, and if an open recruitment process will take place. SD (TTE Chair) confirmed this is correct, anyone is welcome to apply including the interim CEO.</p>			
3	<p><b>Progress of Centenary Celebrations</b></p> <p>SJ (Staff) joined and provided an update to National Council regarding the launch of the Centenary and referred to the papers provided.</p> <p>Feedback from the launch was positive, some IT issues on the night occurred and some refinements will be made going forward.</p> <p>The key risks for the centenary project are sponsorship and donors for the prizes – the team are contacting those in the sport who can assist, and are now gradually reaching outside of the sport – SJ (Staff) is optimistic we will achieve the requirements.</p> <p>SJ (Staff) asked National Council to get in touch with any help they can provide with prizes, donations, sponsorship etc.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> NC to advise SJ of any help they can offer for prizes, sponsorship, archiving, email addresses of former England players etc</p>	ALL	ASAP

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	<p>The Centenary Heritage Project kicked off this month, and SJ (Staff) asked National Council if any colleagues have an interest in archiving county histories, please let him know and they are more than welcome to join the working group to get a county perspective.</p> <p>The Centenary English Leagues Cup Competitions have been launched, with thanks to the work of MS and English Leagues Cup Competitions Committee. SJ (Staff) asked Councillors to encouraged their leagues to enter teams in as many categories as they can.</p> <p>The Gala Dinner invitations are being rolled out w/c 6<sup>th</sup> December and shall be arriving with National Councillors shortly. This has been a large-scale exercise, and the track and trace service has been immense, however we now have 90% of the emails of those in the sport. A group of former England players are still without contact details, and National Council were asked to assist with obtaining this information.</p> <p>The Centenary book is nearly completed and the subscriber campaign will be launched in the next couple of weeks.</p> <p>No questions were raised to SJ (Staff) by National Council.</p>			
4	<p><b>T&amp;P Committee</b></p> <p><b>A. Meeting update 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b></p> <p>RV (Board) advised National Council that DP (Board) has been unwell and was unable to attend this meeting, so RV hosted in his absence on Zoom.</p> <p><u>Discussions were held during this meeting on:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Funding for the England Teams and where the money comes from.</li> <li>2. Smaller squads and dedicated coaches.</li> <li>3. Shared coaches being part funded by GB / Sport England</li> <li>4. The ITTF ranking situation and how you can “buy” ranking points</li> <li>5. Ongoing discussions were held regarding KPI’s</li> </ol>			

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6. Results from the Home Nations, and RV (Board) felt England didn't do as well as we could have done but understood it was used as a development opportunity for younger players
7. A presentation on player welfare was provided by EV (Board) and Loise Peake (Committee Member) which was well received by the T&P Committee and the possible set up of an Athletes Commission.

AR (Cleveland) referred to the Kent / Cleveland Proposal from the AGM that received an 86% majority as a recommendation to the Board for a number of changes. Whilst AR (Cleveland) recognises RV (Board) comments and the fact DP (Board) has been unwell, he feels the progress he had hoped to have seen, has not been met. The T&P Committee authority was rejected by the Board, and therefore this group is advisory whereas he believes it should have decision making authority. The funding shortfall (£200K) has seen some progress, although a lot less than he had hoped. A lot of the players still need to self-fund. Finally, AR (Cleveland) is disappointed that the recommendation to have separate coaches for each of the age groups and boys/girls has not been followed. He expects this to come back to the next AGM.

MS (Staff) clarified some points regarding the Home Nation Championships and programme funding:

- 1) There were no issues with GB/England coaches clashing at that event
- 2) This event was used as a development event with age groups playing up, and this was always the intent – MS (Staff) has taken on board comments from the T&P Committee.
- 3) Funding was made available for 1 event, and this covered a training camp for the Italian National Team.
- 4) We shall be fully funding the French and Belgium events in February.
- 5) An additional 3 events will be fully funded before March.

MS (Staff) agrees that additional funding is needed but another £200k is not available. If we stop the opportunity of self-funding for some events, and therefore ranking points, we will then shoot ourselves in the foot, and the ranking profiles of our players will drop dramatically.

