

PETANQUE ENGLAND BOARD MEETING 23.2.25 MINUTES

Venue: Holiday Inn (Reading South)

Present: Colin Roper (CR), Cary Bush (CB), John Edmondson (JE), Richard Stevens (RS), Peter Aldersey (PA)

Apologies: Tom Wilson, Lynn Wilson, Pippa Boardman, Mark Bell

1. Minutes of last meetings

The minutes of two of the three last meetings (26.10.24 and 23.1.25) required approval. CB ran quickly through the content of each and, there being no matters arising, approval was proposed by CB, seconded by RS.

2. Sport 80

The issue of access to the database was debated amid the obvious concern of complying with GDPR access (it being noted that we had as yet no automated way of ensuring that re-tests take place at the scheduled two year intervals). The GDPR questionnaire must be completed by all granted access.

Those needing access to a greater or lesser extent included:

- Board members
- Umpires
- Club contacts and/or administrators
- Regional contacts and/or administrators

Agreed that a set of 'how to' instructions on the navigation and functions of Sport 80 would be useful at both club and regional level. CB proposed employing a part time administrator but in the first instance PA proposed that he and RS should liaise to see if they could produce such guidelines, with an end of May deadline (which embracing the busy renewal season as it does, gave opportunities for issues to present themselves).

RS noted several other issues with which Sport 80 had difficulty coping, eg joint accounts and suspended members. As an aside, the issue of debtor control was debated, resulting in a firm conclusion that such members would not be allowed to compete without either settling their indebtedness or agreeing a repayment schedule.

3. Financials

CB presented and briefly ran through the 2024/25 results, which showed a trading loss of c£5,000.

He highlighted the key areas on which to focus attention, viz:

- Travel – 50% up on 2023/24 and by far the largest item, so it needs explanation
- Cost of membership – this was basically the cost of Sport 80
- Marketing – a sharp – we need to keep a close measure on effectiveness
- Legal – this related to a club dispute which should have been more proactively managed to prevent avoidable escalation. It had cost many hours of Mike Pegg's time plus a significant legal bill. We simply had to prevent a recurrence of this.

4. Events

JE first summarized the Juniors' visit to Holland for a training event hosted by the Dutch Federation. It was beneficial for both participants and coaches. JE would like to repeat it this year, but subject to more stringent cost controls, and ensure that the coaches were enabled to leverage the knowledge and skills gained more widely across PE.

To the question of whether the Juniors should attend a European event this year, CR's firm opinion was that such an event must include a significant training element – it was not appropriate or good for our youngsters just to go and get thrashed.

Discussion on the selection criteria of the fourth player in a Triples team concluded that if the fourth player did not participate, his/her place should in principle be allocated to the ranking player in the second string (subject also to the views of the team involved). It would be useful for ranking points to appear in Sport 80.

Finally, JE showed a schematic showing the proposed structure of a nationally integrated junior development plan. Claire Geddes (Heart of England) had agreed to head this up and would be invited to join the board in this capacity.

5. Website

In Mark Bell's absence, the progress he was making was noted but consideration of the item was deferred till the next meeting.

6. Preparation for AGM

Discussion prior to the meeting on the management of proxies to avoid the last minute issues at the 2024 AGM had resulted in an offer from DBS Verifier Helen Woods that she would be happy to act as scrutineer – we are happy to accept that offer. Proxies would have to be received at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

CB will prepare the AGM paperwork.

Agreed that the AGM would be set for 12 noon on Saturday 29th March and the venue would be the Kewstoke Village Hall near the Sand Bay Holiday Park at Weston Super Mare. This was further west than usual but it was appropriate to move the event around to encourage attendance from different regions of England. Motorway access via the M4 and M5 was good.

7. Insurance

PA outlined the new deal he had agreed with Marsh Sport and our insurers (though noting that three quotes were outstanding so the final outcome could be cheaper), focusing on the all important public liability cover.

By contrast with our present confusing and strictly limited cover, he had focused on need at the club level. He had arranged a cover which would apply to ALL members of EVERY PE affiliated club, and to ALL their pétanque activities whether inside or outside the orbit of PE.

This approach would benefit all clubs:

- Those who had turned a blind eye to the needs of their 'unlicensed' members would now have such activities fully covered.
- Those who had bought stand alone cover should be able to cancel and save money.

The additional premium cost was a very modest £750, or 14% of last year's premium. He presented a financial forecast which suggested that this could be covered by a modest increase in each club's annual membership fee. PA went on to say that quotations for the remaining covers were still outstanding, but he anticipated no difficulties with them.

JE asked a number of penetrating questions as to the extent of cover in various scenarios and was satisfied with the answers. PA noted that Sport 80 did not need to be involved and that in admin terms, all clubs would be asked to do each year was to submit their total membership numbers.

CR asked PA to prepare a simple briefing note for circulation to all clubs in time for the AGM.

8. New Articles of Association

Backed up by PA, CB explained that because our present Articles required us to consult with any class of members whose rights we were impacting, and we had not had time to do this, we could not offer the recently created Articles (or their associated membership rules) at this AGM.

PA suggested we plan for a thorough consultation process during 2025; CR suggested inter alia a congress of regional presidents in the first instance. This was an opportunity to work up a coherent strategy for PE going forward and perhaps approach the NGBs of similar sports (eg Bowls England) to see how they managed to tap into Sport England etc funding. We know that Bowls England offer their member clubs far more model guidelines than we do – and some of ours are woefully out of date.

9. Any Other Business

Nothing of any note. JE noted that he would be running the Umpires course in mid April and CR referred to a couple of emails he'd received from CEP.

No date was set for the next meeting, though of course we would all be present at the AGM in five weeks time.