



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board meeting hosted on the Zoom video conference application at 10:30 on Thursday, 8 September 2022.

PRESENT**Board**

Joy Carter (Chair) (JC)
 Yawar Abbas (YA)
 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 (Minute Taker) (SJ)
 Paul Makinen (Head of Digital & Insight) (PM)
 Chris Peach (National Education & Pathways Manager, items 4-8 only) (CP)
 Jo Rowbottom (Head of Partnerships & Communities) (JR)

Guests

Simon Perks (Sockmonkey Consulting, item 4 only) (SP)

MINUTES REF.	ITEM	ACTION
M01ESB(2203)	1. Chair's Welcome JC welcomed all to the meeting.	
M02ESB(2203)	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Paul Walters (Strategic Lead for Competitions & Events and Commercial).	
M03ESB(2203)	Declarations of Interests There were no interests declared.	
M04ESB(2203)	Minutes of the Board Meeting 28/06/22 The minutes were taken as read and were agreed to be a true and correct record.	
M05ESB(2203)	Matters Arising M15ESB(2202) – It was noted that there had been recent progress in respect of research and independent thought on transgender issues in sport. MW is to	MW

	provide an update at the next Board meeting on how this might be applied to squash.	
M06ESB(2203)	M23ESB(2202) – It was agreed that PM would provide an update at the next meeting in relation to plans for the ‘phased’ approach to the digital platform that is being pursued.	PM
M07ESB(2203)	M47ESB(2202) – A poll using the online calendar tool Doodle had been shared during the week before the meeting with a view to finding a suitable date for the Board to complete its safeguarding training.	
M08ESB(2203)	CEO Report MW provided some key updates not covered by the other items on the day’s agenda.	
M09ESB(2203)	<i>Commonwealth Games</i> It was noted that feedback from stakeholders following the conclusion of the Games had been extremely positive, and the Board agreed that huge congratulations are richly deserved by the England team, the coaching staff, support staff, volunteers and the wider staff team, who all played a key role in the great success.	
M10ESB(2203)	Notably, preparation for the doubles competition had started considerably earlier in the run-up to this edition of the Games compared to previous editions, and it is felt that this was an important factor in the one Gold and three Silver medals that the team achieved in doubles.	
M11ESB(2203)	There followed some discussion of future editions of the Games. It was noted that only athletics and swimming are guaranteed their places and it was noted that inclusion of any other sport may be dependent upon the host country and the level of engagement they have in that sport. Squash will feature at the next Games, Victoria 2026.	
M12ESB(2203)	With regard to lessons learnt, it was felt by MW that being more proactive at times (e.g. with stakeholders, the organising committee and media) could have been beneficial. He added that more extensive planning for the post-Games period would also have been of benefit, but overall was extremely pleased with the whole event and the impact across performance, participation and publicity.	MW
M13ESB(2203)	<i>Competitions & Events</i> Some key recent English successes were noted as including the U19 British Junior Open titles won by Torrie Malik and Sam Todd, as well as the victory of the England team in the final of the Boy’s World Junior Team Championship against Egypt.	
M14ESB(2203)	<i>Cost of living</i> It was noted that there is a risk facing clubs due to the recent increases in the cost of energy. There was discussion of plans to survey clubs on the matter and for England Squash to provide help and support in any way possible.	
M15ESB(2203)	Discussion followed in relation to the choice of ball selected for play because clearly a bouncier ball reduces the need for warmer courts. It was felt that a change	