SD (TTE Chair) referred to AR (Cleveland) earlier point, and asked everyone to understand that the final decisions lie with the Board. As with any other sub-group / committee is welcome to put forward their comments, considerations, recommendations, suggestions etc but the Board will make the final decision.

Resources *are* a problem, the amount of money needed for performance (Talent money comes from Sport England/ Grant Aid and Performance money comes from affiliations). In real terms, TTE has less money coming in now than we

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	<p>did pre-covid. There has been no increase in affiliation fees for three years and we have no increase in Sport England funding in the next cycle. The Board are discussing the finance problems in the Dec Board Meeting.</p> <p>PC (Berkshire) was welcomed to speak, and he felt this is more about strategy than money. The strategy, in PC (Berkshire) opinion is not the correct one to produce a future England team. This could be done less expensively, and should not rely on the wealth of parents.</p> <p>CD (Shropshire) raised his concern over the vote at the AGM and if this proposition was not implementable, why would the Board allow it to proceed to the AGM.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> Clarity required on the Board position</p>	<p><b>SD / SS</b></p>	
<p>5</p>	<p><b>Jim Skinner (Sussex) Welfare Officer Role</b></p> <p>A paper was circulated ahead of this meeting for National Council. JS (Sussex) put into context the paper, and the role of the County Welfare Officer in his opinion – providing National Council with a history of his experience.</p> <p>JS (Sussex) felt that TTE has created &amp; developed the Welfare Officer role giving them more responsibility.</p> <p><b>A. Judy Rogers (Safeguarding &amp; Ethics Manager)</b></p> <p>JR (Staff) was welcomed to respond, and provided information to National Council about the role description and how Safeguarding have only ever “tweaked” the role according to the NSPCC / CPSU guidelines which evolve. In terms of tournament organising and keeping accounts of permission forms – this is, the Welfare Officers responsibility. We have to respect the parents’ rights, and the Welfare Officer is the right person for this.</p> <p>We should all be working as a Table Tennis Team, and “volunteers checking on volunteers” isn’t the way to look at this. Our young people and their parents, should feel as confident as they can that they are safe in the sport we all love.</p> <p>CD (Shropshire) supported JS (Sussex) and thinks that TTE should more support to the counties.</p> <p>JS (Sussex) responded and said he doesn’t feel the concerns are being addressed. Further discussion to take place offline between JS (Sussex) and the Safeguarding Team.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> JS (Sussex) to speak with Safeguarding Team offline</p>	<p><b>JS, JR &amp; VW</b></p>	<p><b>ASAP</b></p>

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6	<p><b>Report from Constitution Select Committee</b></p> <p><b>CEO Requirements</b></p> <p>AR (Cleveland) referred to the paper that set out that the Select Committee felt that someone with Table Tennis knowledge is required for this replacement CEO position.</p> <p>EW (Chair) National Council to comment on the qualities they feel are required from the new CEO, and he advised that the new CEO will also need experience on obtaining maximum funding for Sport England.</p> <p>SV (Board) questioned what was meant by “expert knowledge of Table Tennis” means? In her opinion she does not have expert knowledge, even though she has played Table Tennis all her life. In the perfect world, we would want the CEO with all the Table Tennis knowledge <i>and</i> CEO ability – it is not a trade-off, you need passion and respect.</p> <p>PC (Berkshire) agreed with SV (Board) and how it is not necessarily the need to have played the sport, but have the underlying respect for our sport.</p> <p>SD (TTE Chair) was welcomed to speak and advised that the candidates interviewed without Table Tennis experience, showed such respect for the sport. The calibre of the interim posts has been fantastic and the Board is confident of making a sound appointment.</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) responded, and thanked everyone for their comments. He confirmed that the recommendation from the Select Committee was to appoint someone with skills and knowledge of Table Tennis as this will be preferred. EW (Chair) confirmed there is no need to hold a vote.</p> <p><b>Staff Involvement in General Meetings, Motions &amp; Elections</b></p> <p>AR (Cleveland) felt there is a view from inside the Select Committee that there has been canvassing from the Board where members of staff have been attending meetings and putting pressure on the volunteers on how to vote.</p> <p>No National Councillors wished to comment.</p>			

