

2010 AGM & OGM MINUTES



2010 Annual General Meeting and Ordinary General Meeting of the England Touch Association

Venue: Gosford All Blacks RFC, Stratfield Brake, Freize Way, Kidlington, Oxfordshire, OX5 1UP.

Date: Sunday 5th December 2010, 1030am

AGM

As per the order of business.

1. Opening Address and Welcome

2. Apologies

Apologies received from: Nathan Joyce (Technical Director), Trevor Jefferies (Compliance Director), Taryn Pile (Development Director), Mike Abromowitz (High Performance Director), Claire McIntosh (High Performance Manager), Chris Simon (Nottingham), Neil Davies (Bath).

3. Registration and accreditation of nominated delegates

Attendees:

- **Clare Gregor** (ETA President)
- **Paul Farrington** (ETA Vice President, Representing: Oxford, Reading, Slough/Maidenhead. Proxy for Clapham Common, Wimbledon, Putney/Wandsworth, Regents Park, Surrey Quays, Manchester Trafford, Manchester Didsbury)
- **Tom Bedkowski** (ETA Statutory Director, Representing: Bristol. Proxy for Bath, Nottingham)
- **Will Ten Broeke** (Financial Director)
- **Bruce Lockie** (National Director of Refereeing)
- **Steve Cleary** (Membership Director)
- **Gregg Cropper** (PR and Marketing Director, Manchester Chargers)
- **Morris Hogg** (Chesham)
- **Julie Walker** (Manchester Chargers)
- **Jon Lovell** (Cambridge)

Quorum present – 5 of 6 Executive Members and 16 of 24 financial members (Requirement – 50% of Executive Committee and 50% of financial members).

4. Review of minutes from previous annual general meeting

These were not made publically available after the 2009 AGM. It will be ensured that the 2010 AGM minutes will be put on the ETA website as soon as possible after the meeting.

5. Reports

Directors reports to be made available on the ETA website.

6. Financial Report

- Details outlined in Financial Report to be made available on the ETA website.
- Main event of 2010 - England Touch Association Limited incorporated at Companies House in February. Clare Gregor and Paul Farrington entered on the public register as Directors, Tom Bedkowski as Company Secretary.
- Odd in terms of timing for financial reporting – not at year end. Financial year registered as 1st January to 31st December.
- Accounts do not include 2010 member affiliation fees.
- Main investment for 2010 was for the new ETA website (£1,400) to be paid for on a stage-payment basis.
- Overall it looks like the ETA will profitable by about £700 in 2010.
- Euros – Upfront costs made on behalf of Elite players (£1,800) is still outstanding from the Elite squad. All England teams have amounts outstanding varying from a couple of hundred to over one thousand.
- If players have amounts outstanding by the end of January, they will not be able to play for England at the World Cup. Emails have gone out to all Team Managers to try and recoup. Clare Gregor to send an email out in January to chase final people owing money.
- World Cup – Each Team Manager will be encouraged to set up separate accounts to track payments from their players.
- Claire McIntosh and Kate Stanley are required to pass the World Cup budget by Will prior to it going live.
- Four recommendations have been made in order to protect the organisation, control costs and promote financial responsibility. See Financial Report for more details.
- One of the main expenses for 2011 is the FIT affiliation fee. The charging structure will be changing in 2011. Currently it is a standard fee per year and will increase significantly from next year. England will pay the highest tier of fees.

7. Motions for amendment of the constitution

- Paul Farrington outlined that amendments to the constitution can only be made at the AGM or at a Special meeting.
- Paul to forward the proposed changes on to Tom Bedkowski for amendments to be made.
- Paul to propose the changes.

- 11.2.a – Has been convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment within the preceding ten (10) years. – AGREED to be dropped.

- FIT have requested that the ETA drop 'rugby' from 'England Touch Rugby'
- Clare Gregor outlined why 'Rugby' should be dropped. RFL and RFU pressing ahead with Touch to increase participation and growth in their respective sports. Dropping 'Rugby' would distance Touch from Rugby.
- Morris Hogg stated that he thought it was too early to drop 'rugby' from branding. It would put the ETA at a disadvantage. People do not know what 'Touch' is at the moment, particularly in schools.
- Clare Gregor recommended that the ETA keep both 'Touch' and 'Touch Rugby'. This was AGREED by all.
- Title of Statutory Director – Recommended that this is changed to 'Membership Director' to relate to roles of current Committee. No Change.
- Notice periods for meetings (7.3.3, 7.3.4 and 7.4.4, 7.4.5) – Recommended for the lead times to change. Agreed to keep as it was.
- Logo needs to be changed on the Constitution front cover.
- General comment from the floor was that the change of ETA logo was not communicated to members or committee. Some people still unaware that it has changed including some of the committee.
- Inclusion of Director of Refereeing onto Executive Committee - AGREED by all.
- Application procedure for those wishing to become members (Item 5). Change from current method of needing to write to the ETA to 'Filling the appropriate Application from in' instead. AGREED by all.
- Inclusion of new constitution from FIT. AGREED

