

County Squash and Racketball Associations Network (CAN)

www.countysquashassociations.co.uk

Chair: [Alan Batchelor](#)



Report from the Chairman

May 2018

England Squash Council meeting

11am – 1pm 17th May 2018

And so another England Squash Council meeting has come and gone. It was held on a Thursday at Goodenough College in London and attended by a number of England Squash Staff and board members and by delegates from around two-thirds of the County Associations. Some of the delegates had to take a day's leave of absence from work to attend.

The agenda included items 11 to 18 as papers for information only:

11. Club Development Initiative – Update
12. Governance
13. Communications Update
14. England Squash & England Squash Masters Partnership
15. Digital Content Progress
16. Programmes Update
 - Squash Girls Can, Squash101, Squash57, Junior 101
17. Referee Development
 - Home Nations Alliance & Mission 2022
18. Commercial Update

Two hours, therefore for the main items of which one was Chair's welcome and 9 & 10 were AOB and Close & Lunch. Was there time for discussion? Very little.

If the constitutional role of Council is to 'Review the work of the Board and provide advice' to what extent did this Council meeting fulfil that task? It was clear that it did not in any meaningful way. The opinion of many was that the format of the Council meeting was designed to minimise the opportunities for meaningful discussion and to be, instead, a reporting exercise, much of which could have been accomplished in the same fashion as items 11 to 18. For example, 10 minutes only was allotted to Chris Vine's presentation on the South East Project. That should have had much more time as well as a period of follow-up discussion.

The group, which is working on the Articles of Association and reported by Paul Millman have posed and will be considering important questions on the role of Council. Does Council work? Should there be wider representation from other stakeholders in the sport? The issues on this are clearly very important and we thank this group for the work they will be doing.

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What is absolutely clear is that the Board must invite input and discussion from Council and other stakeholders. The guidance in the Code of Governance is clear:

“It is for the organisation to determine the role of its Council within the parameters set by this Code. However, the reasonable rights to consultation and constructive challenge that a Council may have in fulfilling its role as a conduit for the views of the wider sport could include:

- *an audience with the chair of the Board;*
- *an audience with the Board as a whole;*
- *the power to call a meeting of the members;*
- *the power to put resolutions at a members’ meeting;*
- *the right to be consulted on the development of the organisation’s strategy and any major strategic decisions which affect the sport*
- *providing a forum for debate among stakeholders;*
- *acting as a ‘sounding board for the Board and providing advisory opinions as and when appropriate;*
- *providing a pool of candidates to fill certain positions; and*
- *acting as an ambassador to disseminate the organisation’s strategic vision, helping to ensure that all stakeholders understand and support a shared vision for the development of the sport and of their respective organisation.”*

The New Board of England Squash has been in place for sufficient time now to establish its role and relations with the executive. It is to be hoped that it will find ways, apart from via the executive, of reaching out to and hearing the views from counties and others.

County Squash Association Network meeting

2pm – 3.30pm

Having commented on the length of the agenda at the council meeting, I have to concede that the CAN agenda was perhaps too ambitious and we did not get through it all. I am tempted to apologise for that, but won’t because we were able to spend some time in open forum discussion, which was worth while. The secretary, Mike Clemson, is distributing a record of the meeting.

Rest assured that we will keep alive the items that we did not get to. A topic for discussion will be raised from time to time, or one will occur naturally, and all are invited to contribute to the discussion, usually by email.

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Since November a number of passionate squash enthusiasts have put themselves forward as consultants in a variety of specialist areas. I want to thank them all for putting in time and effort and for producing reports for CAN. The list of consultants is on the CAN Website and we would urge you contact them in the first instance if you have a particular question or wish to raise an issue which may be of wider interest. Each consultant has a direct contact at England Squash and this route for you may be the quicker way to deal with any matter. Of course, you can contact England Squash direct, but with their now, small staff it would be their preference to use the consultant route.

The reports which the consultants have submitted are all important and I would urge you to read them and let us have your feedback. After all, the CAN Executive Committee represents you and we need to have your thoughts and ideas.

The next full meeting of CAN will be on the same day as the next ES Council meeting, probably in November, and we have advised England Squash to reconsider the format of the Council meeting.

As for the CAN meeting, we hope that many more County Representatives will be able to come (it will be on a Saturday). It will be our first AGM when all positions on the Executive Committee will be reviewed. It would be good to see new people wanting to become involved and England Squash would see a continuing stream of "Squash nuts", to use one of Mike Clemson's phrases, standing up for squash at County level.

Alan Batchelor