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	<p>SD (TTE Chair) agreed with the comments and SV (Board) was also in agreement but confirmed that the Board are here to attend AGM's / meetings if you require them to be there. Keeping the channels of communication open is key, but meetings should not be used as a propaganda tool.</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) responded in asking for a policy to ensure this is formalised.</p>			
7	<p><b>Proposed Select Committee on IT</b></p> <p>Alex Murdoch (Bedfordshire) who had asked for this topic to be placed on the agenda was unwell and had asked Martin Clarke (Worcestershire) to speak for him.</p> <p>EW (Chair) sent his best wishes to AM (Bedfordshire) as he has been unwell in Spain. MC (Worcestershire) provided a recap on the paper.</p> <p>PA (Essex &amp; MAG) advised that MAG would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further.</p> <p>BW (Deputy, Buckinghamshire) felt that anyone he has come across has been incredibly helpful and it does concern him that this could be a "buffer" and would like reassurance this will be looked after.</p> <p>JK (Somerset) as joint proposer, said he has started to see issues with some leagues trying to use both platforms, causing duplications and a lack of integrity being available.</p> <p>DH (Avon) advised that they are using TT Leagues in Bath, then in other areas using TT Leagues and 365 and improvements are needed, and welcome.</p> <p>JKB (Staff) advised that TT Leagues has come a long way since it first started. Sport 80 did have some updates and issues, which are now resolved. The best way forward is being discussed in upcoming meetings, and lots of work is being done – technical issues do arise, but ROCCA are very good at addressing these – no one who has contacted us can say they haven't received excellent customer service. If anyone is unsure or needs assistance, JKB (Staff) reminded National Council that the team are here to help.</p> <p>Following further discussions, National Council agreed with the idea in principle but felt that the way forward was for discussions with NH (Oxfordshire) as MAG Chair take place, and how to take it forward whilst avoiding duplication.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> Discussions with NH &amp; AM to take place</p>	<p><b>NH / AM</b></p>	<p><b>ASAP</b></p>

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	<p>Council agreed that if NH (Oxfordshire) and AM (Bedfordshire) can agree the way forward then EW (Chair) was authorised to approve the proposal.</p>			
8	<p><b>Competition Strategy</b></p> <p>EW (Chair) reminded National Council of the virtual presentation from Neil Rogers held at the last meeting, and that NR had delivered a zoom-based consultation with National Council last month.</p> <p>SS (CEO) recapped on the aims of the Competition Review. Whilst the consultation period has closed and the results of that are being analysed today offers a final opportunity for National Council to provide any further feedback which would be passed on.</p> <p>National Council split off into 7 break out groups for a 35 min group session. The outcomes of those discussions are attached as an appendix to these minutes.</p>			
9	<p><b>National Council Meeting Recordings – Peter Charters (Berkshire)</b></p> <p>PC (Berkshire) was welcomed to speak and put this proposal forward that the recording of National Council meetings should be made available (the request was primarily due to sound issues experienced last time).</p> <p>EW (Chair) stated that the recording is currently for the purpose of minute accuracy. There is a risk if the recording gets into the public domain that it could change the focus of the meeting and could end up with people speaking more for the public gallery.</p> <p>CD (Shropshire) supports the proposal and felt the leaking of a recording is a moot point. If someone wanted to record this meeting privately, they could do and could send it out to the public domain.</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) felt there was a half-way house on this proposal –. For those National Councillors who can't make the meeting the recording should be made available and it should only be available to those requesting it, with a condition of confidentiality. This could also be available in case someone want to check a point.</p> <p>A few other Councillors spoke generally agreeing that subject to confidentiality that the recording could be made available to a Councillor on request.</p>			

