

PETANQUE ENGLAND AGM MINUTES 13.12.25

Venue: Orida Hotel, Chieveley, West Berks RG20 8XY

Present: Board:
Colin Roper (CR) President, Cary Bush (CB) Treasurer, Peter Aldersey (PA) Secretary, Richard Stevens (RS), Mike Head (MH)

Members:
Emma Pople (acting as scrutineer and administrator), John Thatcher, Rose Thatcher, Adrian Thomas, Gavin Naylor, Frank Charlesworth, Chris Peat, Adrian Aldred, Stephen Lombard, Bob Prior, Doug Kendall, Royston Williams, Simon Adamsdale

1. Apologies had been received from:

Mark Bell, John Edmondson, Claire Geddes, Pippa Boardman, Mike Pegg, Martin Hughes, Simon Bird, Carol Barnes, Jean Wilmott, Andy Wilmot, Chris Chubb, Keith Wannell, Steve Read, Lee Herring, Gwynneth Brearley, Simon Clarke, Neil Collier, Janine Collier, Maggie Simpson, Peter Simpson, Debbie Chaperon

2. Quorum

To be quorate, we needed 135 members present in person or by proxy. PA/Emma Pople confirmed that with some 230 proxy votes, the meeting was quorate.

3. Minutes of last meeting

These had been circulated in advance of the meeting. John Thatcher underlined the view expressed in the last meeting that there were too many regions. He also underlined the reference to our desperate shortage of umpires, a concern echoed by Doug Kendall who had recently taken his umpire's exam along with eight others. John Thatcher promised him the results would be out shortly!

There being no other matters arising, acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Adrian Thomas, seconded by Gavin Naylor and approved without dissent.

4. Directors' reports

CR introduced those directors present and explained that individual director's reports were from now on being melded into a single Annual Report covering all aspects of PE's activities for the year. There were no questions arising from the Report.

5. Approval of accounts

These had been circulated by CB. There being no questions, their adoption was proposed by Steve Lombard, seconded by Adrian Thomas, and passed unanimously.

6. Determination of membership fees for 2025

This item again engendered extensive debate. Sadly, the Club member concept had failed to take off. Steve Lombard and MH were among those emphasizing that they had always sought to emphasise that full competitor member status should be a 'given'. Elaine Aldersey, on the other hand, echoed the views of the members of her club and many others, saying we must address the well-worn refrain 'what's in it for me?'

Emma Pople surprised and pleased a number of those present by saying that at the recent meeting with Sport 80 she had attended with RS and CB, our potential participation in their Rewards programme had been explained. More of this would be circulated to members once we had properly explored what was on offer.

Both PA and Steve Lombard suggested that they would like to see a move towards every member of every PE club being a member of PE in some shape or another. PA outlined the approach of Bowls England who required an annual per capita payment of £7.10 from each of their 2000 clubs, thus ensuring a proportionate contribution from each club. That said, Bowls England had a far more comprehensive suite of assistance for their clubs, which we would be seeking to emulate in the coming months.

Meanwhile, the existing level of fees was agreed for the coming year while we assessed the options before us.

A formal proposal to keep all fees unaltered for 2026 was made by CB, seconded by MH.

7. Appointment of directors

PA noted that this item had been accidentally omitted from the agenda and sought the approval of the Chair, which was granted, to bring it forward.

The renewal of terms of two board appointees, CR and CB, was not subject to approval by the meeting.

The appointment of MH and the re-appointment of RS were subject to the approval of members present in the room. They had already been proposed and were willing to stand. Elaine Aldersey, seconded by Steve Lombard, proposed the election of MH and the re-election of RS was proposed by MH, seconded by John Thatcher. Both were elected unanimously.

The re-election of CR as president was proposed by John Thatcher, seconded by Elaine Aldersey, and carried unanimously. CR thanked the meeting and exhorted everyone to work hard at driving PE forward, rather than sitting back and letting others take the strain. It shouldn't be about 'what can I get for my £25' but about 'what can I give'?