8. Notices of motion, including life membership

None

9. Election of Executive Committee

- No new people have come forward for any of the Executive Committee roles.
- Current members all re-standing for election.
- All will automatically be re-elected unless there were any objections from the floor. None were raised.
- It is the first AGM since Chris Wheeler stood down and handed over the position to Bruce Lockie. It is therefore necessary to vote Bruce Lockie in as National Director of Refereeing.

2011 ETA Executive Committee

- **President**, Clare Gregor (Seconded by Tom Bedkowski)
- **Vice President**, Paul Farrington (Seconded by Will Ten Broeke)
- **Statutory Director**, Tom Bedkowski (Seconded by Clare Gregor)
- **Financial Director**, Will Ten Broeke (Seconded by Paul Farrington)

- **Technical Director**, Nathan Joyce (Seconded by Tom Bedkowski)
- **National Director of Refereeing**, Bruce Lockie (Seconded by Clare Gregor)
- Jon Lovell questioned how the Technical Director role fits in with the new High Performance Director role. Clare Gregor explained that the role was brought in as a result of the resignation of Karl Baxter and Teresa Dean Lee and was based on the Australian set up. Nathan (Technical Director) oversees the overall coaching set up on behalf of Executive committee.
- Bruce Lockie stated that all roles being filled should be more openly communicated with the Committee and members. It was agreed that this should be improved.
- Jon Lovell raised a point regarding the appointment of Mike Abromowitz to the position of High Performance Director and the even if the ETA had someone in mind for the position, it should have been advertised. Clare Gregor agreed that in hindsight this should have been done.
- Will Ten Broeke suggested that any ETA positions should be advertised for four weeks as standard. The Executive committee should decide to employ someone on a casual basis and be more widely consulted on long term appointments. The Compliance Director (Trevor Jefferies) is to coordinate this.
- Bruce Lockie suggested that roles should be made public to let people know roles are available to come forward to potentially fill or get involved.
- Jon Lovell questioned the role of 'Regional Selector' that was brought in. The positions are being under utilized or being dismissed at present.

10. Appointment of an Auditor

- No auditor appointed and the ETA is not required to.
- Company reports will be filed with companies House.
- A copy of accounts is to be made available if requested by members.

11. Closure of Meeting

- Meeting closed at 11:20hrs.

OGM

As per the order of business.

1. Introduction by the Chairman

2. Apologies

- As per the AGM apologies

3. Registration and accreditation of nominated delegates

- As per the AGM attendees, including Andy Baulch (Oxford Touch Club)

4. Minutes of previous meeting/matters arising

- These were not made publically available after the 2009 OGM. It will be ensured that the 2010 OGM minutes will be put on the ETA website as soon as possible after the meeting.

5. Reports

- Directors reports to be made available on the ETA website.

6. General business

- These were items submitted to the Statutory Director for discussion.

a. Member votes

- Gregg Cropper questioned the current voting system. One vote per league – commercial Touch organisations that have more than one league have a lot more power and are not representative of their leagues. For example In2Touch have 11 votes at the OGM, there were only another 11 votes possible at the meeting. Is this healthy?
- The ETA stated that with growth of leagues, events and clubs this will become less of a problem in years to come as more member come on board eligible to vote.
- Steve Cleary made it clear that one off events do not get a vote.
- Clare Gregor stated that it was an issue to look into in the future.

b. Communication

- Internal communication within the ETA committee (Executive and Operational) is better, but still room for improvement.
- Clare suggested setting up a blog for committee members to communicate.
- Will suggested setting aside time at NTS events – even if just for a short meeting.
- Jon Lovell suggested that the committees should meet at least one other time a year, ideally quarterly.
- Gregg Cropper highlighted the ways in which external communication has improved over the past year.

