

Summary Report for National Council Meeting - Saturday 18 April 2026

Opening Remarks from the NC Chair

Neil Hurford (NH) chaired the April National Council meeting, welcoming new member Ian Chislett and noting that due to World Championships commitments neither TTE CEO Sally Lockyer nor TTIE Chair, Richard Scruton were able to attend the meeting. The meeting began with a minute's silence to remember recently departed colleagues, including David Hockney, followed by the approval of January meeting minutes which Alan Ransome (AER) praised for being well-written and useful. Clive Ellison (CE) requested that future meeting summary reports include participants' full names and be published on the National Council website, which NH agreed to implement, noting they would also add the Summary Report to the news section to increase visibility among leagues and membership.

AGM Planning and Updates

TTE Chair, Claire Briegal (CB) provided updates on upcoming meetings and events, confirming the AGM date as July 8th. She announced plans for an online finance session prior to the AGM, led by TTE Director, Paul Bishop (PB), to allow members to ask detailed financial questions ahead of the AGM. The group also discussed plans for a post-AGM in-person engagement session in early September, potentially on a Saturday, to discuss Table Tennis England's forward strategy and activities. Tony Catt (TC) raised concerns about the focus on World Championships versus member-focused initiatives, while CE suggested reintroducing a written Q&A process for the annual review, which CB agreed to take back to the Board for consideration.

AER expressed concerns about holding the post-AGM engagement session in September due to potential scheduling conflicts with other events. CB explained the reasoning behind the September timing, including the need to align with the TTE Board meeting in August for strategic plan review. The group also discussed committee recruitment, with CB announcing that a document detailing vacancies would be distributed soon. She also noted that Richard Ayers' term as independent director was ending, with the Board seeking someone with HR and transformational change skills.

World Championships Update

As TTIE Chair, Richard Scruton was unable to attend, CB provided an update on the World Championships and reported that 128 teams from 79 national associations would be participating in the WTTTC at the Copper Box and Wembley Arena. She highlighted the benefits for Table Tennis England including the potential for additional funding, volunteer opportunities, and enhanced international profile. Also mentioned were promotional activities in London, ticket sales performance, and the impact on raising the profile of table tennis. She mentioned that no significant income has been received directly from the championships, and that TTE had contributed to the event through resource allocation rather than direct financial contribution.

Table Tennis England Budget Review

PB discussed the organisation's financial situation. He noted that while TTE has over £4 million a year in income, including funding from Sport England, reserves had steadily been eroded due to cumulative effect of small deficits over the past few years, which had continued to grow. Continued use of reserves was unsustainable and reserves should be rebuilt to provide some headroom to deal with unexpected circumstances. This would involve examining both income and costs.

The Board had agreed in principle that a balanced budget – rather than a deficit budget - is necessary, though the specific budget for 2026-27 has not yet been approved. TC suggested increasing membership fees and implementing a menu-based system to better value individual services, while PB indicated he personally supported an increase in membership fees over a couple of years. The Board plans to consult with National Council members on potential membership fee

increases and timing, with PB aiming to present a final budget for 2026-27 and an indicative budget for 2027-28 at the next Board meeting. National Councillors were invited to participate in a direct consultation exercise with PB about affiliation fees.

The meeting then focused on financial challenges and potential solutions for the organisation. Martin Clark (MC) and other National Councillors raised concerns about high administration costs (45% of expenditure versus the typical 10%), while PB acknowledged these issues and noted that development areas are fully funded by Sport England. Joshua Reynolds (JR) compared the organisation's financial performance to other sports bodies, highlighting that while they have similar government funding levels, they generate less non-government income despite being larger in size. PB proposed a reset, targeting an additional £100,000 in income and £100,000 in cost reductions to address the projected deficits.

AER praised PB's presentation and emphasised the need to address the deficits. PB agreed with these points and discussed potential sources of income, including increasing membership fees and affiliation fees for Premier Clubs. The group agreed to engage with National Council members to gather feedback on proposed income solutions. CE raised concerns about the impact of increased fees on club membership. PB and CB outlined plans to consult with stakeholders on the best approach to generating additional income.

Renaming the “West” Area

The meeting discussed renaming the West Area to West Midlands as requested by Warwickshire's National Councillor, Estyn Williams (EW). AER explained that the Development Advisory Committee is reviewing regional names and geography, with plans to present changes at the next meeting in a few months. NH agreed to send the proposal to Sally Hughes, the Development Committee chair, for consideration.

Annual Returns and Updates to the Electoral Register

NH and Estyn Williams (EW) discussed the importance of completing annual returns and appointing league representatives to ensure voting rights at the AGM. CE raised concerns about communication regarding updates to the electoral register, and NH agreed to help facilitate notifications to National Councillors.

Action List from the January Meeting

The group reviewed action items from the January meeting.

(a) Formalizing the relationship between National Council and the Board

NH and Susie Venner (SV) were planning to meet with CB and Sally Lockyer (SL) to map out this relationship further. EW and AER provided feedback on a draft Memorandum of Understanding, suggesting a need for a more collaborative and partnership-oriented approach rather than an adversarial one.

(b) Insurance Review

The meeting focused on insurance arrangements for Table Tennis England, with participants expressing concerns about the current coverage and communication issues. PB highlighted problems with the personal accident cover, noting it doesn't cover unemployment, people over 80, or certain other cases, while also questioning the necessity of this coverage. Tom Purcell (TP) and SV raised concerns about member expectations regarding insurance benefits, particularly given potential membership fee increases. SV was concerned that communications should be improved so that members did not think that there were insurance benefits of TTE membership which in reality did not exist, AER suggested that the insurance should cover players for the full 12 months even if they

haven't paid their affiliation fee until September, to ensure proper coverage during the start of the new season. The group agreed that further discussion with TTE staff and insurance brokers is needed to resolve these issues, as the email exchange has reached the limit of its usefulness.

