



## COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Council meeting held online via the Zoom video conference application at 09:30 on Wednesday, 15 November 2023.

### PRESENT

#### Council Members

Richard Bickers (Avon)	Gerard L'aimable (Kent)
Julian Holmes (Buckinghamshire)	Bernie Gill (Lancashire)
Matt Harford (Cornwall)	Andrew Beeston (Merseyside)
Jo Wallis (Derbyshire)	Tim Taylor (Middlesex)
Jane Smith (Dorset)	John Thompson (Northumbria)
Nicholas Collins (Durham)	Andrew Wilson (Oxfordshire)
David Neller (Essex)	Philip Caudle (Shropshire)
Chris Vine (Essex)	Patrick Fleming (Surrey)
Richard Cannock (Gloucestershire)	Simon Tunley (Sussex)
Arif Faizi (Hampshire)	Roger More (Warwickshire)
Jonathan Graham (Hampshire)	Nick Carter (Worcestershire)
Leonard Granger (Herefordshire)	

### IN ATTENDANCE

#### Board Members

Joy Carter (Chair)  
Heidi Leseur  
Andrew Light  
Nick Murrills  
Wendy Newlove  
Mark Williams (CEO)

#### President

Paul Millman

#### Vice-President

Barbara Sanderson

#### England Squash

Joey Barrington (Membership & Commercial Partnerships Manager)  
Neil Edgar (Finance Director)  
David Evans (Partner Engagement Officer)  
Steve Jones (minutes)  
Paul Makinen (Head of Digital & Insight)  
Jo Rowbottom (Head of Partnerships & Communities)

MINUTES REF.	ITEM	ACTION
M01ESC(2302)	<p><b>1. Chair’s Welcome</b></p> <p>Joy Carter (JC), England Squash Chair, welcomed everyone to the first Council meeting since the announcement of squash’s inclusion in the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games. 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(2302)	<p>The England Squash team present at the meeting was then introduced to Council, along with President Paul Millman, who had recently shared an inspiring Olympics-themed letter to county associations.</p>	
M03ESC(2302)	<p><i>Sad News</i></p> <p>There was some sad news to report as a couple of particularly notable figures from English squash had passed away since the last Council meeting.</p> <p>In June we lost Mark Cowley. For many years Mark represented England and Middlesex in Masters events, notably becoming World O55 Champion in 2010 in Germany and often being ranked in the top-two in the world in various age categories.</p> <p>Then in September Mike Thurgur passed away at the age of 82. Mike represented England and Great Britain in the 1970s and later became national coach of Wales.</p>	
M04ESC(2302)	<p><i>Apologies for absence</i></p> <p>Apologies were received from Vice President Zena Wooldridge. Zena is also WSF President and was away in Lausanne at a forum representing the new Olympic sport of squash. Zena played a key part in squash’s presentation to the LA28 Organising Committee and the International Olympic Committee. Zena was thanked for her contribution to helping squash gain inclusion for the Games.</p>	
M05ESC(2302)	<p><i>Declarations of interests</i></p> <p>There were no interests declared.</p>	
M06ESC(2302)	<p><i>Minutes of the Council Meeting of 17 May 2023</i></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read and were agreed as a true and correct record.</p>	
M07ESC(2302)	<p><i>Matters Arising</i></p> <p>M08ESC(2301) – It was noted that communications in the lead in to the</p>	