- Newsletter – Now goes out to 1,000 people. It was suggested by Gregg that League managers and commercial organisations forward the newsletter on to people on their database on behalf of the ETA. Bruce Lockie suggested a data protection opt in to the ETA newsletter and database when signing up to play in the local leagues?
- A press release will be sent out to league organisers to forward on to their database contacts or to add as a news item on their websites announcing that a new edition of the newsletter is available.

c. Website

- A new ETA website will be online soon. It is hoped that this will provide a significantly enhanced shop front for the ETA and generate sponsorship for the sport centred on the World Cup 2011.
- It will better communicate to members and those interested in Touch.
- Current website limited in scope
- Englandtouch.com has been purchased by touchrugby.com. Gregg suggested that the ETA purchases all other abbreviations of the web address.
- Gregg to find out who currently owns domain name for the website, and where it is hosted.

d. Membership

- Fees for 2010 to be invoiced shortly.
- Fees for 2011 to be invoiced in January
- A new charging structure is proposed for 2011. This will be a fairer charging system, generate the ETA more funds and also fall in line with the new FIT charging structure.
- The proposals are that each member is charged £12 per team in their peak league of the year. So if a member's biggest league of the year is made up for 10 teams, they would pay £120.
- Club membership was proposed as £75 and one off events, £50.
- These four things were required to be voted on.
 - Vote 1 – Move to a per team fee (Voted IN – 14 for, 7 against)
 - Vote 2 – To charge £12 per team (Voted IN – 14 for, 7 against)
 - Vote 3 – To charge Clubs £75 (Voted IN – 21 for, 0 against)
 - Vote 4 – To charge one off events £50 (Voted IN – 21 for, 0 against)
- A list of benefits for each package needs to be made available.
- Jon Lovell raised the issue of members being charged a lot in a short space of time. 2010 subs being invoiced now, 2011 in January and NTS subs for the past two years have also just been invoiced.
- Clare Gregor asked that if everyone was happy with the proposals that we try this for this year and see how it goes.
- Steve to bring it up as an agenda item for 2011 to review.

e. Sponsorship

- Gregg Cropper suggested that we need to press ahead with finding suitable sponsors for the ETA. Particularly for the national sides.
- Some companies will only offer 'in-kind' products – What would the ETA want or need?
- No idea of value of sponsorship – Need to consider what the money would be spent on and what that would cost.
- Morris Hogg – Suggested that no company will want to sponsor something nationally unless the ETA has a larger development plan so potential sponsors can see where there money will be invested and where the sport is going. They would want to get on board in a 2/3/4 year agreement.
- Jon Lovell – Individual England teams have been seeing their own sponsorship and questioned if this was an issue. Clare said there was nothing formally agreed on that front and it would be considered on a case by case issue.

f. Euros 2010

- This was a huge success and was positive for the reputation of the ETA.
- Largest Euros ever.
- Lots of positive feedback from all countries, not sure about FIT as they have not commented.
- Outstanding efforts by all the volunteers to make it happen and run smoothly.
- Huge improvement on Massy in 2008.
- Great to get coverage on 'Rugby World'
- Financially - A lack of financial sponsorship left us stretched. No profit for the ETA as originally predicted. The current economic situation meant companies were unable to assist the event financially, or the lack of knowledge about the sport of Touch.
- Struggling to meet the £22,000 bill for hosting the event from FIT (expenses and Team/Participant fee %). Lack of understanding of the situation on this front from our Federation friends. Profit first, quality second.
- Tom Bedkowski and organising team learnt a lot about running these kinds of events and it is hoped that this knowledge and experience gained can be put to good use in the future.
- Learning's have been passed on to the World Cup team in Scotland.

g. Refereeing

- Bruce Lockie outlined the proposals in the Referee review document. Refer to Referee report for more information.
- Bruce Lockie stated that the NTS should not be used as a referee development tool. It is the best competition in Europe and therefore the best referees should be there.
- Clare Gregor supported Bruce Lockie on his proposals.
- Clare Gregor to speak to Claire McIntosh regarding the 'Elite player fee' proposals
- Each referee course needs to be making money to put back into Referee development.
- Plan to tie referee coaching in with NTS venues so that local referees can be coached and shown drills they can do to improve their standard.

h. FIT Copyright Issues

- FIT negotiated some IP from Australia which they can send out to members in return for a fee. At the moment these fee is quite high.
- The benefit of getting it direct from FIT would be that the ETA would not have to reinvent the wheel.

i. Tournaments 2011

National Touch Series (NTS)

