

PETANQUE ENGLAND BOARD MEETING 29.4.25 MINUTES

Venue: Virtual meeting via Zoom

Present: Colin Roper (CR), Tom Wilson (TW), Cary Bush (CB), John Edmondson (JE), Pippa Boardman (PB), Claire Geddes (CG), Peter Aldersey (PA)

Apologies: Richard Stevens, Lynn Wilson, Mark Bell

1. Minutes of last meetings

The minutes of the last meeting on 23.2.25 had been circulated. There being no matters arising, approval was proposed by CB, seconded PA. The minutes of the AGM had been circulated to the board and an agreed version 'signed off'. Approval to be sought at the next general meeting.

2. Articles of Association

CB/PB/PA had started to work on the draft prepared with Fretten and were intent on pushing on rapidly. The adoption of these Articles was dependent on a Special General Meeting since we were asking members to relinquish their voting rights in favour of clubs – a change which, we hoped, would increase rather than reduce the current apathetic attitude of members to PE affairs. We planned this for 26th July (but later agreed 2nd August).

CB emphasized the redraft was also planned to comply with the expectations of Sport England, enabling us to apply for Tier 1 funding. We planned a further and hopefully final meeting with solicitors and aimed to have the final version ready for board approval by the end of June.

Preceding this we would be consulting with key stakeholders, notably our nineteen regional presidents. Agreed that PA would kickstart this process via an email to them all enclosing the AGM minutes (including the President's report) and, as an aside, the report of the meeting prepared for Petanque 365 by Martin Hughes which read very well. PA will follow up this email with a telephone call to all the presidents to gauge responses and would also reach out to Martin Hughes.

The meeting also identified several other 'influencers' who might not favour the new Articles, such as David Baxter, Chris Garrett and Andrew Fisher. TW wanted us to be as sure as possible that what we were doing was 'bullet proof'. PB emphasized that reaching out to our key players was essential – if we discovered we were going down the wrong route, the sooner we discovered this, the better. CR's view was that notwithstanding potential difficulties, it was time to move on with a clear plan.

3. Membership structure & fees

CB reminded us that Club membership fees had not increased for probably fifteen years; Regions, meanwhile, paid nothing at all. PA concurred, emphasizing that just a simple increase for inflation would mean an increase in excess of 50%. PA wondered about a flat Club fee of £100, perhaps ameliorated to £50 in the case of Clubs with less than, say twenty members. More radically, he wondered whether it was time to link the club precept directly to total member numbers - say £5 per member? This topic would be part of his discussions with regional presidents.

CG noted how difficult her members had found dealing with Sport 80 – it had been a very negative experience. PA entirely concurred and advised that Richard Stevens had learned a lot from his heavy engagement during the renewal season. We intended to put together some form of user guide, available to all members as part of the proposed new website.

4. Administrative support

CB briefed on the issue of employing part time administrative help – several of us were struggling to access or make sense of information and a clear focus on updating and streamlining this would be advantageous. He had in mind a two day/week contract at £10,000pa. There was general agreement to proceed with this and PA asked that CB put together a job description prior to starting the search.

5. Events update.

Prefacing JE's briefing, CR noted that this was intended to be JE's last year and we would need to identify his replacement. JE ran through the full range of events scheduled in the coming months. He was working with loW Tours on the detail of the inter regionals, noting that both Wales and Scotland were entering eight teams. There would continue to be two divisions this year. The Juniors event was growing extremely well.

CR passed on the complimentary comments he'd received about the running of last year's inter regionals. He then referred to a discussion with David Plumoff offering to take on the Men's Lead role. JE recommended caution: Dave was only looking for involvement in certain key events, and no more.

JE referred to the issue of streaming events to Facebook; this was problematic in terms of who had administrator access at the necessary high level. TW explained that provided access were carefully restricted, several people could log in as the higher-level admin to do the job. It was important to retain control.

Finally, CB raised the issue of adequacy of accommodation at Kewstoke for the inter regionals.

6. Junior update

CG had circulated a detailed report which had been well received. She noted with appreciation the widespread support she'd received and reviewed both the successful trip to Holland and the South/North support structure she was putting in place. She then ran through the current status of planning for this season's Junior events, emphasizing that a lot more involvement had flowed from Whitnash PC.

She was keen to take the opportunity of returning to Valence, with one boys' team and one mixed team. Meanwhile, the World event had now been relocated from Canada to Spain, scheduled for October, and CR would liaise with CG ahead of the next board meeting regarding our attendance at this event. In terms of budget, there was agreement for Valence at £2,500, while for the World event, CR suggested this could be as much as £4,500 [NB CR has since advised the figure is likely to be much higher at c£7,500, which requires a view to be taken on whether it's still good value}.

CG noted the initial difficulties she had experienced in getting reliable data but had worked her way through this. The Juniors were interacting well via Facebook and their own WhatsApp group and she was encouraged by their commitment to the homework initiative she had established.

CR referred to a three year/three day coaching programme proposed by the CEP, to be held in Luxembourg. This clashed with a number of events and whilst it might be desirable, it seemed that PE were ahead of many European federations in terms of junior development.

Agreed that this was not appropriate for PE at this stage – we could spend the money better via a homegrown programme. In which context it was important that we standardise our teaching methods – we need a consistent and clear message

7. Veterans and Mens' Senior update

CR summarized the current status of these sectors and noted that Martin Hughes would be head of delegation for the Mens Seniors and will also be doing the streaming.

Espoirs – very disappointing uptake – not realistic to send any team this year.

Discussion turned to kit. There were conflicting requests but CR was determined to keep costs down and recycle existing kit – and insist on standardising suppliers.

8. CEP Congress Meeting

CR had circulated a report; members had noted with interest but had no input to make.

9. Dates for 2025 board meetings

PB had requested forward planning on this. Agreed four per year seemed appropriate; Tuesday evenings 7pm suited everyone.

PA suggested a meeting in mid June, in preparation for the SGM. Agreed 17th June Zoom meeting. The next one after that would be driven by the inter regionals in mid September– agreed 2nd September. Then there would be the AGM at the end of November – no date was agreed.