



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board meeting held in the Small Common Room, William Goodenough House, Goodenough College, Mecklenburgh Square, London, WC1N 2AB at 11:45 on Tuesday, 28 June 2022.

PRESENT**Board**

Eamonn O'Rourke (Chair) (EO)
 Yawar Abbas (YA)
 Heidi Leseur (HL)
 Andrew Light (AL) (via Zoom)
 Nick Murrills (NM)
 Wendy Newlove (WN)
 Mayuri Nigam (MN)
 Andrew Steele (AS)
 Mark Williams (CEO) (MW)

Also present

Neil Edgar (Finance Director) (NE) (via Zoom)
 Steve Jones (Minute Taker) (SJ)
 Paul Makinen (Head of Digital & Insight) (PM)
 Jo Rowbottom (Head of Partnerships & Communities) (JR)
 Paul Walters (Strategic Lead for Competitions & Events and Commercial) (PW)

Guests

Sadia Quayoum (Stratagem Project Consulting, Competitions Software item only) (SQ) (via Zoom)
 Simon Perks (Sockmonkey Consulting, Membership item only) (SP) (via Zoom)

MINUTES REF.	ITEM	ACTION
M01ESB(2202)	<p>1. Chair's Welcome</p> <p>EO welcomed all to the meeting.</p> <p>There were special, warm welcomes for MN and AS on the occasion of the their first Board meeting, having joined the Board in May. MN and AS both introduced themselves and spoke about their backgrounds.</p>	
M02ESB(2202)	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Mark Jeffreys and from England Squash Chair Joy Carter (JC). The meeting was the only one, to date, in six years that JC was unable to attend, and EO as Senior Independent Director chaired the meeting in her absence.</p>	
M03ESB(2202)	<p>Declarations of Interests</p> <p>An interest was declared by YA, who is employed by Manchester Active. England Squash has agreements with Manchester Active for services such as office space and IT supply.</p>	
M04ESB(2202)	<p>Minutes of the Board Meeting 17/03/22</p>	

	The minutes were taken as read and were agreed to be a true and correct record.	
M05ESB(2202)	Matters Arising M14ESB(2201) – It was noted that the Rally Together pledge had been successful, with more than 300 signatures to date. There are plans to release a club pack in September in order to bring the pledge to life.	JR
M06ESB(2202)	The other Matters Arising are now completed or are in process.	
M07ESB(2202)	CEO Report MW provided an update on the following areas of the business. <i>Staffing</i> Asma Ajaz-Ali recently began her fixed-term role at England Squash as Community Engagement Manager and has made a great start.	
M08ESB(2202)	Josh Taylor recently departed after eight years' service, to begin a new role with the PSA. Interviews for a replacement will take place in early July.	
M09ESB(2202)	A number of candidates were recently interviewed for a new Digital Project Officer role and the expectation is that an appointment will be made shortly.	
M10ESB(2202)	An agreement has been made to work with Aron Harper-Robinson of Calder Community Squash on a fixed-term basis (12 months) to expand the Squash in the Mosque project and other community initiatives	
M11ESB(2202)	It was noted that Chris Baird, who joined England Squash as Competitions & Commercial Partnerships Manager in April, has settled in really well as part of the team.	
M12ESB(2202)	<i>Mohamed ElShorbagy</i> Mohamed ElShorbagy's decision in June to represent England has been very well received in England and he has received significant support from fellow players and in Egypt also.	
M13ESB(2202)	ElShorbagy won the British National Squash Championships on his debut appearance, defeating Joel Makin in the final on 18 June. It was notable just how diverse the audience at this year's Championship Finals were, with people from many backgrounds, and seemingly more people attending as families this year. It is thought that the more diverse audiences are likely to be a direct result of ElShorbagy's participation in this year's event. ElShorbagy took time after his victory to sign autographs and chat with the enthusiastic youngsters in attendance.	
M14ESB(2202)	<i>Whyte review</i> www.whytoreview.org This review, commissioned by Sport England and UK Sport, is in regard to allegations "that British Gymnastics had failed to deal appropriately with complaints it had received" from gymnasts and their parents about mistreatment with the sport. Squash should not be complacent and must take proactive steps to guard against the potential occurrence of anything similar within squash. It was noted that the Whyte review's recommended steps would actually present a hugely significant barrier to overcome for squash due to their high cost.	

