



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board meeting held remotely via the Zoom video conference application at 10:30 on Wednesday, 19 March 2025.

PRESENT

Board

Joy Carter (Chair) (JC)
 Richard Cannock (RC)
 Mark Jeffreys (MJ)
 Heidi Leseur (HL)
 Andrew Light (AL)
 Nick Murrills (NM)
 Wendy Newlove (WN)
 Mayuri Nigam (MN)
 Andrew Steele (AS)
 Mark Williams (CEO) (MW)

Also present

Neil Edgar (Finance Director) (NE)
 Steve Jones (minutes) (SJ)
 Paul Makinen (Head of Digital & Insight) (PM)
 Jo Rowbottom (Head of Partnerships & Communities) (JR)

MINUTES REF.	ITEM	ACTION
M01ESB(2501)	1. Chair's Welcome JC welcomed all to the meeting. <i>New Chair</i> JC was delighted to begin proceedings with the announcement that, following a thorough recruitment process, MJ will take over as Chair from May 2025 following JC's third and final term of service on the Board. All attendees congratulated MJ, who said that he was looking forward to getting started.	
M02ESB(2501)	Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from Board members Yawar Abbas and Eamonn O'Rourke.	
M03ESB(2501)	Declarations of Interests There were no interests declared.	
M04ESB(2501)	Minutes of the Board Meeting 05/12/24	

	The minutes were taken as read and were agreed to be a true and correct record.	
M05ESB(2501)	Matters Arising	
	M05ESB(2404) – It was noted that the work on the subject of Complaints and Disciplinary Matters is now almost complete following excellent work by Safeguarding, Culture & Wellbeing Manager Sarah Ward.	
M06ESB(2501)	M07ESB(2404) – A ‘front page test’ now plays a part in any decision that is made on commercial partners to work with.	
M07ESB(2501)	M10ESB(2404) – The full launch of the Learning Management System is expected to be August or September 2025. Currently the courses are being added to the System.	JR
M08ESB(2501)	M12ESB(2404) – There was discussion of the National Schools Championships, which has grown significantly this season. It was noted that the relatively low numbers of entrant schools from the East Midlands and West Midlands regions needs to be addressed.	MW
M09ESB(2501)	It was also agreed that the work on promoting ‘the right ball’ shall continue in earnest, a need highlighted for example by the recent use of double-dot balls at the National Schools.	MW
M10ESB(2501)	M31ESB(2404) – MW is to check what are the terms of reference for the Remuneration Committee and Nominations Committee.	MW
M11ESB(2501)	M35ESB(2404) – In relation to committed and discretionary costs, it was noted that staff training is set to take place on purchase orders.	NE
M12ESB(2501)	M43ESB(2404) – JC and MW are to discuss the one-page summary that would present ‘three things’ that grab the attention and highlight the purpose of England Squash.	JC, MW
M13ESB(2501)	CEO Report	
	MW reported to the Board on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), successes and concerns.	
	<i>KPIs</i>	
	MW went through the various KPIs by sharing the full details on the screen. There was agreement that the SMART targets document would be updated for the next Board meeting with revised targets for 2025.	MW
M14ESB(2501)	It was also agreed that the following KPIs would be added: • Number of people playing squash in England • Commercial income • Participation by gender • Safeguarding	MW

M15ESB(2501)	<i>Successes</i> Recent successes have included: • The rigorous recruitment process for the Chair and Non-Executive Director roles on the Board. There were eight and 26 applicants respectively and the breadth of experience and the quality was extremely pleasing. • The steady increase in commercial partners over the past year has continued. • Some exciting young players coming through to represent England senior teams, both male and female, and led by new National Coach Stuart Crawford, who has made an excellent start in the role • Increase of 30% in the number of junior competitions over past two seasons.	
M16ESB(2501)	<i>Concerns</i> Some concerns were raised as follows: • The England Squash team continues to be stretched in terms of workload. • Like other sports NGBs, squash is increasingly becoming involved in helping resolve complaints reported to England Squash about third parties. It was noted however that the recent and current work on tightening policies will reduce the workload on the team. • Funding beyond 2027 is an unknown at present due to the Sport England funding cycle, and therefore England Squash generating income comes more into focus.	MW
M17ESB(2501)	2. England Squash Strategy – Progress and Next Steps The ‘Squash in a Changing World’ strategy will be replaced during 2025, with a proposed ‘launch’ in the autumn.	
M18ESB(2501)	Following discussion of external help in producing the strategy, including reflections of the quality of recent work done by agencies, it was felt that, with the support of Board members, the strategy can be delivered internally, with outside help brought in for the ‘design’ phase. The 2025/26 budget is also a factor.	MW
M19ESB(2501)	The Board gave approval of the core themes that stem from the various forms of consultation and insight. The ‘big, hairy audacious goal’ and framework should be proposed by the executive to the Board for the next meeting.	MW
M20ESB(2501)	The Board approved the consultation that is proposed in the paper shared ahead of the meeting.	MW
M21ESB(2501)	The Board also approved the proposed timelines.	MW

