



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Council meeting held on the Zoom video conference application at 1500 on Thursday, 25 June 2020.

PRESENT

Council Members

Richard Bickers (Avon)	Isobel Smith (Hertfordshire)
Seamus Singh (Avon)	Baz Hodson (Kent)
Garry Milner (Bedfordshire)	Bernie Gill (Lancashire)
Sandy Burnett (Berkshire)	Robin Clements (Leicestershire)
Dave Evans (Buckinghamshire)	Andrew Beeston (Merseyside)
Ali Loke (Cambridgeshire)	Tim Taylor (Middlesex)
Richard Loke (Cambridgeshire)	Dave Barnett (Northumbria)
Martin Wren (Cheshire)	Kevin Emery (Nottinghamshire)
Matt Harford (Cornwall)	Nick Hargreaves (Nottinghamshire)
Jo Wallis (Derbyshire)	Aubrey Bell (Oxfordshire)
Jonathan Gliddon (Devon)	Ian Dinwiddy (Shropshire)
Gary Boome (Dorset)	Chris Dawson (Staffordshire)
Brian Duke (Durham & Cleveland)	Fathi Seliman (Staffordshire)
Dave Neller (Essex)	Alec Livingstone (Suffolk)
Geoff Went (Essex)	Paul Millman (Sussex and President)
Mark Toseland (Gloucestershire)	Roger More (Warwickshire)
Devan Kandiah (Hampshire and VP)	John Jeffrey (Wiltshire)
Mark Chamberlain (Herefordshire)	Nick Carter (Worcestershire)
Kim Mansfield (Hertfordshire)	Peter Keen (Yorkshire)

IN ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Joy Carter (Chair)
Kate Bedwell
Nick Donald
Mark Jeffreys
Heidi Leseur
Nick Murrills
Wendy Newlove
Vickie Prow
Keir Worth (CEO)

Other England Squash Vice Presidents

Barbara Sanderson
Joyce Tuomey

Zena Wooldridge

England Squash

Paul Barrett (Director of Membership & Customer Experience)

David Campion (National Coach)

Neil Edgar (Finance Director)

Steve Jones (Operations Officer/Minute Taker)

Chris Peach (National Education & Pathways Manager)

Andy Pilling (Competitions Manager)

Jo Rowbottom (Partnerships & Communities Manager)

Josh Taylor (National Performance Coach)

Linda Taylor (Head of Strategic Partnerships)

Paul Walters (Commercial & Competitions Strategic Lead)

Mark Williams (Director of Sport)

Guests

Simon Perks (Sockmonkey Consulting)

MINUTES REF.	ITEM	ACTION
M01ESC(2001)	<p>1. Chair's Welcome</p> <p>Chair Joy Carter (JC) opened the meeting by reflecting on the difficult time in recent months for both the sport and the nation as a whole due to the COVID-19 pandemic. JC also offered condolences for those at the meeting who may have lost friends or loved ones due to the disease.</p>	
M02ESC(2001)	<p>It was noted that the day's meeting was somewhat experimental due to its online format, but it was one that was welcomed.</p>	
M03ESC(2001)	<p>JC handed over to National Education & Pathways Manager Chris Peach (CP), whose role it was to oversee the technological aspects of the meeting. CP explained how the host video conference platform, Zoom, would be used during the meeting, briefly reiterating the 'house rules' shared ahead of the meeting and describing how the 'breakout rooms' would work for discussion of agenda items 3, 4 and 5.</p>	
M04ESC(2001)	<p>It was noted that during the meeting Board member Kate Bedwell and England Squash staff members would be monitoring any questions raised by Council through the Zoom chat function.</p>	
M05ESC(2001)	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Best wishes for a speedy recovery were sent to Bett Dryhurst of Worcestershire, who was said to have had a recent cycling accident.</p>	
M06ESC(2001)	<p>Declarations of interests</p> <p>There were no interests declared.</p>	
M07ESC(2001)	<p>Minutes of the Council meeting of 16 Nov 2019</p>	

