



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board meeting held remotely via the Zoom video conference application at 10:30 on Tuesday, 19 September 2023.

PRESENT**Board**

Joy Carter (Chair) (JC)
 Yawar Abbas (YA)
 Richard Cannock (RC)
 Mark Jeffreys (MJ)
 Heidi Leseur (HL)
 Andrew Light (AL)
 Nick Murrills (NM)
 Wendy Newlove (WN)
 Mayuri Nigam (MN)
 Eamonn O'Rourke (EO)
 Andrew Steele (AS)
 Mark Williams (CEO) (MW)

Also present


Neil Edgar (Finance Director) (NE)
 Steve Jones (Minutes) (SJ)
 Paul Makinen (Head of Digital & Insight) (PM)
 Jo Rowbottom (Head of Partnerships & Communities) (JR)

MINUTES REF.	ITEM	ACTION
M01ESB(2303)	1. Chair's Welcome JC welcomed all to the meeting.	
M02ESB(2303)	Apologies for Absence There were no apologies for absence.	
M03ESB(2303)	Declarations of Interests There were no interests declared.	
M04ESB(2303)	Minutes of the Board Meeting 08/06/23 The minutes were taken as read. There was agreement that minute reference M27ESB(2302) should be expanded to highlight that more needs to be done to hear the voice of athletes.	SJ
M05ESB(2303)	Matters Arising M06ESB(2302) – Having explored potential links with The Prince's Trust and The Scouts, recent conversations had shifted towards Street Games, about which it was agreed that an update would be provided at the next meeting.	JR

M06ESB(2303)	M13ESB(2302) – In relation to staffing, it was noted that external resource in the area of safeguarding is being considered.	
M07ESB(2303)	Of the three roles that were out to advert, only the People and Education Manager role was proving a challenge to fill, however the vacancy will be revisited with a view to recruitment.	MW
M08ESB(2303)	M25ESB(2302) – It was agreed that Chris Robertson, Head of Performance Operations, will be welcomed back to Board on an annual basis to provide an update.	MW
M09ESB(2303)	M29ESB(2302) – The three requested changes to the Young People Strategy have been made. It was agreed however that the challenge posed by a potential knowledge gap in ‘child development’ should be referenced as part of the paper for the next meeting.	JR/MW
M10ESB(2303)	Other matters arising were said to be competed or would be covered on the day’s agenda.	
M11ESB(2303)	<p>CEO Report</p> <p><i>Membership & Club Affiliation</i></p> <p>The thorough consultation process with stakeholders was felt to have gone well and proved to be very useful in shaping the plans for the new scheme. The feeling was that England Squash presence at events, such as the captains’ meeting of the North-West Counties Squash League, had been appreciated, with key stakeholders recognising England Squash willingness to make changes to the planned scheme in order for it to work well for as many people as possible.</p>	
M12ESB(2303)	<p><i>Staffing</i></p> <p>Reece Allen, Joey Barrington and Ryan Booth had been recruited as Digital Product Officer, Membership & Commercial Partnerships Manager and Social Media & Content Officer respectively. The results of the 2023 staff survey were positive for the most part, although an ongoing challenge is that several members of the team feel stretched in terms of workload.</p>	
M13ESB(2303)	<p><i>Participation</i></p> <p>The Squash from the Mosque and Mixed Ability Squash programmes will receive a national launch in the coming weeks, something the team is excited about.</p>	
M14ESB(2303)	In Birmingham, five outdoor squash courts are to be built, subject to funding being secured. Sport England has been complementary about the squash-related community work in the city.	
M15ESB(2303)	<p><i>Performance</i></p> <p>Notably Gina Kennedy reached her first Platinum semi-final, and on the men’s side Marwan ElShorbagy’s decision to represent England has been well received.</p>	
M16ESB(2303)	<p><i>Insurance</i></p> <p>The trend for rising insurance costs across many sectors is affecting sports organisations, England Squash included, with costs at the next renewal potentially rising by more than 50%. It was agreed that for England Squash, reducing the quality of cover should not be considered. There was discussion of whether the</p>	MW