M15ESB(2202)	<p><i>Transgender policy</i></p> <p>It was noted that Nadine Dorries, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, was due to hold a meeting, on the same day as this Board meeting, regarding transgender policy in sport. MW said that he will report back to Board on the outcomes of the Dorries meeting and any implications for England Squash.</p>	MW
M16ESB(2202)	<p><i>Safeguarding</i></p> <p>It was reported that currently there is one significant case involving a coach. A separate case, involving a club does not reach the criteria to be considered a safeguarding matter and has since been reassessed as a general complaint.</p>	
M17ESB(2202)	<p><i>Talent & Performance</i></p> <p>Doubles squash is currently a high priority as the squad builds up to the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in August.</p>	
M18ESB(2202)	<p>Also in August will be the World Junior Championships, which were relocated from St. Petersburg in Russia to Nancy in France.</p>	
M19ESB(2202)	<p>2. Finance</p> <p>NE summarised his 2021/22 end-of-year papers, analysing the year and proving an outturn. It was noted that the year saw an actual surplus of £418k against a budgeted deficit of £185k, i.e. a favourable variance of £603k. As mentioned to Board throughout the year, Covid restrictions affected activity across all departments, but activity should now be considered ‘back to normal’. It was highlighted that, as with last year, England Squash leveraged the opportunity to offset under-utilised Sport England grant in other areas of the organisation to those to which it would normally have to be allocated.</p>	
M20ESB(2202)	<p>It was also noted that income from membership and affiliation had bounced back well, and better than expected.</p>	
M21ESB(2202)	<p>3. Digital Platform Review</p> <p>PM picked out the key points from his paper, which addressed the scoping of a re-build of England Squash’s digital products, as recommended in the User Experience (UX) Review commissioned in late 2021.</p>	
M22ESB(2202)	<p>Three key principles had been identified to act as foundations for the re-build project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a new approach to data management • To build digital products based on user needs • To develop a portfolio of high-quality digital products <p>The development of a new platform to manage data should be prioritised in order to lay the foundations for the new portfolio of digital products and services.</p>	
M23ESB(2202)	<p>The Board discussed the two re-build options that had been presented in the paper:</p> <p>Option A – ‘Phased’ approach Option B – ‘Big Bang’ approach</p>	

	<p>It was agreed that Option A, which has a longer time requirement and a lower investment budget, should be pursued. It was explained by PM that the reason for the lower cost of A, despite the longer build time, is that A would involve the continued use of some of the existing platform whereas B would not.</p>	<p>PM</p>
<p>M24ESB(2202)</p>	<p>There followed some discussion of the recently rebuilt Squash Finder tool on the England Squash website, as well as SEO. It was noted that the aim is to capitalise on the Commonwealth Games in terms of website traffic and that pre- and post-Games traffic will be observed.</p>	<p>PM</p>
<p>M25ESB(2202)</p>	<p>4. Participation Strategy – “Addressing the Wider Challenges”</p> <p>MW spoke about the rationale behind the Executive’s proposal in the related paper. The Executive recommended that Option 2 be pursued:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to prioritise the ‘participation’ challenge by developing a participation strategy. 2. Present a more comprehensive strategy that seeks to address a wider range of issues that have contributed to the decline in regular squash participation. <p>There was praise for the amount of detail included in the paper.</p>	
<p>M26ESB(2202)</p>	<p>It was noted that the “wider range of issues” include the closure of leisure centre courts, the supply of coaches and a shortage of activity in schools, for example.</p>	
<p>M27ESB(2202)</p>	<p>Option 2 was approved by the Board, and it was agreed that a strategic framework would be presented at the September Board meeting.</p>	<p>MW</p>
<p>M28ESB(2202)</p>	<p>5. Competitions Software Review</p> <p>Sadia Quyoum of Stratagem Project Consulting joined the meeting remotely and for this item only.</p>	
<p>M29ESB(2202)</p>	<p>PW introduced the Board paper and highlighted the recommendation to pursue option 1 from the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terminate use of Club Locker as the competitions platform, implement Sport Manager as the new competitions platform and prioritise delivery of ‘single sign-on’ between the England Squash website and Sport Manager to improve the customer experience. 2. Retain Club Locker as the competition software. 	
<p>M30ESB(2202)</p>	<p>It was noted that the implementation of Sport Manager would be intrinsically linked to the work discussed in item 3 on the digital platform. There was confirmation that the data within Sport Manager would be the legal property of England Squash, and there was discussion of the good flexibility on offer to scope the system and tailor it to specific requirements.</p>	
<p>M31ESB(2202)</p>	<p>The recommendation to proceed with option 1 and therefore, move to Sport Manager, was approved by the Board. There was a request to ensure that full and thorough contractual documentation is obtained throughout the process.</p>	<p>PW, Sadia Quyoum</p>
<p>M32ESB(2202)</p>	<p>It was noted that a draft project plan had been prepared to enable the change to be implemented for the start of the 2022/23 season in September 2022.</p>	<p>PW, Sadia Quyoum</p>
<p>M33ESB(2202)</p>	<p>6. Operational Plan and SMART Targets</p>	