	The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read and were agreed as a true and correct record.	
M08ESC(2001)	Matters arising Page 2 – CP said that there was an update in that England Squash has a new contact database for referees on the website and that he aims to work closely with county associations to progress further.	Chris Peach
M09ESC(2001)	Page 2 – Partnerships & Communities Manager Jo Rowbottom (JR) updated on the Club Engagement Day case study by saying that it would be ready to go once the programme of club visits is restarted.	
M10ESC(2001)	Merseyside raised a query related to when revisions are planned for the Articles of Association. CEO Keir Worth (KW) advised that Senior Independent Director Nick Donald and Board member Nick Murrills, who has legal expertise, are planning to propose revisions ahead of the November AGM, to be shared with county associations in advance.	Keir Worth
M11ESC(2001)	Page 6 – It was noted that Jonathan Gliddon has since stood down from his Masters Committee role but that an invitation would be extended to the committee to present at the next meeting.	Steve Jones
M12ESC(2001)	Page 7 – JR addressed the request, in relation to the England Squash app, for insight into usage for the benefit of county associations. It was said that work can move forward now that the database has been integrated. The work related to providing app information on Coaches Club on the website was said to have been completed.	Jo Rowbottom
M13ESC(2001)	Page 9 – It was noted that the innovationideas@englandsquash.com email address had been set up, and it was agreed that it would be pushed out again to raise greater awareness.	Paul Barrett
M14ESC(2001)	Page 10 – Competitions Manager Andy Pilling brought attendees up to date on Inter County Championships consultation. It was said that the proposed changes would go through another review process with county chairs, secretaries and Vice President Barbara Sanderson, amongst others.	Andy Pilling
M15ESC(2001)	Board update JC updated on recent activities of the Board, which included contributions to working groups and committees, including Innovation, Audit & Risk, Digital, Nominations and Climate & Ecological Emergency.	
M16ESC(2001)	It was noted that recent Board discussions had naturally been dominated by COVID-19, but lots of other areas were also covered during a busy period supporting and challenging the Executive team.	

M17ESC(2001)	Also of important note was that Richard Antcliff had stood down from the Board. Warm thanks were expressed to Richard for his contribution, and it was highlighted that an election would take place later in the year to find a replacement.	Keir Worth
M18ESC(2001)	On the subject of Board diversity, it was reported that Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston had indicated that a review of the sports governance code is likely to see targets introduced for a minimum number of people from black and other minority groups to serve in leadership roles. It was acknowledged that there is a need for England Squash to make significant diversity improvements across the game, incl. at Board/Council. It was reported that this will be a key part of the next England Squash strategy.	Keir Worth
M19ESC(2001)	2. CEO update KW began by highlighting the paper he had shared ahead of the meeting before going on to introduce all the various members of staff present on the video call.	
M20ESC(2001)	Very good progress was said to have been made against the KPIs, emphasising the spirit of collaboration between all stakeholders, including significant contributions from county associations, as being key to these achievements.	
M21ESC(2001)	It was highlighted that it is essential during COVID-19 that England Squash, counties and clubs connect with the wider squash community as much as possible. Working together in a flexible, adaptive and responsive way was said to be important to reconnect with as many as possible of the 1.2m people who play squash each year.	
M22ESC(2001)	There were also key points made about learning from the lockdown period, in terms of the way technology has been embraced, such as online courses and Board/Council meetings.	
M23ESC(2001)	A question was raised by Cambridgeshire about whether elite players were allowed back on court through England Squash. KW and National Coach David Campion said in response that elite players, defined as adults funded by England Squash, had not yet been allowed to do so, but risk assessments are underway at two venues, the National Squash Centre in Manchester and an EIS site in Hertfordshire, with a view to a return in mid-July.	
M24ESC(2001)	3. Squash and COVID-19 Mark Williams (Director of Sport) (MW), Paul Barrett (Director of Membership & Customer Experience) and JR talked through the squash	

