National Council Meeting – 27 June 2026: Summary Report

Opening Remarks
Neil Hurford (NH) opened the final meeting of the 2025/26 season.

There was a minute's silence for three recently departed colleagues: Jose Ransome (Cleveland), Ernie Howell (Wilts), and John Cleveland (Wilts). There was an excellent tribute to Jose on the TTE website. Jose had spearheaded the development of Women & Girls table tennis and ensuring there was equality with the men. Ernie and John were stalwarts of Wiltshire table tennis as coaches and officials who were fondly remembered by the county.

NH mentioned the recent fire at the eBaTT club in North London which had destroyed its venue. Details of what had happened are available at the following link:

ebatt-will-bounce-back-after-fire-vows-eli-baraty/

A Go-Fund-Me page had been set up where donations could be made to support the rebuilding of the venue:

https://www.gofundme.com/f/bring-ebatt-back-stronger-after-the-flames

Minutes of the April National Council Meeting
The Minutes of the April Meeting were agreed as a true record

Dates of Meetings in the 2026/27 season
Saturday 19th December was agreed as the date of the second meeting of the season. The dates of the meetings in 2026/27 would be Sat 17th Oct, Sat 19th Dec and either Sat 17th April or Sat 24th April. Sundays could be considered should Saturday dates prove not to be suitable.

Election of National Council Chair for 2026/27
Susie Venner (SV) noted that she would lead the election process for the National Council Chair. She would follow David Hockney's previous blueprint. Nominations would be invited shortly.

Chair's Update
Claire Briegal provided an update on Table Tennis England's strategy review process. She explained that they would be conducting a comprehensive review of their Table Tennis United strategy over the next six months to prioritise resources and align with member feedback from recent surveys.

There would be extensive consultation with National Councillors and other stakeholders to review and prioritise the current strategy. It was recognised that it was important to ensure wide-ranging participation in the review so that alignment across all stakeholders could be achieved.

CEO Update
Sally Lockyer (SL) presented an overview of the World Championships reporting process, highlighting key statistics including 64 teams participating in each event, 59,000 tickets sold, and a global TV audience of 660 million. She discussed the sustainability initiatives, including measuring the environmental footprint for the first time at a World Championships, and the social impact programme which included free tickets for 2,000 spectators, primarily under-16s from schools and clubs. Chris Brown (TTE Development & Competitions) detailed the social impact and legacy work, including the Pride of Table Tennis Awards, Fan Zone activities reaching 7,000-8,000 visitors, and equipment legacy with 85 indoor tables and 1,000 barriers donated to 40+ organisations.

Sue Hayes (SH) raised concerns about lack of block ticket options for clubs. Attempts to clarify the situation with TTE had met with no response. This was very disappointing and meant that her club was not able to attend the World Championships. SL acknowledged this as an important feedback point for future events.

Several financial questions were addressed, with clarification that while Table Tennis England provided value-in-kind support through staff resources, the financial risk was managed through a special purpose vehicle (SPV) structure with ITTF covering 60% of costs, ensuring no direct financial liability for TTE.

Steve Joel (SJ) raised concerns about the spectator experience, citing issues with ticketing platforms, venue access restrictions, and seating proximity to tables. Jack Ramful (JR) (TTE Engagement) explained these limitations were due to constraints in the 100-year-old venue and security considerations.

John Bayliss (JB) raised concerns about volunteer management, particularly regarding ball boys and girls, questioning how future events would handle similar roles without Dave Madison's expertise.

The discussion concluded with questions about ITTF constitutional and governance changes. CB noted that these changes could prove to be wide-ranging. She would be in a position to provide an update at a future meeting. It was also noted that the WTT event planned for September in London had been cancelled. However, the 10-year joint venture with WTT remains in place.

Review of TTE Financial Performance
Paul Bishop summarised the financial results showing a deficit of £65,000 against an original budget target of a small surplus. The Board had agreed to implement a break-even budget for 2026-27. The Board and the Senior Leadership Team were committed to meet this target. National Councillors raised concerns about the deficit. PB acknowledged these were valid questions that were better suited for the detailed financial review scheduled for the forthcoming meeting on Thursday 2nd July.

SV highlighted the recent successful consultation process with National Council members on affiliation fees, noting how the expertise of National Council was effectively utilised within a tight deadline. The affiliation fees for 2026/27 were in-line with previous TTE commitments and what was recommended by National Council.

TTE Annual General Meeting
CB confirmed that all the information about the AGM is available on the TTE website.

NH explained that six Special Resolutions will be debated at the forthcoming TTE AGM. However, at this NC meeting, those who were proposing these Special Resolutions were being given the opportunity to speak about what they were proposing. Martin Clark (MC) and Alex Murdoch (AM) presented their respective resolutions regarding TTE reporting to National Council and reinstating “In Good Standing” for organisations such as VETTS. AR emphasized that these proposals have been supported by the Select Committee, which includes experienced members from National Council.

