



## BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board meeting held remotely via the Zoom video conference application at 10:30 on Tuesday, 17 September 2024.

### 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

Joey Barrington (Membership & Commercial Partnerships Manager) for item 6 only (JB)  
 Stuart Crawford (National Coach) for item 7 only (SC)  
 Neil Edgar (Finance Director) (NE)  
 Steve Jones (minutes) (SJ)  
 Paul Makinen (Head of Digital & Insight) (PM)  
 Chris Robertson (Head of Performance Operations) for item 7 only (CR)  
 Jo Rowbottom (Head of Partnerships & Communities) (JR)

MINUTES REF.	ITEM	ACTION
M01ESB(2403)	<b>1. Chair's Welcome</b>  JC welcomed all to the meeting.	
M02ESB(2403)	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>  Apologies were received from Board member Richard Cannock.	
M03ESB(2403)	<b>Declarations of Interests</b>  There were no interests declared.	
M04ESB(2403)	<b>Minutes of the Board Meeting 04/06/24</b>  The minutes were taken as read and were agreed to be a true and correct record.	

<p>M05ESB(2403)</p> <p>M06ESB(2403)</p> <p>M07ESB(2403)</p> <p>M08ESB(2403)</p> <p>M09ESB(2403)</p> <p>M10ESB(2403)</p> <p>M11ESB(2403)</p> <p>M12ESB(2403)</p> <p>M13ESB(2403)</p>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>M07ESB(2402) – It was noted that England Squash presence at the North West Counties Squash League AGM had been appreciated by clubs in relation to the discussion of the new membership and affiliation schemes.</p> <p>M08ESB(2402) – England Squash received official confirmation from Sport England that compliance had been achieved with the UK Code for Sports Governance. Further work updates are however to follow.</p> <p>M19ESB(2402) – It was agreed that an update would be provided ahead of the next meeting on the subject of Complaints and Disciplinary Matters. This will provide clarity as to the jurisdiction of England Squash on such matters. Sarah Ward recently joined the company as Safeguarding, Culture &amp; Wellbeing Manager and has been reviewing procedures and processes. It was agreed however that England Squash can as a minimum assist clubs by signposting in the direction of appropriate support.</p> <p>There was discussion of the visual identity of England Squash, and it was noted that the piece of work on its future development has been paused to allow first for the development of the next Strategy, which will then inform the visual identity and branding.</p> <p>M36ESB(2402) – On the subject of engagement in squash of the 18-34 age group, it was agreed that a representative of that group shall attend a Board meeting by March 2025.</p> <p>M40ESB(2402) – In relation to Generative AI tools, there was agreement that training would take place in the first half of 2025. Reece Allen from the digital team has done some preparatory work in this regard.</p> <p><b>CEO Report</b></p> <p><i>Sport England Funding</i></p> <p>It was noted that a two-year extension at the same level of funding has been confirmed.</p> <p><i>Commonwealth Games</i></p> <p>It is acknowledged that squash may not be included in the programme of the scaled-down 2026 edition of the Games. The venue and sports are expected to be confirmed in the coming weeks.</p> <p><i>Staffing</i></p> <p>The following recent additions to the team were noted:</p> <p>Ilse Benson – new Finance Officer          Stuart Crawford – new National Coach          Hannah Ridgard-Mason – new People &amp; Education Manager</p>	<p></p> <p><b>MW</b></p> <p><b>MW</b></p> <p></p> <p><b>MW</b></p> <p><b>MW</b></p> <p><b>MW</b></p>
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	<p>Sarah Ward – new Safeguarding, Culture &amp; Wellbeing Manager</p> <p>Asma Ajaz-Ali left her role with the best wishes of all the team after making a significant impact as Community Engagement Manager in the West Midlands region. England Squash will continue to work with Asma in and around Birmingham.</p>	
M14ESB(2403)	<p><i>Olympic Games</i></p> <p>The next significant news ahead of the Los Angeles 2028 Games is expected to be an announcement of the squash venue.</p>	
M15ESB(2403)	<p><i>World Team Championships</i></p> <p>The 2024 event in Hong Kong in December will be a landmark championships because for the first time the men’s and women’s team competitions will take place concurrently.</p>	
M16ESB(2403)	<p><i>Professional Squash Association Calendar</i></p> <p>The PSA announced a new tier of competition named Diamond. The first two Diamond events are the CIB Egyptian Open and the British Open, with the aim being to create a similar dynamic as with the Majors of golf and the Grand Slams of tennis.</p>	
M17ESB(2403)	<p><i>Key Performance Indicators</i></p> <p>The figures and details were shared with the Board ahead of the meeting and showed that currently the only KPI coded red is the number of social media followers, albeit progress is felt to still be reasonable.</p>	
M18ESB(2403)	<p>There followed some discussion of gender parity in competitions, and it was agreed that England Squash would raise the topic with the European Squash Federation so that those entrant numbers can be balanced in terms of male and female.</p>	MW
M19ESB(2403)	<p><i>Sportswashing</i></p> <p>Following discussion it was agreed that the correct process for assessing the risk of working with any particular sponsor or partner is for it to be addressed by the Audit and Risk Committee.</p>	MW
M20ESB(2403)	<p><b>2. Finance</b></p> <p>NE introduced this item and discussed year-to-date figures. Year-end figures are expected to come in around budgeted levels, although it is acknowledged that the income from membership is unpredictable given that the current year is the first year of the new scheme.</p>	
M21ESB(2403)	<p>It was agreed that, by the end of 2024, England Squash reserves will be split into additional bank accounts to further reduce financial risk.</p>	NE

