



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Council meeting held online via the Zoom video conference application at 10:00 on Tuesday, 21 July 2022.

PRESENT

Council Members

Seamus Singh (Avon)	Bernie Gill (Lancashire)
Simon Street (Berkshire)	Andrew Beeston (Merseyside)
Julian Holmes (Buckinghamshire)	Vickie Prow (Middlesex)
Ali Loke (Cambridgeshire)	Tim Taylor (Middlesex)
Geoff Walton (Cheshire)	Alec Livingstone (Suffolk)
Martin Wren (Cheshire)	Patrick Fleming (Surrey)
Jo Wallis (Derbyshire)	Colin Watson (Surrey)
Jane Smith (Dorset)	Paul Millman (Sussex, ES President)
Brian Duke (Durham & Cleveland)	Roger More (Warwickshire)
David Neller (Essex)	Mo Sarwar (Warwickshire)
Geoff Went (Essex)	Nick Hartley (Wiltshire)
Ewen Denning (Gloucestershire)	Nick Carter (Worcestershire)
Isobel Smith (Hertfordshire)	Hugh Mannerings (Yorkshire)

IN ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Joy Carter (Chair)
Heidi Leseur
Wendy Newlove
Andy Steele
Mark Williams (CEO)

Vice-President

Zena Wooldridge

Guests

Simon Perks (Sockmonkey Consulting)

England Squash

Neil Edgar (Finance Director)
Steve Jones (Operations Officer, Minute Taker)
Paul Makinen (Head of Digital & Insight)
Chris Peach (National Education & Pathways Manager)
Jo Rowbottom (Head of Partnerships & Communities)
Paul Walters (Commercial & Competitions Strategic Lead)


MINUTES REF.	ITEM	ACTION
M01ESC(2201)	<p>1. Chair's Welcome</p> <p>Chair Joy Carter (JC) opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to Council. 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> <p>It was noted that Chris Peach of England Squash would be facilitating Zoom breakout rooms and monitoring questions.</p>	
M02ESC(2201)	<p><i>Apologies for absence</i></p> <p>Apologies were received from Cumbria, Herefordshire and Oxfordshire, as well as from Vice-Presidents Barbara Sanderson and Joyce Tuomey.</p>	
M03ESC(2201)	<p><i>Declarations of interests</i></p> <p>There were no interests declared.</p>	
M04ESC(2201)	<p><i>Minutes of the Council Meeting of 14 December 2021</i></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read and were agreed as a true and correct record.</p>	
M05ESC(2201)	<p><i>Matters arising</i></p> <p>In relation to minute reference M05ESC(2102), it was noted that there is ongoing dialogue with the Willstrop family and we will be led by their wishes.</p>	
M06ESC(2201)	<p>Regarding minute reference M27ESC(2102) it was said that discussions that same week (and prior) with broadcasters took place, although it is acknowledged that Commonwealth Games television coverage is very much dependent on broadcaster schedules and the progress of British players.</p>	
M07ESC(2201)	<p><i>Board Update</i></p> <p>JC noted recent highlights as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed direction of travel for our digital platform as well as for competitions software • Had in-depth discussions regarding the future of club affiliation and membership • Approved an approach to helping clubs remove barriers to participation through national campaigns and training • Gave the green light to a commercial strategy 	

<p>M08ESC(2201)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved the 2022/23 budget <p>2. CEO Update</p> <p>CEO Mark Williams (MW) had shared a written update to Council ahead of the meeting but also gave a verbal update, beginning by highlighting the lifting of Covid-related restrictions in February and the move towards a 'living with Covid' phase.</p>	
<p>M09ESC(2201)</p>	<p>March was said to have brought great news in the form of the Sport England funding agreement for the 2022-27 cycle, with funds secure, subject to performance.</p>	
<p>M10ESC(2201)</p>	<p>There followed some discussion of Covid testing and agreement that currently it's more problematic for amateur players to be tested compared to the relative ease of this for professional players. England Squash continue to monitor government guidance closely.</p>	
<p>M11ESC(2201)</p>	<p>There was a question from Warwickshire regarding the insurance cover provided by England Squash membership in relation to eye protection, and it was agreed that MW would follow up directly. Discussion will also include promotion of the use of eyewear and whether or not prescription eyewear is covered by insurance.</p>	<p>MW</p>
<p>M12ESC(2201)</p>	<p>3. Membership & Affiliation</p>	
<p>M13ESC(2201)</p>	<p>Paul Makinen, Head of Digital & Insight, and Simon Perks (Sockmonkey Consulting) introduced this item and the paper they had written prior to the meeting. The paper presented an outline recommendation for a new membership model.</p>	
<p>M14ESC(2201)</p>	<p>The meeting attendees then went into breakout rooms to discuss the subject in small groups. The following are the collated key points from those discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was general support for the recommendations outlined in the paper • It was felt the easier group is competitive players, using county leagues to 'enforce' registration. However, it's more tricky for club players so need to focus on the tangible benefits • It was suggested the club player offer should include information on how to play squash, improve and learn new skills, from the basics through to expert level • It was agreed that insurance remains a key benefit, as is the case with other sports • The county rebate is hugely important • A 'salesforce' approach is needed e.g. coaches and clubs to get a kickback for individual members they refer 	<p>PM</p>

