

National Council Draft Minutes 27 January 2024



PRESENT

Virtual meeting held by Zoom

9 am

Neil Hurford (Oxfordshire – Chair)

National Councillors:

Alexander Murdoch (Bedfordshire), Jonathan Hopson (Berkshire), Susan Hayes (Buckinghamshire), Karen Tonge OBE (Cheshire), Alan Ransome OBE (Cleveland), Jon Bayliss (Derbyshire), Jonathan Stubbs (Hampshire), Harry Jutle (Herefordshire), David Edwards (Hertfordshire), Tim Giles (Isle of Wight), Tom Purcell (Lancashire), Shirley Pickering (Leicestershire), Tony Dias (Middlesex), Ivor Jones (Northamptonshire), Malcolm Allsop (Nottinghamshire), Neil Hurford (Oxfordshire), James Kenny (South Yorkshire), Margot Fraser (Surrey), Tony Catt (Sussex), Estyn Williams (Warwickshire), Martin Clark (Worcestershire), Stephen Longmoor (Somerset)

Deputy National Councillors:

Clive Ellison (Avon), Clive Hollingsbee (Kent)

Other: Susie Venner (VETTs)

Board Members: Adrian Christy (TTE CEO), Jos Kelly (JS), Don Parker (DP)

Staff: Jo Keay-Blyth (JKB), Emma Sutherland (ES), Sue Wressell (SW)

Minutes: Sue Wressell (SW)

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

Shaun Fitzpatrick (Avon), Andy Millman (Devon), Neil Le Milliere (Kent), Gareth Pearson (Northumberland), Stephen Joel (Somerset), Noel Sewell (Wiltshire), Joshua Reynolds (Yorkshire) Nick Donald (TTE Chair), Kwadjo Adjepong (Appointed Director), Richard Ayers (Appointed Director), Mark Boote (Appointed Director), Sally Hughes (Elected Director), Ray James (Appointed Director) Steve Kemish (Appointed Director), Ritchie Venner (Elected Director), Mike Smith (BUCS)

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Agenda Item	Discussion	Decision/Action	Who	When
1	<p>Introduction by the Chair</p> <p>a) Welcome</p> <p>NH (Oxfordshire, Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting, his first as Chair. He thanked EW, once again, for his tenure as Chair and to Neil Le Milliere for Chairing the Meeting in October 2023.</p> <p>b) Registration of any new Business Interests</p> <p>There were no new business interests.</p> <p>c) Minute Silence</p> <p>A minute's silence was held for Richard Hudson, Doreen Nightingale, Malcolm Sugden, Brian Baines, Mike Kercher, Christine Lewis and George Tyler.</p>			
2	<p>Approval of minutes of last meeting</p> <p>Comments on the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2023 had been received and incorporated into the final draft. The Minutes were approved.</p>			

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<p>3</p>	<p>Actions and Matters Arising</p> <p>EW had met with Andy Wilesmith (TTE Head of Table Tennis Development) about the membership plan and many of the points raised were being taken on board. AW would respond to the paper</p> <p>AW was also in discussion with the previous Regional Chairs to sort out the outstanding monies owed to the Regions. The Action point would be updated for the April 2024 meeting</p>	<p>Action: Respond to the Membership Plan discussion</p> <p>Action: AW to update action on Regional monies</p>	<p>AW</p> <p>AW</p>	<p>April 2024</p> <p>April 2024</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Introduction and welcome to TTE Chair, Nick Donald</p> <p>Nick Donald was unable to join the meeting, due to the death of his father the day before. It was hoped Nick could join the next meeting but ND had been visiting members and was hoping to meet many more at the Senior National Championships.</p>			
<p>5</p>	<p><i>“Table Tennis United” Update</i></p> <p>AC gave a presentation to the Council on the strategy work undertaken so far. The slides would be uploaded to the NC web page. He updated the meeting with all the updates across the four pledges. He thanked TP, KT and Steve Smith for their support and work on the Technical Officers Academy.</p> <p>The following comments were noted:</p> <p>There would be a transition, over a period of time, from the set up at Nottingham University to the new Elite Training Centre in Sheffield. 1-2-1 conversations were currently being held with athletes who are based in Nottingham to assist them with the new training in Sheffield.</p>	<p>Action: Presentation slides to be uploaded to the website</p>	<p>SW</p>	<p>ASAP</p>