	<p>MW spoke on the rationale of the plan and targets as outlined in the paper, in which the recommendation was to pursue either option 1 or 2 from the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accept the proposed targets as presented 2. Add a stretch target for each proposed target that would represent “exceptional progress” towards delivering the strategy 3. Revisit the proposed measures and resubmit in-line with Board recommendations 	
M34ESB(2202)	<p>There was consensus that the internal targets should be adopted, at least until such time that Year 1 targets are established in agreement with Sport England. Option 1 was approved by the Board.</p>	MW
M35ESB(2202)	<p>It was agreed that momentum is important and therefore the following were requested by the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More metrics that show change over time • Some environmental targets 	MW
M36ESB(2202)	<p>7. Membership & Club Affiliation</p> <p>Simon Perks of Sockmonkey Consulting joined the meeting remotely and for this item only.</p>	
M37ESB(2202)	<p>PM introduced this item, which is a subject that had been discussed at previous, recent Board meetings. There had been agreement that the current membership and affiliation scheme does not provide the meaningful connectivity with players that England Squash needs. It is thought to be imperative that a new membership model works for all parties, namely England Squash, county associations, clubs and individual players.</p>	
M38ESB(2202)	<p>It was noted that the proposed new model can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate club/venue affiliation and direct individual membership • Introduce 3-5 tiers of individual membership that appeal to different ‘types’ of player, each with different levels of benefits and associated costs • Maintain a similar model for club affiliation based on the number of courts, with revised benefits and costings • Maintain a ‘county rebate’ model to incentivise counties to drive membership, but remove the central collection of county ‘levies’ by England Squash • Introduce a revised approach to marketing which highlights how England Squash membership enables individuals to feel part of the squash community and give back to their sport 	
M39ESB(2202)	<p>The Board approved the direction of travel summarised above.</p>	PM, S. Perks
M40ESB(2202)	<p>There was agreement that a similar rebate incentive for county associations should be maintained.</p>	PM, S. Perks
M41ESB(2202)	<p>There followed some discussion of the timeline that should be worked to for the implementation of the new scheme. It was agreed that the scheme should be introduced in January 2023, as recommended in the Board paper.</p>	PM, S. Perks
M42ESB(2202)	<p>It was noted that county associations are busy with other areas of work at the present time and will be in the near future (governance commitments, for example), and it is felt therefore that this should be considered in the build up to, and release of, the new scheme.</p>	PM, S. Perks

M43ESB(2202)	<p>8. Commonwealth Games</p> <p>Ahead of the start of the Games in Birmingham this summer, JR provided an update on work delivered to date, as well as the work being planned to ensure the best possible impact from the Games for squash.</p>	
M44ESB(2202)	<p>There followed some discussion around enhancing diversity through the legacy work around the Games. The two options presented in the paper to Board in this regard were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus only on English players 2. Focus predominantly on English players but explore opportunities to celebrate the stories of players from other ethnically diverse communities and other nationalities <p>Option 2 was decided upon by the Board as the appropriate course of action.</p>	JR
M45ESB(2202)	<p>9. Any Other Business</p> <p><i>Board Re-election</i></p> <p>Having expressed his wish to continue to serve on the Board for a second three-year term, NM is required to be re-elected by the England Squash Council.</p> <p>NM left the meeting. NM's request to be put forward for re-election was unanimously approved by the Board. NM then re-entered the meeting.</p> <p>NM will stand for re-election at the next Council meeting on 21 July 2022.</p>	MW
M46ESB(2202)	<p><i>Update Papers</i></p> <p>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 • County Association Governance Project • Inclusion & Diversity • Safeguarding 	
M47ESB(2202)	<p><i>Safeguarding training</i></p> <p>There was discussion of when would be a mutually convenient time for Board members to receive safeguarding training. It was agreed that a Doodle poll would be shared.</p>	MW
M48ESB(2202)	<p><i>North West Counties Squash League AGM</i></p> <p>YA reported on the excellent turn-out from clubs in the region at the recent AGM.</p>	



Signed..... (Chair)

Date.....26/07/2022.....