

Select Committee on the Constitution Report to National Council

13th April 2024

The Select Committee on the Constitution is made up of:

Alan Ransome – Chairman

Alex Murdoch – Deputy Chairman

Neil Le Milliere

Malcolm Allsop

Estyn Williams

Susie Venner

Tony Catt

The Select Committee on the Constitution have been very active since the last meeting to follow up all of the various points which are currently under discussion.

1) Independence of National Council

I have been in discussions with Nick Donald, Chairman of Table Tennis England, who has been handling this matter on behalf of the Board and Neil Hurford has also been involved in these discussions.

a) The National Council meeting to be divided into two parts.

Neil Hurford has advised that the next meeting of Council will be divided into two halves, one with the Board members present and the second half with National Council members only. The Select Committee have discussed this and believe that at least the part of the meeting when the Council is in private session should be private and, therefore, the control of the video stream and taking minutes should be a matter for Council. From the Select Committee Susie Venner has offered to provide this service, she already provides a similar service with video for the VETTS Society meetings.

2) National Council Secretary.

The Committee is proposing a method for the appointment of the Secretary.

My note from the last meeting was “ One final point we need to suggest a procedure for the election of a secretary for National Council. My recommendation is that there should be an opportunity for members to propose a secretary. This should be in writing, with a closing date, at least 1 week prior to the National Council meeting. If there is only one nomination, then National Council vote acceptance or not. If there is more than one nomination there is an election and vote at Council and the winner taking the position. If there are no nominations, then we look to divide the position between Admin Secretary and Minute Secretary.”

If one Secretary is elected an assistant could be added to assist with the workload. The workload would include:

1. Support the work of the National Council and the Chairman of National Council and liaise with other bodies as required;
2. Understand and maintain the Standing Orders of National Council;
3. Liaise with TTE to organise the National Council meetings;
4. Liaise with TTE to circulate papers for National Council meetings;
5. Support the Chairman of National Council in the production of papers; the agenda and guests for meetings;
6. Produce minutes of National Council meetings;
7. Follow up action points;
8. Liaise with TTE to ensure relevant publication of National Council business and materials.

The skill set and experience required would be

- a) Organisational and administrative experience;
- b) Ability to summarise and produce accurate and timely minutes;
- c) IT skills to facilitate online and/or hybrid meetings, and production and maintenance of records;
- d) Strong communications and inter-personal skills;
- e) Knowledge and experience of table tennis, particularly in connection to the membership structure within TTE;
- f) Oversee National Council budget and expenses in liaison with TTE.

3) National Council Link

We have proposed that the National Council link with the Table Tennis England Board should be one of the Elected Directors which we are all comfortable with. Nick Donald has agreed to consider this and he has said that he personally could be interested in providing this link.

4) Reports to National Council.

Nick Donald said that reports would be provided in advance of National Council as at present but it was his intention to circulate these reports to the company members and it was intended that the timing of both Council meetings and the Members meetings would be around the same time to facilitate this.

5) Funding.

We discussed the ongoing support in terms of funding for the Council meetings along the same lines as present. As the next Board meeting is before the April Council we would be able to receive details of the Boards considerations prior to the Council meeting.

6) Standing Orders Committee

From information that we have received, it appears that the Standing Orders Committee which has been involved with the management of the AGM, is appointed by the Members at each AGM and has been operating, for at least the last 50 years. We understand that the

Standing Orders Committee is to be amalgamated into a new committee for the Association which bring together the Rules Committee and other similar committees in one new committee. It would mean that the arrangements for standing orders, if any, at the AGM would no longer be under the control of this independent group.

The principle of this group is to ensure good order and fair play at the AGM as it is the one opportunity when the members are able to make propositions to change actual articles or to propose motions relating to the activities of the Association.

The Standing Orders Committee have carried out their responsibilities very well over the many years and monitored the discussion at the AGM to ensure that the regulations are being followed on all sides and intervened as appropriate where there has been any indiscretions.

The Select Committee believe that it is in the members interests to maintain the Standing Orders Committee in order to ensure democracy at the AGM and any EGM which takes place and would, therefore, like to see this committee continue with the independent role and being elected by the members at the AGM.

Please also find attached a copy of the short document provided by Neil Le Milliere who is currently a member of the SOC, explaining its role.

7) Fifth Director

The opinion of the National Council at our January meeting was that there should be a proposal that five of the Board Members should be elected by the Members and this was proposed to the Board.

The Board will be discussing this at their April meeting and we await their response.

8) Article Amendments

As discussed at the last Council meeting the Select Committee have discussed the Boards propositions for the AGM. These propositions were also discussed at the Members meeting, a number of the members of the Select Committee were present at that meeting.

The comments from the Select Committee perspective – our current position is;

Special Resolution 1) Support

Special Resolution 2) This matter was raised at the Members meeting and we understand that this is receiving further consideration by the Board.

Special Resolution 3) Support

Special Resolution 4) Support

Special Resolution 5) Support

Special Resolution 6) The Select Committee believe that the imposition of this resolution would not be helpful and we understand that it is also not in line with Sport England guidance.

Special Resolution 7) The Select Committee believe that the Deputy Chairman should continue to be one of the Elected Directors. This was a commitment given by the Board at the 2017 AGM when the membership reluctantly agreed to the Sport England requirement that the Chair would be appointed by the Board rather than a National election.

Special Resolution 8) Support

Special Resolution 9) The Select Committee believe that the National Councillor, as at present, should be the company member on behalf of the County Association and should carry the County vote at the AGM as well as at National Council. We believe that if these roles are split then it does weaken the position of National Councillor and having to be elected twice in the same year to represent the County Association in two roles is an unnecessary extra burden on all concerned. Therefore, the Select Committee are not in favour of Special Resolution 9.

Special Resolution 10) The Select Committee are in agreement with the principle of Special Resolution 10, provided there is adequate arrangement in place for an appeal procedure should there be a difference of opinion between the County Committee and its National Councillor.

As we understand it the Appeals Board do not currently have a remit to consider the facts of the case but only if the Committee has acted within its own regulations. Therefore, this would make an Appeal in the majority of cases without any value. The Select Committee feel that the arrangements need to be put in place so there should be an appeal procedure so they can hear the case in full.

Alan Ransome
Chairman
Select Committee on the Constitution
21st March 2024