	<p>commencement of the new scheme will be tailored for each club and member so that renewal dates are clear.</p>	<p><b>PM</b></p>
<p>M08ESC(2302)</p>	<p>M10ESC(2301) – It was reported that the programme for County Programme Managers will include guidance on building relationships with leisure centre management and leisure operators.</p>	<p><b>JR</b></p>
<p>M09ESC(2302)</p>	<p>M10ESC(2301) – England Squash makes Sport England aware of concerns around specific court closures as and when they arise.</p>	
<p>M10ESC(2302)</p>	<p>M14ESC(2301) – The World Squash Federation is developing an action plan related to sustainability.</p>	
<p>M11ESC(2302)</p>	<p><i>Board Update</i></p> <p>Since the last Council meeting the Board had met twice and is due to meet again next month. Recent work and topics of discussion have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further development of the Risk Register to ensure the organisation continues to fulfil regulatory compliance</li> <li>• Guidance on the forthcoming new membership and club affiliation scheme</li> <li>• Provided direction on areas of talent and performance, to ensure that all competitive players receive sufficient support to help them thrive</li> <li>• Approved a Young People Strategy, requesting certain changes</li> <li>• Gave approval in relation to the Code for Sports Governance</li> <li>• Continued to ensure that young people, ‘fun’ and ‘belonging’ are priorities</li> </ul>	
<p>M12ESC(2302)</p>	<p><b>2. CEO Update</b></p> <p>Mark Williams (MW), England Squash CEO, had shared a written update ahead of the meeting and spoke to pick out some of the key themes. These included an increase in the number of competitions, the Olympic announcement, the new membership scheme, county association governance, new additions to the England Squash staff, talent and performance, participation and community engagement, and marketing and promotion.</p>	
<p>M13ESC(2302)</p>	<p><b>3. Participation – Young People</b></p> <p>This item was presented by Jo Rowbottom (JR), Head of Partnerships &amp; Communities, and by David Neller (DN), representing Essex Squash at the meeting but also part of the London Squash Project team.</p>	
<p>M14ESC(2302)</p>	<p>JR highlighted the importance of prioritising young people in the participation programmes, and it was noted that the emphasis is always to take the programmes to the audiences to engage them in squash. Fostering a feeling of fun and belonging is key, as is learning what the</p>	

	<p>needs are of the various communities so that programmes can be designed according to those needs. It was noted that programmes such as Squash from the Mosque and Mixed Ability Squash were not conceived by England Squash but instead were supported and rolled out at national level by the NGB as great concepts coming from the community.</p>	
<p>M15ESC(2302)</p>	<p>DN then presented a suite of slides to highlight the work of the London Squash Project, which drives participation in the Capital. The county associations of Essex, Kent, Middlesex and Surrey are working together with England Squash to inspire a new generation of participants across London over the next five years.</p>	
<p>M16ESC(2302)</p>	<p>JC congratulated the project team for the fantastic recent success of getting squash back into the London Youth Games for 2024.</p>	
<p>M17ESC(2302)</p>	<p>DN noted that an important role of the London Squash Project is to encourage schools across the region to introduce racket skills into their curriculums, working with influential partners such as Queen’s Club, Rackets Cubed and Squash Squared. The focus is on England Squash programmes including Squash from the Mosque, Mixed Ability Squash and Squash Girls Can.</p>	
<p>M18ESC(2302)</p>	<p><b>4. Membership &amp; Affiliation</b></p> <p>Paul Makinen (PM), Head of Digital &amp; Insight, introduced this item by showing some Powerpoint slides taking council representatives through a recap of work done to date and the plans for implementation of the new scheme in 2024. It was noted that the separation of club affiliation and individual membership is in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer more choice and value</li> <li>• Connect directly with members</li> <li>• Offer better governance</li> <li>• Grow membership</li> </ul>	
<p>M19ESC(2302)</p>	<p>Key landmarks on the pathway to the new scheme’s implementation have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of consultation feedback to shape both the benefits package and the mechanics of the scheme</li> <li>• The recruitment of Joey Barrington as Membership &amp; Commercial Partnerships Manager</li> <li>• The appointment of a branding agency to develop identity for the new scheme and launch campaign</li> </ul>	
<p>M20ESC(2302)</p>	<p>PM then invited discussion in small groups and shared the following question to help guide the conversations.</p> <p>Q: How can England Squash and county associations work together to improve the understanding of everyone in the</p>	