<p>M17ESB(2303)</p>	<p>organisation’s current insurance brokers may be interested in a sponsorship or partnership opportunity.</p> <p>2. Finance and Risk</p> <p>It was agreed that Finance updates at Board meetings in future shall include a Forecast sub-item.</p>	<p>NE</p>
<p>M18ESB(2303)</p>	<p>There was also agreement that Risk should in future be a ‘for information only’ sub-item given that the Audit & Risk Committee includes three Board directors and relevant matters are discussed and dealt with there.</p>	<p>NE</p>
<p>M19ESB(2303)</p>	<p>3. Membership and Affiliation</p> <p>PM introduced this item. The squash community had recently been invited to fill out a survey on Membership and Club Affiliation, it was noted that more than 850 responses had already been received. The survey focused on the key themes raised during the prior engagement webinars and one-to-one conversations with key stakeholders.</p>	<p></p>
<p>M20ESB(2303)</p>	<p>Notably one of the key themes was providing county associations with a choice of which level of England Squash membership they are required to mandate for participation in their county leagues and competitions.</p>	<p></p>
<p>M21ESB(2303)</p>	<p>Following the consultation, the Executive proposed five changes as follows, each of which were approved by the Board.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To review the level of membership required for playing competitive squash – there is significant nervousness within the county and league squash community around the likelihood of all players being willing to pay £25. Allowing players to choose between the proposed £15 and £25 levels could help uptake and increase the likelihood that county associations will support the scheme through mandating membership. 2. Use survey data to identify and pursue additional member benefits. The benefits package is important to our members but, different people want different things. There was a feeling that some of the proposed benefits were not exclusive and, in some cases, could be beaten by other special offers e.g. discounts on Squash TV. 3. Reviewing the level and method for how county rebates are administered - there was positivity around a suggestion to move from a flat fee (currently proposed at £4) to a percentage fee (e.g. 20%). It was also suggested that the word ‘rebate’ is avoided. 4. Investigate the feasibility of enabling clubs to purchase memberships on behalf of individual members in addition to individuals signing up directly. 5. Enhancing engagement with the squash community through increased informal engagement and by sharing information about how England Squash invests membership income into the game, particularly in grassroots squash. 	<p>PM</p>
<p>M22ESB(2303)</p>	<p>4. Padel – An Opportunity for Squash?</p> <p>MW picked out the key points from the paper that was shared ahead of the meeting and the Board discussed. The paper pays particular attention to padel as a sport that is gaining popularity and attention. New courts are being built through a partnership with the LTA, some of which are built at squash clubs. Some clubs have reported a positive impact in terms of attracting new people to the club who may then move onto squash.</p>	<p></p>

M23ESB(2303)	The Board was unanimous in its view that the growth of padel is a positive for other racket sports including squash and should be embraced as an opportunity rather than a threat.	
M24ESB(2303)	It was agreed that England Squash should take a connecting role and discuss with padel organisations the opportunities for squash, and also connect those organisations with squash clubs who may be interested in support for the development of courts at their club.	MW
M25ESB(2303)	<p>5. Young People</p> <p>JR introduced this item and highlighted the fact that, following feedback at the last meeting, the requested updates have been made to the Young People Strategy.</p>	
M26ESB(2303)	It was noted that an agency is working on a project to establish a value proposition to compliment the strategy and help England Squash connect with more young people. An update on this will be provided at the next meeting.	JR
M27ESB(2303)	It was agreed that Squash Stars can be considered a success in its first year. The Board praised the work on the Squash from the Mosque and Mixed Ability Squash programmes.	
M28ESB(2303)	<p>6. Any Other Business</p> <p><i>Board update papers</i></p> <p>JC thanked the writers of the supplementary Board papers, which included the following and which were presented for information only and not discussed specifically during the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate & Ecological Emergency • Competitions – the season ahead • Equality, Diversity & Inclusion • Participation • Performance – the season ahead <p>It was agreed that an item on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion would be ‘above the line’ (for discussion) at the next meeting.</p> <p><i>Promoting Optimal Squash Ball Usage</i></p> <p>Following discussion, there was consensus that a paper should be shared before the next Board meeting with suggestions on steps that can be taken to improve the awareness in the squash community of which ball types are most suitable based on player ability, court conditions, etc.</p>	<p>MW/SJ</p> <p>MW</p>

Signed.......... (Chair)