Some National Councillors expressed concerns about the use of Special Resolutions for dealing with the issues and felt they could be resolved by improving communications between the Board and National Council. Tony Catt (TC) and Neil le Milliere (NM) emphasised that the proposals were not seeking constitutional changes but rather action on long-standing issues. SH highlighted improved interaction with the new leadership team, while Joshua Reynolds (JR) raised concerns about the use of Special Resolutions for resolving issue which could be handled in other ways.

Coach Development
Gavin Evans (GE) presented Table Tennis England's new coach development plan, which shifts from a qualification-focused model to a role-based development approach with three coaching roles: coaching assistant, coach, and head coach. The new framework emphasises continuous professional development, mentoring, and place-based learning, with qualifications mapped to the CIMSPA professional standards. GE outlined implementation progress including the recruitment of 8 coach mentors, 40 CPD sessions planned for 2026, and strategic partnerships with CIMSPA, while noting that previous qualifications will be retained and mapped to the new framework.

GE discussed the new qualification pathway for coaches, explaining that it is more expensive and demanding than previous courses due to the need for better coaching development and retention. He noted that currently only 40 out of 400 people who attended Level 1 coaches course retained their licenses after the first year. This had been an important factor in the decision to make qualifications more rigorous.

GE's presentation has been added to the "Papers for Meetings" page on the NC website.

Digital Transformation
Jack Ramful (JR) presented the organisation's digital transformation plans, outlining a new unified platform being developed with Cloud Athlete that will replace the current membership management system. The launch is scheduled for July 2026.

JR explained the transition from the Sport80 platform to the new Cloud Athlete system. The current Sport 80 system would remain available until October. In some cases, such as ranking, there would be parallel running to check the robustness of the new system. Clive Ellison (CE) raised questions about daa migration, with JR clarifying that payment information would not carry over and members would need to set up new direct debits. SJ questioned the broader digital strategy, to which JR outlined plans for competition management features in phase two and potential app development. NH noted the goal of extending similar competition software capabilities down to club, league and county levels.

JR's presentation has been added to the "Papers for Meetings" page on the NC website.

National Council Meeting Structure Changes
The group discussed a paper which suggested a more focussed approach for National Council meetings to improve discussion and be in a position to input into the TTE decision-making process in a more timely and relevant manner. Estyn Williams (EW) welcomed the approach in the paper and emphasised the importance of timing presentations to ensure they are neither too early nor too late in the decision-making process. He suggested requiring presenters to submit advance papers. The group agreed to start implementing these changes for the October meeting, with Susie Venner (SV) and NH taking the lead for NC. They also discussed the conflict of interest policy, with CB offering to provide SV with a short brief to set out the nature of the consultation process.

Report of Select Committee on Competitions
The meeting focused on removing barriers for young female cadet and junior players to compete in Table Tennis England competitions. JB and AR raised concerns that current rules prevent girls who play in the Youth British League from participating in regional mixed competitions, thereby creating a barrier that could lead to girls leaving the sport.

There was a lengthy discussion and several members of NC raised concerns that a resolution to this issue was being blocked unnecessarily. There had been a meeting of a Task and Finish Group led by TTE Director Ritchie Venner (RV) who explained there was unanimous agreement on how to improve the situation for this season. The NC meeting sent a clear message that this should be resolved as a matter of urgency. JB emphasised that it had been under discussion for three years. CB cited issues with the Terms of Reference of the Committee and governance issues, in as much as they wanted more women involved. RV was happy to include an additional two women in the group under the existing ToRs and NC members offered to submit names of suitably experienced women but urged that this should not be a barrier in itself to preventing young girls from playing.

CB acknowledged the importance of the issue and would investigate how it could be resolved in a timely fashion. She recognised that the entry deadline was in TTE's hands and could be extended a few weeks for this to be resolved in time for the 26/27 season

Neil Hurford & Susie Venner
July 2026

Actions

1. CB to provide an update at a future meeting on the ITTF constitutional changes and changes to the number of teams at future World Championships.

2. CB to share the link to the Sports Governance Academy session on conflict of interest with the National Council.
CB has subsequently provided the relevant link:
understanding-directors-and-trustees-duties-in-sport-resources-recordings/

3. CB to discuss the issue of removing barriers for cadet and junior girls in competitions with the board and executive for a quick resolution in time for next season.

4. JR to launch the new Cloud Athlete membership and engagement platform in mid-July, with communication to members and support resources.

5. NH to finalise and publish the dates for the second meeting of the 2026-27 season (19th December) and keep Sundays open as options for future meetings.

6. NH to provide links to the News Article on the TTE website about the fire at the eBaTT Club. Also a link to GoFundMe page that has been set up to help with the re-build.
Done – provided at the beginning of this Summary Report.

7. PB to present a detailed financial discussion at the separate meeting on Thursday, including analysis of the deficit and the 2026-27 budget.
Meeting took place on 2nd July.

8. SL to ensure capture the experience of Dave Madison and John Dennison regarding the ball kids/boys and girls, and have a direct conversation with them as part of the lessons learned process.

9. SV to follow David Hockney's blueprint and send out information on the election of Chair of National Council within the next two weeks, including the timetable and process for nominations.

10. NH/SV/CB/SL to develop a calendar of themes for future National Council meetings, starting with the October meeting, to improve the relationship and effectiveness of input of National Council into the decision-making process.