



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Board meeting held remotely via the Zoom video conference application at 10:30 on Thursday, 5 December 2024.

PRESENT

Board

Joy Carter (Chair) (JC)
 Yawar Abbas (YA)
 Richard Cannock (RC)
 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

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(2404)	<p>1. Chair's Welcome</p> <p>JC welcomed all to the meeting.</p>	
M02ESB(2404)	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>	
M03ESB(2404)	<p>Declarations of Interests</p> <p>There were no interests declared.</p>	
M04ESB(2404)	<p>Minutes of the Board Meeting 17/09/24</p> <p>The minutes were taken as read. It was noted that the last sentence of M39ESB(2403) was too general a statement, not evidenced and therefore will be removed.</p>	SJ
M05ESB(2404)	<p>Matters Arising</p>	

M07ESB(2403)	– It was noted that there is a plan in place for the work on the subject of Complaints and Disciplinary Matters and there will be significant progress ahead of the next meeting.	MW
M06ESB(2404)	M09ESB(2403) – There was discussion about the 18-34 age group, and it was agreed that an 18-34-year-old shall attend the next meeting for the item on Young People and contribute to the discussion.	JR
M07ESB(2404)	M19ESB(2403) – It was agreed that JC and MW would discuss sportswashing before the next meeting. Part of this discussion will be the concept of a “front page test” and how this can be applied by England Squash in determining whether or not to engage with any given external organisation.	MW
M08ESB(2404)	M44ESB(2403) – It was noted that a several agencies had shown interest in working on the ‘listening exercise’ project. The plan is to shortlist over the coming weeks and start the project in January 2025.	JR
M09ESB(2404)	CEO Report <i>Important funding announcements</i> It was highlighted that funding announcements are expected from both UK Sport and Sport England before Christmas.	
M10ESB(2404)	<i>Learning Management System (LMS)</i> The work to develop a new LMS will take place in the first half of 2025.	MW
M11ESB(2404)	<i>Optasia Squash Super League</i> The SSL had a very successful launch night on 15 November with excellent video broadcasting.	
M12ESB(2404)	<i>National Schools Championships</i> It was agreed that MW would share with the Board the geographical locations of the entrant schools to show the national spread. It should be possible to compare these locations with the locations of members.	MW
M13ESB(2404)	There was also a request for MW to check which squash balls are used in the National Schools as well as the number of matches played in a day by a player. It is important that all players in the competition are not playing excessive minutes and are using suitable balls with an appropriate level of bounce.	MW
M14ESB(2404)	<i>Safeguarding</i> The addition of Sarah Ward to the team has made a significant impact with excellent progress having been made. It was noted that a new safe sports organisation working across all sports is in the pipeline, about which MW will update in due course.	MW

M15ESB(2404)	<p><i>Brothers in Arms documentary</i></p> <p>England Squash members will receive 24-hour exclusivity to watch the new documentary on the Elshorbagy brothers before other fans.</p>	
M16ESB(2404)	<p><i>Awards season</i></p> <p>It was noted that notable squash appearances amongst 2024 year-end awards nominees and winners include the Manchester Open and Newcastle coach of the year Bob Aynsley.</p>	
M17ESB(2404)	<p><i>Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan</i></p> <p>The Plan was published online since the last meeting in an important step.</p>	
M18ESB(2404)	<p><i>World Squash Team Championships</i></p> <p>Currently the team and physio are working hard to get the England players fit to compete in the event following some recent fitness issues. England is seeded at two in the male draw and 3/4 in the female draw.</p>	
M19ESB(2404)	<p><i>Key Performance Indicators</i></p> <p>Changes are currently being made to the KPIs and they will be updated ahead of the next meeting.</p>	MW
M20ESB(2404)	<p>2. England Squash Strategy</p> <p>MW introduced this item, which continues the planning ahead of writing a new organisational strategy beyond 2025.</p>	
M21ESB(2404)	<p>There was discussion of whether the use of external resource is desirable, necessary or not recommended. At present, both options, i.e. using or not using external resource, remain available and a final decision will be made in the next stage of planning.</p>	MW
M22ESB(2404)	<p>It was agreed that culture will play an important role in the new strategy because this influences everything that happens at grassroots level.</p>	MW
M23ESB(2404)	<p>There was also agreement that looking back at the current <i>Squash in a Changing World</i> strategy, in terms of assessing what did and didn't work, is part of the process.</p> <p>MW will discuss Strategy outside of the meeting with AS.</p>	MW
M24ESB(2404)	<p>3. Membership and Affiliation</p> <p>PM introduced this item and provided a further update since the writing of the paper shared ahead of the meeting. The good news was a strong performance in terms of membership sales in the first few days of</p>	

