



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board meeting hosted on the Zoom video conference application at 10:30 on Wednesday, 7 December 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)
 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) (CP)
 Jo Rowbottom (Head of Partnerships & Communities) (JR)

MINUTES REF.	ITEM	ACTION
M01ESB(2204)	1. Chair's Welcome JC welcomed all to the meeting.	
M02ESB(2204)	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Board member Andrew Steele.	
M03ESB(2204)	Declarations of Interests There were no interests declared.	
M04ESB(2204)	Minutes of the Board Meeting 08/09/22 The minutes were taken as read and were agreed to be a true and correct record.	
M05ESB(2204)	Matters Arising M12ESB(2203) – It was noted that some good success in reaching some new communities for the first time had been achieved on the back of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. The spike in social media followers from the Games has provided an encouraging platform for numbers to grow further.	
M06ESB(2204)	M18ESB(2203) – There was discussion of the Risk Register and the addition of a new tab within the document on the cost of living, as well as plans for NE to meet	

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	with Jockey Club Services (England Squash finance partner) to discuss risk. It was agreed that risk would be discussed at the next Board meeting.	NE
M07ESB(2204)	M23ESB(2203) – It was confirmed that England Squash will source the input of external experts and industry professionals with regard to the new membership and affiliation model. It was agreed that this consultation would be done at an early stage of the process and that progress will be reported to Board in due course.	PM
M08ESB(2204)	M28ESB(2203) – A People Strategy was said to be in development, with plans for it to be shared at the next meeting.	MW / CP
M09ESB(2204)	M29ESB(2203) – It was agreed that ‘fun’ in addition to ‘belonging’ should be the key themes of any work to engage young people during the last meeting. The meeting minutes will be amended accordingly to reflect this.	SJ
M10ESB(2204)	M32ESB(2203) – YA is to discuss matters relating to the National Squash Centre with National Coach David Campion and community users to ensure that the venue continues to meet the needs of the various players and squads that use the facility.	YA
M11ESB(2204)	CEO Report <i>Sad news</i> MW began with the recent sad news that Dr. Assem Allam had passed away. Dr. Allam was a huge supporter of squash through sponsorship of the British Open, the building of the Allam Sport Centre in Hull, support of the Yorkshire county association and his all-round passion for the game. It was agreed that England Squash will have discussion with Dr. Allam’s family and the PSA with a view to finding a fitting way to recognise his significant contribution to the sport.	MW
M12ESB(2204)	There was further sad news as it was reported that well-respected former squash journalist for The Times, Rex Bellamy, had passed away at the age of 94.	
M13ESB(2204)	<i>Staffing</i> It was noted that Alex Bentham had been appointed as Project Officer to fill the gap created by Coaching Coordinator Kevin Stewart’s departure.	
M14ESB(2204)	There was news of changes to the staffing of Competitions as well, with Chris Baird due to depart following the British Junior Open (BJO). A recruitment process to appoint two new staff members, a Competitions Manager and a Competitions Officer, is underway.	CP
M15ESB(2204)	It was said that Strategic Lead Paul Walters will continue his role as expected until the end of his contract on 31 March 2023 but not continue thereafter.	
M16ESB(2204)	<i>Office</i> As discussed in previous meetings, England Squash’s shared office at the National Squash Centre has been closed as part of a major refurbishment of the building. It was noted that the office is due to re-open early in 2023 and that there will be flexibility for staff to use a new business lounge, as well as other meeting rooms within the building.	
M17ESB(2204)	There followed some discussion of the potential to share printers with one or more governing bodies. This will be investigated further.	NE

M18ESB(2204)	<i>Participation</i>	
	It was noted that the Squash from the Mosque programme had been expanded to 10 new venues across the north west of England. Mini squash walls are being used to bring the game in an accessible way to new communities, and there is much focus on building trust with these communities and on ensuring that the activities provided meet their needs.	
M19ESB(2204)	The Board wished to place on record its gratitude to Board member Andrew Steele for his support with digital marketing and promoting the sport.	
M20ESB(2204)	There was discussion on the possibility of holding a festival (or similar) that focuses on inclusivity, to which perhaps Sport England and the likes of Rackets Cubed and Squash Squared could be invited, as well as other sports to make it a multi-sport event.	MW
M21ESB(2204)	<i>Transgender</i>	
	It was noted that there are plans to share a policy on transgender at the next meeting.	MW / JR
M22ESB(2204)	<i>Talent & Performance</i>	
	Notable events since the last meeting include the Nations Cup, won by England, and the strong performance in winning a Bronze medal at the Women's World Team Squash Championships despite some injury issues. It was reported that more than 700 players had entered the (January) 2023 edition of the BJO, a number thought to be very impressive for the first BJO event since the 2020 edition that features a full set of age categories.	
M23ESB(2204)	<i>Environment</i>	
	It was reported that England Squash has arranged for one tree to be planted for every entrant to the BJO.	
M24ESB(2204)	MW has begun a PhD related to ecology within sport, and it is felt that this will help with environmental strategy during the coming period. It was noted that England Squash is supporting the World Squash Federation to encourage and drive global strategy in this area.	MW
M25ESB(2204)	<i>Olympic Games</i>	
	The Board is encouraged by the news that squash is part of a shortlist for inclusion at the 2028 Olympic Games, set to be held in Los Angeles. It was noted that there was a presence at the recent Commonwealth Games from the LA28 organising committee. It is felt that the limited number of participants allowed for the LA Games may be helpful to squash as an individual sport that has a relatively small-scale infrastructure. It was said that any conversations with UK Sport around Olympic funding would only take place if the squash bid was successful.	
M26ESB(2204)	2. Finance	
	NE provided an update to the Board on the second quarter of the financial year, as well as on the Risk Register. It was noted that a new forecast would be shared before Christmas, and Board members were invited to contact NE with any questions they may have.	NE

