



Minutes of the Board meeting hosted on the Zoom video conference application at 10:30 on Wednesday, 8 December 2021.

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(2104)	1. Chair's Welcome JC welcomed the Board members to the meeting. Part of the discussion in item 1 was in relation to staffing, therefore the England Squash staff members only joined the meeting from item 2 onwards	
M02ESB(2104)	MW outlined the process for recruiting a new Board member to replace Kate Bedwell, including support with recruiting from a more diverse audience from Perrett Laver provided through Sport England.	MW
M03ESB(2104)	Apologies for Absence There were no apologies.	
M04ESB(2104)	Declarations of Interests There were no interests declared.	
M05ESB(2104)	Minutes of the Board Meeting on 14/09/2021 The minutes were taken as read and were agreed to be a true and correct record.	
M06ESB(2104)	Matters Arising	

	<p>All matters were said to have been actioned or were covered in the day's meeting agenda and Board papers.</p>	
<p>M07ESB(2104)</p>	<p>CEO Report</p> <p>In his update MW addressed a proposal to introduce four new roles to the organisation to better reflect the new strategy. The makeup of the executive team was also discussed and there was agreement to extend the contracts of PB and PW for a further 12 months to cover vital areas of work.</p>	<p>MW</p>
<p>M08ESB(2104)</p>	<p>It was noted that feedback on the Sport England application had been positive. The executive would be submitting the final draft of the application on 17 December, with the outcome due to be shared with England Squash in February 2022.</p>	
<p>M09ESB(2104)</p>	<p>There was a brief update on the progress with the roll-out of the new England Squash strategy, including workshops with county associations. There was also an update on the Commonwealth Games, the cancellation of the World Team Championships by the WSF and a potential new sponsorship deal. Finally six funded players were reported to have achieved career-high rankings in the past month.</p>	
<p>M10ESB(2104)</p>	<p>The main challenge facing the organisation at present was said to be the ongoing pandemic, particularly the emergence of the Omicron variant. It was said that England Squash were monitoring the situation and had recently strengthened guidance provided to large junior events in anticipation of cases rising over the winter.</p>	
<p>M11ESB(2104)</p>	<p>2. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion</p> <p>JR introduced this item, which had three areas of discussion, with decisions requested from the Board.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>1) Diversity in decision making</i></p> <p>Advice was sought from the Board in relation to how greater representation across the organisation can best be achieved and how diversity in strategic and operational decision making could be achieved.</p> <p>Following discussion there was agreement upon the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to prioritise recruiting people from diverse backgrounds • Create an advisory group made up of and driven by external people with expertise in inclusion and diversity to provide support and direction at a strategic and operational level. It was decided that this would not be a decision-making group. 	<p>JR</p>
<p>M12ESB(2104)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>2) Disability</i></p> <p>It was noted that consideration must be given to how squash can attract more people with a disability and which activities are prioritised, particularly regarding the role of wheelchair squash.</p> <p>It was agreed that initial disability projects should be focussed on the wider inclusion of disabled people (including wheelchair users) through projects such as Mixed Ability Squash and Walking Squash 57.</p>	<p>JR</p>

M13ESB(2104)	<p><i>3) Transgender participation in squash</i></p> <p>The final area of discussion for this item was to address how best to proceed with including transgender people in the sport, including balancing individual choice and protecting the integrity, fairness and safety of the sport.</p> <p>It was agreed that a decision should only be made following further discussions with partners such as Inclusive Employers, Pride Sports and Fair Play for Women. It was felt that there is a need to better understand the implications of the transgender guidance.</p>	JR
M14ESB(2104)	<p>There followed discussion about the collection of gender-related data. It was noted that there would be a campaign in early 2022 to encourage existing users of englandsquash.com to provide relevant data as part of their user experience. In particular, a 'gender' category was set to be added to the existing 'sex' category.</p>	JR
M15ESB(2104)	<p>3. Commonwealth Games</p> <p>MW introduced this item, highlighting that the opportunity to use the Games as a catalyst for change and growth is significant. It was noted that experience suggests that higher levels of engagement can be achieved with a more generic marketing approach than when seeking to engage non-participants from diverse new audiences.</p>	
M16ESB(2104)	<p>There followed discussion on the degree to which there should be a focus on engaging new audiences that might be harder to reach. It was agreed that new audiences should be a priority and that SMART targets should be assigned.</p>	MW
M17ESB(2104)	<p>The following next steps were approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit Commonwealth Games Legacy Manager • Complete improvements to Squash Finder. • Launch Squash Stars • Complete planning for New Street Station event • Further develop plans for outdoor courts including sourcing funding 	MW
M18ESB(2104)	<p>There was discussion of the risk to the inclusion of squash at future editions of the Games after 2022. There was consensus that a strategy should be agreed with regard to lobbying for squash's continued inclusion, for which JC volunteered her support.</p>	MW
M19ESB(2104)	<p>4. Finance</p> <p>NE summarised his Board papers on Finance, specifically the year-to-date position and the end-of-year reforecast, before going on to request approval of three documents related to the 2020-21 financial year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Accounts (which will be voted on by members at the AGM for adoption later in the month) • Letter of Representation • Going Concern <p>The three documents were all approved. It should be noted that some new wording for the Going Concern document had been received shortly before the meeting, read out by NE. It was agreed that the new wording should be included.</p>	NE

M20ESB(2104)	<p>5. Participation Trends</p> <p><i>Project Revival</i> Discussion of this item began with the <i>Project Revival</i> research project, which produced a report that sets out some of the challenges squash faces. The report also highlights potential initiatives for England Squash to consider in order to reverse the decline in participation seen over recent years and respond positively to the pandemic.</p>	
M21ESB(2104)	There was agreement that radical solutions are needed, that future inclusion in the Commonwealth Games is important and that digital and innovative advancements should be fully embraced. It was felt that the next five years (the duration of the <i>Squash in a Changing World</i> strategy) are crucial. The foundations were said to be in place and outlined in the strategy, with schools and universities playing a key role, and one of the challenges is how best to energise and empower people in the squash community to help grow participation.	
M22ESB(2104)	It was agreed that a participation strategy should be agreed in order to set out how the trend line shall be addressed.	MW / JR
M23ESB(2104)	The Board instructed that the facility focus should be placed on working with and supporting partners to create new accessible places to play.	JR
M24ESB(2104)	<p>6. County Association Governance Review</p> <p>Discussion of this item was on the back of the new (draft) version of the Code for Sports Governance, developed by UK Sport and Sport England. The draft emphasises the need to cascade good governance through the sport. On behalf of England Squash, Sockmonkey Consulting recently completed a review into the governance standards across the county associations and identified a new process for implementing a new governance standard for counties.</p>	
M25ESB(2104)	The main thread of the discussion was how best to support county associations in their work towards meeting the governance standard. It was agreed that a supportive approach is required. There should also be provision of resources such as templates that county associations can make use of.	MW
M26ESB(2104)	<p>7. Any Other Business</p> <p><i>Update Papers</i> The following update papers had 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"> • Climate & Ecological Emergency • Competitions & Events • Digital Enablement • Membership & Affiliation • Participation & Programmes • Role Models, Influencers & Ambassadors • Safeguarding 	
M27ESB(2104)	Two of the papers listed above requested approvals, with outcomes as follows. <i>Competitions & Events</i>	