<p>M15ESC(2201)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Wren of Cheshire requested a one-to-one with Simon Perks to discuss detail <p>4. County Association Governance</p> <p>MW and Simon Perks presented this item and the paper shared prior to the meeting. The paper noted the 12-point list of governance standards that was drawn up, implementation of which began in March led by David Evans (Partner Engagement Officer for county associations) and supported by Simon Perks.</p>	<p>PM, SP</p>
<p>M16ESC(2201)</p>	<p>The meeting attendees then went into breakout rooms to discuss the subject in small groups. The following are the collated key points from those discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource was highlighted as a key issue given that county association committees remain primarily run by volunteers • The counties need a clearly defined primary role, which should be kept simple due to the resource issue • Recruitment of new committee members is generally difficult, although some recent experiences in that regard have been more positive and promising • The two-year time limit was felt to be important but challenging, probably the biggest challenge of all 12 standards • Lessons could be learned from school governance in terms of recruitment of volunteers, in terms of the support they receive, access to data, etc. • There was a suggestion to share FAQs (from county associations) on the England Squash website as a resource • The nine-year maximum term for committee members was considered a significant concern • England Squash could do more to recognise and reward volunteers • Some counties have a succession plan in place and try to break down their committee positions into smaller, more manageable/appealing roles • Counties sharing more news on a regular basis not only builds the community but builds interest in the work of county associations • It would be useful for there to be a template constitution that county associations could adapt and adopt 	<p>MW</p> <p>MW</p> <p>MW</p> <p>MW</p>
<p>M17ESC(2201)</p>	<p>5. Commonwealth Games</p> <p>With the Commonwealth Games due to begin just one week after the meeting, there was a presentation of slides from Head of Partnerships & Communities Jo Rowbottom (JR) to supplement the Council paper shared ahead of the meeting.</p>	<p>MW</p>

M18ESC(2201)	There followed some discussion of the different brands of mini courts. MW is to follow up with information on the potential for county associations to perhaps join together to make an order in bulk to reduce cost per unit.	MW
M19ESC(2201)	There was also discussion of ticket sales and its importance in terms of the continued inclusion of squash in future editions of the Games. It was noted that only athletics and swimming are guaranteed inclusion beyond 2022, although Squash is set to feature in 2026.	
M20ESC(2201)	6. Participation and Inclusion MW and JR presented this item, including some slides to build on the Council paper shared in the lead-up to the meeting.	
M21ESC(2201)	There was a request for England Squash to distribute its Diversity Policy to the county associations for quick reference.	MW
M22ESC(2201)	It was noted that diversity training is planned for county associations.	JR
M23ESC(2201)	There was agreement that availability of coaches can also be key, and it was noted that this point was not highlighted in the slides and could be incorporated as a specific area at the base of the pyramid.	JR
M24ESC(2201)	There was a suggestion to seek insight into new leisure centres that open, looking at the proportion of them that do and don't include the provision of squash courts.	PM
M25ESC(2201)	It was felt that the marketing of squash is perhaps an undervalued aspect and that a specific agenda item, covering also Squash 57 and connection with other sports, would be useful for the next Council meeting and Board meeting so that a 'big effort' can be made.	MW
M26ESC(2201)	7. Election for Non-Executive Directors Current NED Nick Murrills' three-year term was coming to an end and Nick was seeking re-election. Nick's intention to be re-elected received unanimous support from the England Squash Board at the June meeting.	
M27ESC(2201)	It was also noted that Vickie Prow left the Board at the end of her three-year term. There was a thank you for Gloucestershire for the nomination of Richard Cannock, who is currently the County Secretary.	
M28ESC(2201)	There then followed two votes: 1. Proposal to re-elect Nick Murrills	

	<p>Votes were submitted electronically and following post-meeting verification the result was 18 votes for, two abstentions and none against. Nick Murrills was therefore re-elected.</p> <p>2. Proposal to elect Richard Cannock</p> <p>Votes were submitted electronically and following post-meeting verification the result was 17 votes for, three abstentions and none against. Richard Cannock was therefore elected on to the Board.</p>	
M29ESC(2201)	An announcement is to be made following the meeting.	MW
M30ESC(2201)	8. Any Other Business	
	There was discussion of the Commonwealth Games schedule and a request for this to be shared widely.	JR
M31ESC(2201)	It was requested that there be a renewed push to promote defibrillators following the recent sad loss of a player in the North West.	MW
M32ESC(2201)	There was discussion of the meeting format and the pros and cons of virtual meetings compared to face-to-face meetings. It was felt in some quarters that the virtual meetings in particular have tended to be on the short side and don't allow sufficient time in the breakout rooms. It was agreed that these points will be considered ahead of future meetings.	MW
M33ESC(2201)	A topic also raised was refereeing standards, and there was a suggestion for greater use of real-life examples from matches within the referee training.	CP
M34ESC(2201)	There was a request for statistics on the use of Squash Finder, about which PM will follow up with county associations to share.	PM
M35ESC(2201)	It was noted that there are plans to share information with Tournament Organisers on Sport Manager, and it was requested that this information be shared simultaneously with county associations.	PW
M36ESC(2201)	There was discussion of the possibility of England Squash facilitating the provision of club websites in the future, e.g. via Club Spark or Sporty HQ, as is done by the LTA.	PM

Signed.....  (Chair)
 Date.....02/09/2022.....