	response to COVID-19, referring to an expected return-to-play date of mid-July.	
M25ESC(2001)	It was noted that a suite of resources has been prepared ready to be shared with the squash community as soon as the Government provides guidance and confirms a restart date. The resources include risk assessment templates, posters and ideas for types of games to play on court dependent on the specific social distancing guidelines that are ultimately issued. There was an appeal for help from county associations with regard to sharing the resources far and wide.	County Associations
M26ESC(2001)	A question was raised by Berkshire in relation to whether England Squash could help by contacting leisure operators who were said to be looking to use squash courts as additional gym areas post-lockdown. Whilst acknowledging that England Squash does not have the power to provide direction to leisure operators in that regard, MW said that the plan is to work with them in a positive and constructive way. The leisure operators were said to have been contacted and are also expecting the forthcoming advice and guidance on how squash can come back safely.	MW
M27ESC(2001)	<i>Player survey</i> JR shared slides to summarise the results of a recent England Squash survey that was completed by some 4,700 squash players. The most common word selected in the survey to express player feelings on a return to squash was 'excited', although there were also, to a lesser extent, some feelings of caution and apprehension expressed.	
M28ESC(2001)	<i>Discussion</i> All attendees on the call then broke off into small 'breakout rooms' to discuss the following questions: 1. <i>What can we do collectively to re-engage squash players when the Government restrictions are lifted?</i> 2. <i>What support will clubs need and how can we help?</i>	
M29ESC(2001)	What follows are the collated thoughts and ideas from those breakout-room discussions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a coaches conference at the point of being able to re-open, and when we have shared our guidelines, so that they can all work together through what it means for the clubs and players. Include the toolkit and packs in course content/a module for coaches currently going through training/courses • Can we provide any template or boilerplate social media comms for clubs that they can use to share on their own channels? • Social media key to sharing information • Clubs to be encouraged to organise events/functions (club nights etc.) to provide opportunities for players to meet • England Squash to produce and distribute toolkit – confusion over WSF information 	

- England Squash to produce videos of how players can prepare for playing again – England Squash also to provide direction of where information can be found
- Most concerns related to spread of COVID-19 via changing rooms and not playing – i.e. playing is safe, changing rooms are not
- Reiterate health and mental wellbeing benefits
- Connect using What’s App and through team captains
- Drive reassurance that venues and activities are safe by training coaches and other key personnel needed to get squash open
- Connect with local partners, e.g. SGOs, Active Partnerships, etc.
- Images of socially distanced routines/conditioned games (not just aimed at the better players)
- Find funding/learn how to apply for it
- Tool kits with risk assessments and images/films of how to interact, clean, etc. help to boost confidence
- Focus on individual games rather than team
- Have clear phases and associated resources – what can people do and when?
- Use existing members to help reengage/recruit infrequent or lapsed players
- Transfer box leagues to tennis courts – i.e. play tennis with squash scoring
- Focus on the biggest area of challenge – reengaging the infrequent/casual players
- Leicestershire commented on losing players to tennis and the risk of those players not coming back. Essex meanwhile replied that they had several members playing tennis to keep a racket in their hands and that those players couldn’t wait to get back on the squash court.
- Need to minimise the risk to players but also balance the economic side of things for clubs
- Hourly bookings – 40 minute play/20 minute clean-down
- Get more juniors/women playing and give them ‘mentors’
- Make every night club night, change the way people consume squash (rather than focusing on off-peak)
- Encourage different formats for squash – competitions/get-togethers
- Look at other ‘similar’ sports and see if we can attract players that way, e.g. golf
- Go hard at diversity
- Encourage clubs and members to share our comms with their members/friends (so word is spread further)
- Be bolder on social media
- Get forms/templates out ASAP
- For return to play, focus on the masses – get the core of the game back and happy (80-20 rule)
- Squash 57 push