M27ESB(2204)	<p>3. SMART Targets</p> <p>There was a reminder that the SMART targets presented are internal only and that these targets may be updated and refined once Sport England sets specific targets.</p>	
M28ESB(2204)	<p>It was agreed that Sport England data on total numbers of squash players in England would be added into the England Squash reporting on participation numbers.</p>	MW
M29ESB(2204)	<p>There was also agreement that the SMART targets will, from now on, also include data to show the impact of the activity in venues that are running participation programmes.</p>	MW
M30ESB(2204)	<p>4. Young People</p> <p>MW summarised the recent work in this area, which has become the main area of focus following guidance from the Board. There was discussion of the concept of young people being the “golden thread” within the marketing of the sport and wider work, which will be central to much of the organisation’s activity during the coming period.</p>	
M31ESB(2204)	<p>It was noted that young people are under-represented at Board level at the present time and that this will be a consideration for the next change(s) to the make-up of the Board. There was discussion of ‘shadow boards’ at Birmingham City University and elsewhere. A shadow board allows young people to participate in overseeing strategic direction in conjunction with the main Board.</p>	MW
M32ESB(2204)	<p>It was agreed that the role of parents and carers must also feature prominently in all strategy and activity related to young people.</p>	MW / JR
M33ESB(2204)	<p>It was requested that the subject of ‘parents and deliverers’ be addressed in a paper for the next meeting.</p>	MW / JR
M34ESB(2204)	<p>The Board paper shared ahead of the meeting proposed five priority areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our people 2. Places to play 3. Ways to play 4. Innovation 5. Promotion and presentation <p>During discussion each Board member named two of those five areas according to what he or she considered to be the most important for greater focus. The result of this vote was that 2. ‘Our People’ was felt to be the most important area of focus, followed by a tie between 4. ‘Innovation’ and 5. ‘Promotion and presentation’.</p>	MW / JR
M35ESB(2204)	<p>There was agreement that consideration would be given into how The Prince’s Trust relates to this area of work.</p>	JR
M36ESB(2204)	<p>It was felt that consideration should also be given to how this ‘golden thread’ of young people can be applied to the organisation’s different committees and working groups in order to ensure synergy and increase impact.</p>	MW
M37ESB(2204)	<p>It was agreed that the next Board paper on Young People should provide clarity on age groups within the current broad age range.</p>	MW / JR

M38ESB(2204)	<p>5. Membership & Affiliation</p> <p>JC gave thanks to Board member AL for chairing the Audit & Risk Committee discussions of this subject.</p>	
M39ESB(2204)	<p>PM summarised the paper. The Board agreed that sufficient due diligence has been done, whilst recognising that there is nevertheless inevitably a risk involved in any fundamental change of membership model or scheme.</p>	
M40ESB(2204)	<p>It was agreed that Membership & Affiliation shall be a discussion item at the next Council meeting.</p>	MW / SJ
M41ESB(2204)	<p>PM is due to catch up before the next meeting with Scottish Squash on this area of work.</p>	PM
M42ESB(2204)	<p>The Board gave approval to proceed with the next stage of the implementation plan for the new membership model.</p>	PM
M43ESB(2204)	<p>6. Safeguarding</p> <p>CP summarised the Board paper and highlighted that there had been an increase in reported safeguarding cases since the return of competitive squash following COVID-19. There was discussion of the fact that many sports had likewise seen an increase and how this could be due to wider awareness of safeguarding on the back of the Whyte Review and following the pandemic.</p>	
M44ESB(2204)	<p>There was further discussion of the Whyte Review and the learnings that England Squash will be taking from it to help safeguard the squash community in the future. It was agreed that safeguarding must be embedded within all decisions made by the organisation.</p>	
M45ESB(2204)	<p>The Board recently undertook some safeguarding training. Based on the feedback from the Board on the training, it was felt that the training was perhaps somewhat too focused at an operational rather than strategic level. For future training, it was agreed that this shall be a consideration, and it was felt that transfer of knowledge from other Boards would be beneficial.</p>	CP
M46ESB(2204)	<p>With regard to a new role to lead on safeguarding within the organisation, discussion centred on whether it should be a part-time or full-time role. It was agreed that the role would provide leadership on case management and cascading of communications on good practice across the sport, as well as an internal governance and HR element.</p>	
M47ESB(2204)	<p>There was approval from the Board to invest in a permanent role within the England Squash team to provide dedicated support to the Safeguarding Working Group.</p>	CP / MW
M48ESB(2204)	<p>CP and MW explained how the Child Protection in Sport Unit reviews work and highlighted the current focus on the language of safeguarding to facilitate dialogue with young people on the subject.</p>	
M49ESB(2204)	<p>7. Any Other Business</p> <p><i>Anti-doping</i></p> <p>It was agreed that a paper on the subject of anti-doping would be shared with the Board ahead of the next meeting.</p>	NM

<p>M50ESB(2204)</p>	<p><i>Squash media</i></p> <p>There was discussion of The Squash Player magazine and websites such as Squashsite and Squash Mad, which all have an important readership. It was agreed that such media outlets would be included when sharing press releases et cetera.</p>	<p>PM</p>
<p>M51ESB(2204)</p>	<p><i>Board update papers</i></p> <p>JC thanked the writers of the 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 & Events • Digital • Inclusion & Diversity • Marketing & Communications • Transgender Policy Update 	



Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....30/01/2023.....