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	<p>PC (Berkshire) agreed that the caveat of confidentiality was important.</p> <p>EW (Chair) suggested he write a protocol and circulates with the papers for the next meeting.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> EW to write a protocol for the recording's procedure</p>	<p><b>EW</b></p>	<p><b>Next Meeting</b></p>
<p>10</p>	<p><b>Reports</b></p> <p><b>a. Chairman Report</b></p> <p>SD presented her written report and would be happy to take any questions.</p> <p>EW (Chair) raised the matter of Board minutes being made available rather than a summary. CD (Shropshire) agreed and whilst accepting that they should be approved minutes that could happen by email.</p> <p>SD (TTE Chair) confirmed the Board is in agreement that minutes will be provided, the discussion is about timing (not being in draft) and the level of detail to protect the confidentiality of discussions. The Board is discussing these principles at the 9-10 Dec meeting but reassured that the principle of supplying the minutes in a timely fashion is agreed.</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) asked about the bid for the World Table Tennis Championships in 2026. His concern is that the ITTF have changed the eligibility considerably, and on the basis of where we are with our cadet and senior players, he is worried England will not be in the top 32. SD (TTE Chair) responded that as host England would get host nation places however she did not share his concern certainly with the men's team who are performing at the highest level. The England para players would also be on show and some of them are potential medallists.</p> <p>KT (Cheshire) said it was a privilege to be with SS (CEO) and SD (Chair TTE) in Houston, and the World Championships is more than just how a team performs, it is about Table Tennis coming home, the wider concept, the centenary and we should all be proud.</p> <p>AR (Cleveland) asked about the ITTF AGM and if there was a report from this. He was interested in the ETTU calling an extraordinary general meeting to change the constitution to allow the President to be nominated to the ITTF Executive Committee and he then withdrew his candidacy.</p>			

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	<p>SD (TTE Chair) responded that the ETTU President withdrew because of a proposition to create a Continental Commission of the ITTF comprising the Continental Presidents. There were also two other European candidates for the EC.</p> <p>SD reported that Petra Sorling from Sweden was elected as the ITTF first female President and that we send her our congratulations.</p> <p>Table Tennis England submitted a resolution to ask the ITTF to consult on changes to competition clothing to allow greater flexibility for players. It was passed with 94% and a round of applause.</p> <p>SS (CEO) also advised that Busan, South Korea Was awarded the 2024 World Championships (having been the original host for 2020 which was cancelled)</p> <p><b>b. CEO Report</b></p> <p>SS (CEO) welcomed questions and wished everyone the very best, the report reflected on her time with TTE.</p> <p><b>c. Other Reports</b></p> <p>EW (Chair) welcomed questions on each departments report.</p> <p>MC (Worcestershire) thanked the Board and Sam Garey for providing a more detailed Finance Report. It is pleasing to note that a surplus is now forecast. MC had a few small queries and SS invited him to contact Sam Garey directly for clarification. MC also asked for clarification on if the Sport England award has been confirmed. SS explained that the bid had been submitted and evaluated and an indicative award granted which was expected to be confirmed by the Sport England Board before Christmas. AR (Cleveland) asked for a report on the Sport England bid and SS confirmed that Greg Yarnall would be asked to present at the next National Council.</p> <p>CD (Shropshire) expressed his concern over the credit card fees which appear higher than industry standard. SS confirmed that it includes the transaction fee which is the basis of the Sport 80 contract.</p> <p>No other questions were raised on any of the Departmental Reports.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> Details on Credit Card fees to be discussed with SG (Staff)</p>	<p><b>SS</b></p>	<p><b>ASAP</b></p>
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11	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>CD (Shropshire) is concerned that, again, less than 50 % of National Councillors are attending the meeting today. He wants this discussed at a future meeting.</p> <p>JS (Sussex) agreed with this and proposed making the discussions wider, about the relevance of counties.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> Add National Council attendance to next meeting</p>	<b>EW</b>	
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Action	Owner	Progress
National Council to advise SJ of any help they can offer for prizes, sponsorship, archiving & email addresses of former England players etc	ALL	Ongoing
JS (Sussex) to speak with Safeguarding Team offline	JS/ JR/ VW	To be arranged
Discussions with NH & AM re IT project/Select Committee	NH / AM	ASAP
EW to write a protocol for the meeting recordings procedure	EW	Next Meeting
National Council attendance discussion	EW / VW	Future Meeting

**Date of next meeting:** 19<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**Hybrid meeting** – Great Holm Community Centre & Zoom