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	<p>The Nottingham University students who are currently on the High Performing Programme will still be able to access this in Nottingham and they will be invited to train in Sheffield at weekends or during the holidays. The first Senior Camp was due to take place in Sheffield on 25 March.</p> <p>SH (Buckinghamshire) queried the role of the National Council, with Company Member Meetings now taking place. AC explained that there was still a role for the National Council, but it was important that consultation and information was shared across the whole membership, including league members.</p> <p>Discussion was held on how to recruit more members, from recreational players into TTE and onto the contactable list.</p> <p>AR (Cleveland, Chair NC Constitution Committee) agreed that the National Council was very relevant so long as Councillors continued to perform of the role of a conduit of information to and from the County and TTE.</p> <p>AC had had a positive meeting with VETTS to discuss the issue of good standing. The intention was not to dismantle 'good standing' but to strengthen it.</p>			
6	<p>Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>This item would remain on NC agendas so that consideration could be given to understanding diversity and inclusion within the sport. This could be a threat to the organisation as Sport England were keen for more diversity and inclusion in all of its funded sports. But just as important were the enormous opportunities for growing our sport if we adopted the correct approach of fully embracing the principles of diversity and inclusion. If National Councillors had any queries they were encouraged to send them to Emma Sutherland (TTE Head of People) at emma.sutherland@tabletennisengland.co.uk</p>	<p>Action: All NCs to send to TTE any issues relating to Diversity & Inclusion that they would like to be addressed at the next meeting</p>	All NCs	By April 2024

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7	<p>Affiliation & Membership – Follow-up to discussion at October meeting</p> <p>DE's (Hertfordshire) paper circulated at the previous NC meeting was discussed further. Thanks were given to the eight Counties who had responded and it was agreed that DE's paper would be resent to the Councillors so that more County responses could be encouraged.</p>	<p>Action: DE to send list of questions to JKB\SW</p> <p>Action: SW to send out DE's paper to NC again</p>	<p>DE</p> <p>SW</p>	<p>ASAP</p> <p>With minutes</p>
8	<p>Updates to Articles of Association</p> <p>NC received the paper on suggested amends to the Articles in four areas: General Tidy Up; Directors; County Company Member/National Councillor; and Standing Orders Committee</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There was general support for the tidying up sections suggested. 2. With regards to changes to the Director section, it was felt that this could be open to interpretation and it should be split into recruitment and responsibilities, which needs to be tightened up. <p>The Select Committee were not in favour of the changes as they felt it was important for members to know who the Elected Directors were if they wanted to contact them. It was recognised that the title only explained how that Director was recruited and the wording was consistent with the Code of Governance. If the intention was to bring greater cohesion, this should be done by the Directors understanding their role. The Select Committee raised a concern that the point in relation to the Chair not being an elected director contradicted the need for cohesion. It was felt by the Committee that a 5th Elected Director would support a better balance of the Board.</p>	<p>Action: Views expressed on the Articles to be fed back to TTE</p> <p>Action: JKB to consider whether to hold a specific discussion session to go through all</p>	<p>NH</p> <p>JKB</p>	<p>ASAP</p> <p>ASAP</p>