- Once again standard of Touch at the events improved. All venues apart from Thames Valley and the Cambridge finals were fully subscribed.
- NTS Finals – Not all teams entered unfortunately. Combination of post Euros blues and the date being in August, a traditional holiday period were the reasons for this. Those that did attend seemed to be a bit flat. The event was probably too soon after the Euros.
- All venues have had feedback from evaluations sent out to team captains after each event. This feedback will hopefully be used to improve events in years to come.
- Poor quality pitches and refereeing standards were the two main issues raised overall.
- 2011 – Five dates proposed initially, but due to internal communication issues this reduced to four due to an England Elite training camp taking place on the same weekend. Difficulty fitting dates in the calendar due to the World Cup being in June.
- Now looking to increase number of dates to five or six for the 2011 calendar with a possible date in March and finals in early September. Venues and dates to be confirmed early in the New Year.
- NTS rules and regulations, along with guidance for host venues to be released. Also putting together a number of protocols in relation to NTS venue selection etc. so this can be transparent.
- Clare Gregor stated that teams and players must be affiliated if they want to participate. Method of checking this to be looked into.

- Bruce Lockie suggested that each team should bring a referee with them, or contribute to the expenses of one.
- Requested that venues are given guidance on fee structures with regard to referee expense payments at NTS events. Tom Bedkowski to put together some guidance.

Social Touch Series (STS)

- To be launched in early 2011.
- Series of tournaments aimed at local leagues teams who don't normally get a chance to play at tournaments either due the standard of NTS, and/or just not knowing what events they can play at.
- Looking to have five/six events in 2011.
- Will be run on different weekends to NTS events.
- Tom Bedkowski to put together a Tournament strategy document in 2011 which outlines how the NTS and other events, including a Men's and Women's NTS will develop over the coming years. This will involve consultation with players and national coaches.

7. Player development

- Gregg Cropper suggested that a coaching package is put together for affiliated clubs and members to use.
- Possibility of introducing online resources.

8. Development days 2010/2011

- Gregg asked how you go about running one of these events. Do members know how to go about running one of these events and getting one in their area?
- These need to be instigated by members themselves. Members need to come forward and express an interest in hosting these events.
- Clare Gregor suggested that a method of applying to host such an event is tied in with the Social Touch Series and/or NTS. Tom Bedkowski to tie in.

9. Elite Players

Player selection/Affiliation issues

- Paul Farrington raised the issue of England players not playing in affiliated leagues and the need to clamp down.
- Greg Cropper also pointed out that some players don't play in any leagues but play for England. Some however do not have any leagues local to them.
- Harsh to penalise people if no affiliated league available near the player.
- Team Managers responsibility to check that players in their team play in affiliated leagues. Any issues should be raised with the High Performance Director and Manager. Claire McIntosh to be informed that this is the case and to make Managers aware.

- A number of people suggested having a player registration scheme as in any other sport. This would require central registration.
- Andy Baulch outlined the system and procedures in Rugby Union with the RFU and stated that a similar scheme should be in place for the ETA. Important to set up and get up and running now before Touch becomes too big.
- Julie Walker to look into setting up a player database/player registration scheme.
- Bruce Lockie asked what the situation is with regard to a referee from a country looking to play for another country. No issues as such that anyone knew of.

Transparency of fees

- Gregg said there should be more transparency of elite fees. Players should be able to see where fees went.
- Euros 2010 finances restricted to avoid issues being raised.
- More communication needed in this respect going forward.
- Steve Cleary – Against adding 10% on elite player costs. Not fair to pass on to players to cover those who haven't paid. Will stated that this was to ensure that the ETA was covered in case of unforeseen costs and to have a contingency fund in place.
- Payment deadlines are to stricter and may lead to players not playing if missed.

Business Decisions

- Gregg Cropper raised the concern that some business decisions go to 'mates' and not being considered in a proper manner.
- Physio for the World Cup – A good offer from Huddersfield University was turned down.
- Mel Bryant is to lead Physio team at World Cup
- Clare Gregor stated that Sports Physio's are very important and it is crucial to have someone who understands of Touch and who has knowledge of a number of the players.
- Mel was at the Euros, the experience she gained there was invaluable and therefore it was felt it was best to utilise her again.
- Clare Gregor stated we must trust the people responsible for making those decisions. All decisions can't be advertised.
- Clare Gregor to look into the offer from Huddersfield University and see if Mel can work with them.
- Jon Lovell – Players need to be involved in business decisions, or at least to inform them of the decisions.
- Clare Gregor mentioned that some teams are looking at hiring in their own specific team physio and they were free to do so if they wished.

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10.AOB

- Clare suggested that the next AGM is held in the summer during the season to enable the off season to be able to plan for the off season and how to utilise the time. After the World Cup was suggested. Tom Bedkowski to look into.
- Clare suggested that a Committee meeting is held in March. Tom Bedkowski to action.
- Meeting closed at 14:30hrs