M22ESB(2403)	<b>3. Membership &amp; Affiliation</b>	
M23ESB(2403)	PM, Head of Digital & Insight, introduced this item.	
M24ESB(2403)	The Board congratulated the team on the launch of the new membership and affiliation schemes in August.	
M25ESB(2403)	Following discussion of whether the next phase of work should prioritise a) the acquisition of new members or b) the retention of existing members, there was consensus that there must be a focus on both simultaneously. It was acknowledged that doing so may necessitate bringing in additional resource.	<b>PM</b>
M26ESB(2403)	<p><b>4. Board Member Recruitment</b></p> <p>MW introduced this item, summarising how three long-serving and highly experienced Board members will be leaving the Board in May 2025 when their current and final terms come to an end:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joy Carter (Chair)</li> <li>• Eamonn O’Rourke (Senior Independent Director)</li> <li>• Andrew Light (Non-Executive Director and Audit &amp; Risk Committee)</li> </ul> <p>All three have made a huge impact on the organisation.</p>	
M27ESB(2403)	Following discussion, it was agreed that future term lengths shall be varied if possible as this should help avoid the departures of Board members at the same time.	<b>MW</b>
M28ESB(2403)	There was also agreement that equality, diversity and inclusion shall be at the forefront of thought in the process to recruit three replacement Board members.	<b>MW</b>
M29ESB(2403)	<p><b>5. England Squash Strategy – Beyond 2025</b></p> <p>MW again introduced as the Board’s input was sought on whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the ‘new’ strategy should be a revision / update of the current strategy or an entirely new approach</li> <li>• the proposed priority areas are the ‘right’ ones</li> <li>• the proposed timeline is appropriate</li> <li>• an external consultant is required to devise the strategy</li> </ul>	<b>PM</b>
M30ESB(2403)	It is felt to be important that the new Chair beyond May 2025 ‘owns’ the new strategy.	<b>MW</b>
M31ESB(2403)	There was discussion of the fact that, since the current strategy was written, squash is now an Olympic sport, new membership and affiliation schemes have been launched, and there has been a change of Government. These and other changes to the external environment point towards a bigger, in-depth refresh of the strategy. This was the consensus of the Board.	<b>MW</b>

M32ESB(2403)	The Board made clear its willingness to make available its collective expertise and experience to support the writing of the new strategy.	MW
M33ESB(2403)	There was also clear steer from the Board that the new strategy should have an edge to it and push boundaries.	MW
M34ESB(2403)	There was agreement that the proposed timeline is suitable.	MW
M35ESB(2403)	External support should be utilised in the writing of the strategy.	MW
M36ESB(2403)	It was agreed that the new strategy should reflect the dual priorities discussed in item 3 of the agenda, which are the acquisition of new members and the retention of existing members.	MW
M37ESB(2403)	<p><b>6. Commercial Progress and Opportunities</b></p> <p>JB summarised the paper he had shared ahead of the meeting with a view to securing Board approval of the proposed next steps for this important area of work.</p>	
M38ESB(2403)	There was thanks from the Board for the progress made.	
M39ESB(2403)	The Optasia Squash Super League (SSL) is felt to be an exciting initiative as effectively the replacement for the Premier Squash League. The Board particularly liked the parity of player fees for the male and female players, and it was agreed that this should be highlighted where appropriate in the coverage of the event.	MW
M40ESB(2403)	AS and MN encourage contact and conversations moving forward with JB to feed in their insight from their areas of expertise.	JB
M41ESB(2403)	<p><b>7. Talent and Performance</b></p> <p>The Board was able to meet new National Coach SC at the meeting. SC and CR summarised SC's work since beginning the role as well as plans for the future.</p>	
M42ESB(2403)	There was discussion of the perceived shortfall of the female voice and ensuring that key females in the coaching community are heard. It was agreed that England Squash will make use of the leadership training that UK Sport provides and give these opportunities to females where possible and appropriate.	CR
M43ESB(2403)	<p><b>8. Inclusion and Diversity</b></p> <p>JR updated the Board on the work on the independent listening exercise, as summarised in the paper shared ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed that YA, HL and JR will discuss women's squash leagues.</p>	JR

M44ESB(2403)	It was noted that the listening exercise has so far looked inward, however potentially a phase two of this work could look outward and outside of the sport.	<b>JR</b>
M45ESB(2403)	It was agreed that this area of work should be documented on the Risk Register.	<b>JR</b>
M46ESB(2403)	<p><b>9. Any Other Business</b></p> <p><i>‘Western Lane’ by Chetna Maroo</i></p> <p>There was a recommendation of this inspiring book.</p>	
M47ESB(2403)	<p><i>Information-only Board Papers</i></p> <p>JC closed the meeting with thanks also to 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"> <li>• Environment and Sustainability</li> <li>• Young People</li> <li>• Competitions</li> <li>• People and Education (JR welcomes feedback from the Board)</li> <li>• Roll of Honour Project</li> </ul>	<b>Board</b>



Signed..... (Chair)