



Minutes of the Board meeting hosted on the Zoom video conference application at 10:30 on Thursday, 17 March 2022.

## PRESENT

### Board

Joy Carter (Chair) (JC)  
 Yawar Abbas (YA)  
 Nick Donald (ND)  
 Mark Jeffreys (MJ)  
 Heidi Leseur (HL)  
 Andrew Light (AL)  
 Nick Murrills (NM)  
 Wendy Newlove (WN)  
 Eamonn O'Rourke (EO)  
 Vickie Prow (VP)  
 Mark Williams (MW)

### Also present

Paul Barrett (Director of Membership & Customer Experience) (PB)  
 Neil Edgar (Finance Director) (NE)  
 Steve Jones (Operations Officer, Minute Taker) (SJ)  
 Jo Rowbottom (Head of Partnerships & Communities) (JR)  
 Paul Walters (Strategic Lead for Competitions & Events and Commercial) (PW)

MINUTES REF.	ITEM	ACTION
M01ESB(2201)	<p><b>1. Chair's Welcome and Board Update</b></p> <p>JC welcomed all to the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that since the last meeting in December 2021, Senior Independent Director ND had announced that he would not stand to be re-appointed for a third term on the Board after the end of his second term on 28 May 2022.</p>	
M02ESB(2201)	<p>A thorough process is underway to recruit two new Board-appointed non-executive directors to replace ND and Kate Bedwell. Support on recruiting from a more diverse audience was provided from Perrett Laver through Sport England. The Nominations Committee is working closely with the England Squash Board Skills Matrix to ensure that the new appointments will provide the necessary skills and experience to make the Board as well rounded as possible. A high-quality shortlist of candidates has been produced.</p>	
M03ESB(2201)	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>There were no apologies.</p>	
M04ESB(2201)	<p><b>Declarations of Interests</b></p> <p>There were no interests declared.</p>	

M05ESB(2201)	<p><b>Minutes of the Board Meeting on 08/12/2021</b></p> <p>The minutes were taken as read and were agreed to be a true and correct record.</p>	
M06ESB(2201)	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>M11ESB(2104) – JR reported that the advisory group focussing on Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion is in the process of being put together.</p> <p>M13ESB(2104) – JR advised that there is a current live case on the subject of transgender participation in squash.</p> <p>M14ESB(2104) – JR provided an update in relation to the addition of a ‘gender’ category to England Squash website profiles. It was noted that the category has been created and that the next step is to ensure that as many people as possible select their gender on the website.</p> <p>M17ESB(2104) – MW noted that all five steps regarding the Commonwealth Games had been completed except for the sourcing of funding, which is to be confirmed.</p> <p>All other matters arising had been completed or were covered in the day’s meeting agenda and Board papers.</p>	<p>JR</p> <p>JR</p> <p>JR</p> <p>MW</p>
M07ESB(2201)	<p><b>CEO Report</b></p> <p><i>Funding from Sport England</i></p> <p>MW began with the great news that the funding that England Squash requested from Sport England for the 2022-27 cycle had just been confirmed in writing. JC congratulated the England Squash team on behalf of the Board.</p>	
M08ESB(2201)	<p><i>COVID-19</i></p> <p>It was noted that there are no longer any Government restrictions in place, but England Squash continues to promote sensible recommendations where possible.</p>	
M09ESB(2201)	<p><i>Conflict in Ukraine</i></p> <p>It was reported that conversations had taken place with the European Squash Federation (ESF), World Squash Federation (WSF) and Professional Squash Association (PSA). The WSF had just published a statement. It was noted proactive steps had been taken by England Squash in relation to the small number of Russian squash players based in the UK. England Squash has sent a note of support to the Ukraine federation.</p>	
M10ESB(2201)	<p><i>Competitions &amp; Events</i></p> <p>MW highlighted some of the exciting tournaments coming up soon, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British Open, Hull: 28th March – 3rd April</li> <li>• World Doubles, Glasgow: 5th – 9th April</li> <li>• European Junior (U19) Championships, Eindhoven: 8th – 17th April</li> <li>• Manchester Open, Manchester: 11th – 15th April</li> <li>• European Team Championships, Eindhoven: 27th – 30th April</li> <li>• Tournament of Champions, New York: 1st – 7th May</li> </ul>	