M22ESB(2501)	It was agreed that engagement with the community should continue.	MW
M23ESB(2501)	Following discussion of the next steps, there was agreement that: • The Board and executive will discuss the strategy in May separately to the Board meeting • A working group will be created consisting of executive team members and a couple of Board members	MW
M24ESB(2501)	3. Performance Funding UK Sport is investing £500k for the 4-year Olympic cycle across the UK. However, with Sport England no longer providing funding at the previous level, due to squash's new Olympic status, this represents a significant reduction in overall funding for the Talent and Performance programme within England Squash. The staff team will also need to cover significant additional work.	
M25ESB(2501)	There was discussion of a potential advisory group for performance, including hearing 'the 'athlete's voice'. This is to be considered by the executive.	MW
M26ESB(2501)	Two options were presented by the executive to the Board: • Option A: Invest the full amount of the UK Sport grant back into the performance budget • Option B: Accept that the performance budget will be much lower and invest UK Sport investment into the appropriate cost centre Option A was approved.	MW
M27ESB(2501)	4. Finance NE had provided some update papers and spreadsheets ahead of the meeting on the year-to-date position, as well as on the 2025/26 budget.	
M28ESB(2501)	The Board expressed its disappointment about the year-to-date position.	
M29ESB(2501)	In relation to the 2025/26 budget, the Board requested that it be presented in such a way that the base costs (including salaries) provide a starting point, with the costs of the various discretionary projects shown in addition.	NE
M30ESB(2501)	5. "UK Squash" Ahead of the Olympic Games in 2028, a light-touch organisation will be set up to bring the home nations of England, Scotland and Wales together to represent the whole of the UK from a squash perspective. Northern Ireland does not have a national governing body (NGB) for squash.	
M31ESB(2501)	There was discussion of what the organisation should be called, with UK Squash, British Squash and GB Squash all options. Following voting by show of hands, GB Squash is the Board's preferred name.	MW

M32ESB(2501)	It was then decided, following discussion, that the proposed Articles of Association are not appropriate and that a simpler Memorandum of Understanding should be produced instead.	MW
M33ESB(2501)	It was agreed that England Squash should align itself with the more experienced NGBs who have themselves set up GB or UK organisations.	MW
M34ESB(2501)	6. Social Media Strategy – including the Future of X Changes to X (formerly Twitter) since Elon Musk’s acquisition of the platform in 2022 have been well documented. Engagement on the platform has also dropped significantly. Following discussion by the Board, it was agreed that England Squash shall cease posting and engaging on the platform, whilst still retaining a presence (keeping the accounts open).	PM
M35ESB(2501)	7. Anti-Doping Anti-doping compliance is critical from a regulatory and reputational perspective. England Squash remains compliant with UK Anti-Doping requirements and follows an implementation plan agreed by the Board. The implementation plan outlines England Squash’s strong commitment to the pursuit of clean sport.	
M36ESB(2501)	There was discussion of squash’s new Olympic status and the extent to which this may impact the management of anti-doping processes.	
M37ESB(2501)	It is recognised that there is a risk of an athlete falling foul of the framework requirements or paperwork as well as of taking performance-enhancing drugs.	
M38ESB(2501)	There was agreement that the lower down in the pyramid the better in terms of England Squash helping to start ‘planting the seed’ in the minds of squash players and providing education on the topic of anti-doping. Coaches have an important role in education in this area.	
M39ESB(2501)	It was noted that one of the threats in other sports (e.g. cycling) is the increasing sophistication of avoidance of detection. Squash must be guarded against this.	MW
M40ESB(2501)	8. Any Other Business <i>Information-only Board Papers</i> 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. The Board is extremely thankful to the England Squash team for the quality, breadth and depth of the work being done, but nevertheless recognises that the workload of the team continues to be higher than what would be ideal. • Commercial Progress and Opportunities • Competitions – Summary of the Season	

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding and Complaints Procedure • Inclusion and Diversity • King's Honours and Roll of Honour • Membership and Affiliation • Young People | |
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Signed..... (Chair)