	December, taking the overall numbers up to around 9,400 sales since the scheme's launch in mid-August.	
M25ESB(2404)	It was noted that the North West Counties Squash League is the largest in the country, and it was reported that feedback from NWCSL clubs about the scheme so far had been positive on the whole.	
M26ESB(2404)	There was discussion of the benefits packages provided to members. It was agreed that it is important to start to review the benefits in order to ascertain which ones members most value. This relates to retention of members in year two, which is crucial.	PM
M27ESB(2404)	It was agreed that some graphical data ahead of the next meeting on membership sales will be valuable for the Board.	PM
M28ESB(2404)	Board members had tested and approved the 'user journey' for when people go to englandsquash.com to purchase a membership.	
M29ESB(2404)	4. Succession Planning In May 2025 three key Board members including the Chair will complete their third and final terms. Planning work therefore continues in order for replacements to be appointed.	
M30ESB(2404)	It was agreed that the Skills Matrix is an important document to help identify suitable Board candidates. The Inclusion Advisory Group is to review the Skills Matrix and approach to recruitment with the aim of attracting a diverse range of candidates.	MW
M31ESB(2404)	It will be necessary in the coming period to also refresh the personnel of the Remuneration Committee and Nominations Committee because these committees are affected by the Board departures.	JC & MW
M32ESB(2404)	It was noted that Sport England is not involved in the recruitment process.	
M33ESB(2404)	It was agreed that MW will share the Skills Matrix with the Board to help plan next steps.	MW
M34ESB(2404)	5. Finance NE summarised the paper and spreadsheets that he had shared ahead of the meeting. These documents reported on the year-to-date to 30 September 2024.	
M35ESB(2404)	There was discussion of committed and discretionary costs, about which NE is to share further details with AS.	NE
M36ESB(2404)	It was agreed that England Squash will check to ensure that existing Board member template documentation makes reference to the necessity for all Board members to provide certain personal / financial information relating to tax in the UK or other jurisdictions, etc.	NE

M37ESB(2404)	6. Olympic Games – UK Sport Funding	
	<p>As referenced earlier in the meeting, it is noted that news on potential funding from UK Sport related to the 2028 Olympic Games is expected imminently.</p>	
M38ESB(2404)	<p>There was discussion of how England Squash should proceed in the case of a negative or zero investment decision. It was agreed that communications to be shared with the squash community should be prepared in advance allowing for different scenarios. It was agreed that MW will share the drafts with the Board.</p>	<p>MW</p>
M39ESB(2404)	<p>It was noted that there will be an appeals process to be used if necessary. It was agreed that an appeal should be submitted if required.</p>	<p>MW</p>
M40ESB(2404)	<p>It was agreed that the impact on the welfare of players should be acknowledged in Board papers on this subject.</p>	<p>MW</p>
M41ESB(2404)	7. What England Squash Does	
	<p>This item was to discuss the importance of communicating clearly and concisely with key stakeholders on the subject of “what England Squash does”, i.e. its crucial and unique role in the fabric of the squash community. A one-page summary document had been drafted for Board feedback.</p>	
M42ESB(2404)	<p>Following discussion there was consensus that the initial draft was “too busy” and requires simplification of language and greater use of layman’s terms in order to make maximum impact.</p>	<p>MW</p>
M43ESB(2404)	<p>There was a suggestion that the one-page summary could present ‘three things’ that grab the attention and highlight the purpose of England Squash, and this concept should be explored further before finalising the document.</p>	<p>MW</p>
M44ESB(2404)	8. Any Other Business	
	<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"> • Armed Services • People and Coach Education / Development • Competitions • Environment and Sustainability • Inclusion and Diversity • Participation • Safeguarding, Culture and Wellbeing • Talent and Performance 	



Signed..... (Chair)