

FINAL Board Update Call Minutes 22 July 2026 CONFIDENTIAL



PRESENT

Location: Online – MS Teams

Meeting: 8.30 am – 10:05 am

Board Members: Clare Briegal (CB) Chair, Don Parker (DP) Deputy Chairman, Katharine Curran (KC), Sally Hughes (SH), Jos Kelly (JK), Liam McTiernan (LM), Leanne O’Leary (LO) Ritchie Venner (RV), Anna Whowell (AW), Paul Bishop (PB)

Additional Attendees:

James Plowright (JP), Sport England — Partner Relationships Manager.

Lucy Valerio (LV), Sport England — Head of Governance Support

Minutes: Drafted from Transcription

Apologies: Sally Lockyer (SL) CEO due to ill health

Agenda Item	Paper No	Discussion	Decision/Action	By Who	By When
1	Agenda	Welcome Clare Briegal opened the meeting and reminded the Board that this was a scheduled interim Board call between full Board meetings. She stated that the meeting was important in order to pick up discussions from the previous Board meeting and to reflect on significant developments since that meeting. It was noted that JP and LV from Sport England were joining the meeting to provide an update and answer questions regarding correspondence received from Sport England. JP introduced himself as Partner Relationships Manager at Sport England, explaining that he had worked with Table Tennis England since 2021 and that Table Tennis England was one of the national governing bodies within his			

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		portfolio. LV introduced herself as Head of Governance Support at Sport England, explaining that her role included supporting organisations with code and general governance queries and that she had previously been company secretary of a national governing body.			
2	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] The Board was informed that Sport England wished to attend all future Table Tennis England Board meetings and Board calls as an observer until at least October 2026. JP emphasised that Sport England did not intend this to be viewed as punitive, but rather as a supportive, collaborative and constructive measure. [REDACTED] It was noted that Sport England would follow up with a formal written letter setting out its position and further information, including information on the role of a Sport England Board observer. Board questions to Sport England [REDACTED] DP welcomed the attendance of Sport England and stated that more specific information would be helpful to the Board. SH similarly welcomed the involvement of Sport England and requested specific examples and clarity [REDACTED] The Board indicated that it was content for JP and LV to remain for the rest of the meeting.	Sport England to provide a formal written follow-up letter and further information on the Sport England Board observer role. [REDACTED]	James Plowright [REDACTED]	1 week (29th July) 1 week (29th July)