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESF European Mixed Team U15 &amp; U17 Squash Championships, Eindhoven: 12th – 15th May</li> <li>• PSA World Championships, Cairo: 13th – 21st May</li> <li>• World Games, Birmingham (USA): 7th – 17th July</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games, Birmingham: 28th July – 8th August</li> <li>• WSF World Junior Championships, TBA: 9th – 20th August</li> <li>• National Championships: TBC</li> </ul>	
M11ESB(2201)	<p><i>Elite-level Squash</i></p> <p>Gina Kennedy’s outstanding development was noted, in particular the rise in the World rankings from 167 to the top-10 in a short period of time, which is quite unprecedented.</p>	
M12ESB(2201)	<p>Alison Waters’ recent retirement from professional singles squash was highlighted. Alison will continue to play doubles squash, including at the World Doubles in Glasgow and will be available for selection for the Commonwealth Games. Alison had a brilliant singles career, reaching World no. 3 and representing England to great success on many occasions.</p>	
M13ESB(2201)	<p><i>Birmingham New Street Event</i></p> <p>MW reported that interest from the squash community was extremely high and that the all-glass court event would be a great way to promote the sport. The court will be installed inside Birmingham’s New Street train station from 4-9 April. The Squash United group has been instrumental in coordinating this event, as well as other projects such as school playground courts in what is hopefully the start of a new wave of different ways people can get into the sport.</p>	
M14ESB(2201)	<p><i>Rally Together Pledge</i></p> <p>It was noted that the England Squash campaign to encourage people to take the Rally Together pledge had already attracted more than 300 sign-ups. The pledge is to “take action to create an inclusive environment where females can thrive”.</p>	
M15ESB(2201)	<p><i>Squash Stars</i></p> <p>More than 200 clubs were reported to have signed up so far as a delivery partner as part of the new junior participation initiative for children aged 5-11.</p>	
M16ESB(2201)	<p><i>Staffing</i></p> <p>MW advised that 2022 arrivals Alex James and Kirsten Todd had settled in really well.</p>	
M17ESB(2201)	<p>MW also shared the news that Paul Barrett, Director of Membership &amp; Customer Experience, had decided to leave his role once his contract ends at the end of March 2022 in order to pursue other opportunities. PB has made a huge contribution in more than five years with England Squash, and the skills, experience and guidance he has brought have been invaluable. JC shared her heartfelt thanks to PB on behalf of the Board, and PB said he’ll certainly be keeping in touch and supporting England Squash again in the future.</p>	
M18ESB(2201)	<p><b>2. Participation</b></p>	

<p>M19ESB(2201)</p>	<p>JC began the discussion by praising the work done so far on the participation strategy. This was a great start, but more work is needed, including sections on coaching, schools, universities, etc.</p> <p>In relation to how leaders/decision-makers within clubs might best be influenced to improve culture and remove barriers to participation, JR sought guidance from the Board from the following options presented in her paper:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prioritise national awareness campaigns to influence behaviour. In theory this will reach large numbers but may not provide a ‘deep’ level of engagement</li> <li>2. Prioritise training to influence behaviour (e.g. Club Developers Award). This will reach smaller numbers but will provide a deeper level of engagement</li> <li>3. A mix of both national campaigns and training, accepting that both areas of work will need to be scaled according to resources</li> </ol> <p>Following discussion, the guidance from the Board was option 3.</p>	<p>JR</p>
<p>M20ESB(2201)</p>	<p>There was further praise from the Board of the recent work in this area, notably followed by discussion of the potential to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do more virtually with club decision-makers</li> <li>• Emphasise to a greater extent the importance of coaches</li> <li>• Be more overt about the current culture and ‘call it out’</li> <li>• Be realistic about how large a project this work is and how it can best be resourced</li> </ul>	<p>JR</p>
<p>M21ESB(2201)</p>	<p><b>3. Commercial Strategy Review</b></p> <p>The Board was thankful for and supportive of the recent work in this area by PW, who drafted the Strategy, as well as by PB and Board members ND and EO.</p>	
<p>M22ESB(2201)</p>	<p>PW sought guidance from the Board regarding the proposed approach, specifically on how we can best lead the organisation’s transition to embedding a commercial mindset within the culture of the organisation and whether this is the best approach to improving commercial income.</p>	
<p>M23ESB(2201)</p>	<p>Discussions included considering what assets England Squash has and which people will want to pay for. It was acknowledged that it’s important to think about the make-up of the current workforce because commerce and driving participation require very different skillsets, from which SMART targets should be set.</p>	<p>PW</p>
<p>M24ESB(2201)</p>	<p>The Board approved the Strategy and emphasised the importance of keeping an entrepreneurial and commercial spirit foremost in mind in order to best prepare the organisation for the future.</p>	<p>PW</p>
<p>M25ESB(2201)</p>	<p><b>4. Finance</b></p> <p>JC thanked NE and the Audit &amp; Risk Committee on behalf of the Board for their hard work since the last meeting.</p>	
<p>M26ESB(2201)</p>	<p>NE summarised his papers, emphasising the good position coming out of Q3 and reflecting on the similarity of this year’s forecast compared to last year’s. The forecast is similar in the sense that both years are deemed to be essentially transition years and both involve an under-utilisation of Sport England funding due</p>	