NH suggested waiting for new insurance arrangements to be implemented before discussing details with suppliers to clarify coverage definitions and potentially review the value of personal accident cover. There was also agreement that more information, such as the claims ratio, would be helpful.

(c) County Organisers Handbook

The group also discussed updates to the County Organizers Handbook, which will be revised to align more closely with updated county administration regulations, though CE raised concerns about new regulations that appear to define specific requirements for county constitutions, potentially contradicting the principle of county autonomy.

(d) Conflict of Interest Policy Review

The meeting focused on reviewing a draft conflict of interest policy that had been proposed but not yet approved by the Board. SV expressed concerns about the policy's tone and scope, particularly regarding its extension to National Council members, the oversight and management of the policy, and the concept of "conflict of loyalty". CB explained that the policy originated from a Board Review and emphasized the importance of open declaration of conflicts. It was agreed that National Council should provide feedback to the Board, with CB indicating there was no rush to finalise the policy and the Board could await the response from National Council's consultation

Select Committee Reports

(a) Constitution

The National Council meeting focused on concerns raised by the Select Committee regarding communication and transparency with the Board. Alan explained that the Select Committee had submitted propositions to the AGM after feeling ignored by the Board on previous discussions but expressed willingness to withdraw them if issues could be resolved in advance.

(b) Competitions

The Committee expressed their disappointment that important issues which had been included in our reports and had been passed on to the Board had not received the attention the Committee believe was required. However, good progress had been made by the "Task & Finish" group, led by Elected Board Director, Ritchie Venner (RV), which had addressed concerns about the cadet & junior girls pathways at its first meeting held on April 13th.

Significant concerns were raised about the organization of the National Senior Championships at Nottingham, particularly the Friday event, which fell short of all expectations. The concept of a Friday qualifying event was a step forward, but the implementation of the strategy was not adequate for such an event. RV had identified 17 issues that needed to be addressed and had offered to work with the CEO to improve the event for next year.

The U17 and Cadet National Championships were restricted to only 32 players in each of the singles which limited the number of people who could participate in the event, yet the event had times where the majority of tables were not being used, therefore, to allow the entry to 64 players, boys and girls, rather than 32 would have been much more beneficial to the two events in each age groups

AER expressed his view that there should be greater use of volunteers in running the sport. The volunteers would have a better understanding of table tennis and this would result in significant cost savings for Table Tennis England.

Dates of Future Meetings

These were confirmed as follows:

- June Meeting 2026 – 27 June 2026
- October Meeting 2026 – 17 Oct 2026
- Dec/Jan Meeting 2027 – either 12 Dec 2026 or 16 Jan 2027 (decision to be made at June meeting)
- March/April Meeting 2027 – awaits a decision on the date of the Senior National Championships, which in turn is dependent on finalisation of the ITTF calendar

Action List

1. NH/SV to email CB and SL to formalize specific actions and issues discussed for follow-up between National Council and the Board.
2. CB to discuss with Board reintroducing the ability to ask written questions ahead of the AGM.
3. PB/CB to coordinate with interested National Council members (via NH/SV) to participate in consultation on affiliation fees for next season and related finance proposals.
4. NH to send the West Area renaming paper to Sally Hughes (and copy SL) for consideration by the Development Committee
5. NH to wait for new insurance arrangements to be finalized, then organize a meeting with PB, relevant TTE staff, and insurance brokers to review and clarify insurance coverage details.
6. NH/EW/CE to update the County Organizers Handbook to align with revised county administration regulations within the next month.
7. National Council members to review the draft Conflicts of Interest policy and provide feedback to SV who would summarize and submit consolidated comments to CB/Board in advance of Board decision.
8. All National Council members are encouraged to apply for Table Tennis England advisory committee positions – particularly the Finance & Audit advisory committee.
9. NH to send out notifications to National Councillors when new version of the Electoral Register is published once informed by the returning officer.
10. NH/PB/TP/CE to participate in review of new insurance arrangements once tender is complete, focusing on issues such as personal accident cover value, club definitions, and timing of coverage.
11. National Council members to ensure leagues and counties complete annual returns and appoint company members in time to secure voting rights for the AGM and upcoming elections.
12. NH/SV to meet with CB and SL (post-Worlds) to map out and clarify the ongoing relationship and collaboration process between National Council and the Board.

List of Participants

Name	County	Name	County	Name	County
Alan Ransome	Cv	Ivor Jones	Np	Paul Bishop	Board
Brian Freer	Ca	Jonathan Stubbs	Ha	Reinhard Lindner	Do
Brian Whitehead	Bu	Jos Kelly	Board	Ritchie Venner	Board
Clare Briegal	Board	Joshua Reynolds	Y	Sandra Deaton	Dy
Clive Ellison	Av	Karen Tonge OBE	Ch	Shaun Parsley	Nk
David Edwards	He	Kevin Fudge	County	Shirley Pickering	Le
Don Parker	Board	Liam McTiernan	Board	Susie Venner	La/VETTS
Estyn Williams	Wa	Margot Fraser	Sy	Tom Purcell	La
Ian Chislett	So	Martin Clark	Wo	Tony Catt	Sx
Ian Langley	Bk	Neil Hurford	Ox	Trevor Kerry	Ng