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	<p>A statement was made that the Articles were there to regulate the company and should be at a strategic level, not overly specific. Some National Councillors were unsure why there was concern being raised. They supported the strategic change and understood that any member could contact any Director, not just an Elected Director.</p> <p>3. There was a general consensus that Option 1 or 2 was preferred. The Select Committee felt that were two differences to consider; whether a National Councillor was set for the whole term; or whether they could be removed if the County felt it appropriate. The Select Committee’s preference was for Option 1.</p> <p>A number of National Councillors had spoken to their Counties to confirm that they were the representative of the County and should only act on their behalf. They took the view that if a County wished to remove their National Councillor they were entitled to do so and could do so at any time. But it was emphasised that it had to be for a good reason, and not just because they did not like their councillor and in accordance with an approved disciplinary process to ensure fairness. Some of those who spoke in favour of this approach expressed their preference for Option 2.</p> <p>4. The Select Committee felt that the SOC was there to ensure fairness and regulate the AGM for Members and the Board and should continue in this referee role.</p> <p>It was pointed out that should SOC become part of the Articles and Regulations Committee, there are suitably qualified person to ensure Standing Orders are adhered to.</p>	proposed changes in detail		
9	<p>Towards a More Autonomous National Council</p> <p>Members discussed the paper and recognised the intention to split NC meetings into separate parts where TTE Chair and CEO attend and where they do not. It was recognised</p>	<p>Action: Paper to be sent to the Board for consideration</p>	JKB	February 2024

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	<p>that more details about implementation needed to be considered. It was agreed that the paper should be sent to the TTE Board for consideration.</p>	<p>Action: NC Select Committee to work on implementation of NC becoming autonomous</p>	<p>NC Select Committee on Constitution</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
10	<p>Report of Select Committees</p> <p>Constitution</p> <p>The three nominations of Susie Venner, Tony Catt and Estyn Williams, to join the Committee were approved.</p> <p>SV's paper about a 5th Elected Director was received and discussed and it was agreed that it should be forwarded to Board, for consideration.</p> <p>Competitions</p> <p>Discussion was held about the Junior British League moving to three weekends rather than two. It was felt there was a lack of consultation with clubs over this decision. DP confirmed that the Competition Committee agreed this move because it was believed that this was wanted by Clubs.</p> <p>It was noted that Henry Arthur (TTE British League Administrator) was hosting a meeting on 20 February, by zoom, and it was suggested that NCs contact the clubs in their counties and encourage a representative to attend the meeting.</p> <p>A response to JB's (Derbyshire) paper needed to be given by the Competition Committee.</p>	<p>Action: SV's email to be shared with Board</p> <p>NH to send JB's paper to the Chair of the Competitions Committee, requesting a</p>	<p>SW</p> <p>NH</p>	<p>February 2024</p> <p>February 2024</p>

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	<p>Any NC who was interested in joining the NC Competition Select Committee should contact Alan Ransome (Cleveland).</p> <p>Disability</p> <p>It was noted that the NC Disability Select Committee covered all disabilities, whereas British Para Table Tennis covered only elite table tennis.</p> <p>The members of the Disability Committee, as listed, were approved.</p>	response to the points raised.		
11	<p>Paper on Standing Orders Committee</p> <p>The item was covered under item 8.</p>			
12	<p>Table Tennis England Reports</p> <p>a. Chair of Table Tennis England</p> <p>The Chair's Report was noted.</p> <p>b. CEO Report</p> <p>MC (Worcestershire) raised a concern about financial support from ITTF as he understood that they were experience financial difficulties. NH asked that MC express his concerns in writing, but given the serious nature of the concerns he asked JKB/SW to flag these concerns with the CEO as soon as possible.</p> <p>Discussion was held about the AGM 2024 being virtual only. Some members felt it was one of the few times where members could come together and it was undemocratic to not have a</p>	<p>Action: To flag concerns with ITTF to the CEO</p> <p>Action: NH to share National Council</p>	<p>MC to send to JKB to relay to CEO</p> <p>NH</p>	<p>ASAP</p>