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3		Board Effectiveness Senior Independent Director and Board composition The Board discussed the vacancy for a Senior Independent Director following the end of Richard's term of office. [REDACTED] stated that the appointment of a Senior Independent Director was an important part of Board governance [REDACTED] summarised the previous meeting that had been held during CB's absence, explaining that the Board had discussed the importance of the Senior Independent Director role and the criteria that should be considered. He stated that no decision had been made and that the intention was to involve the whole Board and, if possible, finalise the appointment at the next Board meeting. [REDACTED, who had not attended the previous meeting, noted that [REDACTED] had requested that it not proceed and that this had affected [REDACTED] engagement with the minutes. [REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] views on the Senior Independent Director role related in part to the position regarding the proposed new Board member. [REDACTED] welcomed the fact that no decisions had been made. [REDACTED] expressed the view that a recommendation on the Senior Independent Director appointment might properly sit with the Chair or the Nominations Committee, and that the Nominations Committee could be well placed to support the process. [REDACTED] identified experience, independence and the ability to understand board and compliance requirements as important criteria for the Senior Independent Director role. [REDACTED] also stated that the ability to act independently was, in [REDACTED] view, particularly important. [REDACTED] stated that the Board had been seeking a meeting about the Senior Independent Director role for some time, given that [REDACTED] stated that it had been useful for directors to discuss the matter without [REDACTED] present and that knowledge of table tennis and diversity of perspective were important considerations.			
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	[REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] had found the previous meeting awkward and did not understand why it had been urgent. [REDACTED] also questioned why the Board had not proceeded with the prospective new Independent Non-Executive Director, whose curriculum vitae [REDACTED] considered to show a strong skill set, and emphasised the strategic rather than operational role of the Board. [REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] had considered the previous meeting useful and that no decisions had been made because the whole Board was not present. [REDACTED] also expressed the view that diversity of gender and knowledge of table tennis were important for the Chair, CEO and Senior Independent Director grouping, and that corporate memory and knowledge of the sport would be valuable. [REDACTED] advised that recruitment of Independent Non-Executive Directors, including a Senior Independent Director, should be conducted in a code-compliant manner and that the Nominations Committee should lead the process. Board diversity and Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan [REDACTED] noted that Table Tennis England had a Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) and that the last update [REDACTED] had seen was from 2021. [REDACTED] suggested that the Board might reflect on and update that plan, particularly given Board changes since 2021. Proposed Independent Non-Executive Director appointment [REDACTED] asked why a candidate who had apparently been selected through interview for an Independent Non-Executive Director role had not yet been appointed. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] nomcom never concluded the recruitment process to put a recommended candidate to the board because the feedback from a meeting with SLT has not been put into writing.	Share Board DIAP from 2021	Clare Briegal	1 week (29 th July)
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[REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] continued to believe that the Board would benefit from the candidate's skill set and that the candidate could assist with the process of appointing a Senior Independent Director, although [REDACTED] was not suggesting that the candidate should necessarily be appointed as Senior Independent Director.

[REDACTED] reported that the Governance and Risk Committee had expressed concern that the recommended candidate had not been appointed. [REDACTED] stated that the Committee considered it poor governance if the reason for not appointing the candidate was that the Board did not want to bring someone into the current environment, and that the relevant criterion should be whether the candidate had the skills and attributes to contribute to the Board.

[REDACTED] raised a practical question as to whether appointing an additional Independent Non-Executive Director would restrict the Board's ability to recruit externally for a Senior Independent Director, given the maximum Board size. It was noted that clarification would be needed as to whether there were exceptions or flexibility under the relevant code or governance requirements.

Board behaviours, effectiveness and relationship with senior staff

The Board had an extended discussion regarding Board behaviours, Board effectiveness and the relationship between the Board and senior staff.

[REDACTED] reported that issues around Board governance, Board effectiveness and the way in which the Board relates to senior staff had been discussed by the Governance and Risk Committee. [REDACTED] stated that this issue had been rated as high risk on the risk register and that [REDACTED] had previously raised concerns regarding [REDACTED] effect on senior staff.

[REDACTED] also reported that the Governance and Risk Committee had noted some improved confidence among staff in responding to member behaviour considered abusive, unreasonably persistent or vexatious, but that the main concern remained the behaviour of some Board members and the effect on senior staff.

Arrange individual calls with Board members to obtain reflections on the meeting and to arrange a further facilitated session on Board behaviours, culture and ways of working.

Clare Briegal

2 weeks (5th August)

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	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] stated that the Board had not created sufficient time for sensible strategic conversations about [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] emphasised that there was a place for feedback, but that the manner, words and tone used in delivering feedback were very important and could determine whether feedback was acted upon. [REDACTED] stated that, in [REDACTED] view, the Board needed additional time together to work through issues of culture, behaviours and ways of working, including how feedback was given. [REDACTED] also stated that [REDACTED] intended to speak to each Board member individually after the meeting and arrange a longer session before the next Board meeting. [REDACTED] further stated that the [REDACTED] Board should lean into support from Sport England and UK Sport. [REDACTED] Interim arrangements during CEO absence CB reported that, during the CEO's absence, she had asked available senior leadership team members to meet with her to review priorities and interim arrangements. She stated that she would update the Board on the interim arrangements so that directors had visibility and Sport England and UK Sport could have assurance. It was noted that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were also absent on holiday at that time and that interim arrangements in finance were more difficult because there was no additional member of staff in the finance department.			
		Provide the Board with visibility of interim arrangements during the CEO's absence.	Clare Briegal	31 st July

