



## BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board meeting held remotely via the Zoom video conference application at 10:30 on Thursday, 21 March 2024.

### PRESENT

#### Board

Joy Carter (Chair) (JC)  
 Yawar Abbas (YA)  
 Heidi Leseur (HL)  
 Nick Murrills (NM)  
 Wendy Newlove (WN)  
 Mayuri Nigam (MN)  
 Eamonn O'Rourke (EO)  
 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)

#### Guest

Simon Perks (Sockmonkey Consulting) (SP) for item 5 only

MINUTES REF.	ITEM	ACTION
M01ESB(2401)	<p><b>1. Chair's Welcome</b></p> <p>JC welcomed all to the meeting.</p>	
M02ESB(2401)	<p><b>Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Board members Richard Cannock, Mark Jeffreys and Andrew Light.</p>	
M03ESB(2401)	<p><b>Declarations of Interests</b></p> <p>There were no interests declared.</p>	
M04ESB(2401)	<p><b>Minutes of the Board Meeting 06/12/23</b></p> <p>The minutes were taken as read and were agreed to be a true and correct record.</p>	
M05ESB(2401)	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p>	

<p>M06ESB(2401)</p>	<p>M12ESB(2304) – It was noted that the employment roles had gone out to advert and that some excellent candidates had already applied.</p> <p><b>CEO Report</b></p> <p>MW updated the Board on a number of topics including notably the following.</p> <p><i>UK Sport</i></p> <p>The submission to UK Sport for Olympic Games-related funding is to establish to key questions: firstly whether a GB squash organisation is a suitable investment partner; and secondly whether Great Britain has medal potential in the sport.</p> <p>It was noted that MJ's support and guidance in relation to the submission had been greatly appreciated.</p> <p>It was agreed that England Squash very much values the opportunity that Olympic status has provided in terms of participation at UK Sport meetings.</p>	
<p>M07ESB(2401)</p>	<p><i>Legal matter</i></p> <p>MW updated the Board on an ongoing legal matter involving a club.</p>	
<p>M08ESB(2401)</p>	<p><i>Talent &amp; Performance</i></p> <p>As highlighted in the paper, England Squash has been pleased by how well the changes to selection policy have been received by players and their families.</p>	
<p>M09ESB(2401)</p>	<p><b>2. Finance</b></p> <p>NE had shared as usual a set of finance papers with the Board ahead of the meeting. NE summarised the content before some detailed discussion ensued in relation to the 2024/25 budget.</p>	
<p>M10ESB(2401)</p>	<p>It was agreed that it is not correct or appropriate to pass on inflationary pressures to England Squash members and therefore it is necessary to increase commercial income and find sources of income that are not currently accessed.</p>	
<p>M11ESB(2401)</p>	<p>It was noted that an agreed deadline would be communicated in relation to switching the England Squash bank account to an account with a higher interest rate.</p>	<p><b>NE / MW</b></p>
<p>M12ESB(2401)</p>	<p>There was agreement to look at the feasibility of a committee to consider commercial opportunities. MN and NM are both keen to be part of such a committee should one be formed.</p>	<p><b>MW / JC</b></p>
<p>M13ESB(2401)</p>	<p>A further agreed action from the discussion was to work on some budget sensitivity. It was noted that this should be kept simple.</p>	<p><b>NE/ MW</b></p>

