



EGM update: Fit for the future

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An update from Sandra Deaton, Chairman of Table Tennis England

I would like to update you with some positive developments since our funding from Sport England was suspended following the vote at the AGM on July 8. During that time we have been working with people who supported us throughout, as well as some of those who opposed us, to find a way forward which will provide table tennis with an Association which is 'fit for the future' and will secure our funding and restore our reputation.

Out of these difficult times came an opportunity to look closely at how we operate, what we do and the way we do it. We also recognised that we needed to include directly our members by having their input into how they are represented and the way their association is run – for their benefit.

I am pleased that we have reached consensus with a number of people to move forward in a way which will provide a great opportunity to develop and modernise our sport – and the way it is run. I am confident that we will emerge a better organisation for this – and will be 'fit for the future'.

We will be creating an independently-led, wide-ranging expert review of our governance, structure and operations which will then recommend improved representation and better service for our members. We will be asking members to contribute fully at all stages of this process.

The review panel will make recommendations in a wholly open and transparent procedure, having listened to the views of the table tennis community. The Board of Table Tennis England is committed to this, and we are supported by a wide-range of diverse interests within the table tennis family.

We have an opportunity for everyone within the sport to work together for the benefit of table tennis and our membership to develop the blueprint for a 21st century organisation.

The journey of the past few weeks has been difficult and uncertain. But we now have a solution, which should appeal to everyone who cares about the future and the development of our sport.

1. The £9 million funding from Sport England will be restored with a positive vote at the EGM on August 12;
2. We will immediately create a wide-ranging, independently-led review of the governance, structure and operation of Table Tennis England to see how it can better serve our membership. The members will be invited and encouraged to be involved at every stage – and the process, the outcomes and the decisions will be wholly open and transparent.

The principles of this review were agreed as a positive way forward by all parties at a meeting in Grantham on July 31. They were representatives of the Board and National Councillors who had supported the Board, and also those who had opposed the original plans.

Those at the meeting who unanimously agreed that this was a positive way forward were: Sandra Deaton (Chairman), Susie Hughes (Deputy Chairman), Mike Smith (Board), Simon Griew (Board), Sara Sutcliffe (CEO), Phil Ashleigh (National Council), Chris Dangerfield (National Councillor), Neil Hurford (National Councillor), Alan Ransome (National Councillor), Jonathan Bruck (Head of Operations)

More details and a timetable will be announced immediately after acceptance by leagues and county representatives that this is the way forward at the vote at the EGM.

[Click here](#) for more information and to download documents about the EGM, including Proxy Vote forms and the Electoral Register of Company Members.

Following the meeting, the National Councillors who attended issued the following statements in support:

Chris Dangerfield:

I am delighted to be able to say that despite what it took to get here, we now have a significant result.

The review that is being proposed will be far reaching and in-depth; and this is going to take time. If there is a better way forward with regard to governance, the review will find it, members will have the opportunity to feed in their ideas and concerns on a whole range of issues, it's a great opportunity for our sport.

Given the wide-reaching scope, it is not feasible to do justice to this review before the October 31st Sport England deadline. In view of the commitment the Board have now made, I will be giving them my full support at the EGM and voting to accept the proposals being put forward and I would urge anyone who voted against at the AGM to seize this opportunity to secure this independent review, which I believe is the best way forward for our sport.

Alan Ransome:

I am pleased that we are finding a way forward. My sole aims from the start of this has been to retain the funding from Sport England, but at the same time to find the best way to ensure that democracy in the sport which has been in place since 1926 is retained.

I am very hopeful that this review will deliver a good result regarding this as well as having the opportunity to look at other aspects of the sport that are also ripe for review.

Phil Ashleigh and Neil Hurford:

Our sport is too valuable to risk losing. We took time to listen to all sides and make our minds up independently hence our involvement and backing for the board.

It has been hard work and at times tough but a great experience speaking with and hearing the views of a huge number of our fellow table tennis enthusiasts including those with different opinions.

The meeting at Grantham on Monday was massively positive and gives our sport the opportunity to set the

standard for a National Governing Body to really engage and ensure grass roots involvement with a defined, independent and positive pathway for the future.

We have been working closely with the Board over many weeks on something we believe in passionately. What is clear to us, often unnoticed and invariably forgotten is that our Board are also unpaid volunteers. Their expertise, passion and commitment is special and we offer our thanks.

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