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	<p>face to face meeting. Members were reminded that only 23 members attended in person in 2023, with 50+ members attending online and the experience for those online during a hybrid meeting was not great. A meeting held completely on-line was a better experience than hybrid and there was no issue with voting even for those that could not attend virtually as all rights were protected in an online meeting. NC thoughts would be shared with the Board, via NH, (Chair – Oxfordshire).</p> <p>The issue of making Award presentations at the AGM was raised, however these could be presented at another time.</p> <p>The AGM timeline was being considered by the Board at the February meeting and would be published in line with normal practice for publishing the timeline on 7 March 2024.</p> <p>c. Finance Report</p> <p>MC (Worcestershire) raised questions about the Finance Report with regards to the layout of the finances since the move to the new system and Jack Petchey figures. He also queried the role of audit that was undertaken by the Finance and Audit Committee. He would send his questions and points into TTE and responses would be circulated to all members.</p> <p>It was noted that two new members of the Finance and Audit Committee had joined recently.</p> <p>d. Articles & Regulations Index Summary</p> <p>Councillors received the Summary and disappointment was expressed that the Summary was retrospective and changes to the Regulations were not notified as they were made.</p> <p>The issue of good standing was raised again and it was clarified that organisations in good standing had to be affiliated with TTE, where, as previously they did not. VETTS were reconsidering their position but wished to keep good relations with the NGB.</p>	<p>thoughts on AGM being on-line only</p> <p>Action: MC to send in his queries on the Finance Report and function of Audit to TTE</p> <p>Action: NH & JKB to discuss the format of what is now provided following feedback from CE.</p>	<p>MC</p> <p>NH & JKB</p>	<p>February 2024</p> <p>ASAP</p> <p>ASAP</p>
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13	<p>Dates for Next Two Meetings</p> <p>The dates of the next meeting were discussed and it was agreed that the next meeting would be 13 April with 20th as a backup should AC and ND not be able to attend on 13 April.</p>	<p>Action: Check availability of AC & ND to attend the NC meeting on either 13 April and/or 20 April.</p>	NH & SW	ASAP
14	<p>AOB</p> <p>NH Chair (Oxfordshire) noted that Dave Goulden had recently been taken ill again and the Council wished him well</p> <p>In closing the meeting, NH, Chair (Oxfordshire) noted that he would always welcome feedback on National Council meetings from those attending. As part of promoting the role of National Council he would always be happy to meet with National Councillors and their county colleagues to discuss the role of National Council and hear views on how it could operate more effectively.</p>			
15	<p>Meeting Closure</p> <p>The meeting closed at 2 pm</p>			

Action	Owner	Timeline
Update the action on the Membership Plan discussion with EW	AW	April 2024
Update action on Regional monies to be shared with National Council at the next meeting	AW	April 2024

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TTU Update presentation slides to be uploaded to the NC page on the website	SW	ASAP
All NCs to send to TTE any issues relating to Diversity & Inclusion and Investing in People that they would like to be addressed in the presentation at the next meeting	All NCs	Before the end of March
DE to send list of revised questions on county membership issues to JKB/SW to be included in the Minutes of the meeting.	DE	Completed
David Edward's paper to be recirculated to National Councillors	SW	With minutes
NH to feedback to JKB the views expressed to the proposed changes as outlined in "Articles" document. This would cover "Directors" (principles and detailed changes), "Company Members/National Councillors" and "Standing Orders Committee".	NH	Completed
JKB to consider whether to hold a specific discussion session to go through all proposed changes in detail	JKB	ASAP
Paper on NC Autonomy to be sent to the Board for consideration	JKB	Completed
NC Select Committee to continue working up the proposals for more NC autonomy with a view to implementing this approach.	NC Select Committee on Constitution	February 2024
SV's email to be shared with Board	SW	Completed
JB's paper on Competitions to be sent to the Chair of the Competitions Committee, requesting a response to the points raised	NH	Completed
To flag concerns with ITTF to the CEO	MC & JKB	Completed
NH to share National Council thoughts on AGM being virtual only	NH	Completed
MC to send in his queries on the Finance Report and function of Audit to TTE	MC	Completed
NH & JKB to discuss the format of what is now provided in the Articles & Regulations summary following feedback from CE.	NH & JKB	Completed

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Check availability of AC & ND to attend the NC meeting on either 13 April and/or 20 April.	NH & SW	Completed
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