M14ESB(2401)	<p>Finalising the discussion, the Board summarised its position by directing towards the following options outlined in the Board paper:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“3. Request reductions to cost be identified to potentially reduce deficit.”</p> <p>This also incorporates:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“2. Request more time to review and digest.”</p>	<b>NE</b>
M15ESB(2401)	<p><b>3. Membership &amp; Affiliation</b></p> <p>There was discussion of how best to help county associations prepare for the upcoming changes, and it was noted that the retention of the current membership technology platform is advantageous because counties are already well-versed in the system. England Squash has been liaising with the counties that use a member check (automated checking of England Squash membership status) as part of their county competition software in order to facilitate integration.</p>	<b>MW</b>
M16ESB(2401)	<p>YA is to share the date of the North West Counties Squash League AGM with PM and MW so that there will be the opportunity to facilitate engagement with clubs.</p>	<b>YA</b>
M17ESB(2401)	<p>Following discussion, the Board approved the following:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>“Option A - extend affiliation dates of all clubs affiliating from 1 June until the launch of the new scheme.”</b></p>	<b>PM</b>
M18ESB(2401)	<p><b>4. Olympic Games</b></p> <p>MW summarised his paper.</p>	
M19ESB(2401)	<p>There followed some discussion of whether potentially in the future there could be a new UK or GB National Governing Body (NGB), replacing the current home nations NGBs, however it was agreed that it’s very much dependent upon what kind of future squash has as an Olympic sport. All being well, squash will have a permanent place at the Olympic Games.</p>	
M20ESB(2401)	<p>In conclusion the Board agreed that the following should be pursued as a next step:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“Option A - Establishing a ‘light-touch organisation’ with a governing board and a performance programme delivered by a ‘designated country’.”</p>	<b>MW</b>
M21ESB(2401)	<p><b>5. UK Code for Sports Governance</b></p> <p>JC welcomed Simon Perks (Sockmonkey Consulting) (SP) to the meeting for this item only.</p> <p>SP presented a suite of slides to highlight to the Board the key changes in relation to Sport England’s Code for Sports Governance, before going on to</p>	

	discuss the impact of Board decisions, engagement with stakeholders and financial skills/competence.	
M22ESB(2401)	It was agreed that work should be done to ensure there will be an effective process in place to collect the necessary data from Board members and staff in order to be compliant with the Code.	MW
M23ESB(2401)	There was consensus that the presentation was extremely helpful. It was agreed that the template forms used to collect the data should be softened in tone in place, e.g. by using words such as 'discussion' instead of 'review' when referring to one-to-ones between the Chair/Senior Independent Director and the other Non-Executive Directors.	SP
M24ESB(2401)	<b>6. Inclusion &amp; Diversity</b>  <i>Listening exercise</i>  JR introduced this item, followed by discussion of the merits of conducting an independent listening exercise in relation to Inclusion & Diversity. It was agreed that this should be pursued and that potentially students should assist in this area of work and that technology can be put to good use.	JR
M25ESB(2401)	<i>Racism</i>  It was agreed that as diversity within sport improves, there is an increased likelihood of cases of racism and therefore it is wise to prepare accordingly. It was noted that the Squash from the Mosque programme has had a positive impact in this area and that sport can be used to unlock racial tension.	JR
M26ESB(2401)	<i>Board diversity</i>  It was highlighted that although age and disability took prominence in the Board paper, other areas of diversity are equally important.	
M27ESB(2401)	<i>Role of the Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG)</i>  It was agreed that the England Squash executive team shall bring topics and issues to the Board as appropriate.  JC thanked the team for the excellent work to date in this area.	JR
M28ESB(2401)	<b>7. Young People</b>  JR introduced this item and referred to the paper shared ahead of the meeting that presented a number of options for the Board to consider.  It was agreed that there shall be consideration given in the schools programme to training coaches for specifically working in schools.	JR

M29ESB(2401)	Going beyond school-age people, it was also agreed that we need to consider how to best get the message to young-professional people about the benefits and fun of squash.	JR
M30ESB(2401)	<p>The Board gave direction as follows:</p> <p><b>Question:</b> Whilst both a new school programme and a new offer for ages 10 plus are important, which should receive more focus and resource?</p> <p>Option 1: Focus most resource on embedding squash within schools          ✓ Approved</p> <p>It was agreed that there should be a schools advisory group.</p>	JR  JR
M31ESB(2401)	There was discussion of teachers and the importance of enabling them to be advocates. It was agreed that it is a case of the easier the better when it comes to engaging teachers because invariably they are busy, with competing demands on their time.	JR
M32ESB(2401)	<p><b>8. Any Other Business</b></p> <p><i>Copper competitions</i></p> <p>There was discussion of copper competitions, and it was agreed that England Squash should always be supportive to clubs in relation to promoting these competitions.</p>	MW
M33ESB(2401)	<p><i>Board update papers</i></p> <p>JC thanked 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>• Climate and Ecological Emergency</li> <li>• Marketing &amp; Communications</li> <li>• Promoting the 'Right Ball'</li> <li>• People &amp; Education</li> <li>• Competitions</li> <li>• Talent &amp; Performance</li> </ul>	
M34ESB(2401)	<p>Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)</p> <p>MW is to report back on the KPIs, as discussed during the pre-Board meeting.</p>	MW



Signed..... (Chair)