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4		Women and girls group / time-sensitive operational matter RV asked for time to discuss junior and cadet girls, noting that he had texted CB the previous day and that the matter was time sensitive. CB acknowledged that the matter was time sensitive and stated that she believed the terms of reference had been approved and that the remaining issue was approval of the membership of the group. She stated that she would speak to RV separately in order to resolve the matter.	Meet to discuss the time-sensitive women and girls group matter and the approval of the group's membership.	Clare Briegal/Ritchie Venner	31st July
5		Charlie Childs Fund SH raised the Charlie Childs Fund. She explained that Charlie Childs had been a coach in Portsmouth for many years and that, following his death, a fund had been established in his memory. She stated that the fund supported women and girls, people with disabilities and young people with funding for qualifications, predominantly coaching but also umpiring and tournament organisation. SH reported that the committee had not met for a couple of years and that there was a backlog of requests requiring a response. She stated that the fund held approximately £3,500 and that member donations had contributed to it. SH explained that the committee required a female representative at Board level or equivalent, and that the person currently listed [REDACTED] (a former board member), who was no longer current. She suggested that Jill, as President, might be suitable, but also noted that AW had offered to assist if appropriate. CB asked that the terms of reference for the committee be obtained and shared, and proposed that SH, AW and Jill work out the appropriate route for appointment and come back with a solution.	Locate and share the terms of reference for the Charlie Childs Fund committee. Consider the appropriate appointment or appointments to the Charlie Childs Fund committee and bring a recommendation back to the Board.	Sally Hughes Sally Hughes, Anna Whowell & Jill Parker	31st July August 31st
6		Honours Committee matter CB stated that the Honours Committee matter would be deferred, as there was no urgency and it was a straightforward discussion.	Honours Committee Matter deferred to next Board	Clare Briegal	August 19th

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7		Next Board meeting and agenda The next Board meeting was noted as being scheduled for 19 August 2026. CB stated that she would circulate a draft agenda in the usual way. It was noted that the agenda was expected to include strategy, finance and current governance and effectiveness issues. PB noted that there was some urgency associated with finance and confirmed that he and CB were due to speak later in the week about the current financial position. [REDACTED].	Circulate draft agenda for the next Board meeting, including consideration of strategy, finance, Board effectiveness and any appropriate governance matters.	Clare Briegal	31st July
8		Close CB thanked Board members for attending and for the extended time given to the discussion. She also thanked JP and LV for observing and noted that she looked forward to receiving Sport England's further thoughts and information on the observer role. The meeting closed at approximately 10:05.			

Actions

Summary of actions

1. James Plowright / Sport England to provide a formal written follow-up letter and further information on the Sport England Board observer role.
2. Clare Briegal to pass comments regarding alleged factual inaccuracies in UK Sport correspondence to Jen / UK Sport.
3. Clare Briegal to share Board DIAP from 2021 for review and update.
4. Clare Briegal to arrange individual calls with Board members to obtain reflections on the meeting and a further session on Board behaviours, culture, feedback and ways of working around August Board meeting.
5. Clare Briegal to provide visibility of interim senior leadership arrangements during the CEO's absence.

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6. Clare Briegal to speak with Ritchie Venner regarding the time-sensitive women and girls group matter.
7. Sally Hughes to locate and share the Charlie Childs Fund committee terms of reference.
8. Sally Hughes, Anna Whowell and Jill Parker to consider the appropriate appointment or appointments to the Charlie Childs Fund committee and report back.
9. Honours Committee Matter deferred to next Board meeting agenda.
10. Clare Briegal to circulate a draft agenda for the next Board meeting.

Decisions

Summary of actions

1. Board agreed to SE personnel attending the whole meeting as observers.