



Board blogs: Steve Kemish

Author: Paul Stimpson

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Although I was appointed to the board in late 2019, I have recently taken on two new roles, or hats to wear, alongside my general responsibilities as a director of Table Tennis England.

Those are as Senior Independent Director (SID) and Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee.

I have undertaken similar positions before and my day job (as CEO of marketing services provider, [Intermedia Global](#)) means I have the same form of duties when it comes to finance there as I do with Table Tennis England.

If we start with the first of these, the hat of SID then theoretically the role covers a number of areas. If you read a definition from the Code for Sports Governance then you can see a lot of what's expected of the role.

Senior Independent Director means an independent director who is appointed as such by the Board, and whose responsibilities include:

- providing a sounding board for the chairperson;
- serving as an intermediary for the other directors when necessary;
- acting as an alternative contact for stakeholders to share any concerns if the normal channels of the chair or the organisation's management fail to resolve the matter or in cases where such contact is inappropriate; and
- leading on the process to appraise the chair's performance.

Happily, in more practical day-to-day terms at Table Tennis England, my role is a lot less officious. That's largely down to the makeup of the current Board. We are fortunate to have a lot of experienced and capable people, including our Chair and CEO, so the need to proactively take up many of the duties outlined is far less frequent.

That said, like my predecessors in this role, I'm very happy and ready to act if the need arises.

This is a sentiment I know is shared with all the Board. We have been elected or appointed with differing skills and experiences but come together for the same purpose – to help improve the sport for all. That means there are shoulders of responsibility and accountability (12, in fact – the number of people on the board) who operate as a team, rather than as individuals.

That team mentality is also important when it comes to my second hat, the chair of the Finance and Audit committee.

If we look at the detail of what this committee is responsible for then we (Table Tennis England) define it as “The Finance Committee’s core emphasis is on audit, finance and remuneration within Table Tennis England.”

The further detail you can read

here: <https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/content/uploads/2015/10/Finance-Committee-TOR.pdf>

Once again down to the combined experience and knowledge of the members of this committee – with a great deal of Table Tennis England experience as well as an awful lot of broader experience from other roles held by the team – we find that the way we work is very much as a team.

Our focus is the financial health and wellbeing of Table Tennis England. That’s the bottom line – to ensure that Table Tennis England brings in more than it spends and does so in the right manner (legally and morally).

Thanks to a very experienced, qualified and capable finance team, led by Samantha Garey ACMA, CGMA, MAAT, then the reality of the committee when we meet is more about helping give input, thoughts and advice on the best and fairest use of those funds that come into Table Tennis England – again linked back to that sentiment I expressed above – to help improve the sport for all involved.

Although we keep a close eye on the purse strings, acting as an early-warning system for the wider board, we can also be proactive – making group decisions on how to make the most of our income, whilst managing risk.

We are by no means out of the woods given the past eighteen months of pandemic but the fact that the team, led by the stellar work of Samantha, as well as excellent guidance from my predecessor, Doug Livingstone, have weathered the storm during the pandemic and kept the books so well balanced bodes well for the whole sport as we move forwards.

That means we can start to move our team focus and energy to continue to try and ensure we maximise our income. Again, this committee is there to feed up ideas and recommendations to the whole Board on where to look to increase our routes to financial growth, rather than just be the emergency button.

This means our focus in the coming weeks and months will be on how we can continue to be as effective as possible with the income we have, how we can look to spend that as wisely and fairly as we can and how we can look to build future revenue opportunities to help improve the brilliant sport of table tennis for all involved – now or in the future.

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