



AGM fees proposition published

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The Board of Table Tennis England is proposing to the Annual General Meeting that our playing membership fees will rise for the 2020/21 season.

The proposal is for fees for adults to rise by £4 to £20 and for cadets and juniors by £2 to £10.

The original five-year strategy of the Table Tennis England Board, which started in the 2016/17 season, was to increase membership fees by £2 each year. However, last year fees were frozen, and this proposed increase brings it back in line with the original plan which formed part of our funding bid to Sport England.

The strategy, which is now entering its fifth year, is reviewed on an annual basis and shared with National Councillors and the Members' Advisory Group to ensure that it is still relevant and appropriate, as well as being publicised online for members.

The proposal will be voted on at the AGM on July 18th. In light of the ongoing restrictions in terms of travel, gatherings and social distancing, we are currently exploring alternative options for a remote AGM. More information will be made available as soon as possible.

[Click here to read more about the AGM, including all the propositions for this year's meeting](#)

Under this proposal, an adult membership for the 2020/21 season would cost as little as £1.67 a month – and if you take advantage of the many member benefits and discounts we offer you with your membership package, you could easily save more money than your entire membership cost.

Research into average membership fees of sport National Governing Bodies revealed that table tennis was one of the cheapest – the average price of memberships across sports in 2019 was £32.50, whereas the average price a member of Table Tennis England paid last year was £17.34. Last year, Table Tennis Wales charged an affiliation fee of £20. Table Tennis Scotland charged a £22 fee for adult membership.

The affiliation fees we receive help fund an incredible amount of important work, including at grass roots level,

and without your support and contribution, we wouldn't be able to do this.

You may not even know it, but by being a member of Table Tennis England, you help us unlock other funds, whether from funding partners or commercial sponsors. This means we can spend ever more on growing the sports at grass roots. In fact for every £1 of membership fee income we receive, we invest £2 supporting grass roots table tennis, which amounts to almost £1 million annually.

That's why we say that when you buy a membership with us you become more than a player – you become part of a bigger picture, part of the fabric of table tennis in England.

We encourage you to read our [‘How your fees support our sport’](#) article, which helps explain why your fees are so vital to us, and the wide-ranging work it they enable us to do.

Impact of Coronavirus

In the latest [message from the Chairman](#) last week, Sandra Deaton discussed the impact COVID19 is having on us as an organisation.

For the majority of Table Tennis England staff, work has continued as normal, and because we cannot predict when people will be able to return to table tennis activity in a club or public setting, we are actively reviewing advice from around the table tennis world whilst following our own Government's advice. We will issue guidance on the return to activity as soon as we can. In the meantime, we are planning for the season as normal.

We have furloughed a small number of staff whose roles are funded not through Sport England funding. This precautionary step has been taken to ensure as a business we can 'weather the storm' as much as possible. Of course, we are making some other small budgetary savings during this period of inactivity and we remain in dialogue with Sport England. The overriding priority is to safeguard the future of the association and provide support and be ready to recommence activity, support and guidance to the membership.

We cannot yet predict the impact this crisis will have on the association, and what will happen come membership renewal season this summer. We hope we can count on your support to help us through this unprecedented time, and ask that if you can afford to, that you renew your membership as normal this year, regardless of whether or not the season has started. While it may be a relatively small contribution at an individual level, these fees help deliver a large amount of work, and safeguard the future of Table Tennis England. As a not-for-profit organisation, all our revenue is re-invested in delivery of our strategy and in particular to supporting clubs, leagues and competitions to recover.

Why an increase?

As well as underpinning our five-year operational plan, the rise in fees was also necessary as part of our four-year funding agreement to reduce reliance on Sport England funding. Alongside increasing membership fees, we are also working on increasing our commercial income through new partnerships, including that with Mark Bates Ltd, sponsor of the National Championships series.

Sport England have reduced their funding to all National Governing Bodies and this trend is likely to continue as far as core organisational costs are concerned. We do need to look to our membership to provide support to maintain the service they receive and some support in key areas where we do not receive funding.

Throughout this funding cycle, we have been making large efforts to address the reduction in funding, become more efficient and diversify our income. We have invested in technology to support the membership and make the member experience better. We need to continue to develop our digital presence to engage even more members.

I don't see money going into grass roots participation. Why not?

Despite reduced funding, we're actually putting more resources into grass roots table tennis, both in respect of staff time and funding. Our focus more than ever is on the player and the enablers (clubs, coaches, volunteers and leagues) around them and our aim is to improve their 'customer experience' and ensure they get the most out of their affiliation with Table Tennis England.

The Be TT development programme for clubs and leagues is seeing us invest tens of thousands into clubs and leagues every year, as well as the time of an 8-strong staff team dedicated to supporting the programme. Last week we announced that applications were open to clubs and leagues, and that we've doubled the funds available this year to help activate table tennis after the restrictions are lifted.

We're also continuing to develop our software platforms, including TT Leagues, our leagues and fixtures management platform, which was introduced this season and is available to all leagues under our umbrella at no extra cost.

This year's membership survey revealed that the average user rated the platform 6/10 at the start of the season. By the end of the season, they rated it 8/10. We will continue to develop and improve TT Leagues and are preparing to announce new features ahead of the 2020/21 season.

We're also investing further in events, including appointing a British League Officer for the first time to improve the process, support and member experience, and developing our event entry and sanctioning system. This will support our key hard-working British League volunteers.

We're also developing our popular TT Kidz programme, which aims to get more 7-to-11-year-olds playing table tennis, thereby helping to safeguard the future of the sport. Research shows that those who take up table tennis between the ages of 7 and 11 stay in the sport the longest. This programme has proved hugely popular with clubs and has helped them grow the number of young people within their clubs, particularly girls. We will develop this programme further this year, including the roll-out of the programme in schools.

This year we had our largest number of applications to join the Hopes and Aspire squads – our England pathway for under-14s – resulting in us accepting more young players than ever on to the programmes. We are working with players and their club coaches to help them train effectively and develop other key physical and mental abilities they need to apply to their regular daily training in order to progress.

We will also continue to grow the number of volunteers and officials in the sport and open up more opportunities for under-represented groups, including female players.

It's important to remember that we do not receive public funding support for our schools or much of our elite performance programme, both key elements for the growth of table tennis and moving players along the elite pathway.

To find out more about where your membership fees go, read our ['How your fees support our sport'](#) article, which helps explain why your fees are so vital to us.

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