	of culture, to some extent, will be necessary in order for players to make the change to a bouncier ball.	
M16ESB(2203)	<p><i>Staffing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Josh Taylor had recently left to take on a new role at the PSA after many years at England Squash, most recently as Talent Pathway Manager. It was noted that Lucy Townley was due start in the role after excelling during the recruitment process. • Luke McFarland was appointed Digital Project Officer in an important role to speed up delivery of in-house digital projects • Chris Robertson’s work within Talent & Performance over recent times was formalised into a permanent contract on a part-time basis as Head of Performance Operations. • Coaching Coordinator Kevin Stewart had resigned in order to pursue a new career in transportation, after ten years with England Squash, with the recruitment process underway for his replacement. 	CP
M17ESB(2203)	<p>2. Finance</p> <p>NE picked out the highlights from the papers he shared ahead of the meeting.</p>	
M18ESB(2203)	It was noted that the auditors had raised the issue of fraud and its increasing prevalence in the business world. It was agreed that MW would provide an update at the next meeting with regard to what is needed in relation to work to minimise the risk of fraud.	MW
M19ESB(2203)	There was agreement that in such cases where formal approvals of accounts are required before any given Board meeting that matters can be dealt with by email.	NE
M20ESB(2203)	<p>3. SMART Targets</p> <p>It was noted that Sport England’s SMART targets are yet to be issued, however internal targets are in place, most of which have related work ongoing.</p>	
M21ESB(2203)	<p>4. Membership & Affiliation</p> <p>Simon Perks of Sockmonkey Consulting joined the meeting for this item and outlined the key points from the paper presented ahead of the meeting. It was noted that an important reason for the proposal to separate individual membership from club affiliation is to reach more of the many thousands of pay and play squash players around the country who are not currently engaged with England Squash, this being an important part of the Strategy.</p>	
M22ESB(2203)	Following discussion, it was agreed that the next step is for the Audit & Risk Committee to discuss the proposals in detail and provide an update at the next Board meeting.	NE
M23ESB(2203)	<p>The Board approved the proposed new membership and affiliation model as outlined in the paper with the following caveats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive outcome from the above-mentioned Audit & Risk discussions is essential • Marketing of the scheme should be done with the input of external experts and industry professionals • Rebate to counties should be appropriate (there was a suggestion to taper the rebate) 	PM

<p>M24ESB(2203)</p>	<p>5. Addressing the Participation Challenge 6. Engaging the People that Drive the Squash Community</p> <p>These two items were discussed together. MW and CP spoke about the papers written for the meeting. Discussion followed on the importance of the youth market and how the organisation can best support the community in engaging young people.</p>	
<p>M25ESB(2203)</p>	<p>The Participation paper identified seven key areas that require addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our people - coaches, volunteers, administrators, delivers, advocates • Our target audiences - female / disability / ethnicity diverse / young people • Places to play - schools / universities / outdoor courts / protecting facilities • Ways to play - programmes, equipment, environments • Innovation, digital and technology - engagement / connectivity • Promotion and presentation - marketing / communications / perceptions • External Forces - court closures / global participation / behavioural trends / insight 	
<p>M26ESB(2203)</p>	<p>The Board requested however that the focus be narrowed considerably so that 'young people' is the priority and made front and centre in terms of promotion and presentation.</p>	<p>MW</p>
<p>M27ESB(2203)</p>	<p>It was agreed gaining a deep understanding of young people through insight is crucial and will be key to informing the digital output, however at a sensible point, it was acknowledged that instinct will need to take over to ensure work progresses.</p>	<p>PM, MW</p>
<p>M28ESB(2203)</p>	<p>There followed some discussion of the crucial role that coaches will play in relation to this youth focus, and it was noted that the coach pathway is currently very linear and that a shift to a more individual and modular approach is the direction of travel.</p>	<p>CP</p>
<p>M29ESB(2203)</p>	<p>Key words that came out of the discussions were 'belonging' and 'fun', and it has to be a priority to create a sense of belonging and fun amongst the target audience.</p>	<p>MW</p>
<p>M30ESB(2203)</p>	<p>7. Commonwealth Games</p> <p>JR and PM's paper focussed on maintaining momentum on the back of the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, discussing options such as working with marketing agencies, either on a retainer or on specific campaigns and events where budgets allow. Also discussed in the paper is the potential to create a working group to develop a strategic approach to marketing, PR, digital and content development.</p>	<p>PM</p>
<p>M31ESB(2203)</p>	<p>It was agreed that conversation should take place with the relevant parties in relation to post-Games plans and strategy in the Midlands. It was noted that many events had already taken place.</p>	<p>MW</p>
<p>M32ESB(2203)</p>	<p>YA is to pick up with the Talent & Performance team in relation to the National Squash Centre, venue of the 2002 Commonwealth Games, to ensure that the venue continues to meet the needs of the team.</p>	<p>YA</p>
<p>M33ESB(2203)</p>	<p>8. Any Other Business</p> <p>JC thanked the writers of the Board papers, which included the following and which were presented for information only and were not discussed specifically during the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate & Ecological Emergency 	

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competitions Software & Rankings• Digital• Inclusion & Diversity• Safeguarding | |
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Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....15/11/2022.....