<p>M21ESC(2302)</p>	<p>squash community about the work that England Squash and its delivery partners do in supporting the grass roots game?</p> <p>The following are the collated key points and ideas from those discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback about the new scheme has been generally positive</li> <li>• Communication is important, including giving counties the information they need to communicate key messages to clubs, i.e. a toolkit</li> <li>• County association AGMs are an important and useful forum to communicate information about the scheme</li> <li>• There is a need to tell the story of squash pictorially</li> <li>• A couple of slides for county committees to talk to are needed:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ ‘Where your money goes’ – there’s a general misunderstanding that money goes on pro/elite players</li> <li>◦ Something to answer the question “What does England Squash do for us?”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A one-page summary stating what England Squash does for members and what the county does and how both work together would be helpful. The messages should come through the clubs</li> <li>• Some joint branding (and a logo lockup) would be good. This is to demonstrate that we’re working together to build a powerful community. This could be offered to all county associations and perhaps to clubs too</li> <li>• Be inspirational in our communications to both players who just want to play and to those who want to know where their money goes</li> <li>• There is a need to resolve a general misunderstanding of the size and scale of England Squash, i.e. to be clear about what we can and can’t do. England Squash can only really create a framework, and delivery has to happen elsewhere due to resources and being a much smaller organisation than the likes of the FA, RFU or ECB, etc.</li> <li>• Data sharing/direct access to the main database would be helpful to support county engagement with the community</li> <li>• Car stickers (or similar) could work well to get the message out there. Cost would be a consideration. Perhaps giving them out at competitions would be the most cost-effective way</li> <li>• A ‘letter’ thanking people when they join could work well. This could perhaps be signed by a player or former player or, perhaps better, by a young player who got to play squash for the first time because of membership. The template letter could be updated regularly so that people hear different stories each time.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Olympic Games – Los Angeles 2028</b></p> <p>Following the recent, exciting news of squash’s inclusion for the first time in the Olympic Games, MW introduced this item with the aid of some slides. The slides highlighted what the Olympics means in a broad</p>	<p>PM</p> <p>PM</p> <p>PM</p> <p>PM</p> <p>PM</p> <p>PM</p> <p>PM</p> <p>PM</p> <p>PM</p> <p>PM</p> <p>PM</p>
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<p>M22ESC(2302)</p>	<p>sense, with every squash court in the country set to benefit. With less than five years to go before the start of the Games, there are plenty of challenges to overcome as well.</p> <p>MW then invited discussion in small groups and shared the following question to help guide the conversations.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Q: What do we want squash in England to look and feel like in 2028, and how must we work together to maximise the opportunity presented by being an Olympic Sport?</p> <p>The following are the collated key points, questions and ideas from those discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the specifics of the selection process, governance and what the competition will look like?</li> <li>• What does the selection process look like?</li> <li>• Players could perhaps tour the country in the build-up to the Games to build anticipation</li> <li>• Agree a deal with Squash TV to show the Games live in all clubs</li> <li>• Use players as role models</li> <li>• Make the event inspirational and aspirational, and grow the game through increased profile</li> <li>• Increase visibility of squash at the forthcoming Olympics in leisure centres, which will hopefully build a strong case to keep courts at risk open</li> </ul>	<p><b>MW</b></p> <p><b>MW</b></p> <p><b>MW</b></p> <p><b>MW</b></p> <p><b>MW</b></p> <p><b>MW</b></p> <p><b>MW</b></p>
<p>M23ESC(2302)</p>	<p><b>6. Any Other Business</b></p> <p><i>Non-Executive Directors</i></p> <p>Zoom’s voting feature was used to seek Council approval for two Non-Executive Directors to move onto new three-year terms of service on the England Squash Board.</p> <p>The result of the voting was as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yawar Abbas – 17 votes in favour, none against and one abstention</li> <li>• Heidi Leseur – 18 votes in favour, none against and no abstentions</li> </ul> <p>Congratulations to Yawar and Heidi.</p>	
<p>M24ESC(2302)</p>	<p><i>Council papers not discussed</i></p> <p>JC highlighted that several information-only papers as follows had also been shared with Council members and thanked the writers of those papers:</p>	

M25ESC(2302)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Competitions</li><li>• Marketing &amp; Communications</li><li>• Talent &amp; Performance</li></ul> <p>There was a request for Talent &amp; Performance to feature ‘above the line’ on the agenda (for discussion) at the next meeting.</p>	<b>MW</b>
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Signed.....

Joy Carter (Chair)