



## COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Council meeting held online via the Zoom video conference application at 09:30 on Wednesday, 17 May 2023.

### PRESENT

#### Council Members

Simon Street (Berkshire)	Tim Taylor (Middlesex)
Julian Holmes (Buckinghamshire)	Mike Broadbent (Northamptonshire)
Ali Loke (Cambridgeshire)	John Thompson (Northumbria)
Hannah Hodgson (Cheshire)	Andrew Wilson (Oxfordshire)
Matt Harford (Cornwall)	Ian Dinwiddy (Shropshire)
Jo Wallis (Derbyshire)	Alec Livingstone (Suffolk)
Jane Smith (Dorset)	Colin Watson (Surrey)
Nick Collins (Durham & Cleveland)	Patrick Fleming (Surrey)
Brian Duke (Durham & Cleveland)	Paul Millman (Sussex, ES President)
Geoff Went (Essex)	Simon Tunley (Sussex)
Ewen Denning (Gloucestershire)	Roger More (Warwickshire)
Arif Faizi (Hampshire)	Bett Dryhurst (Worcestershire)
Baz Hodson (Kent)	Hugh Mannerings (Yorkshire)
Bernie Gill (Lancashire)	

### IN ATTENDANCE

#### Board Members

Eamonn O'Rourke (Chair)  
Richard Cannock  
Heidi Leseur  
Wendy Newlove  
Mayuri Nigam  
Mark Williams (CEO)

#### Vice-Presidents

Barbara Sanderson  
Zena Wooldridge

#### Guest

Carrie Cattle (Rackets Cubed)

#### England Squash

Neil Edgar (Finance Director)  
Steve Jones (Minute Taker)  
Paul Makinen (Head of Digital & Insight)  
Jo Rowbottom (Head of Partnerships & Communities)

MINUTES REF.	ITEM	ACTION
M01ESC(2301)	<p><b>1. Chair’s Welcome</b></p> <p>Senior Independent Director Eamonn O’Rourke (EO) opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to Council. EO explained that England Squash Chair Joy Carter was unwell and that he would be chairing the day’s meeting in her absence. Some housekeeping matters were then covered, including how to ask questions on Zoom and the need for attendees to have their name and county association on display.</p>	
M02ESC(2301)	<p><i>Apologies for absence</i></p> <p>No apologies were received.</p>	
M03ESC(2301)	<p><i>Declarations of interests</i></p> <p>There were no interests declared.</p>	
M04ESC(2301)	<p><i>Minutes of the Council Meeting of 30 November 2022</i></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read and were agreed as a true and correct record.</p>	
M05ESC(2301)	<p><i>Board Update</i></p> <p>It was noted that the Board had met twice since the last Council meeting and is due to meet next in early June. Recent topics of discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed training on safeguarding</li> <li>• Approved investment into further support for safeguarding</li> <li>• Approved further developments to the Risk Register</li> <li>• Approved the 2023/24 budget</li> <li>• Guided the development of a People Plan</li> <li>• Continued to ensure that young people are a priority</li> <li>• Approved developments in the areas of anti-doping and transgender participation</li> <li>• Discussed and approved the direction of the new Membership scheme</li> </ul>	
M06ESC(2301)	<p><b>2. CEO Update</b></p> <p>CEO Mark Williams (MW) had shared a written update with Council ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>MW highlighted three areas of his written update.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">i. Participation – first full post-pandemic season</p> <p>The latest Active Lives survey results were released recently. This is the first dataset covering the period after Covid restrictions were lifted. There has a</p>	