8. Special Resolution to adopt new Articles of Association

PA introduced this item with a brief overview of the need for them and of the evolution of our thinking during the two-year period of their gestation. We had had the advice and guidance of Frettons, solicitors, during the process. Against the background of a perceived lack of interest in PE's affairs from members, we had gone through several options.

But in the light of extensive consultation during 2025 we had been convinced to retain the present member-centric voting system. Indeed, the Articles now tabled went further in this direction by stipulating that ALL board appointments (rather than only 50%) be elected by members.

PA stressed that the adoption of these new Articles was merely the beginning, and not the end, of the process. The next steps, which were already under way, would be the creation of vision and mission statements together with measurable strategic and operating plans to achieve them.

Regions and clubs and members could expect to be fully consulted and involved as we moved through each stage. Communication, he stressed, is two way – we really want members to engage with these important issues which were all designed to assist in our quest for public and corporate funding.

Before proceeding to a vote, he noted one small typo that he would ask the meeting to approve: the definition of Independent Director had wrongly referred to article 65 and not 64. The meeting approved this correction.

At this point, John Thatcher asked for an explanation of why, alone of all the board, was to be elected by the board and not by members – this seemed out of place. PA explained the split of responsibilities between a chairman (strategy and external boundaries) and a president (operations) and we need to ensure that the right person is appointed to both roles. If, in due course, we considered that the presidential role should revert to a board role and/or elected by members, this could be picked up at a future general meeting along with any other issues emerging.

Adoption of the Articles was proposed by Adrian Thomas, seconded by John Thatcher, and approved by all present and by all proxy voters except for a single 'no' vote and two abstentions. They were duly initialed and signed by the President, ready for lodging at Companies House.

9. Any Other Business

- Membership Regulations: John Thatcher queried the reference to 'the Handbook' in the document. This gave pause for thought – PA's assumption was simply that it was the Official Rules. But he considered this might well be among the issues the board would need to be clarified before a final version was made public.
- Website: MH suggested that the website should have a role here as the repository of trusted information. John Thatcher recommended Mike Pegg as having an encyclopedic knowledge of all our regulations.
- Sponsorship and funding. A key issue seems to be that pétanque is, as CR put it, a 'cottage industry' in this country and it may well be that local initiatives are as productive, or perhaps more so, as national ones. PE centrally needs to guide clubs towards local funding sources.

MH emphasized that sponsors themselves wanted a return – they are not altruistic: in their turn they want to know ‘what’s in it for me’?

- Growth: PA noted the extensive ‘low hanging fruit’ that existed in the many local leagues that had hitherto seen no value in joining forces with PE. Steve Lombard touched on some of the history behind this but attracting their support would be invaluable in terms of making our presence larger and more visible. Gavin Naylor gave a graphic example of a league which adamantly refuses to engage with PE - the 99 League which has five divisions each of ten clubs.
- Integrity of regions. Bob Prior sought reassurance from the board that they would not lightly sanction the creation of new ‘breakaway’ regions as a response to internal disharmony within a region. PA expressed the firm view that as things stood at present, he personally was very much averse to the creation of more regions - on average, nineteen regions had only eight clubs each. MH endorsed the concept of PE producing a set of transparent guidelines and also emphasised his desire to see new players, not just recycled existing players.
- Safeguarding. Major events such as the Inter Regionals need – required, even? – a nominated safeguarding officer. There were some weaknesses apparent in Weston Super Mare this year and Gavin sought reassurances that improved measures be put in place before future events. All regions should have a safeguarding officer in place. CR assured the meeting that this was in hand – Pippa Boardman was picking up this role.
- Calendar: Steve Lombard pleaded for early publication of the 2026 calendar. Supported by Adrian Thomas, CR considered that we had to wait for Europe; PA/MH wanted to see early release because this would benefit all players and all clubs. We should not be driven by the elite.

14th December 2025

PWA