

**Minutes of SGM of pickleballEngland (pbE) held at 13.00 on 4 May 2025  
in person at Loughborough Sports Centre and by ZOOM**

Present: 22 identified below (region/country and pbE roles shown in brackets): [Plus 7 unidentified on line and many more in person] \*indicates in person presence

Karen Mitchell\* (SES – National Director pbE [ND] ) in the Chair, Martin Smith (SES – ND); James Chaudry\* (SES) (Co-opted Director), Michael de Groot (Regional Director [RD] WM), Christine Neyndorff (RD SEN), Peps Guiliano\* (RD EM), David Hughes\* (Regional Director SES), Frank Arico\* (SES); Mandy Williams (NW), Simon Watson (SEN), Julie Vickerman (NE), John Bownlie (WM), Trevor Robinson (NW), Chris Mitchell\* (SES), Laura Blatherwick (WM), Julz Donald (SES), Penny Pearkes (SW), Ian Judd (SES), Annette Kratz (SES), Donald Adams (SES), Peter Simmoms (SEN), Salli Griffith (SES), Vee Baker (SW), Shane Crook\* (SW), Charlie Burt\*??, Emmanuel Otu\* (SES), Stephen Pisano\* (SES), Dave Cotterell\* (WM), Martin Andrews\* (WM), Ben Biggs\*??, Freddie Gratton\* (SES), Jack Gratton\* (SES), Chris Frylink\* (SES), Sebastien Malbois\* (SES), Dyone Robinson (SES)\*, Rupert Robinson (SES)\*, Jamie Champion\* (SEN), Thaddea Lock\* (SES), Louise Wormald\* (EM), Andre Strachan (SES)\*, Chris Mann\* (EM), Stephen White\* (EM), Richard Green\* (SEN), Martin Ruth\* (SW), Helen White, Andrew Fennell\* (WM), Katy Freeman\* (SEN), Elaine Brown\* (SES), Andrew Pollard\* (WM), Sharath Jeevan\* (SES), Hans March\* (SES), Suzanne March\* (SES), Chris Walkau\* (WM), Nick Hobbis\* (WM), Abigail Hind\* (XX), Craig Crowley\* (EM), Sally Huggins\* (SES), Ian Banks-Jones\* (WM), Jo Banks-Jones\* (WM), Jack McGregor\* (SW), Shaun Davies\* (WM), Louise Stephens\* (SES), Julia Oprea\* (SEN), Paul Oprea\* (SEN), Jesse Byron-Russell\* (SES), James Travers\* (Non voting IOM), Mark Eggleton\* (SEN), Anakin Owen\* (EM), Boon Yeng\* (WM), Irene Burman\*?, Jason Miles\* (SW), Dale Johnson\* (SW), Mohmud Mohamed\* (SES), Luke O'Connell\* (EM), Damon Bridge\* (SEN), Nadeem Rehman\* (SEN), Glenn O'Hanlon\* (SEN), Amy McConnell\* (SES), James Neale\* (WM), Jemma Southall\* (WM), Jaan Anthony\* (NE), Lyndsey Hammond\* (NE), James Salter\* (EM), Jackie Arico\* (SES), Jasbir Tutt\* (WM), Gavin Samways\* (WM), Alistair Cernik\* (NW), Rob Wardle\* (NE), Sam Williams\* (WM), Rae Claramunt\* (WM), Nizar Charania\* (SES), Keith Lewis\* (WM)

## **1 Introduction and aims of SGM (Karen)**

The SGM is designed to seek approval from members of pbE for two changes to the Articles of pbE being recommended by the pbE Board and communicated to members by email before the meeting.

### **1.1 Resolution 1: Approval of Board Restructure**

To approve the proposed restructure of the Board of Directors of pickleballEngland, whereby:

- (a) A new Regional Committee will be established, comprising the Regional Directors [RDs]; one of the RDs will be nominated by the Regional Committee to serve on the Board of Directors;
- (b) The Board of Directors will comprise 6 National Directors, each selected for their relevant skills and experience, and 1 Regional Director nominated by the Regional Committee;
- (c) The necessary amendments to the Articles of Association to give effect to this restructure will be drafted and circulated to members in due course for separate approval.

### **1.2 Resolution 2: Extension of Deadline for 2025 AGM**

To approve the extension of the deadline for holding the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in 2025 by a period of six (6) months, beyond the time limit currently specified in the Articles of Association, to allow

adequate time to finalise the details of the proposed Board restructure and prepare the corresponding amendments to the Articles of Association for formal member approval.

## **2 Background to the proposed changes (Karen)**

### **2.1 Celebrating success**

We have achieved a great deal over the last year. Events include the Pickleball SLAM with Greg Rusedski; the English Open which attracted more than 2000 players; English Nationals Doubles, regional leagues in each region culminating in a national final to be held in July and the first English National Singles this weekend. A new curriculum has been created and the L1 programme is in full swing; the L2 stage is being piloted in May for roll-out in June. Team England won the inaugural European Cup competition. Sport England recognised pbE as the National Governing Body (NGB) for pickleball in England. Nearly 800 people had their first experience of Pickleball in taster sessions at Twickenham Stadium. And we are starting much needed enhancements to the way we handle membership and event information by the implementing a new digital interface using PickleBook. This is already saving us management effort and is a key stepping stone for further development. James also emphasized the gains to be made in better communication with members which would be a vital component to support our future growth.

### **2.2 PickleBook roll-out**

Already PickleBook contains the registration data for 575 clubs and 764 venues, together with 11942 individual members. Regional analyses or other management reports are straightforward in PickleBook. We owe a debt of gratitude to Frank Arico who while no longer of the pbE Board has facilitated the cleansing and migration of our existing data to the new system.

### **2.3 Current governance structure**

At present, the pbE Board comprises two national directors, one appointed director and the regional directors (and the secretary). It is also supported by other volunteers centrally and in the regions such as the County Representatives. It has one member of staff (Trevor Robinson). In addition it has a number of acceleration areas such as curriculum development.

### **2.4 The proposed new governance arrangements**

Under the new proposals, the Regional Directors would form their own Regional Board, charged with developing the game in their own areas. The new National Board would comprise six national directors with specific skill sets relevant to setting and addressing the national priorities for the NGB of a fast growing sport. This would provide for a wider range of expertise and enable better succession planning. In addition, the Regional Board would provide one of their number to sit on the National Board. The pbE Board believes that this structure would better meet the needs of pickleball as the number of players and clubs continues to grow. It would free the Regional Directors to focus on grass roots developments in association with the County Representatives in their areas with delegated budgets when resources permit. And it would help the National Board to take a more strategic view, for example, on digital transformation, safe guarding and other national policy areas.

### **2.5 A stepping stone**

The new structure will also be better placed to manage the expansion of paid staff that will in time be needed. The first priority is an Events Manager as pbE events get larger and more complex. Events provide much of the income the pbE receives and it is very important that in addition they offer a good experience

for those participating so they want to keep coming back. A CEO and executive team will also be needed in due course. It is envisaged that the CEO would sit on both Boards in the new governance structure.

### **3 Questions and answers**

Karen noted that job descriptions for the new National Directors would be needed to enable a proper recruitment process. She added that these Directors would not be paid. Other questions could be forwarded to [info@pickleballengland.org](mailto:info@pickleballengland.org).

### **4 Voting**

This was by members using their electronic link. The members approved the resolutions above through electronic vote: 86 for and none against.

**This note of the pbE SGM was prepared by Guy Herzmark  
Secretary to the pbE Board  
7 May 2025**

Please note where it states Regional Board, this should read Regional Steering Committee