	to the pandemic, and the opportunity for flexibility to spend in other areas of the business.	
M27ESB(2201)	In relation to the 2022/23 budget, it was noted that this is the first year of the 2022-27 funding agreement. There was discussion of pay structure, and it was felt that current salaries would benefit from being placed into bands. NE and MW will discuss to find a solution.	NE, MW
M28ESB(2201)	The budget was approved by the Board.	NE
M29ESB(2201)	It was requested that future meetings be optimised in terms of timing so that proposals for pay increases, for instance, arrive at appropriate times.	NE
M30ESB(2201)	<b>5. Membership &amp; Club Affiliation</b>  PB introduced his paper by noting that it is felt that the organisation currently has the opportunity to be bold and brave, and engage better with core audiences, which is considered to be key at this time. It was highlighted that useful feedback had been received from clubs at the 2021 AGM.	
M31ESB(2201)	PB sought guidance from the Board on which option to take from the following:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue with the M&amp;A scheme in its current format with incremental improvements</li> <li>2. Undertake a review of the M&amp;A scheme, conducted by a third-party agency/consultant, with a view to introduce changes by September 2022</li> </ol> <p>The Board acknowledged that choosing option 2 is not without risk, but the Board takes issue with option 1 because it is perceived by stakeholders to be unfair.</p>	
M32ESB(2201)	It was agreed that England Squash should be bold and take option 2 with a view to finding a membership & affiliation solution that works for everyone. There is a need to sell the vision of what England Squash is looking to achieve for the sport and bring the community along on the journey.	MW
M33ESB(2201)	The next steps are to decide:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the membership &amp; affiliation offer is</li> <li>• How it can best be sold to individuals and clubs</li> <li>• Ensure due consideration is given to risk management</li> </ul>	MW
M34ESB(2201)	<b>6. AOB</b>  <i>County Association Governance Project</i>  The Board paper requested guidance on which option should be taken from the following:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proceed with the implementation plan as outlined at Council</li> <li>2. Run a two-county pilot to test and learn</li> <li>3. Review the proposed requirements</li> </ol> <p>The Board approved option 1.</p>	MW
M35ESB(2201)	<i>Digital Platform Review</i>	

<p>M36ESB(2201)</p>	<p>MW provided a brief update on progress, highlighting that the current paper will be followed by a more comprehensive paper ahead of the June meeting.</p>	<p><b>Paul Makinen</b></p>
<p>M37ESB(2201)</p>	<p><i>Competitions Software Review</i></p> <p>England Squash’s continued use of the Club Locker software is under review. It was agreed that the relationship with US Squash is an important consideration in any decision made.</p>	<p><b>PW</b></p>
<p>M38ESB(2201)</p>	<p><i>Board Reappointments</i></p> <p>Having expressed their wish to continue to serve on the Board for a further term, the following Board members were required to be formally reappointed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joy Carter (Chair)</li> <li>• Mark Jeffreys</li> <li>• Andrew Light</li> <li>• Eamonn O’Rourke</li> </ul> <p>Each of the above Board members left the meeting in turn so that their respective reappointments could be considered. No objections were raised and all four Board members were reappointed.</p>	
<p>M39ESB(2201)</p>	<p><i>Board Departures</i></p> <p><i>Vickie Prow</i></p> <p>Since the previous meeting, Vickie had announced her intention to leave her role as a Board member at the end of her term, which is 30 June 2022.</p> <p>It was noted that Vickie’s input, support, challenge and diversity of thought have been invaluable. It was agreed that Vickie has provided a great link between the Board and grassroots squash.</p>	
<p>M40ESB(2201)</p>	<p><i>Nick Donald</i></p> <p>Likewise, Nick had communicated his intention to not continue after the end of his term, which is 28 May 2022.</p> <p>Nick was thanked most sincerely for his excellent work as Senior Independent Director and his highly valued input in a wide variety of areas over the last six years.</p>	
<p>M41ESB(2201)</p>	<p>Both departing Board members were given the sincere thanks of the rest of the Board for their contributions. ND said that serving on the Board had been a privilege that he will miss, before going on to pay tribute to the values and behaviours of the organisation, which he believes many others could learn from.</p>	
<p>M41ESB(2201)</p>	<p><i>Update Papers</i></p> <p>In addition to the Board papers referred to in AOB above, the following update papers had also been circulated to Board members prior to the meeting, and the Board was appreciative of the work done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate &amp; Ecological Emergency</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safeguarding</li><li>• Talent and Performance</li></ul>	
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Signed.....  ..... (Chair)

Date.....25/04/2022.....