

County Squash and Racketball Associations Network (CAN)

www.countysquashassociations.co.uk



RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD AT COVENTRY SQUASH CLUB ON SATURDAY 15 JULY 2017

ATTENDANCE

The meeting was attended by 33 people, including the representatives of 22 County Associations and two members of the England Squash Board. It was independently chaired by Robert Smith, a lifelong player and supporter of squash. A further 10 County Associations sent their regrets at being unable to be represented on this occasion

THE CURRENT SITUATION

After the Chair had laid down the ground rules for the conduct of the meeting, Mike Clemson gave a brief summary of the current situation, reiterating his belief that the County Associations are best placed to drive forward a resurgence of squash, and his regret that England Squash pay lip service to working with the County Associations while continuing to pursue their own strategy

A Board member, Nick Donald, confirmed that there is frustration on all sides about the lack of an effective consultation process, but factors to be taken into account included the influence of Sport England as the main funders of England Squash, and their requirements on governance arrangements, which would lead to revised Articles of Association being presented to the members of ES for approval. He felt that England Squash was moving more towards being an enabling organisation, and he was optimistic that we can move forward together. This was echoed by Paul Trott, the other Board member present

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A FORMAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

There was considerable discussion on this proposal, which was based on the need for a body which could be recognised by England Squash as its main communication channel for working in partnership with the County Associations. Factors included the current position of the County Associations Network (CAN) as an unofficial body seeking to influence the culture and strategy of England Squash, the role of the National Forum, which is seen by England Squash as its preferred avenue for communicating with the County Associations; and the role and position of the Regional Forums. There was also discussion about the most effective arrangements for relating to the ES Board, whether by some form of sub-committee or individual cross representation. Reference was also made to the role of the ES Council, and possible changes which might be included in the revised ES Articles of Association

There was general agreement about the four main roles of an Association –

- (a) To share good practice and views on all area of activity and concern by means of a network of volunteers recruited through the CAs (County Support

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- Contacts) and the CAN website. The CSCs would liaise on an ongoing basis with appropriate members of staff of ES
- (b) To develop a strategy for supporting and strengthening the weaker County Associations, including the role of the Regional Forums and the recruitment of skilled consultants who could work with individual CAs
 - (c) To act as the main communication channel for the County Associations as a group to relate to England Squash and other organisations
 - (d) To co-ordinate and represent the views of the County Associations to England Squash and other organisations

VOTING ON THE PROPOSAL

Taking into account preferences expressed by County Associations who were not able to be represented, both for and against the proposal, the votes were

IN FAVOUR 20 AGAINST 7

It was therefore declared that the Association is established, and the following agreed to serve on an interim Executive Committee – Richard Antcliff (Kent), Alan Batchelor (Cheshire), Mike Batte (Cornwall), Richard Bickers (Avon), Mike Blasdale (Leics) and Mike Broadbent (Northants). It was agreed that an invitation to nominate a representative on the Committee should be extended to the Masters Committee and the Referees Working Group

Mike Clemson agreed to continue as Co-ordinator until the official Inaugural Meeting of the Association, at which its Name, Aims, Terms of Reference and Governance arrangements would be confirmed, Officers and an ongoing Executive Committee elected, and arrangements for its Administration agreed. The intention would be that the functions of CAN, including the website, would be incorporated into the Association

To minimise the commitment required of County Association representatives, it was hoped that meetings of the Association could take place on the same day and location as Council meetings (especially as the latter are now limited to two hours), with the first one likely to be in November, prior to the Council meeting and the AGM of England Squash

Those in favour – Avon, Berks, Cambs, Cheshire, Cornwall, Devon, Durham, , Herefords, Lancs, Leics, Merseys, Norfolk, Northants, Northumbria, Notts, Shrops, Warks, Wilts, Worcs and Yorkshire

Those against – Beds, Essex, Gloucs, Hants, Kent, Middlesex and Suffolk

No preference expressed – Bucks, Cumbria, Derbys, Dorset, Herts, Lincs, Oxfords Somerset, Staffordshire, Surrey and Sussex

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AFFILIATION AND MEMBERSHIP

Nick Donald and Richard Antcliff summarised their proposals, which were supported by the meeting

RELATIONSHIP WITH MASTERS SQUASH

Martin Pearse (ex-Chair of the Masters Committee) summarised how Masters Squash and the County Associations could work more closely, for example in promoting Regional Masters tournaments locally and encouraging Masters players to become more involved in their County Associations

OTHER MATTERS

Other matters discussed briefly were

- (a) A nomination for President of England Squash
- (b) The ES website
- (c) The future of the Squash Player magazine
- (d) The Inter-County Championships 2017-18
- (e) Coach Education and Development
- (f) Concerns about ES' adoption of Club Locker
- (g) The need to revert to the name of Racketball
- (h) Junior Rankings
- (i) The adoption of Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status by County Associations
- (j) The appointment of Paul Walters as Commercial Manager of ES, his remit to include membership
- (k) The revision of the Articles of Association

The meeting closed at 3.00 pm with thanks to the Chairman for his handling of the meeting, Nick Donald and Paul Trott for attending as Board members, Mike Clemson for his work on behalf of CAN, Coventry Squash Club for providing the venue facilities free of charge, and to all present for giving up their Saturday in the interests of squash

NOTE: Since the meeting, the interim Executive Committee has agreed on the following summary of the agreed Aims and purpose of the Association

1. To promote the playing of squash and racketball throughout England, in conjunction with England Squash
2. To support a strong and comprehensive network of County Associations
3. To identify and disseminate best practice across the County Associations
4. To be the primary consultative group for all matters relevant to England Squash which affect the County Associations