<p>M07ESC(2301)</p> <p>M08ESC(2301)</p>	<p>been a positive change in the number of people playing squash with participation back at about 90% of the pre-pandemic numbers. The numbers reported put squash in a similar position to other sports, but clearly there is still work for the squash community to do to get more people into the sport.</p> <p>ii. Campaigns and programmes</p> <p>It was noted that the community engagement work delivered during the Commonwealth Games has continued with hundreds of people playing squash for the first time as a result of various programmes started in the city.</p> <p>On the back of the Games, Squash Stars, a national programme to get young people into the game, was launched. Three rounds of activity had been completed with over 1,000 young people playing squash as a result.</p> <p>Some pilot work in the north of England was also mentioned. Two new programmes to engage new people are Squash from the Mosque and Mixed Ability Squash 57. It was noted that there are plans to roll out these exciting programmes across the country in the coming year.</p> <p>iii. Membership and Club Affiliation</p> <p>This is a topic on the agenda for the day’s meeting, and MW’s reflections were that the changes to the scheme, following many years with little change, will be far reaching and impact lots of different people across the sport, whether it be players, league organisers or county associations. Although it is acknowledged that the changes bring challenges, there is confidence that the changes are needed in order to modernise the sport. The aim is to make the transition as smooth as possible.</p> <p><b>3. Membership &amp; Affiliation</b></p> <p>Paul Makinen, Head of Digital &amp; Insight, introduced this item and talked through some slides that showed progress so far in the development of the new scheme.</p> <p>Council members fed back in several different areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future communications should be tailored so that the individual membership renewal dates and affiliation renewal dates are referenced, making the changes easier to understand in each specific case.</li> <li>• Some clubs are concerned that, although the intention of the new affiliation scheme is to reduce the administration burden, at least one club has reported concerns that the administration might increase.</li> <li>• The way the child accounts are managed should be simplified.</li> <li>• Interaction with the league software will be crucial.</li> <li>• Squashmatch.com could be offered as a benefit.</li> </ul>	<p>PM</p> <p>PM</p> <p>PM</p> <p>PM</p>
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<p>M09ESC(2301)</p>	<p><b>4. Participation &amp; Inclusion – Leisure Centres</b></p> <p>Head of Partnerships &amp; Communities Jo Rowbottom (JR) introduced this item. There was appetite at the last Council meeting for a Council discussion at this meeting of leisure centres and their role in the squash community. This is amid concerns of an increasing threat of closure of centres or courts post-pandemic and in a time of a cost of living crisis. It is known that leisure centres account for a significant proportion of squash facilities (around 40%).</p> <p>JR then invited discussion in small groups and shared the following questions to help guide the conversations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What examples can Council members share of successful squash activities and environments at leisure centres?</li> <li>2. How can we work together to address the challenges and improve engagement with leisure centres?</li> </ol>	<p>PM</p>
<p>M10ESC(2301)</p>	<p>The following are the collated key points from those discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was agreed that the management personnel of a leisure centre are very important in determining the success or otherwise of any given sport at the centre.</li> <li>• Coaches are also crucial, although it was felt they often don't have the capacity, the time and perhaps all the right skills to build a business in a challenging environment.</li> <li>• Surrey Squash is currently trialling investment of funds into leisure centre coaching.</li> <li>• Successful leisure-centre activities tend to be driven by individuals who are passionate about making squash activity happen. These individuals have the ability to inspire participants and management.</li> <li>• It would be useful to include guidance in a toolkit for county programme managers on building relationships with leisure centre management and leisure operators.</li> <li>• Regular reminders to Sport England of the threat of court closures would be helpful. Could a short-term moratorium be mandated to halt court closures?</li> <li>• There is an opportunity to make better connections between leisure centres and traditional squash clubs, whereby the former can be feeders to the latter.</li> <li>• Leisure centres tend to be engaged better at local rather than national level.</li> </ul>	<p>JR</p> <p>MW</p>
<p>M11ESC(2301)</p>	<p><b>5. Environment and Sustainability in Squash</b></p>	

	<p>MW introduced this item, highlighting that England Squash wants to become more environmentally sustainable and reduce its impact on the planet. Some initial steps have been taken in this area in recent years, including becoming a Carbon Neutral Organisation and planting trees linked to large events such as the British Open.</p>	
<p>M12ESC(2301)</p>	<p>In the future, there is a desire to do more and to play a leading role in supporting the squash community to do likewise.</p>	
	<p>M13ESC(2301)</p> <p>MW then invited discussion in small groups and shared the following questions to help guide the conversations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are Council members aware of examples of individuals or clubs taking positive action on environmental sustainability that England Squash could learn from and share?</li> <li>2. What could England Squash do to support the squash community to take action to help the environment and improve sustainability in squash?</li> </ol>	
<p>M14ESC(2301)</p>	<p>The following are the collated key points from those discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst there is overwhelming support for environmental issues, it was felt to be difficult to see this as a priority for local clubs.</li> <li>• There was support for events to take place more locally to reduce car journeys or to recommend lift shares.</li> <li>• Common ground for environmental support was found on improving ageing facilities with systems to help reduce costs and lower carbon footprints.</li> <li>• England Squash could recommend contractors for LED lighting, ventilation, heat pumps, solar power, etc.</li> <li>• The LTA has a venue support toolkit on its website that focusses on environmental sustainability: <a href="https://www.lta.org.uk/roles-and-venues/venues/environmental-sustainability/">https://www.lta.org.uk/roles-and-venues/venues/environmental-sustainability/</a></li> <li>• It was noted that 10-18 June is Great Big Green Week and therefore an ideal time for clubs to get involved.</li> </ul>	<p>MW</p> <p>MW</p>
<p>M15ESC(2301)</p>	<p><b>6. Rackets Cubed</b></p> <p>Carrie Cante, Programme Director at Rackets Cubed, gave an excellent presentation of the registered charity that was founded in 2016.</p> <p>Rackets Cubed focuses on education, nutrition and racket sports. Full information is at <a href="https://racketscubed.com">https://racketscubed.com</a>.</p>	
<p>M16ESC(2301)</p>	<p><b>7. Any Other Business</b></p>	

<p>M17ESC(2301)</p> <p>M18ESC(2301)</p>	<p>EO highlighted that several information-only papers as follows had also been shared with Council members and thanked the writers of those papers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitions</li> <li>• Digital</li> <li>• Marketing &amp; Communications</li> <li>• Talent &amp; Performance</li> <li>• Young People in Squash</li> </ul> <p><i>County association funding</i></p> <p>There was discussion of funding streams for county associations now that the structure of some regional forums has changed, and last year funding went directly to county associations. It was noted that funding is currently being evaluated and feedback is being sought from county associations.</p> <p><i>Squash 101 app</i></p> <p>It was agreed that the app remains a valuable tool despite some limitations, however, in part because Sport England has required changes to how things are measured, the app is not currently being pushed to the extent it was in the past. Plans are in place to move the technology forward so that coaches and leaders are no longer required to do the data collection themselves.</p>	<p>JR</p> <p>JR</p>
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Signed...  .....

Eamonn O'Rourke (Chair)