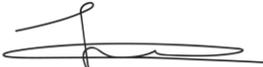
<p>M30ESC(2001)</p>	<p>4. Competitions and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter County Championships (ICC) Update <p>Andy Pilling introduced this item by summarising some of the key activities around the ICC. Reviews were said to have taken place as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Junior ICC, led by Tim Vail <p>Feedback from a range of stakeholders from county associations to team managers to parents led Tim to make a number of proposals that then went to a focus group that was formed. The review process was now said to be in its final stages, and it was noted that counties will have the opportunity to feed back one last time before the changes are finalised for the new season.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Masters ICC, led by Chris Truswell <p>Counties and team managers had the opportunity to feed back on several key areas such as dates and costs. This feedback will lead to a number of proposals that will again go out to counties to garner opinion.</p> <p>It was highlighted, however, that, due to COVID-19, England Squash Masters approached England Squash with the proposal to not hold Masters ICC for 2020/21 due to the rescheduling of some major competitions that were cancelled during the lockdown months.</p> <p>Currently it is likely that a compromise solution will be found whereby the Masters ICC will take place in 2020/21, but potentially in a reduced format, with subsequent changes in format for the 2021/22 season based on the review.</p>	
<p>M31ESC(2001)</p>	<p><i>Discussion</i></p> <p>All attendees on the call then broke off into small 'breakout rooms' to discuss the following question:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How can we collectively support clubs in the delivery of competitions to ensure the safest possible environment?</i></p>	
<p>M32ESC(2001)</p>	<p>What follows are the collated thoughts and ideas from those breakout-room discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every participant AND organiser/volunteer must be registered – contact details for track and trace must be mandatory. • Reduce the number of people going along to watch/support (i.e. one parent/guardian per household if juniors) • What do organisers need to think about in terms of timings for cleaning down, etc. Do they need to be scheduled differently? What guidance can we provide? 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can/should England Squash support or fund non-affiliated clubs? • England Squash to advise whether counties can/should fund non-affiliated clubs • Can England Squash provide funding to support clubs to host graded tournaments • Use new formats that reduce the number of people on site at any one time – i.e. different scoring and smaller draws to get a competition done in a morning • No spectators – use streaming technology to show matches live, so families don't need to attend the event • Need to adopt best practice – learn from the elite and professional players. Send any risk assessment to all clubs along with any guidelines – talk through it and support if necessary – explain clearly what will be expected. • Learn from other sports who have been back before us 	
M33ESC(2001)	<p>5. England Squash 2021 Strategy – a Work in Progress</p> <p>JC introduced Simon Perks (SP), Director of Sockmonkey Consulting, who explained that he had been working with the England Squash Board and Executive with a view to developing a strategy for 2021 onwards.</p>	
M34ESC(2001)	<p>Key stakeholders had been consulted by SP during the development of the strategy, and SP took the opportunity to thank all of the county associations who had contributed so far. It was highlighted that the purpose of this item on the agenda was to allow further opportunity for county input.</p>	
M35ESC(2001)	<p>A strategy was defined as a plan of action for how an organisation can reach its goals. It was said that the strategy needs three things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A robust understanding of the goals and the challenges to overcome along the way 2. A clear approach to <i>how</i> those goals can be achieved and the challenges overcome 3. A suite of coherent actions 	
M36ESC(2001)	<p>SP highlighted the Council paper he wrote and which was circulated ahead of the meeting, notably the results of a survey that went to counties and clubs. The view that was said to have been most commonly expressed in the survey was the need to get more people playing squash.</p>	
M37ESC(2001)	<p><i>Discussion</i></p> <p>This need to get more people playing was therefore said to be the basis of the discussion. All attendees on the call then broke off into small 'breakout rooms' to discuss whichever of the following questions about which they felt particularly strongly or which prompted ideas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can we get <i>more people</i> playing squash? 2. How can we get more <i>women and young people</i> playing squash? 	

	<p>3. How can we get <i>existing players</i> to play <i>more</i> squash? 4. How can <i>county associations</i> and <i>England Squash</i> help to achieve this?</p>	
<p>M38ESC(2001)</p>	<p>What follows are the collated thoughts and ideas from those breakout-room discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the family on the court – this can then work for the current situation but also longer term because family groups come to the clubs for a range of activities and general recreation • Introduce family membership • Sell the message better – get it across more to women and juniors – seen as a bit elite • Put coaches in schools – give each coach/club a school • Free coach courses for PE teachers • Free membership at clubs for local school children • Are we making the most of the health and fitness message? • Squash 57 is fast growing – how can we encourage juniors to play Squash 57? • National promotion of range of balls available (i.e. Max) appropriate to level • Social tournaments for adults – graded tournaments • U25 social graded tournaments to ensure young players are not lost to squash at university, etc. • Clubs to welcome younger players via introductory offers, etc. • England Squash support is focused on supporting clubs/existing players – should be more outward-facing to attract new players • Greater focus on pay-per-play opportunity to attract players • Clubs should focus on ‘taster’ opportunities/events to attract new players who can be converted to members in the longer term • England Squash to focus more on Instagram to be relevant for younger players, both existing and potential • England Squash to focus on producing and distributing video content to promote the image of the sport • Schools outreach/National School Games • Workforce ready – recruitment initiatives and pipeline, lifelong career • Partnering with other groups • Reaching local businesses and groups by direct-selling or social media • Marketing – don’t wait for squash to come to us • Outdoor squash/pop-up squash • Not only correct ball promotion but 1-wall, 2-wall, 3-wall hitting • Squash has a brand problem. We must make it appeal to more (types of) people through a rebranding exercise. • Get more people playing through business networking competitions • Go big on Squash 57, for women and juniors but also more generally, as an alternative way to play 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help clubs build better links to schools. Focus the messaging on fitness, health and fun (squash being the vehicle to achieve it). • Get more current players into Squash 57 – education campaign on which balls are available – people dislike the blue ball (too bouncy) but the black balls play more like squash and will appeal to current squash players • Go big on diversity – must do something about the narrow profile of current players • Make sessions more like fitness and fun classes so they feel they have a good workout • Organise more women-led and focussed events – promote the likes of a creche or children’s session alongside them • If a club doesn’t have many female members, link up with other local clubs to combine sessions and rotate the host venue • Women-only club nights – ensure clubs are welcoming – change culture • Make sessions not so focussed on competition • Marketing – game needs to be promoted more – make the sport ‘sexy’ and appealing so people of all ages have heard about it but also want to be part of it. Get some sort of endorsement from ‘famous people’ make it more prominent. • Use elite players to go round with a roadshow, but fun and exciting to appeal to a younger audience, not just the purists 	
M39ESC(2001)	County associations were encouraged to contact SP with any further thoughts at simon@sockmonkeyconsulting.com	County associations
M40ESC(2001)	There was agreement that both squash and Squash 57 have an important role to play – essentially any squash activity that takes away a gym’s urge to use squash courts for anything other than squash is crucial, and perhaps more so post-COVID-19 than ever.	
M41ESC(2001)	<p>6. Any Other Business</p> <p>Buckinghamshire queried whether there was any insight into how many squash clubs on a national basis had been successful in obtaining Sport England funding during the lockdown period.</p> <p>In response, MW reported that the initial figures were not particularly high for the Crisis Fund, but there was also said to be an unknown because Sport England categorised the applications based on what was considered to be the primary sport at a club. That meant, for example, that it was not known how many squash sections at tennis and squash clubs might have benefited. Of the squash clubs that applied, it was noted that around 70% were successful.</p>	
M42ESC(2001)	Leicestershire queried the reason that two clubs in the county, namely Leicester Squash Club and Leicestershire Lawn Tennis Club, were unsuccessful in their application for England Squash’s Bounce Back grants.	

	It was noted by JR that there were more applicants than available grants. JR agreed to feed back to Leicestershire Squash on the specific applications from the two clubs in Leicestershire.	Jo Rowbottom
M43ESC(2001)	JC placed on her record her thanks to KW and the England Squash team for adapting well to remote working and for the hard and varied work done during the lockdown period, as well as to her fellow Board members for all of their support, but most importantly to all the county associations in attendance on the call for their invaluable contributions on the day and generally.	
M44ESC(2001)	In addition, there were some questions raised and comments made in the Zoom chat that were not discussed during the meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avon pointed out that with regard to how COVID-19 affects squash, the WSF noted that “each sport was given a score from 0-4, with 0 being of little risk and 4 being very high risk. Squash, along with sports like basketball, volleyball and boxing were included in the very high-risk sports.” 	
M45ESC(2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buckinghamshire asked whether the full results of the survey discussed in item 3 would be shared, and it was confirmed that they would be. 	Paul Barrett
M46ESC(2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex noted that “with respect to court usage worries we have written to the head of the County Sports Partnership (Active Essex) to ask their support in ensuring courts are not poached” and that there have been discussions to do likewise in Sussex, Surrey and Middlesex 	
M47ESC(2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex also emphasised the need for “a local strategy to bring together facilities, coaches, marketeers and events” 	
M48ESC(2001)	There was an additional, update paper shared with all attendees ahead of the meeting: ‘COVID-19 Communications Update’ The purpose of the paper was to outline the communications approach taken by England Squash during the coronavirus pandemic and the steps taken to engage stakeholders during lockdown. The appendix showed a full list of the communications.	

Signed.....  (Chair)

Date.....28/07/2020.....